COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Reference: Teacher education

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Wednesday, 28 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 Corcoran, Mr Fawcett, Mr Michael Ferguson, Mr Hartsuyker 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

Committee met at 9.05 am

COMBER, Professor Barbara, University of South Australia

ELLIOTT, Mr Michael John, Director, Northern Adelaide Partnerships, University of South Australia

HAMILTON, Mr Ian, Lecturer, University of South Australia

HATTAM, Associate Professor Robert, University of South Australia

HOLMES, Dr John Arthur, Lecturer, University of South Australia

MEINERS, Mr Jeff, Lecturer, University of South Australia

SIMONS, Dr Michele, Education Campus Coordinator, University of South Australia

UNDERWOOD, Mr Bruce, Lecturer, University of South Australia

CHAIR (Mr Hartsuyker)—Welcome. I declare open this public hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training inquiry into teacher education. The inquiry has examined a broad range of issues which impact on how well we are preparing teachers for their complex, demanding and critical role in educating our children. It has generated considerable interest and we have received in the order of 150 submissions. We are about halfway through our schedule, with public hearings having been conducted in Victoria, Queensland and the Northern Territory. We have also held several hearings in the ACT. I will take this opportunity to thank those involved for hosting the committee today. I also thank all those responsible for making the arrangements for our visit here.

Prof. Comber—It is my pleasure to welcome you to the University of South Australia, to acknowledge that we are on Kaurna lands and also to give you a sense of what we are hoping to do this morning, which is largely, in our presentation, to focus on our research partnerships, on our innovation in teaching and also on the kinds of applied research we actually do. I am going to begin that process by sharing with you some of the research that we are actually engaged in at the moment.

CHAIR—Thank you, Professor. 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 as such 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. I look forward to hearing your submissions. I understand that a number of people will be using PowerPoint presentations. In doing that, if you could just bear in mind that you will need to describe the slide for the purposes of the *Hansard* of proceedings.

Prof. Comber—What I am hoping to do in 10 minutes is give you a sense of two decades of literacy research.

Slides were then shown—

What I am hoping to show you through the slides is a sense of what our centre, as part of the School of Education, has been working on for at least two decades. I also want to give you a sense of some of the directions that our literacy research is taking at the moment. I want to start by saying it is a pleasure for me to be here. I have worked formerly as a high school teacher—in Whyalla and then in the northern suburbs of Adelaide—and then as a remedial reading teacher. What I am going try to do very quickly is give you a sense of what we hope is the nature of our research and literacy education.

I will ask Professor Marie Brennan to go to the next slide. We hope the features of our research are that it is long term and in depth, that it is collaborative with school educators and that we take account of the local, state and national perspectives in the field of literacy education. We have a particular commitment, as part of the university's mission, to focus on low SES communities and places, and we focus on different students' learning trajectories. I want to give you a little sense of what that means, and Marie will now go to slide No. 2.

I have tabled some of our research here. While we are very keen, as all institutions are, to produce refereed journal articles and books and so on, we put particular priority on professional development programs for teachers, so we do research that has an impact. We concentrate on trying to get the findings of our research both into the field, through teacher education, and also into preservice education. While we do a range of the usual things, we also embed the results of our research in undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and we deliberately try to contribute to policy. I am going to give some examples of how we do that in the next few slides.

In terms of literacy development, this particular centre and many of its members—and Associate Professor Susan Hill and I—have been involved in many of the major longitudinal studies of literacy development conducted in Australia over the last decade, including the '100 children go to school' project, where we focused on children from preschool to when they turned 10. We were also involved in the questioning development study and a study where we focused on children's literacy development in grades 3 to 5. Most recently in our work we have looked at the ways in which new teachers are being inducted into the profession and particularly at the way in which young teachers learning to teach now learn to teach the kids who have the most challenges with learning, including literacy learning, in school. We have tried to get all of that work out. The '100 children go to school' project, for example, was turned into a professional development package by the professional associations. One of the other professional associations has just published our work on children's literacy development. I just wanted to give you a sense of that history.

I now turn to the present. I mentioned earlier that we have a particular commitment to working in communities with high poverty. They also tend to be communities that are highly culturally diverse. I want to give you a sense of a few projects that we are working on, before showcasing one. One of the projects that we are working on at the moment is called River Literacies. The staff involved in that project are mentioned on the slide, and it is a linkage with the Primary English Teaching Association and Charles Sturt University.

In our work, we are increasingly thinking about issues such as what it means to teach and go to school in particular places. That particular project is focusing on children's understanding of the environment, particularly of the Murray-Darling. That project is conducted with teachers

throughout the Murray-Darling Basin. They are working with young children to think about the problem of water—which is another feature of our research. We like to focus on problems.

Another project that we are working on at the moment, commissioned by Catholic Education in South Australia, is looking directly at the question of boys' literacies and identities, particularly in the northern and western suburbs. That project involves teachers who are working with children who are sometimes alienated from schooling.

One of the things that it is important to emphasise is that we try to make our research have an impact on our teaching. For example, the River Literacies project that I mentioned, which is conducted around the Murray-Darling Basin, has already been developed into a course in our masters program with Charles Sturt University about rural literacies. Teachers in South Australia, New South Wales and Canada can take that course.

Another example of how we bring our research on place and literacy—the situated nature of literacy—into our curriculum is the way in which our languages and multiliteracies undergraduate core course is run. The work that we do there is infused into our lectures, into our readings and into our assignments. We want young people undertaking teacher education to have a very powerful sense of the latest research in literacy as they begin with us.

I now want to talk about one specific project, and my colleague Rob Hattam will talk about another. Again I want to emphasise the very applied nature of our research and the way we work with local communities to focus on real problems. I want to talk with you very briefly about a project called 'Urban renewal from the inside out'. This is a project where we work with the University of South Australia architecture department, the University of South Australia communications department and University of South Australia education.

The image in this next slide shows children from Ridley Grove Primary School from grades 3 to grade 6 in a workshop at the University of South Australia architecture studio, where the children were engaged in a project about redesigning a part of their school grounds. We call this project 'Urban renewal from the inside out' because these children are growing up in the western suburbs of Adelaide, where they are watching Westwood get developed. We want the children, right from an early age, to be active citizens and participants through very strong literacy programs.

What you see are the first year architecture students working with the children from Ridley Grove. This is the problem: the space between the preschool and the school. What you cannot see there is a car park, which is quite dangerous. This project has been funded by the Myer Foundation. On the day the Myer Foundation visited, it was 47 degrees so, for those of you who know an Adelaide hot wind and 47 degrees, it was a very hot day.

The challenge of this project is for the children to work with the architecture students from the University of South Australia, the journalism and communication students from the University of South Australia and the researchers and education researchers to redesign that space. I will give you a very quick tour of where we are up to. The next slide shows the children learning how to think about space—learning how to design what we might call spatial literacies. How do we make a difference to the places in which we live?

The children have been engaged in analysing the grounds of Ridley Grove Primary School: the things that they like about it; the things that make them feel like they belong and that they can learn there; the things that are not working for them—and you will notice mouldy roofs, too many ants, grass growing in the wrong places and no shade—and the things that they find interesting.

What we have been doing over the last two years—and this project is just coming to fruition as I speak to you—is working with the children across the whole school to conduct an analysis of how we can make schools better places for learning. The children have been involved in imagining and designing a better school environment, a better garden. As part of that process, what the children have done is develop what they have called consultation books where the two classes that have been most directly involved have taken their designs and put them in a book. They have taken them around the school. The children from the other classes have written feedback about the kinds of design ideas the children have had. The children have also had to argue a case. They have had to write persuasively about how they would like the garden to be developed. I have not got time to share the writing in detail with you, but the children have been very passionate and very creative about the kinds of things they have imagined in improving their school.

I want to leave you with three things—I am moving towards the end. The children engaged in what the architects described as pegging out. Having come up with their designs and got consensus in small groups, they then had to work out what those would look like in the actual yard itself. Then we had what was called a belonging day, where the children acted as consultants and guides and members of community came in to look at their designs. The children also had to explain to the preschool children the kinds of changes that were going to take place in the yard nearest to the preschool and to explain to the children how they imagined the new design.

At the same time the children were working on new and complex literacies—learning to work with design, learning to represent their ideas in different media. They were doing this both on paper and, as you saw, making models and so on, using what we call spatial literacies and at the same time learning to work with new technologies. I have added these slides—I will give you new copies—to show you what has happened just in the last few days. I could not resist showing you the kind of work that is finally going on as the garden comes to fruition. These are the children of Ridley Grove sitting on the walls that they designed and, as the changes happen in the schoolyard, they are documenting them in a variety of media. These are the University of South Australia architecture students who are there at the moment. These students were involved in trying to take the original designs from the children and bring them to fruition. The structures you are seeing there were constructed in the University of South Australia architecture studio workshop.

In summary, the work that we try to do and that we are passionately committed to is problem based. It is applied and innovative. It involves collaborative partnerships with schools. I hope that you can see from this example that it is interdisciplinary, so we try to work across and beyond education. We try to work locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The project that I showed you has a partner school in Baraneng in Pretoria, South Africa, where we are allied in making schools better places. We want to make our work as relevant as we can to the

profession. We see it as informed by and informing international theory and research. Most importantly for our purposes today, it is absolutely integral to our teaching.

Prof. Hattam—I am going to be talking about one particular project which we are calling Redesigning Pedagogies in the North. It is an Australian Research Council Linkage project. It has got the following features at this point. Its partners are the northern Adelaide public secondary schools, the Australian Education Union and the Social Inclusion Unit, with representatives from the School of Education at the University of South Australia. The project has a full-time PhD student, and I think we are negotiating for another one. As well, a couple of our EdD students are working out in the north, so their work is related to this project. We have got two honours students. The project has the involvement of the program coordinator of our middle-school teaching program. We have got some nascent plans to try and involve practicum students in the project next year. For those people who are not familiar with the northern Adelaide area, the participating schools are 10 northern Adelaide schools, which are listed on the slide. They are schools in Salisbury, Parafield Gardens, out to Craigmore and Elizabeth, Para West Adult Campus, Smithfield and Gawler.

Before we get to the justification of this project, there are about 14 or 15 academics working on the project. It brings together some ARC grants that Barbara has won before, Helen Nixon's work on new technologies and new literacies, Alan Reid's policy work, Marie Brennan's work, an ARC Linkage project that I was involved in at Flinders University around early school leaving, and a range of other studies. So this study is sort of a continuation of a range of other work that has been going on in a couple of Adelaide universities.

The project is justified in a range of ways. From my perspective, South Australia has got serious concerns around retention rates in the post-compulsory years. That is a major interest for the Social Inclusion Unit and the South Australian government. In the suburbs that we are working in there are changing demographics. A lot of the schools we are working in talk about youth being alienated from their communities and from school. There have been serious changes to the labour market in the last 10 or 20 years. It is possible to argue, in fact, that full-time youth labour markets have almost completely collapsed and so pathways from school to work are quite difficult to navigate if you are a young person these days. All of these things have big impacts on young people being in school.

If schools are going to be doing something about that whole range of issues then obviously there are a lot of things that need to be done in the post-compulsory years. But we made an argument that this work needs to be started in the middle years. A whole lot of work needs to be done around what we are calling middle schooling. If you go and have a look at what is going on in middle schooling then it is possible to make an argument that it is in need of some reinvigoration. The idea of middle schooling is now about a decade old. We have been arguing that the idea is a bit exhausted, but it is unfinished—the project is not complete. We want to make a contribution to the reinvigoration of this idea of middle schooling.

When you tease out the serious issue that really does need to be struggled with around middle schooling, it is that we need to be doing some reinvigoration around teaching and learning. A lot of our middle schooling work, in this state especially, has gone on around restructuring schools—so you have got architecturally designed middle schools, middle school coordinators

and so on. But we think the greatest amount of interest needs to be in changing teaching and learning. So that is the focus for our project.

As well, the university has a long-term commitment to the northern suburbs, and so it made sense to us to do this work with the northern area secondary schools. So over the years the university has formed quite close linkages with the secondary schools in the north of Adelaide. I do not know if you know about how you put together Linkage grants. The industry partner—in this case the northern Adelaide secondary schools—has got to put some money on the table. They are not putting money on the table unless they are fairly convinced that their university partners have got some credibility. I think we have proved that over a couple of decades.

There is also a need to improve the transition from primary to secondary schools. That is another issue related to middle schooling, and it is certainly one that lots of the teachers we are working with are taking up. To make it even more complicated, it is quite clear that young people's identities are now media saturated. That seems to be a serious issue for educators.

I will try to encapsulate the challenge for this project. The principal challenge for advancing middle schooling is the building of new forms of pedagogic practice that might begin to turn the educational performances of those young people who disaffiliate from formal education. Research is needed particularly into how curriculum relevance can be negotiated in the subject specialist world of high school. That is the challenge that defines the project.

In our reviews of the literature around middle schooling, it is possible to come up with the following list as a description of the sorts of pedagogical practices that we are keen to be involved in. The list comes from a DEST-funded review of middle schooling that was published in 2003. It is called *Beyond the Middle*. It is a review that heavily informs our project. There are descriptions of pedagogy, the teaching is goal oriented, in lessons there are real world connections to community problems, there is support for student autonomy, students are studying interesting texts, there are strategies to foster metacognition, there is lots of collaboration and working in small groups, there is praise and rewards for engagement in literacy and there is ongoing evaluation of students' performance in various ways.

There is a set of stated aims for the project. We wrote up a series of aims for our ARC grant proposal and then translated those for the participating teachers. This is the way we are describing the key aim: 'How can teachers build pedagogy that engages the life worlds of their students and that enables success?' Our project has five key components: building collaborative professional learning communities across schools and the university; examining theory and practice through mapping and benchmarking against the international literature; using ethnographic methods to study community life worlds in Adelaide's northern suburbs and trying to engage students as researchers of their own communities; redesigning curriculum and pedagogy using an action research approach, so the participating teachers are involved in action research around these pedagogical innovations; and building curriculum knowledge and pedagogical practice that works for students in the north, which is what we hope the project will culminate in doing. The project uses a research roundtable process. I think my five minutes are up.

CHAIR—We are running tight for time. We will keep moving.

Dr Simons—As I said before, I am going to talk briefly about the work that we have done that has informed the way that we have integrated issues relating to vocational learning and vocational education and training, particularly in our teacher education programs that prepare teachers not only for secondary school settings but also for TAFEs and private providers of vocational education and training. As you would be well aware, increasingly there are broader numbers of people taking responsibility for the education of our children, particularly in the post-compulsory years, as there is a blurring between the vocational education and training sector and the schools sector.

The Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work—or CREEW, as it is known—conducts research in four key program areas: professional development; educational policy analysis; learning, teaching and curriculum; and workplace change and innovation. One feature of our research is that it contributes to the development of policy and dissemination of best practice in schools, vocational education and training and adult and community education settings. I would underscore the broad contexts our young people are moving to in education careers. We also emphasise collaboration with end users and the building of knowledge through partnerships.

Specifically, the impact of our research has provided the basis for developing courses used in teacher education programs for both the school and the vocational education and training sector. We have a vocational learning in schools minor in our secondary teacher education program, which familiarises secondary school teachers with learning in the workplace and the specifics around the pedagogy of vocational education and training. This is offered also in the form of extended in-depth knowledge in our undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in adult vocational and workplace learning. It is interesting to note that, particularly when working in the adult vocational and workplace learning context, we are often training teachers who in their classes will have young adults learning alongside more mature people. So there are some particular challenges in how we train teachers to be able to run a broad spectrum of learner needs; it is not quite as simple as with the silos we used to have. A further impact of our research is that it informs the development of vocational education and training policy and, through our work in disseminating information, it also provides opportunities for ongoing professional development.

I will run quickly through a couple of our projects. ‘More than meets the eye’ was a project that we completed in 2000. That has been particularly important in informing the revision of the certificate IV in assessment and workplace training, which is a key and pivotal qualification used as a basis for preparing people to work with learners in vocational education and training. ‘The changing role of staff development for teachers and trainers’ is once again looking at how the work of teachers and trainers, particularly in the vocational education and training sector, is changing, particularly with how they need to respond to a broader range of learner needs and to work in partnership with a wider range of people, including schools.

We have also done work that looks at training, paying particular attention to the needs of casual and contract staff working with new technologies, in flexible and online delivery, which is a significant emerging and growing need in the education sector. The numbers of casual and contract staff are growing and they cannot be assumed to have the same sorts of needs as perhaps their permanent full-time colleagues, so how to engage them so that they continue to remain connected and able to contribute meaningfully to the growth of the profession is important.

Also, we have continued to look at the changing work and roles of vocational education and training practitioners. You will note that many of these projects are done in collaboration with people in the vocational education and training sector, which is a unique feature of our work. In addition, we have done work looking at teachers working in enterprises. This is probably new and it is quite interesting. It is a complex undertaking for teachers to move into enterprises and to learn to work in ways that will be conducive to people learning while at the same time enabling the enterprise to continue with the jobs it has to do, such as producing its products and providing its services. This new area of thinking about teaching and learning, we believe, needs to be explored further as vocational education and training becomes more widespread.

CHAIR—Is that a teacher working as an employee of the enterprise or solely as perhaps a TAFE employee going into the enterprise?

Dr Simons—It is facilitating the learning of students who might perhaps be in schools or part of apprenticeships, including school based apprenticeships. It can also include the idea that sometimes teachers, as part of their professional development, may also go into workplaces and need to be helped to understand how they can best get a lot of learning out of the enterprise and then use it and translate it into their work with their students in their classroom settings.

We will just move through that slide; I will not talk about it. At the moment we have a very large two-year project going that, in some ways, brings together all the research we have been doing over the last five or 10 years. It is called 'Supporting VET providers in building capacity for the future'. As you can see from the description there, it is focused on work force development for the vocational education and training sector. That will necessarily include people who provide vocational education and training in schools. It looks particularly at building the capability around a range of issues that impact on the cultures and the ability of these organisations to become agile, capable and responsive to the needs of the students and to the enterprises in which they work. This is a two-year research program—we will go to the next slide—in collaboration with a number of people. This slide gives you a taste of some of the titles of the research projects that we are looking at. They run the whole gamut, trying to look in a holistic way at how we can build a better vocational education and training system and register training organisations, including schools, which can respond to the needs of our learners. This slide summarises what Barbara has already said: our research is being integrated into our teaching programs, which we think is very important, and it is policy relevant, applied and collaborative.

Dr Holmes—Ian has a PowerPoint presentation that he will go through. You might like to think about all of this around some figures. I do not know whether you know or are interested, but in our programs we have a few prac days—to the tune of about $52,932. That is the sort of contact that our students who go out have with their settings and their schools and that is the sort of money we need to pay to these locations. We have about 2,500 placements per year across the School of Education. I think that is quite a reasonable number of placements to get out. As a consequence, we need an allocation of three staff. So I am really talking about money at the moment—not that you probably want to hear about that.

CHAIR—We are very interested in the money side.

Dr Holmes—Are you really? Good. Eventually you will hear some theory behind why we have so many prac days and why all our students go out to various settings—I use the word 'settings' rather than 'schools' because we have early child-care centres and a whole range of locations—and why we think it is important that they do this constantly; in fact, they do it every year and sometimes more than once a year.

In comparison with the eastern states, we pay quite a reasonable amount for the supervising schools; we do not think it is a very large amount. We spend about $812,000 on school placements. If everyone claimed, it would be about $964,000. If we were paying what is paid by the eastern states, we would probably be paying well over an extra $1 million. If the claims were to increase, if the practitioners in schools and settings looked for more money, we would be up for about another $1¼ million. So this is a very important part of our financial partnership as well as our intellectual and philosophical partnership.

I believe that we have incredibly good cooperation between all the providers in South Australia—us, Adelaide University, Flinders University and Tabor College. All four of us work very closely together. I am biased, of course, but I think we are probably the best of the four and work extremely well with all our settings, but I must say that we all work well and cooperatively together. Our challenge though is—I think Ian will follow this up more thoroughly—the preparation of students for the future. We must not prepare them as clones of ourselves or of other people or of the present. Our challenge is providing students who as beginning practitioners can go out to lead education into the future. Our difficulty is finding quality placements for future orientations.

Mr Hamilton—I will work very quickly through some of the slides; I will not read all of them per se. I want to suggest that a practicum is not just, 'Let's get out into schools and make it happen.' We have quite serious research that informs our practice and the decision making as to how the practicums are shaped. Our courses aim to provide authentic learning opportunities for all our students. The planning of any practicum course is collaborative and involves consultation both within and outside of the program management teams. We enjoy a very healthy professional working relationship with other providers as well as educational sites. That is a key to the success of many of the programs that we run. Being small, South Australia is quite intimate. You can, therefore, very easily establish contacts and networks with members of the professional community.

In terms of innovation et cetera, wherever practical our practicum courses aim to accommodate and involve our students in innovative projects that arise throughout each year. Being flexible in our approach means that we aim to consider requests while maintaining the academic rigour of the course. Innovative practicum partnerships—examples of which are on the slides—are the types of programs that we get involved with. We do that because it provides an authentic reason for students to gain that practicum experience as well as a greater understanding of what the roles and responsibilities of teachers are.

Many people, when commencing an education course, believe that teaching is about going out into the classroom and that is where it begins and ends. All of us who have been involved in education realise that that is just one aspect of what is a very diverse, complex and evolving role and responsibility. In our practicum courses, we are trying to connect students with authentic learning experiences so that they are better able to take on leadership roles. All of our statistics

tell us that, as the year 2010 approaches, significant changes will need to take place because, on the whole, our present teaching population will have retired.

For us, innovation means that we respond continually to student evaluation and school personnel feedback and that we make modifications to reflect stakeholder interests and concerns in our practicum courses. In that regard, I think we undertake a fairly rigorous evaluation process. Not only does the university itself have a formal process through CEIs, which are course evaluation instruments, but also the relationships that are established between the university tutors and their students include fairly open and frank discussions and debriefs that occur after practicums. In addition, students certainly are not backwards in coming forward to tell us what they think. We take on board what they say and we are fortunate that we can be reasonably flexible in meeting evolving needs and changes in the profession.

We also try to empower students. Many of our students come to us with prior learning experiences that are of significant value in the education community. We have both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. From looking at the next slide, you will see that one of the terms we often use is 'regular activity'. That term is aimed at providing an opportunity for students to go into schools and look at how they might enrich the cultural life of those schools. Rather than assuming that those students are neutral, we are identifying that their prior learning experiences—particularly those of the postgraduates—have great impact. As a result, the personnel within the practicum settings embrace much of what we are on about, because it is to their benefit as well.

For example, in our student teaching population we have doctors and lawyers et cetera who have made social justice choices to undertake teaching as a new profession. They have much to contribute to the education community and that is what we are building upon. We have a diverse range of practicum courses in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The profile of our student teachers has continued to change and, wherever appropriate, we acknowledge students' prior learning. We encourage them to become involved in regular activity that enables them to use their expertise to enrich the learning culture of the settings that they are placed in for practicums.

Just by way of example, take a look at the second dot point on this slide. Recently two of our health and PE students, as part of their regular activity, engaged in a 'come and try' activity. Ultimately, using their prior experience and knowledge as health practitioners, they were able to involve over 500 primary students in a physical activity day. They are the sorts of experiences that are beneficial to all stakeholders. In particular, our students come away even more enriched because they have an understanding of the complexities in the roles and responsibilities of teachers beyond the classroom.

In terms of connecting and contributing to school culture, as teachers work continually to evolve, we plan new ways of providing practicum experiences beyond the classroom so that our graduates are more able to respond to the changing demands on their professional capabilities. Some of the possibilities that we look at are things like students' involvement in arts festivals. For those of you who are not familiar with events in South Australia, we have the festival one year and then we have Come Out, which is the youth arts festival, the alternative year. Wherever possible, we look for such opportunities to connect students with those programs.

We have already looked at things like lab schools, which currently exist within certain learning areas and certain learning area courses, to make them more legitimate in terms of practicum experience. In particular, we are very interested in youth and community outreach programs. We are frequently approached by schools and organisations who want to undertake some meaningful projects. What they are looking for is how they might connect with student teachers or emerging professionals. So part of our role is to try to facilitate that wherever appropriate.

Being a critical reflective practitioner is one of the most important aspects of an emerging teacher. We place great emphasis on not only developing teaching and learning skills but also being able to evaluate one's own practice in order to make a difference. So the question about 'in whose interests' becomes an underlying aspect of the practicum process. The criteria currently on this slide are criteria that most practicum courses would use in some way. They obviously may modify the wording, but you can see that there is a sense of consistency, scope and sequencing that happens within all practicum courses.

We are fortunate in having effective networks that enable us to make connections with the right people and consequently we have actively involved other community stakeholders as partners in our practicum. This flexibility to invite colleagues from schools and sites enables us to enrich our courses and also to respond quickly to national and local imperatives. One of the things that I think we are particularly strong at, which is beneficial to all, is that ability to bring classroom practitioners into the university and to share their expertise. We are all aware of the fact that we can say things, but, when we bring in a teacher to say exactly the same things, student teachers consider it more authentic.

Mr Meiners—I work with the early childhood program. That prepares students for working with children aged from birth to 8 years. You have been hearing colleagues talking about partnerships. What I am going to try to do very quickly is provide you with a snapshot of some of the partnerships that the early childhood students are involved with. We want our students to be really outward looking and focused on their work in the community. We encourage them to be advocates for early childhood education. So the partnerships that you see up there—I will talk through those in just a moment—actually encourage the students to be outward looking and work with these organisations.

The first one is Windmill Performing Arts, which is a national company for children. It was established in 2001. It is based in Adelaide. It has won three Helpmann awards and had seasons of acclaim around Australia and overseas. So we are in a partnership with Windmill Performing Arts. The Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation is the national association supporting professional educators and advocating for the health and development of children and youth. We undertook a partnership with this organisation as well. We have also undertaken, with other staff members leading it, a project called the toy project, where our students were involved with toy manufacturers.

I am now going to give you an overview of these projects so you get a picture of them. Windmill Performing Arts is a really large project and part of it has come under the de Lissa research centre. There are three projects that our students are involved in. One is called *In the Beginning*; it is a teaching and learning project. Another one is *Children's Voices*, which is a three-year longitudinal study, a research project. The other one is a holiday workshop program.

In the beginning investigated interactions between artists and preschool children in early childhood centres and involved university essay lecturers, early childhood education students, a partnership with new media undergraduates and teachers in preschool settings. As part of that project, the early childhood education students, in the context of one of their final year courses—and you can see one of them in the background there—recorded, analysed and interpreted their observations of children and their interactions as the artists worked. We were interested in finding out what kinds of things would happen when an artist was working in a child-care setting. That is that project essentially. The students then fed back to Windmill Performing Arts the results of their observations, and that helped Windmill Performing Arts build their next project, which was an acclaimed performance that is now travelling nationally and internationally.

The next project with Windmill is called *Children's Voices*, and it looks at children's responses to life performance. It is a three-year project, and it is just coming to its conclusion. It is being conducted in four metropolitan public schools in South Australia and involves the participation of 135 South Australian school children aged five to 12. The research questions here provided the framework for the study. What impact does attending live arts performances have on school age children in public schools in South Australia, and what is the relationship between schools, the communities and these live arts performances? Four different school cultures were selected. Schools were asked to apply for this project, and these four schools were selected: an inner city school, which reflected diverse cultures, including a new arrivals program and a very transient population; an outer northern suburbs school, which was economically and socially disadvantaged with little exposure to or valuing of the arts; a country school in the Adelaide Hills with a very active adult arts community; and a port area school with blue-collar workers, a very sport-driven culture and little exposure to or valuing of the arts.

The third project with Windmill is a holiday workshop program. The aim of our students involved in this is the planning and implementing of postperformance arts workshops for young children and accompanying adults at the Adelaide Festival Centre during the school holiday period. This gives the students an opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge in a very new context for them. They have to establish relationships very quickly. They work in a team, and they have to apply their expertise in this context. With regard to the next project, as part of physical education week, which is run by the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation and the Department of Education and Children's Services, the university has been involved in our students working as part of that project as well.

Next is the toy project, which is a collaboration between early childhood education students, industrial design students and toy manufacturers. In this project, the early childhood education students utilise their child development knowledge and their experience with children to support and professionally critique the industrial design students' toy designs, ensuring their appropriateness for and appeal to children. This was a very exciting project for our students to be involved in. The industrial design students similarly gained an insight into necessary child development knowledge to support their design and creation of a children's toy aimed at toy manufacturers and marketers at a particular time of year—near Christmas. The toy manufacturers came in and assessed the industrial design students' designs and made up the toys, and our students organised for children to come in and try out the toys. Again, this was a very exciting application of their knowledge and skills. Finally, you have already seen the graduate colleges; I am sure you are aware of those. As I said, we want our students to be very outward

looking and thinking about how they serve the community and act as advocates and leaders in early childhood. Thank you.

Mr Underwood—I will be very brief. I have a feeling that somehow we have got the wrong slide show. My apologies for that. The AnTEP program is a unique and small program in the scale of things within the university, but it is still an important one for people who live in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands in the north-west corner of South Australia and also at Yalata on the west coast of South Australia and in the Maralinga Tjarutja lands at Oak Valley. In many ways, the program supports those other important things about educational programs in the University of South Australia in that it is an important collaboration between a number of groups. It is a collaboration between the University of South Australia, which supports the program with quite large sums of money because of the remote area that it operates in.

I guess that gives you a flavour of it. If you are a speed reader then you have taken all that in! I will very briefly speak to the slides. As I was saying, it is an important collaboration between the University of South Australia, the Department of Education and Children's Services in South Australia and the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee, which has operational control of education in the Anangu schools. There are a couple of University of South Australia staff. As part of the collaboration with the education department, DECS provides the funding or the salaries for the tutors who work in the eight other communities. Some of those are full time; some of those are part time. Currently spread over those communities—these are communities that are often in the media; they are the subject of a number of both federal and state government inquiries and interests by a number of departments—are a number of success stories. There are currently 56 students who are studying either as full-time students in receipt of an Abstudy allowance or as part-time students, so they currently, in most cases, work as Anangu education workers, AEWs, in schools. Currently there are three exit points. Because the AnTEP program is one of the few tertiary or post secondary educational options, many students come into the program to do a general education course and do not actually want to go on to become teachers. Out of those current 56 teachers, probably about three will become teachers in their own schools.

The program started in 1984 and it has been operating continuously. It is now in its 21st year. Because of the great amount of transience of non-Anangu teachers in those schools, Anangu in communities wanted their own people to be teachers in their own schools and also those who were working as AEWs to gain additional professional, personal and academic skills. There have been 18 graduates of the program over those 20 years. The majority of those are working as teachers in schools, and one of the graduates is the director of the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee. One of the good things about the program is that the graduates who are not already employed have been able to be employed as part of our agreement with DECS. Those who are already employed have been able to obviously increase their competencies and skills as education workers in the schools. That is all I have time for at the moment.

Mr Elliott—The University of South Australia formed Northern Adelaide Partnerships about 2½ years ago. It was seeking to take the many good things that we were already doing in Northern Adelaide but also to ensure coordination and to ensure that the sorts of things we did had lasting impact. Northern Adelaide Partnerships does not run programs or projects; it facilitates the work of various parts of the university to ensure that there is joined up conversation.

I will focus particularly on education itself. In Northern Adelaide, there are parts of Playford that have the lowest rate of entry into university and TAFE in Australia outside, I think, the Kimberleys and Arnhem Land—areas of extreme and multiple disadvantage. In the north we have played an important role in forming a number of structures that bring education into conversation with others. Firstly, there is a group called Northern Futures, which seeks to address all the issues affecting people aged 12 to 25 in Northern Adelaide. So at the table we have DECS people, university people, TAFE people, employers, youth agencies—there is a range—who take an overview of what is happening in the north. There is also another body, the early child and family strategy group, covering the age group from zero to 12. Education is of vital interest to both those groups, but they cover lots of other areas as well.

A further collaboration that sits below Northern Futures is the NASSPN group, the Northern Adelaide State Secondary Principals Network. The RPN project that Rob referred to earlier works with the principals of those 10 high schools. They have developed a large number of coordinated programs across those 10 schools. They keep changing the name, but they are currently forming academies which are joint virtual structures operating across the 10 schools. They are seeking to form academies which match different career pathways. In Northern Adelaide, a Northern Advanced Manufacturing Industry Group is already formed. There is now a health and aged care industry group who are identifying their employment needs. They are talking now with the academies that are forming across those 10 schools, so there is a conversation. Instead of what has happened in the past, where an employer sometimes talks to a school, often depending on personal relationships, we now have a formal relationship between clusters of industries and clusters of schools. Now there are joint programs being formed.

The most advanced of the groups is the advanced manufacturing academy. A member of the School of Education sits within that group. There is now a similar group forming in the health and aged care area, and again I would expect that somebody from the School of Education will sit within that, because there are important issues around curriculum and pedagogy happening there.

The next and probably the most significant collaboration at this stage is around middle schooling. Rob talked about the RPN project. We have a memorandum of understanding with the three directorates in Northern Adelaide, which covers issues of research—and the research is collaborative action research that is happening. It is around practicum and professional development, and it is also about informing the university itself about the content of its own curriculum. There is a steering group which is made up of DECS representatives and university representatives, and it is seeking to ensure that, for instance, it will help disseminate what is learnt from the RPN project and that sort of thing. A web site will be established. I think the RPN project itself is running fora, but there will be other fora run as well, and now there are a couple of projects about to commence working with grades 6 and 7. There is no time to go into those now.

One particular director has come to us, and we had a meeting just last Friday. There is one category 1 high school in South Australia—category 1 is the greatest level of disadvantage. The director is keen to really rework that school, effectively, in all senses. Both he and the principal have made a commitment to do that. We—that is, representatives of the university—had a meeting last Friday to which two-thirds of the staff came after school on a Friday night, which is quite stunning and I think shows the level of commitment the school has as well. The School of

Education will be a lead partner working with them. We expect the School of Social Work and Social Policy will be involved as well.

Finally—I am running out of time—looking at early childhood, the first of the projects which are emerging there is a 'lap-sit' program. There will be 100 students from our early childhood area working in 'lap-sit' programs next year—that is parents working with young children around reading. We expect a great deal of growth to happen around some early childhood development centres which are about to be established in northern Adelaide. There are going to be at least two of them, and we expect that we will be quite heavily engaged in those as they evolve.

To reiterate, my role is about the building of partnerships to make sure that, as projects come and go, we do not rely upon personalities or personal relationships to keep the impact going. We need relationships which are organisational to ensure that change is embedded and that we keep moving forward and do not end up with what unfortunately happens sometimes—research ends up sitting on a shelf or is shared by the particular teachers involved in a project but does not manage to get beyond them.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee. A range of questions will arise out of your address to us today, but time does not permit us to go through them. If members of the committee have some questions, we will put them to you in writing, and, if you could, please respond as quickly as you can to them. We may be able to get some answers from some of your other colleagues during the day. The secretariat will provide you with a copy of your evidence. A copy of the transcript will be loaded onto our web site. Thank you very much for your time.

[10.07 am]

BRENNAN, Professor Marie, Dean of Education and Head of School of Education, University of South Australia

REID, Professor Alan, Professor of Education, Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences, University of South Australia

ROWAN, Professor Michael, Pro Vice Chancellor, Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences, University of South Australia

CHAIR—Welcome. May I remind you that the proceedings are recorded in *Hansard* and copies of those proceedings will be loaded onto our web site. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

Prof. Rowan—At the moment I am also the acting vice chancellor of the university, so it is my pleasure this morning to welcome you to the University of South Australia as a whole.

Prof. Reid—I am based at the Mawson Lakes campus.

CHAIR—I think you were all here earlier when I went through the issues in relation to the proceedings being proceedings of the parliament. Would you like to make a statement in relation to your submission?

Prof. Rowan—Yes, thank you. What it might be most useful for me to do is pick up what seem to me to be some of the themes of the inquiry that have emerged from other submissions and give a University of South Australia perspective on those submissions. The three that I would particularly take up are, firstly, the scale, the interconnectedness with other parts of the university and the importance of teacher education to the University of South Australia; secondly, the quality of teaching and research that is undertaken in teacher education; and, thirdly, threats to the quality of our work and, in particular, the current funding formula for teacher education in Australian universities.

Having read some of the submissions I get the impression that some of the people who have put propositions to you think that teacher education is being done in universities in a way that is hermetically sealed from the remainder of the university, that it is a reasonably small part of the university's operation and it might be improved, and that it was picked up from universities and dropped down in schools as an old apprenticeship model of education. I hope the things that you have already seen this morning show you the extent to which teacher education in this university is an integral part of the university's whole activities.

Professor Brennan would be more on top of the figures than I am, but I think our teacher education student load is about 2,000 EFTSU and of those about 600 EFTSU are taught by other parts of the university. So almost one-third of our teacher education programs are taught by academics outside the School of Education. It is certainly a part of the university's activities that is thoroughly integrated into the remainder of our academic program. That also applies to the

research. Much of the fine research that has been very briefly presented to you this morning is not conducted just by teacher education academics. It is conducted by them in partnership with academics from other parts of the university and, indeed, in partnership with the community and with industry.

I want to make very clear to you one of my favourite sayings: it takes a whole university to educate a teacher. I think in the future that will become more true, and I think the notion that teacher education is something that could in any way be put back into specialist colleges, which is the history that we have come from, or be taken away from universities and perhaps be done in schools is a false and dangerous notion. I would certainly encourage the committee to attend carefully to the importance of the whole of the university in the education of teachers.

Some of the submissions also express concern about the quality of teachers and perhaps the quality of the intake. Some submissions go to the TER cut-offs for teacher education entrants and the quality of the graduates, inasmuch as there is significant concern about teacher attrition. I would like to start a brief submission on that by drawing your attention to one of the things I certainly agree with in the DEST submission, which is that international studies have shown that the learning of students in Australian schools is among the best in the world.

You should begin your inquiry into teacher education with the notion that, if the purpose of teaching is to ensure that our students are well educated, it would appear that we are looking at a success story, not a problem story, in Australian schools. One of the things I am particularly interested in as a senior academic in the university is: what problem is it that we are trying to fix in relation to teacher education? I would encourage you to think about teacher education in Australia as a success story and to think about the outcomes of your inquiry as being about the improvement of schooling and the improvement of teacher education, rather than about problems that need to be fixed with some urgency.

In relation to the quality of what we do, the University of South Australia, along with all Australian universities, attends very carefully to its own students' assessment of its quality. I am pleased to report that, for example, when we asked teacher education students in the University of South Australia, 'Is your program enabling you to develop the knowledge and skills that you will need for the workplace?' in a survey that we did in 1994, 92 per cent of students agreed or strongly agreed with that proposition. When we asked the students, 'Is your program enabling you to develop skills that will help you to continue learning in your chosen field?' 96 per cent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with that proposition. So our students believe that we are preparing them well to begin professional practice and that we are also giving them the skills that will enable them to continue professional learning.

That latter point is very important. Sometimes, particularly in the media when there are discussions about teacher education, we all have in our minds a young teacher in front of a classroom of young children, as if that is all that there is to teaching. But of course our graduates are going to go on to become senior teachers, principals, superintendents, curriculum advisers and the director-general of education, and we always have in mind the importance of our students' continual professional learning and their preparation for leadership, not only within their profession but within the community as a whole.

One of my main jobs is as a resource manager in the university, so I am certainly concerned about retention. Every time we admit a student to a program and do not graduate them there is, in a sense, a loss to us in that outcome. In fact, our retention rates in education are really quite good. The figures that I have here for retention indicate that we have about an 86 per cent retention rate, which would be higher than the average retention rate for most degrees in the university.

Our understanding—and I will be very interested in the outcome of your inquiry in relation to this matter—is that the major attrition in teaching occurs not in the course of the students' undergraduate or postgraduate degree but after they begin teaching. The issue is whether their education at university has made them sufficiently aware of what teaching will be like. We would say that the importance of the practicum in our program is such that it is hard to imagine how a student could graduate from a University of South Australia teaching degree and not understand what classrooms are really like. Our understanding, from talking to our graduates, is that it relates more to the fact that after a few years of teaching they see that there is not a strong path of career enhancement for them unless they are prepared to move out of teaching and into some form of school administration. If they are going to take that step away from the classroom, that opens up in their thinking a whole set of much wider career steps that they might take, putting their teacher education to good use in a broad range of professional fields—but lost, unfortunately, to teaching.

The last point I will make on that section is in relation to TERs. You have to be careful when you look at the cut-off scores for teacher education because they are such large programs. If teaching were a minor profession and we educated, say, not 2,000 students but 500 students, our TER cut-offs would be very much higher. If you look at education, you could say, 'It's cutting off at 75; that's a problem,' whereas medicine, dentistry or physiotherapy are cutting off at 93. But you are taking perhaps 50 students into physiotherapy while you are taking perhaps 250 or 300 into teacher education. A better picture of the quality of teacher education entrants will be given to you not by the TER cut-off score but by the median TERs. Looking at the data that we have for 2003-05, in 2005 our median TER for early childhood was 82, a Bachelor of Education in the junior primary area was 84, a Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Education was 88, and a Bachelor of Education in the primary and middle school areas was 79. So we are talking about bright young people making a career choice to become teachers.

The last point I want to make is in relation to the funding of teacher education. I was very excited when Minister Nelson declared that education and nursing would be priority areas. I thought, 'You beaut.' I have managed parts of the university since 1991 and in every year I have consistently had less money per student to do a good job, compared to the rising costs. If you took not the consumer price index but what you might call the higher education index and compared it to our real costs, every year, consistently since the early nineties, we have had less money to educate our students than the year before. I thought, 'We're going to be a priority; this is fantastic. At last I'll have some more money.' It has cost us money to be a priority area. If teacher education were not a priority, this university would have $584,000 more to spend on education than it does. I got my pocket calculator out last night and calculated that it is about $340 per EFTSL less. That comes about because, even though the cluster funding—if I can use the technical jargon; I am sure you are familiar with it—for education was increased by virtue of it being a national priority, the HECS was capped. This university, along with almost every other university in Australia, has raised its HECS by the full 25 per cent, and teacher education and

nursing, being capped, are now less well funded relative to the other disciplines in the university than they were before, and they would be better funded were they not priorities. I would strongly encourage the inquiry to reach the conclusion that making teacher education a priority has financially disadvantaged teacher education, and that is something that should be relooked at.

CHAIR—Thank you, Professor. We are very much focused on improvements in teacher training rather than believing that we have a huge problem. It is very much a focus on improvement. We are also very interested in the issue of money. We have received some conflicting evidence. There are two camps. One describes things fairly much as you have described them—that there are significant cost pressures on teacher training. There is another school of thought that is saying that teacher training is potentially a cash cow that some universities are using to finance other areas of their activities. What are your views on those two schools of thought?

Prof. Rowan—They are not inconsistent, of course. An area can be underfunded; nonetheless you can strip funding out of it to prop up something else. The way this university does its budget is that essentially, as the pro vice chancellor, I receive a single line budget from the university as a whole which is related to the way in which the division earns its funds. I receive a fixed percentage of the Commonwealth Grants Scheme and the HECS and a fixed percentage of the international student fee income, both onshore and offshore. If the amount of money that was received through HECS or through the Commonwealth Grants Scheme were increased, my division budget would go up and that would flow directly to the School of Education.

Mr SAWFORD—There is another camp. We had a witness yesterday who put this forward. When you analyse what he was saying it weakens the case of universities in terms of faculties of education and applications for funding. He did a research project in which he wrote to all universities about funding. Very few were able to come back and explain how they organised their funding and what they did to be accountable. He thought that was a significant weakness. People from other universities have also put forward the view that this lack of transparency in the amount of money and where it goes is a strong mitigating factor in not being able to argue strongly with government. What is your response to that?

Prof. Rowan—I can tell you where every dollar goes. The university has a transparent budget. I know how much we receive from DEST, how much we receive from students through fees and through HECS and I know what percentage of it is distributed to every part of the university.

Mr SAWFORD—We are about a third of the way through this inquiry. I suppose we are looking for directions of where to go. There are some directions coming to us. In other areas it is a bit of a mire as to where we should go. We are also conscious of the fact that there have been 80-odd other inquiries in the last 20 years. We are going to get together in Canberra as a group and go through all those recommendations. There needs to be a reason why those other inquiries have not hit the mark as perhaps they should have. We get, as Luke said, a lot of contradictory information. There are almost three or four different camps coming up very passionately putting forward very strong arguments one way or the other. Should all universities in Australia have an education faculty?

Prof. Rowan—I doubt whether all universities in Australia do have an education faculty, but I think the large majority of universities in Australia should have an education faculty for two

reasons. First, education is one of the largest areas of work in higher education. Our community has a need for teachers on a scale which is just incomparable with many of the other professions. There are schools in every community. I think it would be a concern if, let us say, we had no teacher education in regional universities or if we did not have teacher education in the Go8 or if we did not have teacher education in universities like Flinders—innovative research universities. Education is something which goes across the whole of the community and which, as I say, has a great need for graduates. It follows from that that you would expect to find teacher education in if not all then certainly a large number of universities.

The second reason is that that is not only true of Australia; it is true of the world. Given that we have a very fine system of education in Australia from early childhood right through to universities, I see education as a major growth area for international student education. I am sure that you would be aware that education is now Australia's fourth-largest export industry. I say that slowly because it still surprises me. Education is Australia's fourth-largest export industry, and it is an industry that has been grown by schools and by universities in toto since 1988. It is an industry which has existed for only just over 20 years. It was illegal for us to charge international student fees before 1988. So I would not want to say that teacher education should not be widely spread among Australian universities, because I think that would cut off an important avenue for future export growth. I am sorry to be so moneyed about it, but I think that is a fact.

Mr SAWFORD—I congratulate the people who put forward your submission. It was very easy to follow, very transparent, self-explanatory—

Prof. Rowan—We are sorry about the spelling mistake in the first line.

Mr SAWFORD—I was going to mention that—it is a very good submission. The quality of the submissions, if some of you have been looking at them because they are all up on the web site, vary tremendously. One of the balances is between scholarship and research. Some universities have almost a total research function without any attention to scholarship. Others have a balance. Others have it more in favour of whatever. That is not necessarily a bad thing. I heard on *AM* this morning Leonie Trimper, who is the President of the Australian Primary Principals Association t, responding to Brendan Nelson's talk about a more determined syllabus, vis a vis outcomes based learning. She was arguing that they would support both rather than one or the other.

There is this debate in education—and it seems to be in teacher education as well—scholarship, research, syllabus based defined, whatever, one thing or the other teacher training, teacher education. I noticed that your university did not get into any unnecessary denial arguments or any of that silly stuff that we have got, which I think is one of the reasons that I am impressed with the submission. But the controversy does not do teacher education a lot of good because, often, I think it focuses on the trivial and the precious rather than the substantive. It would have been a wonderful opportunity to question the people who were presenting information to us this morning. It was a very interesting set of propositions that was being put to us, so maybe over morning tea we can do that.

Education is sometimes its own worst enemy. You mentioned a little bit about it in terms of how the media tends to blow up—we know about what the media can do more than anyone, I

can tell you—the debate that goes on in teacher education. As Luke said, we want to improve the situation so in terms of beginning points, you have looked at funding; we have done the funding thing. I think we need a lot more transparency from a lot of other universities in order to be able to tackle that properly. What other initiatives do you think we should be considering strongly? If I asked you what the three strongest recommendations you would make to this committee were—and you focus on three areas—if you were to put it in the form of a recommendation, what would you say? It was a longwinded way to get around to three questions.

Prof. Rowan—I should let my more expert colleagues speak now I have had a little bit of air time but I will very quickly give you three: certainly, more funding—at least do not discriminate against us—and if you could add a PS I think the Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding should have been indexed. I was very disappointed that Minister Nelson said, 'You're not broke so therefore you don't need more money.' It would be irresponsible for us to show that we need more money by going broke, I would have thought.

Secondly, I would like to see more support from politicians and particularly the leadership of Australia for our teachers and for our schools. One perhaps provocative explanation of why we needed—whatever it was—47 or 27 inquiries into teacher education in the last few years is that there isn't a problem. I grew up in my father's garage in Port Lincoln, and the people whose cars were hardest to fix were the people whose cars actually did not have a problem. That is why they kept bringing them back. We could not fix their cars because there wasn't anything wrong with them. I urge you to consider whether we actually do have a problem. The third recommendation I would make is to understand the point I made early on: it takes a whole university to educate a teacher.

CHAIR—I noted that quote; it was very appropriate.

Prof. Rowan—I tried to give you some quotes to put in your report.

CHAIR—I want to go to something specific. We had some discussion with a number of witnesses yesterday about whether it would assist you as a university to have some form of mandated partnership with schools to take a predetermined number of graduates. Obviously, there is some issue as to whether certain schools could take certain graduates with certain skills. As a basic principle, rather than the university investing huge amounts of time in trying to place students on a more ad hoc basis—and you do have those partnerships with schools—do you think that some sort of systemic arrangement where you were allocated certain places right around the education region would assist or would it be of very little benefit?

Ms CORCORAN—That was not graduates; that was student teachers—

CHAIR—Student teachers—I am sorry.

Prof. Rowan—I am not sure. Marie would probably have a few, but I cannot hesitate to give mine. I think you would find, if you looked at the way in which we place our teachers in schools, it is one of the ways that we build up a close partnership between the schools out there in the community and the university. If that relationship was taken away and it became a compulsion that was placed on the schools, I think that would make it much harder for us to work with the schools. In the university, we take the view that our colleagues out in the schools are the same as

us. We are all educators; we are just at different points of the spectrum. We meet each other on equal terms and to be organised with them, up high, having to take our students, down there, would perhaps ruin the basis of what we have as a very good relationship with them. Marie, what do you think?

Prof. Brennan—I think there would be a really serious set of issues to come to grips with. For example, in South Australia we are the largest by far. We have 3,500 students and, as Michael has noted, a large number of those students are getting a significant portion of their work in other faculties. You are not dealing with just one blanket kind of course. You have undergraduate four-year courses; you have two-year graduate entry courses and each program needs to develop the partners that go with the kind of program they are offering. For example, our primary-middle program is not going to be of any use to people who are not interested in middle schooling. Just mandating them is not going to solve anything.

That is one of the reasons that it is really important for us to have the partnership between the providers, the employer and school groups, because we need to have the capacity to create our own relationships. Within Australia, South Australia—and Tabor College will talk about this one as well—is seen as being the state with the best relationships with schools and with other sites where people take up their work. That is because we really work at it and put a lot of time into building those partnerships. Mandating it is not going to necessarily provide quality. More is not necessarily better either, so we have to think through what we want to do.

Some of the examples that were shown before—the artists in schools programs or the health and PE people who go into a secondary school and help the transition from primary to secondary by having a 'PE day: come and try it out!'—do not come just because we all set it up. We have to release the energy of the hundreds of student teachers out there to help produce their own practicum so that they are helping to have a professional experience to contribute to the particular site. They will often come up with many ideas.

One of our big issues is how to have the students work alongside innovatory teachers so that our student teachers get an experience not just of being in there to manage 30 students but to get the idea that, as student teachers, they have a job to learn how to become a full teacher, who has lots of responsibilities that are outside the classroom but also include inventing the profession. Teachers have to keep on inventing it; it is not something that is fixed. We have different students; different communities; different bases of knowledge; different sets of issues that need to be dealt with. There is no recipe that is going to give them an answer. What works at St Peters will not necessarily work at Gilles Street. We have to think through how a teacher becomes a person who is able to build judgments and help build knowledge. That is one of the reasons why we like having so many joint research projects with schools and other partners who are engaged in educational enterprise. That is the long answer. The short answer is no.

Ms CORCORAN—I want to deal with a less interesting question first about funding. I want to deal with it and get it out of the way; it is starting to overtake this inquiry a little bit. We are hearing different people say—Luke referred to it before—that funding that comes into a university that is meant for education is going somewhere else. That suggests that the way it is happening may not be quite right.

Michael, you made the point very clearly that you know exactly where your dollars are going. I think that is your role, so you should. I am wondering whether this furphy—if it is a furphy—is growing because others do not know that, and why should they? But there is a perception being built up. Maybe I should be asking people behind you, but my question to you is: do you think it is a reasonable assumption for me to start building on this theory that this thing develops because people actually do not know, it is not their business to know and lack of knowledge allows rumours to run? Would your staff know where their funding comes from?

Prof. Rowan—If a staff member in the university wished to know, the information is part of the council papers, for example, in the annual budget, so it is not difficult to find that out. The division's budget is distributed to a divisional executive by email and can be sent on to every staff member in the division as a matter of course. I would think the school budgets would be tabled at their school boards, so they would know. I do not want to be cynical about that proposition. One of the really interesting things I get to do is to meet with the Australian Association of Social Workers when they come to accredit the social work degrees and with the Royal Australian Institute of Architects when they come to talk about the architects. Every professional group, when they come to the university, asks: 'What is happening to all of our money? How come it is being propped up?' The architects think we are propping up the teachers; the teachers think we are propping up the architects and so on and so forth. We have not got enough money to go around; that is the problem.

Ms CORCORAN—That puts is nicely in context. I guess your annual report is there for us to get hold of. The more interesting area for me is that I was really impressed with all the different bits of research we saw demonstrated quickly before. I am assuming that then translates very quickly into how your students are taught. You made the comment that your educational philosophy is highly practice based and operates at the pragmatic end of the spectrum informed by research. I do not know exactly what that means. I guess you are saying that the things that work come out of the research and get straight into the classroom here at the university. Is that correct?

Prof. Reid—I reckon that we have got a really good track record in connecting up research and teaching and professional development and professional involvement in incredibly strong ways. So you will find the sorts of research that was described here before really informing teaching, and students actually talking about it. Even more than that, for example, a number of the academics of this university in South Australia were involved in writing the state's curriculum in partnership with teachers. So the state's curriculum from R to 10 was written by academics at the University of South Australia and teachers, and that is a wonderful spin-off to teaching: when you explore that, you unpack it, what its assumptions are and so on. I think that sort of partnership is quite powerful.

The review of the senior secondary system in South Australia that has just been completed had a person from the University of South Australia involved in it and other people from the university heavily connected into it. So you could almost say that the whole of the South Australian curriculum, in terms of our students working with it as an example and a model of curriculum, has been developed, supported and engaged in by the staff at the university. That is another example of the way in which both research and professional development connect into our teaching. Our students often make comments about that—we seem engaged in the education

community and not removed from it. I think that is a really important insight that the committee needs to take on board.

Ms CORCORAN—I am assuming by that that you mean the curriculum that exists in schools?

Prof. Reid—Yes.

Ms CORCORAN—I am not a researcher or a teacher. How is it that the research trickles down into teaching? What happens? Are the researchers also teachers? What is the physical connection?

Prof. Brennan—Both of these things happen. One is that, for example, Professor Comber, who was first cab off the rank this morning, is part of the group that helps to develop the language multi-literacies first-year course that is shared by everybody—early childhood, adult and VET, primary, middle and secondary people. So you can be part of writing the course. You can be part of giving lectures. She will go along to the lecture sequence and give one or two of those lectures. Others who are involved in other projects will also be part of the lecturing team. Some of the really high-flyer researchers do not do as much undergraduate teaching as their colleagues, of course, or they will not have time to do research. But there are a range of ways: in small-scale projects, the students themselves can be the arms and legs of doing the research project and they might be developing materials and trialling examples of work that has come out of the recommendations from projects. So that occurs in a whole range of research and consultancy work that we do. They can be involved as tutors in the classroom teaching. They can be involved in writing them. They can be involved in putting them online. They may be involved in moderating online discussion groups. There are those kinds of things.

Particularly since the growth in the use of the internet and the web for online learning, which this university takes very seriously, a lot of our resources are going into supporting the movement to online to make the delivery of courses more flexible and to enable students to link with other students. For example, in some of our doctoral or master's programs, there will be students from four continents all in the same discussion group. With a number of onshore teacher education students here, particularly those who are upgrading their qualifications, they will be in the classroom or online with people from all over the place. That may include having a high-flying researcher answering questions or it may include your common-or-garden everyday researcher answering questions and teaching. We expect all the staff to have some role in research in the workload formula in the school. The university actually expects every staff member to have some involvement in scholarship and research.

Mr FAWCETT—I have three questions. One is a follow-up to Ann's question on funding. You mentioned the model whereby you get a fixed percentage, whether it is of grants, HECS fees or international student fees. I am assuming that split is something that the university comes up with based on the needs of students and that it is fixed for a fiscal year.

Prof. Rowan—Yes.

Mr FAWCETT—Let us take the hypothetical case that the priority for overseas students in a given year is on engineering and you are flooded with students who wanted to do engineering

type subjects. So 90 per cent of your fees are coming in for engineering and only, say, 10 per cent are for teacher education. Regardless of that, if you had, say, 30 per cent of the original break-up, you would still get 30 per cent of the total international student fees for education.

Prof. Rowan—No. International student education is a business, and we run it like a business. It does not mean that it is improper in any way, but we need to make money on it. We allocate to the areas of the university that enrol the international students the funding from those international students. So, if we enrolled 90 per cent of the international students in teacher education, we would get 90 per cent of the funding. If engineering enrolled 90 per cent, they would get 90 per cent.

Mr FAWCETT—Does the same apply if grants were given for specific areas? Would that flow as well or would you still have the standard split?

Prof. Rowan—It would depend on the conditions of the grant. Most grants that we get come with rules of acquittal so the grant has to be spent for the purposes for which it has been given. If we receive a grant for research in teacher education, then that is where it will be spent.

Mr FAWCETT—You talked about attrition and the internal stats of attrition. You mentioned briefly in your statement about attrition beyond graduation. Do you have any follow-up, at 12 months or 48 months, of students who have gone through here who are teachers to find out: first, if they are still teaching; second, if so, how they now feel, five years down the track, about their preparation; and, thirdly, if they have left, why they left?

Prof. Rowan—I think Marie would be better placed than me to answer that.

Prof. Brennan—There has been some effort to follow students through, particularly the students who are our highest flyers. One of our biggest problems, of course, is trying to replace ourselves, given that 67 of our 86 staff are over 50 and a significant number are also over 65. So we are interested in where they go. It is extremely difficult to keep records. It is very difficult to get our students to answer the graduate destination survey because most of them have moved. It is really very hard to get good return rates, even though you encourage them. Given the large number—3½ thousand students of whom well over a thousand would be graduating every year—it has been quite a large logistical problem. We do it largely through word of mouth. But that only counts for South Australia. We have had some studies that have followed through with students. We continually find staff who have been our students and are now supervising students in the practicum or who are our research partners out in the schools. One of the ways that we are trying to do that is to follow through and have actual things to do with them rather than just answer a few questions.

But there are also some problems and larger scale projects that really do need to be funded nationally. I know that a number of people have put in requests for funding but have not been successful to get that funding to follow through some of the students. The DEST evaluation and investigations projects have followed some of that through. The MCEETYA group have followed some of that in some of their research projects as well. But what we have been trying to do is to build our alumni base so that the ex-students have a real reason to come back. We find them popping up in our graduate programs now, doing upgrade qualifications, building their new knowledge in new areas like ICTs and literacy or dealing with bullying or dealing with other

issues. Where there is a lot more new knowledge or a new issue has come into prominence, we are getting a lot of sponsorship for upgrading of qualifications.

Prof. Reid—We are aware that there is quite a high attrition rate in the first five years of teaching. That research has been done. I do not think we are sufficiently aware of the reasons for that. I think some studies need to be done there. It is clear that one of the reasons is the fact that there is a growing education dimension to so many different jobs and professions now, and education has almost become the BA of the 21st century. Because of the broad range of skills that you have in getting an education degree, people are being attracted to other jobs and other professions that have an educational component to them. So I think we have to look closely at why it is that people are leaving and whether we see as a negative thing or a positive thing the way in which teacher education faculties are therefore contributing to wider professional areas.

Prof. Brennan—Inside, I think it is also important to look at the reason for attrition of our undergrads or the graduate entries. The first group are those who go out on prac and realise that, despite their love of children or whatever, they really do not want to be a teacher. That is a significant group. A lot of them move into other parts of the university, which is also supported by things like double degrees or a range of other transition arrangements.

The second reason is that a significant number of our students are mature age and they also have care responsibilities—children, parents et cetera. We have 39 per cent of students in the equity targeted groups nominated by DEST, and that is a significant understatement because a lot of our rural students actually give a city address because that is where they live when they are studying. They find it really hard, with the amount of work they have to do, to actually keep going through. When I went through I had a Commonwealth scholarship and then a studentship to become a student teacher. There is a bit of a loan that students can take out but there are no living allowances that are made available as scholarships that are means tested. It would seem to me that that would be a huge contribution that this committee could recommend: a process of living allowance scholarships, means tested and available to student teachers, particularly in the last two years, when they have the larger pracs, when they have to give up their course or give up their daily work.

We did a survey two years ago and a significant majority of the students were working 30 or more hours a week just to live. It is really hard to do a full-time course—a minimum of 40 hours—particularly if you are going out working full time on a practicum placement for five weeks. What are you going to do? It is one of the reasons—and I am sure you heard it yesterday at Flinders—that it is very hard for a lot of students to do rural placements. You cannot give up your work, because that is what you need to live on. That would be the second biggest reason. The third biggest reason is personal reasons, such as changing life circumstances. Very few of them were going out because they were actually failing courses.

Mr FAWCETT—I have two questions. You talk about your five-year reviews with external people. Who would you consider your stakeholders to be?

Prof. Rowan—The stakeholders are our students, first and foremost; the schools and the community at each school; the Teachers Registration Board, which is an accrediting authority; and the employing authorities, the Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools and DECS, the Department of Education and Children's Services. I think they would be

our major stakeholders. But, given that almost everyone has children and all children go to school, I think you would have to say that the stakeholders in education are in a sense the whole community, which is one of the reasons why teacher education is endlessly political.

Mr FAWCETT—There has been a fairly consistent response from the groups that we have spoken to and in submissions. I think two of the glaring omissions to stakeholder review in teacher education are employers outside of education employers—industry, commercial retail and whatever else—and parents, who have huge expectations and demands of the product, if you like, of education. I note the Education Union made a statement last week or the week before that education should not be seen as a way of preparing people for jobs, but the expectation in the community to a very large extent is that that is one of the prime purposes of education. Would you like to comment on why you do not engage, for example, employers outside the education sector who the students in large part will eventually go to, and do you see that they could be usefully engaged?

Prof. Reid—I think we actually do engage them. On our education advisory committee there is someone from the employing community nominated by SA business. In the major review of our education programs in 2001, we had submissions from parent associations. They were invited to put in submissions. So we do, and their voice needs to be heard. I would add to that list professional associations and teacher unions, which I do not think were there. I think those are important voices.

Mr FAWCETT—Do you do it in a targeted way? For example, if you are teaching student teachers to be science or maths teachers, do you engage in a targeted way with any of the industries—advanced manufacturing, electronics or wherever—who employ young people with those kinds of skills? They particularly want people to be given an interest in those industries so they will go to university and work in that sector. That would inform to a large extent the way those teachers encourage and promote the concept of a career within that industry. That is a very important part of the outcome for the students—to have a vision for where that training can take them.

Prof. Brennan—I think we also have to be very careful of blurring the teacher education function of an education faculty with all its functions and the teacher education function of a university with the job of schools, TAFEs and other education bodies. I think we have to be really careful not to try and pretend we are everything to all people, to every single part of the university and to every single part of the whole society. While we are connected and we do want to take that on board, I think there have to be particular reasons why we would extend our partnerships more broadly than we do at the moment.

In the work that Mike Elliott was talking about up in northern Adelaide, the partnerships there do include the electrical institute and people who work in defence industries, health and various other places. They are part of the projects. The way that we get access to those and make them available to our students is largely through conducting research projects through CREEW, the Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work. That then translates into the teaching and learning. At particular times through some of the practicum, some of the student teachers themselves will go and do industry observations or follow through a particular industry so that they can make it connected. That is particularly relevant to the design and technology people.

I think one of our biggest problems is that people have been using very old knowledge, and what we are interested in is the way that workplaces are organised now, including school workplaces. They are quite different now to how they were even 10 years ago. I think the level of work and the kinds of pressures on teachers have changed. So I do think that we need opportunities to upgrade knowledge and swap between different workplaces to help understand them. But it is not going to help just going and having a look or going and asking somebody about them.

The Business Council of Australia has done some very useful work that documents the expectations of employers and different sectors, and that gets taken into account both as a topic for students to study and as information for courses, and it gives us ideas for new research projects. I think we have to see the things as interrelated. Going and interviewing Joe Employer off the street will come out with the same kind of stuff you get from the front page of the paper. It will not help to give an informed or useful view to help sustain and underpin the kinds of courses that we want to develop.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Professor, Rowan, I wanted to take up the argument you raised with respect to funding for the courses that you provide in education. You were, with respect, a bit sarcastic about the government making education and nursing national priorities and, because of that, preventing the university from increasing HECS fees while for other courses that was allowed. Would it be fair to say, though, that that has been successful in that, in the year that it was applied, you have had a great boost in demand for your courses at a time when we are facing up to a challenge of a shortage of teachers? Here at UniSA you found that there was a great demand for teaching education and in the same year your TER score went up by eight points. So I suppose, while universities will always want more money, you have a better cohort of future teachers to train.

Prof. Rowan—I did not mean to be sarcastic; I meant to be sympathetic. I thought that Minister Nelson was serious in wanting to support teacher education and nursing in universities and declare them priorities. I thought his policy had an unintended consequence when all of the universities increased their HECS fees pretty much to 25 per cent. I do not think the increase in TER was a consequence of the HECS charge on education being less than on other courses. If I believed that, I would have to believe that increasing HECS is a general disincentive to participation in higher education and then I would have to believe that it was contrary to the interests of universities in a way Minister Nelson assured me it wouldn't be—that the increase in HECS would not be a disincentive to increased participation.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—But relatively it is a more attractive option. Surely you would agree with that.

Prof. Rowan—The difference in cost to students would be about $300 and I would not expect that in and of itself to be a major factor in a student's deciding whether they want to be a teacher or an accountant.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—So if you were able to have access to the extra funds that you were disappointed in not being able to receive, what would you do with them and how would that impact on the course?

Prof. Rowan—I would employ more staff.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—How would that impact on the course?

Prof. Rowan—As you walk down these corridors, instead of seeing 35 students in a class with one academic out the front, you would see 33.

Mr SAWFORD—I would like to put in a request. Professor Rowan, you were explaining that the last 10 years of your funding has not been indexed. Do you have some supporting arguments that you can table to this committee?

Prof. Rowan—I certainly can. The Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, on its web site, has a series of excellent fact sheets which show the loss to Australian universities as a whole in consequence of our income from the Commonwealth government not keeping pace with our increasing costs. For this university, off the top of my head—I hesitate to say a figure because I am aware of the seriousness of the testimony given before the committee—it is of the order of tens of millions of dollars.

Mr SAWFORD—Can you give us that information for UniSA?

Prof. Rowan—I could get that information. I also have here information which details the loss to the university from education and nursing being national priorities, and I am happy to table that this morning if you would like.

Mr SAWFORD—Please.

CHAIR—Thank you for your evidence.

Proceedings suspended from 10.59 am to 11.23 am

BRENNAN, Professor Marie, Dean of Education and Head of School of Education, University of South Australia

COMBER, Professor Barbara, University of South Australia

GRANT, Ms Pat, Lecturer, University of South Australia

HAMILTON, Mr Ian, Lecturer, University of South Australia

HILL, Dr Susan, Associate Professor, Early Childhood Education, University of South Australia

HOLMES, Dr John Arthur, Lecturer, University of South Australia

LLOYD, Dr David, Lecturer, University of South Australia

McCALLUM, Dr Faye, Lecturer, University of South Australia

NICHOLS, Dr Sue, Professor of Education, University of South Australia

O'DONOGHUE, Mr Michael, Senior Lecturer, University of South Australia

SIMONS, Dr Michele, Education Campus Coordinator, University of South Australia

SPEARS, Dr Barbara, Professor of Education, University of South Australia

CHAIR—In the interest of brevity, I will dispense with the normal introduction. You all would have heard that these proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

Dr Nichols—I am program director of the graduate certificate in education and a key researcher with the Centre for Studies in Literacy, Policy and Learning Cultures.

Ms Grant—I lecture in language and literacy. I am also a key researcher in the Centre for Studies in Literacy, Policy and Learning Cultures.

Dr Lloyd—I lecture in maths and science education.

Mr O'Donoghue—I am also program director for the Bachelor of Education (Middle and Secondary).

Dr McCallum—I am also director of the Primary and Middle School program based at Mawson Lakes.

Dr Hill—I also work with early childhood literacy.

Dr Spears—I lecture in education psychology, particularly focusing on bullying issues for this inquiry.

CHAIR—I invite each of you to make some brief introductory remarks, starting with Dr Nichols, after which we might go to questions.

Dr Nichols—My remarks are about the relationship between our graduate programs and the industries that are our partners. The graduate certificate in education is a highly industry-responsive program. Every year or two years, we develop new strands to that program, which relate to the service development needs identified by our partners for their experienced teachers. Over the last four years, we have developed new strands in the fields of science and maths education, inclusive education, new literacies and new technologies and community capacity building. Our student and stakeholder evaluations have been highly positive.

Ms Grant—I would just like to make some points about how research informs teaching and I would like to build on to the comments by Michael Rowan about teacher education. Many of our students are also taught in other faculties and it is also true that students from other faculties are taught in education. For instance, we have a submajor that students in, perhaps, psychology or social work may take with us. That builds in to what I want to talk about—research informing teaching. I am coordinating a subject that I think both Marie and Barbara have referred to, the language of multi literacies, which has a range of people working in it. We use the research that people like Barbara or Sue or I have been doing. That comes through in several ways. The assignments we set are often research based and the readings that we set can be some of the research that a number of people may have done. We also have a number of people working in the team. Some of those people are casual staff and so there is quite a lot of work that needs to be done to work with them. We choose them for their background in language and literacy and some of them may be in fact some of our graduate students.

Dr Lloyd—In preparing our teachers who are preparing our students for the 21st century, we are well aware of the issues which are facing the world today. They tend to be multidisciplinary in their approach. That is, they cannot be solved through one particular discipline; they require a multitude of disciplines to solve the problems. We are exploring the idea of transdisciplinary approaches to science, mathematics and environment education. This enables students to take knowledge and skills from a number of areas to look at some of the issues we are facing today. That is my first point, in the sense that that is an innovation.

The second is that we run a general studies course called for 'local and global environments' which looks at current issues and which many of our education students take. We also provide those courses for students throughout the university and we get people from many different faculties working with us in this area. For them it is an advantage because they get pedagogical approaches to learning which they would not get elsewhere.

Mr O'Donoghue—I am very privileged because I get to work with young people and not-so-young people who have already done a degree. They have often spent three or four years studying or have been in the work force for a number of years and have decided to spend 18 months or two years of their lives coming back to do a Bachelor of Education (Middle and Secondary) to prepare themselves to be professional educators. It is very exciting to see these people committed to education. It is very exciting to see them coming with a lot of naivety about

education and suddenly having their eyes opened through the theoretical and practical aspects of the program to what the nature of being a professional educator is.

It is exciting because this program grew out of a report, *Shaping the future: educating professional educators*, that was done by the university and is mentioned, I think, in our submission, on the School of Education and its programs that was conducted in 2001. Since then we have been planning these programs and the first year of the program, the Bachelor of Education (Middle and Secondary), has been this year. It gradually introduces students to the experience of working in schools. They spend a total of 65 days spread over the program in schools and it introduces them to being experts in the field. They have a degree with subject expertise but also they are able to teach the middle schooling and integrated curriculum methods.

Dr McCallum—This is a unique program. It has been written in collaboration with a number of stakeholders. Its uniqueness comes from five main principles on which it is based, which we try to address throughout the program. They are social justice and equity; issues around sustainability; the wellbeing and health and identity of students and teachers; place based education, which acknowledges that today's teachers educate in places other than schools, as they will in the future; and futures thinking, which is the last key principle. We integrate those principles into every course that a student undertakes as part of their program so that we can anticipate that, upon graduation, they will have a good understanding, knowledge base and capacity around those key principles. Then they can go out to schools and other education sites and educate our young learners and young adolescents in those key principles.

An important one to highlight is place based education. Even though students have 90 days of formal practicum throughout the four-year program, and 65 days in the graduate entry, we use school sites and other community places throughout the program. An example of that is in their physical education course, in which they go out to schools in the north and do lab schools, work with disinclined and disengaged children, run special education programs and mentor students one to one in the school to address those sorts of issues to get better learning outcomes for the students. So, throughout their programs, in nearly every course they do, they are out in schools teaching, working with and mentoring children. I think that if you were to ask any graduate, 'What is the thing that you like most about your Bachelor of Education?' or 'What would you like to do more of?', the answer would often be: 'I wish we had more prac. I wish we were in schools more.' And that is exactly the sorts of experiences we are trying to give students as they go through the program. This program and the graduate entry program are in high demand, particularly the graduate entry program, which is similar to one that Michael talked about. This year I had a quota of 32 bodies; I had over 240 applicants for those positions. And I am talking about high-calibre people. Surgeons, social workers, nurses, architects, police and all sorts of people wanted to come and do this primary to middle school program.

Another thing is that, because we are based at Mawson Lakes, which is in the north, a lot of the staff are involved in professional learning and research in the area. I am involved in the RPN project, which Rob Hattam talked about this morning. I and other staff are also involved in a program called Attendance Action Zone, which looks at the transition of students in the north from grades 6 to 7 into grades 8 and 9. That is when their interest in school goes down, the retention goes down and they tend to leave school. So I and a few staff are working with teachers in schools, and with student teachers while they are there in formal and informal placements, to work with these groups of children.

Dr Hill—Building on the idea of innovation, I want to talk about some research projects and how they relate to teaching. Recently, I was involved in a project called Children of the New Millennium, which explored what children of the new millennium are doing with computers and ICT, as well as their literacy. These children are now about four to eight years of age. With 21 teacher researchers from South Australia, we investigated what young children are doing with new literacies. The project has since gone on to inform the Department of Education and Children's Services early years literacy initiative, which will go for the next three years. So, within this project, we developed understanding and knowledge. We made DVDs. We turned parts of it into professional development workshops for teachers. The project, along with many others, has also informed postgraduate teaching, numerous courses and undergraduate teaching. I have finished a textbook for undergraduate teaching, which is pretty much based on current research and research worldwide.

Dr Spears—I would like to comment on the aspect of the curriculum that we use with teacher education students. It goes beyond methodology and curriculum frameworks and looks at the social, emotional and psychological development of the children that they will be teaching. The focus that we have is on children with special needs, family and community environments, bullying issues, and there are behaviour management issues as well. We are privileged in South Australia in that we have some of the foremost researchers in understanding bullying in Australia and in the world. I am very privileged to work with those people. That informs our practice in the courses that we have here that look at how we manage behaviour in schools and how we deal with bullying and with the complex relationship issues in schools. Schools are about people and they are about relationships between people and the social dynamic in a system and so we do work with our students to that extent.

CHAIR—I note that we have still got quite a number of witnesses from the earlier sessions and we have got a roving microphone so we might go to questions. With regard to the practicum, Dr McCallum, you talked about students wanting greater amounts of time in schools. We have heard conflicting evidence from a number of witnesses, some saying there should be more and some saying it is about right. The comment was made this morning that more is not necessarily better, that quality is an important part of the practicum. I would just like your thoughts on the quantum of practicum that is currently offered at the university

Dr McCallum—I think that quality is obviously the key there, not quantity. It is just that students really enjoy their time working with young learners and pre-adolescents in schools and those who come into teaching probably do so for reasons like the ones that brought me into education—to make a difference in the lives of kids. So more contact with children and learners is often what they are looking for. The sorts of examples that we have in the program that I represent are formal and informal. We also bring learners to the campus in different ways too, particularly those students from the north so that they get a feel for what it is like to go to university. Research shows that a lot of kids from the north do not actually get to university and places like that so we try to provide a myriad of different experiences for them. They do see it as a highlight. We try to make the links between theory and practice of course so that the students are going out for purposeful reasons, not just for a matter of days.

CHAIR—Is the quantum of practicum offered at this university about right or in an ideal world would you like a bit more?

Dr McCallum—I think that in an ideal world we would all like a bit more. Variety is the key. Because a lot of us work in schools as well, we get lots of spin-offs there. We do a lot of research and professional development of teachers as well and often the students are involved in that.

Dr Holmes—I would like to reinforce one of the points that a number of people have made about the formal and the informal, or whatever language we like to use. We have got practicum courses that are run where you actually go out into a setting and a certain number of days are allocated for that—it might be 50 or 90 over a period of the program. That is the sort of funding I was talking about earlier—how much that costs us and all the rest of it and whether we have enough places for these formal practicum settings. We have also got a huge number of informal ones, like the ones Faye is talking about, where it is not funded. It is just done in many courses of a program. Jeff Meiners mentioned earlier the Windmill practicum work. That is actually not funded. So we have a large number of days, some of which are formally recognised in the documents that you might find—65 days for a graduate entry program or 90 days or 120—and there is a large number of informal days, and the committee needs to be reminded of that as well.

Mr SAWFORD—The role of the employing authority has been very understated by people who have talked to this submission, and I suppose it has been understated this morning as well. The links that people mention with schools are very impressive and there was an example this morning of a link with the Australian Education Union and of an Indigenous program with the employing authority. Does the employing authority have a much stronger role to play? I would have thought the trinity of partnerships between universities and schools and the employing authority ought to be fairly significant. I do not see a great deal of reference to the employing authority. Should there be?

Dr Nichols—Are you referring to the Department of Education and Children's Services?

Mr SAWFORD—DECS, yes.

Dr Nichols—I do feel qualified to speak about that, at least in relation to the program which I direct, which is the Graduate Certificate in Education. So this really goes to point 10 of your terms of reference, as we are involved in in-service teacher education. The employing authorities, which would be DECS, the Catholic Education Office and the Independent Schools Board, are the ones who often initiate the themes or the ideas for programs which we then take up and develop.

I can give you a specific example. I am currently coordinating a program in the graduate certificate in the area of inclusive education which actually refers to education for students with disabilities and learning difficulties. It was because I had been involved in a national research project which was reported as mapping of the territory a few years ago—I was actually working closely with DECS on that project—that I was approached by someone within the disability services area to develop a curriculum on inclusive education. Since there is a competitive climate now in higher education, what happened then was that the department put out a proposal for tender. I and my colleagues responded to that by putting in a tender and we won the tender to run the program. That is an example of how other strands within our program have been developed and will be in the future. At the moment I am negotiating with some people in other parts of the department around particular initiatives that they would like to see developed into graduate certificate programs.

Mr SAWFORD—Are there any other comments?

Prof. Brennan—Perhaps the disappearance or the almost invisibility of the employing authority is because they are so always here. We would have 20 staff from there or from us with each other in meetings every week. We have a Teacher Education Liaison Committee, which meets quarterly, which brings together all the employers, all the providers and other interest groups to talk about supply, demand, issues about professional development and a whole range of topics that people want to put on the table. A subcommittee of that is the group referred to before by Ian Hamilton and John Holmes, the Teacher Practicum Coordinating Committee, where the employers and the providers sit down and work out who is having what, so that we do not have demarcation disputes with four providers asking every school to provide placements.

We also have them as partners on a number of research projects and consultancy projects. So before something becomes a major research project, such as an ARC linkage grant, you will often have done a range of projects with the department as an employing body. I, as the dean, and the other three deans are also on a Futures Workforce Planning Group with DECS which is specifically set up to look at how the teaching work force is changing, at what the implications of that will be for teacher education, recruitment and targeting marketing and at how, for example, DECS might win the best and brightest to stay here in South Australia rather than going off to England or Canada or to an international school anywhere else in the world. Canada, the USA and England are our biggest target markets and their employer offerings are very well attended by our students.

Dr McCallum—In addition to the number of committees Marie has just mentioned, as a program director of a large undergraduate program I have a lot of contact with the employing authorities. I also have them involved particularly with final year students, but also earlier in the programs, to talk about employment criteria and what it is like to be employed in different sectors so that there is a lot of collaboration between making the transition from student to employment.

Also, as part of the general studies strand of the program, students are able to take units in Catholic education which, upon graduation, give them the equivalent of a graduate certificate in Catholic education, which enables them to get employment in the Catholic sector. I also work in collaboration with the Lutheran seminary to offer similar cooperation with regard to study.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Thank you for those answers. In asking these questions—and we have asked them around the country—we are not attempting to be critical of state authorities, but the evidence we have heard today in respect of this question is the first time that we have not heard that the state education authority should do more. Even yesterday, the witnesses from Flinders University were saying that the absent party in organising and playing a key role in the success of practicum was the state education department. While I am sure they take a keen interest in the matter—and I do not doubt what you are saying in terms of their involvement on various committees—at a systemic level it seems that they are not really an active player but that the local schools, in concert with the university, are very active players. I am raising that issue with you in terms of conflicting evidence.

Mr Hamilton—I would contest that, for the simple reason that on a number of different levels the employing authorities are actively involved in issues such as practicum. We have agreements

with top-level management in terms of supporting the practicum, but in terms of how this state works, the devolution of responsibility often is at the site. We talked earlier about developing those relationships with the site. I would suggest that all of the employing authorities are actively involved in promotion and support, as best they can. We talked earlier about the issue of mandating and what the consequences would be for how we work and operate in terms of practicum. I am at a loss to understand that. Certainly, in terms of number crunching and finding a place for a student, yes, there are lots of negotiations that go on. But on the whole we enjoy a very healthy relationship with the employing authorities.

The other aspect I want to pick up on is that, while we have talked about what we do in taking things to schools, how those employing authorities and schools bring things to us is also very important. Our professional development is also extended by the relationships we have. Frequently, many of the courses that we offer to our students in order to enhance understanding and knowledge are about inviting members from that group to contribute significantly to our students' learning. So it is certainly not my understanding or experience.

Mr SAWFORD—Michael is right: the evidence we have had thus far is the opposite. You are the first ones to state that there is a very strong relationship with the employing authority. Maybe we need to go back and look at some of the other evidence. We are delighted to hear that, because that is part of a successful teacher education course.

Dr Holmes—Could I respond to that by giving an example. I am a bit disappointed in what has come up, Michael.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I don't give the evidence.

Dr Holmes—I understand that. DECS have appointed one person, salary-wise, to work with all the universities. His name is Allen Campbell and he works across all the universities—Adelaide, Flinders, Tabor and UniSA—to address a major issue that they have, and that is staffing of regional and rural schools. It is a big problem, as you know. People always want to work close to home. DECS have appointed that person. Allen works with the campuses of all the universities. The students think the course is fantastic. He takes them out and they work in the locations. He is encouraging them to work in schools in rural and remote areas. So there is a very close relationship with DECS. He is also doing a doctorate on that whole area.

Mr SAWFORD—Allen spoke to us yesterday. In Indigenous education, that was obviously the case. The case for working generally with teacher education was not put. I think that is our response.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—In fact, it was the very person that you are talking about who gave evidence, which will be available later in the *Hansard*, that it would be much more helpful if that sort of approach were adopted across the department.

Dr Holmes—I totally agree that more and more would be better, but there is something happening. Of course, we would like more from them.

Mr SAWFORD—Can I move on to another topic. One of the very impressive statistics in the submission was that 39 per cent of your group is meeting target equity groups. One of the

distinct impressions we are getting as we travel around Australia is that, with one exception—and I will come to the exception in a moment—the overwhelming bulk of people doing teacher education are middle-class, metropolitan and female. There is nothing wrong with any of those criteria. It could be asked: are you getting people from country and provincial areas or rural and remote or disadvantaged areas?' I think Mike Elliott said something about what is happening at Playford. There are lots of other areas in South Australia where participation at university or in tertiary education has fallen almost through the floor. Thirty-nine per cent is a huge figure for a target equity group and something that your university should be very proud of. What sorts of things do you do? Could you expand on what those target groups are.

Dr McCallum—I would like to comment on the primary to middle school program which was offered for the first time this year. I do not have the statistics in front of me, but I have previously been the program director of the junior primary/primary area, so I can compare the cohorts in that group. I have a significantly higher number of male students in that program than in junior primary/primary. Because we are based in the north, I have a higher amount of country and rural students in that program, and mature age students. Previously I worked in a campus in the north that closed down a few years ago. At Mawson Lakes this year, as was the case at the Salisbury campus, you get local students coming to university. Often it is the first time in their family that someone has gone to university, so it is a new experience. With respect to that campus in the north of Adelaide, because it is a primary to middle school program which looks at adolescence and pre-adolescence, I think we are attracting some of that target group to that program.

Mr SAWFORD—That is a very high figure. Are there any things in particular that you are doing? You might take them for granted.

Dr McCallum—No.

Mr SAWFORD—You are doing something that is working very successfully. How do you target these? What do you do?

Dr Simons—I think our university has a strong record of providing alternative entry pathways into university. We have links with the mature age entry scheme that is run through SATAC. For example, we have routinely coming in to adult vocational workplace learning not school leavers but people who perhaps only went to year 10 who then went off and did trade qualifications and who then have returned to teaching. Some of them are also making their way into Michael's program. So the university as a whole has a very strong commitment to providing alternative pathways. The other thing that our university does that is unique and something that I am proud of is the extensive credit agreements we have in place with TAFE to enable people to articulate from TAFE studies into university. I know that in the early childhood program there are significant and growing links with other programs. I think that can make university more attractive to people who would otherwise not consider it. So those strategies are part of our attractiveness.

Prof. Brennan—It is also important that we have student forums. For example, in the junior primary/primary area, there is a year-level forum and in all the undergraduate programs we have year-level forums where a group of students come together to make sure there is an interaction and feedback loop in to the staff of the program that is not about individual crises but about what

is going on. There is a real effort by the teaching team to be explicit in their teaching. We understand that a very significant group of our students are first generation, as are most of the staff. I think you would find in most education faculties that most of the staff are first-generation university people.

It is also really important that we have a very strong marketing targeting group. We have a country circuit where we take things around to the schools in rural areas. We spend time on careers nights with schools. There is a very strong online presence so that a lot of our material is available online so people can find it wherever they are. Compared to the situation with other universities, the accessibility of material online for our students is really critical. We have a priority for low SES in our admissions process, and we have a very strong section in Learning Connection, which is part of our flexible learning delivery.

Mr SAWFORD—How do you do that with SES? Do you have interviews?

Prof. Brennan—Some of it comes through interviews. We give actual extra points to students from particular targeted areas where we are trying to build up longer term relationships. It is not just for individuals. We are trying to target particular areas where there are deep needs.

Mr SAWFORD—Susan, I have a specific question to ask you. I was listening to *AM* this morning and a couple of things came up. Our British colleagues are having their annual conference at Brighton, and Blair was giving a significant speech about New Labour and Third Way politics, which is in the news later. In many ways, 'new' in a political sense just means the best of the Left and the best of the Right—in other words, it is a balance. When you say 'new literacy' what do you actually mean?

Dr Hill—When we started the project we were interested in exploring what children were doing with computers, so we started out looking at information and communication technologies and thinking, 'What are they doing with computers?' As we and the teacher researchers looked further at this we discovered—and it is probably not a brand new idea—that they are actually reading and writing, and so we needed to take our idea about basic literacy further into how children are reading and writing with these new technologies. That has informed the whole department of education's early years literacy strategy. We are saying that reading and writing are really more important than ever, particularly when there are children in preschool who find a caterpillar, for example, and can go straight to Google to identify it. This is documented.

When the teachers went into the children's homes they found that the children were accessing technology which was way in advance of what they have in schools. Our preschools then got curriculum laptops for the children to use. So children in preschools are not just sticking playdough into the computers, they are actually using the computers. So literacy means basic reading and writing but it also means moving into different types of medium in how we are actually communicating. It is crucial—

Mr SAWFORD—So it is speaking and listening?

Dr Hill—Yes, talking, reading, writing. But accessing information off the internet does still demand connected reading of text, and being able to write and spell accurately is part of my agenda in teaching literacy.

Ms CORCORAN—My question is to Barbara. As part of our terms of reference we are examining how educational philosophy underpins teacher training courses and the extent to which that is informed by research. We had a good conversation over morning tea about how all the work you described earlier this morning gets translated into the classrooms here at the university. I wonder if you would mind going over that again, with the explicit examples you gave me, so that we can get it on the tape here and my colleagues can hear it too.

Prof. Comber—One of the things I want to say at the outset is that an inquiry approach to teacher education is underpinning our whole philosophy, whether at the undergraduate level or at the postgraduate level. So we are very keen on positioning student teachers as inquirers, as teacher researchers—obviously, from the name, they are inquirers—and working with them.

To take one example, I think I mentioned to you that the language and multiliteracies course is one of the places where I am directly involved. In that particular course, which is a core course for student teachers, the way in which research would inform that course is manifold. For one, it would inform the way we design our assignments. If we take on board insights not only from our own research but, as Sue Hill mentioned, from research internationally, that would inform the way we design our assignments for students to be doing. So we would encourage student teachers, in the first year of their program, to understand first hand how language works in context by actually having them undertake small research projects, even from the beginning of their teacher education.

I think this connects with what Faye was saying as well and also with what John was saying. Research really underpins our whole approach. It is not only being out on practicum; it is capitalising on opportunities where student teachers become inquirers and start looking, because of the way we encourage them in our assignments and so on to think about education in an inquiring way.

One of the other ways in which we build insights from research into teacher education at all levels is that we use a lot of materials that we have published ourselves and materials that colleagues around Australia and internationally have published. So we are constantly changing. Some might say we have a bit of change exhaustion, but we are constantly changing our programs in terms of what we make available to students in terms of the reading we would offer. So a lot of the things we write out of our research we deliberately write in such a way as to make it accessible to student teachers and teachers.

Another way in which research underpins our practice is that many of the teachers—if not all of us—are researching our own practice at all levels. So there is a lot of research that goes on in the university, in the School of Education, with people actually researching their own practice and trying to improve it. So I guess, in a nutshell, what we try to do is to design our teacher education in an inquiring manner and to think about the content, the delivery of lectures, the assignments and the workshops as occasions where we can induct student teachers into an inquiry process. I am not sure if I repeated some of the things we said earlier; other people might want to add to that.

Mr FAWCETT—I think Michelle picked up the point before about mature age students who have perhaps had a trade previously and who are interested to come back and teach. Many of them feel put off because they perceive that they are going to have to go back and be taught to

suck eggs for three or four years et cetera before they can actually get into a school versus a trade apprentice supervisor type relationship. What programs does UniSA have in place for the sorts of people who are perhaps mid-50s and just want to come back and spend five or six years teaching at a school to pass on some of that trade training, in order to accelerate their ability to teach?

Mr O'Donoghue—If they have a degree then the Bachelor of Education (Middle and Secondary) is the pathway for them.

Mr FAWCETT—Many I am talking to have been apprentices then tradesmen—fitters and turners or whatever. They have a huge amount of experience to pass on. Schools are crying out for teachers who are qualified with trades, but many of these people do not want to go through three or four years of training at that point in their life and yet they have a lot of experience in supervising apprentices and other things that would equip them fairly well for many of the aspects they may need.

Mr O'Donoghue—We have a new program—

Prof. Brennan—There is a Bachelor of Design and Technology. Denise MacGregor, the program director, is here. What we organise there is specifically designed to help provide teachers of design and technology, not only old ones but new ones. If you go up to the Mawson Lakes campus you will see big workshops full of things like lathes, woodworking equipment and kitchens and things like that. People who already have qualifications can get recognition of that prior learning and have that counted towards their degree. That makes it quite possible. As somebody mentioned before, the practicum is in every year of the degree; therefore they are able to work through. They can fast-track their degree if they already have a whole series of certificates III and IV and trade qualifications. They made need to update them, because many of them may not have updated their qualifications or their knowledge. You used to work on a lathe that was half the size of this room, but it now sits on a small tabletop because it is all computerised. They may need to update that unless they have already done that in their workplace. If they have got that, we give them the recognition of that prior learning and we have specific agreements in place with TAFE to recognise that against those particular courses.

There is a big issue there. I am a technical school teacher. I taught in technical schools in Victoria through the seventies. For me, how you build the range of skills that people can specifically bring in place was a huge issue. I think there is a real range, as we start to redesign schools and particularly vocational learning in schools. Giving all students—not just the people who might like working with their hands, so to speak, as distinct from their heads—real access to a wider range of the curriculum is an issue. That is where the design and technology curriculum area is really important. It is very hard to get people in place to teach in that area.

I think we have a range of ways in which we could have more permanent part-time staff in schools, for example—that would be really helpful—where we can bring in to this place people who can actually help to teach our students and who can also work along with our staff in projects about what the new kinds of knowledges will be. Most of the places that are in the industrial heart have walked away from their rust-belt old factories and things like that; they are not doing it in the same way. We have to think about the new forms of technologies as well as the old ones. We do not want to get rid of all the past knowledges, whether they are embodied in

machinery, in books or in people's heads. I think that, for us, trying to get some new ways of thinking about different kinds of teachers is really one of our priorities. The adult and vocational education and workplace learning degree is also a place where students come in from TAFE. Michelle might give you a few ideas on that one.

Mr FAWCETT—Can I make one comment? You made a comment that the old technology is almost completely gone and we need to be looking for the new. It is a perception that is not 100 per cent accurate and it is really damaging employers in the second- and third-tier industries out there. For most of your primes—the TENIXs, the British Aerospaces, the GMHs and other people like that—sure, most things are computerised and there is a lot of robotics. That is where some of the new skills and things are coming in. But all of them rely on second- and third-tier supply to do their tooling work, to do a lot of enabling manufacturing of jigs that actually host the computers and things like that, and they still require those traditional trade skills sets. I spent an hour or so yesterday morning with a group who are looking at exactly this issue in the aerospace sector, both military and civil, and the fact that they just cannot get people to train young apprentices because they are not getting kids in school who are enthused by and inculcated with the concept that is something that could be an exciting and rewarding career. They have some people who are approaching retirement who would love to come back in and start providing that but who say, 'We don't want to go and do three years.' I think there is a real need there that is being written off by this perception that everything is becoming computerised, when the fact is that there is a large section of the work force that still needs those basic skills.

Dr Simons—I think they are partly right. I think the other thing for me is that you cannot look at vocational education and training in the schooling sector in isolation from vocational education and training in the broader sector. I would argue that some of the traditional skills that you are talking about that are important are sometimes missing from the training packages that inform the curriculum that has been developed for that sector, which has flow-on effects. It is meant to be developed by industry. So I actually think there are some issues there about how we inform what is required for learning in those sectors. The two sectors are quite distinctly different. So there is not that seamless integration, because you have different groups of stakeholders with different sets of perspectives bringing to bear on that.

One of the issues is how the two sectors talk to each other and how all employers are encouraged to engage in informing the VET sector rather than just the larger, high-profile sorts of companies, which often have the resources to engage in the consultations that inform VET sector development. While you could look to the schooling sector and say there are some simple solutions, there are some broader issues around that.

I think the other thing is the relationship between teachers in the vocational education and training sector and teachers in the school sector. Ann and I had a brief conversation about that. There is not a seamless movement between the sectors. There are a lot of questions that have to be asked about developing educators that are able to work across the sectors. Young people are not now going to school and then going to TAFE; they are going to TAFE and school at the same time. We have a lot of people who are becoming responsible for the education of our young adults. It is almost like, as Marie was saying, a rethinking around what we need of those people in the broad to develop young people as citizens as well as workers.

There are a lot of anomalies between the sectors. Someone could go to a vocational education and training setting where the person teaching them only had a certificate IV, and they could go to another setting where they could be working with a highly qualified person who has been through university teacher education training. Those teachers would be equally responsible for that young person. There are a lot of questions about how the sectors work together and what the new educator looks like who can move between those sectors to better meet the needs of our young people and to be more realistic about what they need.

CHAIR—I thank you for appearing before the committee today. It has been a very enlightening session this morning.

Mr SAWFORD—Can I say on behalf of all of us that you are either a pretty dynamic group or you have conned us wonderfully well!

Prof. Brennan—There are too many of us!

Mr SAWFORD—I think the former is correct. We are on a bit of a roadshow, but coming across professional people like you is a real pleasure. You have shown us commitment and passion, albeit in a brief form, this morning. Hopefully there will be a reconnection later on when we perhaps get more significant direction in the way we are going. I am sure all of us would like to say that we are mightily impressed.

CHAIR—I will need a motion that we accept the document tabled from the University of South Australia as an exhibit.

Mr SAWFORD—I so move.

[12.15 pm]

BYRNE, Mr Gerard

CHING, Mr Siu Pong Kelvin

COOK, Mr Eric

DENTON, Mr Graeme

FOOT, Mr Justin

KINGSTON, Dr Angela

LI, Mrs Kylie Dianne

MICHELL, Mr Michael Osmund

PEDERICK, Mr Glenn

STEPHENS, Ms Leanne

STEPHENS, Mr Richard

WADWELL, Mr Jonathon

WILKIN, Ms Kate Elizabeth

CHAIR—I welcome the students to our hearing. Thank you for taking time out from your studies to appear before the committee today. One of the things that we have found quite uplifting is the degree of enthusiasm of our trainee teachers and the way in which they have been approaching their course. I want to throw open a very general question as to what you like about the course and perhaps what you do not like quite so much. What is good about teacher training at the University of South Australia?

Mrs Li—Just to give you an idea of where I am coming from, I am doing the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education. One of the things that all of the students I have spoken to within my program—and, Kate, please disagree with me if you want to—would say is important is the prac starting in the first year. I know that you have heard a lot about pracs, but I cannot emphasise enough how important that is. Prac is a really good thing. We have prac once or twice every single year for the duration of the course. Another thing that is particularly important in the early childhood program is the quality of the staff we are working with. They love their job—shock, horror!—and they are very passionate when they teach. That passion comes across, which is very important when you are learning about something, particularly if it is challenging.

Ms Wilkin—Another strength of the early childhood program is the number of people from the field we get in to talk to us. This is really important for us in putting our knowledge that we are learning into practice. We have had people from child care, kindy and schools to talk to us, which has been a really strong point and emphasis of our degree.

Mr Pederick—I would like to add to the comments made by my peers from the early childhood program. I am studying the Bachelor of Education (Junior Primary and Primary). In our course, when we do, for example, literacy, we have people come in from outside to teach us about different methods of teaching literacy et cetera. One of the things that I like about studying in UniSA is that they are very much up to date with what is happening in research, and that comes back into our degree. Another thing is the pracs. Having the experience where you learn about your theories of education and how to relate to children and also the different subjects like literacy and then you can take that knowledge that you gain from uni out into your pracs every year is another advantage, as you are not sitting on what you have learnt; you actually get out there and use it in the classroom, which is very important.

Mrs Li—To extend on that a little, another one of the big things which I have really taken away from my program is the importance of doing research ourselves. When I initially came into the teaching program I had this picture in my head of being a teacher and what being a teacher looked like. That did not include doing my own research in the classroom. It is a very empowering concept that I can go out and not just teach but also learn about my own teaching, learn about other people's teaching and learn about teaching and learning. I am not relying on somebody else all the time to tell me what is best for me in my classroom with my students; I can act on that or develop that myself not only in the classroom concept but also in child care or something that is not directly related to teaching.

CHAIR—What about something that you do not like quite so much? Do you have any examples of things we can do better?

Mr Byrne—I am doing a Bachelor of Education. The answer is money. I do not have any of it. None of us do. It costs a lot of money going to university. I am sure you are well aware that Austudy does not approve rent assistance. I come from a construction background. I was a scaffolder-rigger for 10 or 11 years. Moving into this industry, I have taken a huge pay drop. One huge argument I have is that I am trying to better my life and I want to help kids. I do not want to be just a scaffolder who goes down to the pub on a Friday night. I want to give back to the community. Yet someone who is not even looking for a job and sitting on the dole gets paid more money than me. That is something I disagree with and hate.

Dr Kingston—I think income support is important. I am one of two graduate entry students here today. I do not qualify for Austudy because I am a postgraduate student. I have a past degree. The lack of income support is automatically cutting out a lot of people from this degree who are very well qualified and passionate. Marie mentioned scholarships. That is something that I certainly would have benefited from. I am relying on my family for financial support and that has been very difficult. So I agree with Marie.

Ms Stephens—I just wanted to echo what the students and also Marie Brennan have said. It is very difficult as a mature age student. Both my husband and I, who is here today, are teacher education students living on Austudy. We also want to work in the country so I have elected to

do my PAR 3 in the country. I could not get any support at all. All I wanted was 500 bucks towards the petrol and accommodation. There is absolutely nothing to be had. I spent hours on the internet and on the phone trying to find grants for students. There is absolutely nothing. I had to fund that out of personal savings, which was a real hardship. Also you have to give up your employment for six weeks, so you get no money as well. How would you like to give up your salary for six weeks to further your own employment opportunities? Six weeks is a long time without earning any money. It is very difficult.

Mr Byrne—I was talking with another student at Adelaide University who is an engineer. He is doing a double degree. He actually gets paid for his practice. That blew me away. I have never heard of that happening. I did not know people got paid for their pracs. I had this great idea. Pracs for MBEd, junior primary and primary, are almost at the end of the year every year. I would like one full year at schools at practice—I am sort of living a pipedream here but it would be nice—and actually get paid a subsidy from the government—an apprentice wage, if you will; something above Austudy. But you are actually in a school putting into practice what you have learnt throughout the last three years.

Mr SAWFORD—I will ask each of you three questions just to get a background of where you come from. Firstly, are you metropolitan, country or remote? Secondly, what did you do in a previous life before coming here? Did you work, like the scaffolder-rigger? What did you do? I have forgotten the third question. I will come to it in a minute. I have a mental block.

Ms Stephens—I live in the metro area and I would like to work in the country. Before I came to education, I was an administrator for 20 years working full time.

Mr SAWFORD—I know what the third question is. Do you currently do part-time work?

Ms Stephens—Yes. It has been very difficult to find part-time work. I know they say, 'Support your Austudy with part-time work.' I am 35. Big W does not want you. Nobody wants you. It has been very difficult. I have secured employment now but that is after a couple of years. It has been very hard.

Ms Wilkin—I am metropolitan and I have come straight from high school. I also work three jobs. I work as a waitress on weekends, I work for a centre for children with autism during the week and I also teach ballet. So I am doing a lot.

Mr Foot—I am representing adult education. I am doing a Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education at the moment. I am studying full time and working full time as a lecturer with TAFE SA. I worked in the hospitality industry for 12 years full time. I came across the TAFE system and got into the education to gain a qualification. I have to study full time and work full time to further my career. I am working in the city, but there are not enough qualified people in hospitality in regional areas. Many of my counterparts are either studying and working full time to complete the adult education qualification or, because of age, seeing it as a bit of a barrier and not doing it at all because they have progressed into it too late in their lives.

Dr Kingston—I live in a metropolitan area. In my previous life I spent nine years as an administrator with the government. After that I went to uni and did a BA and went through to do

a PhD in English. With a graduate entry degree I am finding there is not enough time to work, like most of us I think. It is an accelerated degree and it is pretty full-on.

Mr Denton—I grew up in the country but I have been metro based since leaving high school. I have had numerous previous jobs. Most of my time was spent in the police force, about eight years. I went back and completed sports science and then nutrition degrees. I worked as a dietician in the public hospital system for two years before coming back to study this year. I am currently working in my own business as a clown.

Mr SAWFORD—What a wonderful preliminary to teaching! Is there a message there?

Mr Pederick—That is quite a coincidence, having not known Graeme before, because I do clowning as well as a part-time job. I grew up in a metropolitan area and then spent 12 years working in retail. I decided I had had enough of that and went back to uni. I did not look for work straightaway, but work came to me via contacts, which was pretty good. I work in a primary school doing after-school care. I started that when I started my degree. It has been very helpful to have that experience where I can take what I have learnt on my prac and in my degree to the workplace.

Mr Stephens—I have lived in metropolitan areas for most of my life. I spent 10 years working in supermarket retail as a supermarket manager. After 10 years of that I was quite sick of being exploited and paid a salary where I did not get any overtime or any other benefits. I moved overseas and worked in hospital administration for a while. I came back to Australia about three years later and could not get a job. It may have been age related; I never got to the bottom of that. I worked in the building industry for about five years before I started in the MBEd program that I am a part of now. I work part time. I have dropped to a three-quarter load this year so I can work a bit more because trying to work and study full time is extremely demanding. I have a few other things to say that I will say after.

Mrs Li—I was raised in Housing Trust homes in various places with my family. Neither of my parents are educated. I am the very first person from my family who has ever been to university, and they are extremely proud of that. I was expelled from high school because of my attitude and outspoken behaviour. I worked in McDonald's and that kind of thing for a while and then decided I would go back to high school. I completed my SACE. I got a TER of 87 point something or other, which at the time was amazing, after being told that I would amount to nothing. I then got into a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education. I have been working from day one in various things. I have done some vacation care work and relief work at child-care centres. I have taught people how to drive cars so that they can do all the lessons with me at a cheaper price and then just do the five logbook lessons. I have done contract administration work. I have done any bits and pieces I can to help pay for the things that I need to pay for and support myself. I am also a mum, so I also take care of my daughter.

Mr Michell—I am from a metropolitan area. My partner and I both gave up full-time work to come to university to do a Bachelor of Education (Primary/Junior Primary). In relation to the previous submissions, I gained entry through having a prior award through the TAFE system, an associate diploma in justice administration. My partner gained entry to the university through having prior work experience. So neither of us went through the TER scenario. As for my previous life, I qualified as an electrician when I left school. I worked for SAPOL, the police

department in South Australia, for 15 years. In terms of current part-time work, my partner and I have four children—we are both on Austudy—and it is very tight, and I have had to rely on my previous trade. My partner cleans.

Mr Byrne—I am doing a Bachelor of Education and I have been a scaffolder-rigger for 10 years. I am metro based. I have the luxury of being a scaffolder. You get paid a lot of money to go away and work 12-hour shifts seven days a week in shutdowns that do correspond with the holidays at university. Without that, I probably would not be able to go to uni because I have to support my partner—and there are the dogs!

Mr Ching—I am a graduate entrant in the Bachelor of Education and specialise in secondary. I got my first degree—an honours degree—in computing. At the moment I am unemployed because of lots of commitments in my studies, so I thought I had better concentrate on that rather than working. In my previous life I worked part time in various contexts: tutor, toy vendor and whatever else. I am also an international student. I guess I belong to that 39 per cent equity group.

Mr Denton—I just wanted to pick up on the previous questions that were raised. I am a graduate entry student doing junior primary and primary. I am only halfway through the program, so I acknowledge I cannot give a full critique on the program at this stage, but I would like to acknowledge the positive aspects of the program, which in my opinion far outweigh any negatives. I want to reiterate that the majority of lecturers, tutors and supervisors I have had in this program have been dedicated, passionate and hardworking. That has to be the best basis for a successful teacher education program.

CHAIR—I am sure you are going to get a high distinction!

Mr Denton—A particular focus of the course, which I like, is the focus on making education relevant and meaningful for school children today and on a real-world application approach. Again, with our course there is a real focus on ethics and sociocultural based courses that really raised my awareness and others' awareness of social justice issues, to help us with the skills for teaching in an inclusive manner and identifying practices that could be perpetuating disadvantage. I think that is a real plus of the program.

To get to something that could possibly be improved—and I will wade into the current debate over literacy and numeracy, which is certainly topical—I do not buy Dr Nelson's argument that picking out a few teachers and picking out single spelling mistakes that they make is any sort of evidence that there is a systemic problem. However—and I do not know what the situation is with teachers in the work force—in relation to numeracy in the current course, while we have further maths subjects coming up and so I cannot speak completely about that, we do have what is called a diagnostic tool, which everyone sits at the start of the program. It helps us to understand areas of weakness in our own maths knowledge, which I think is useful, and steps can then be taken to improve that.

In relation to literacy, I certainly value the broad approach in teaching English. We have talked about focusing on reading, writing, viewing, listening and speaking, incorporating all sorts of daily texts and ICTs and that sort of approach, because they are all relevant today. Personally, I finished high school 20 years ago and I believe I have a good ability to communicate in all

forms, including written. However, if you sat down and asked me to teach someone else the intricacies of grammar, punctuation and the rules of literacy, I would not be superconfident in explaining it all at this stage. Within the course, I know it is my responsibility to get up to speed with that. We have been referred to the appropriate resources to do that. However, I do think that, in the English program, there is perhaps room for a similar thing to what we do in maths where there is some sort of assessment early in our program which is not a test that kicks you out of uni but something that helps you to identify areas of those basic skills that you may have trouble with that you can then work on through the rest of the program.

Mr SAWFORD—None of you are school leavers, are you?

Ms Wilkin—I am.

Mr SAWFORD—In your group, what is the percentage of school leavers? It seems to be, right around Australia, very much a sharply increasing trend for people to come from other experiences, which I think in the long run is going to be very healthy for teaching. How many school leavers would make up a percentage of the course?

Mr Michell—I would say that the primary cohort would probably be 60 to 70 per cent.

Dr Holmes—That is pretty close—it is 78 per cent. Just to remind us all, we have a four-year program which is mainly aimed at the school leaver. That has moved quite rapidly towards graduates or people from other experiences coming into it. That is the four-year program. But the graduate entry program, of course, is always non school leavers. That is why a lot of people here have previous experience—they have other degrees and so on. But, if you are doing a four-year degree without any previous degree, you are bound to be a school leaver, to the tune of 75 or 78 per cent. The other 20 per cent are made up of scaffolders.

Mr SAWFORD—I have a question for Kylie. Right at the beginning you were saying that prac in first year was highly desirable. Would you like to expand on that? Why do you think it is? I actually think it is too, but why do you think it is a good thing?

Mrs Li—When everyone comes into a program, they have some kind of picture in their head about why they have chosen this, why they want to do it and what they think it is all about. When you go out on your first prac, that is your first real experience of going into a classroom, a child-care setting or wherever you are going and actually looking at it from a perspective outside your own. Before, the majority of ideas that were in your head were based on your experience of what preschool was like for you from what you can remember of it—those kinds of perceptions. However, in that very first prac, if you are going in there and saying, 'I'm not the student—not really; I am now thinking of myself as a teacher—and I am here and I am watching,' I think that is a very important way of judging whether it is something that you want to do with the rest of your life. Is this actually what you thought it was going to be? It also gives you a new awareness. The first prac in the first year was after a period of theory and that sort of stuff. Then you have this new mind-set that you have gone in with this as well, so that you say to yourself: 'I can now see these things which, before, were invisible to me. I just thought about when the lunch bell was—I wanted lunch.' It is a new way of looking at things. Does that answer the question?

Mr SAWFORD—That is fine. What do other people think about doing prac in the first year?

Mr Byrne—I think it teaches you the nuts and bolts of what things have to happen in a classroom. You learn about theories, ed psychs and how children's brains are supposed to work. Then you see them in the classroom and then you work out what has to be done during the day—not just the teaching part but how to interact. Most of us have left school and have done other stuff, so we can interact and communicate with other people, but it teaches you how to interact within a school environment. Being a scaffolder, I had to learn a fair bit.

Mr SAWFORD—You have a good language vocabulary!

Mr Byrne—Yes; more than one syllable.

Mr SAWFORD—I was a painter and docker, so I know.

CHAIR—Did you want to make a comment, Mr Stephens?

Mr Stephens—Yes. I have been of the opinion that, as far as prac goes, to be at a school for perhaps one day per week throughout the whole school year—every term—would show us a tremendous amount about the development of children throughout the year. We are going to have to find out through the other way of doing it, which is actually in our own classroom. I would much rather spend one day a week in a school for the whole year, perhaps in different classes, and do the blocks that we do so that we are there with the children for a few weeks at a time as well. It is my opinion that that would give us the background we need of watching kids develop from being year 3s to year 4s at the end of the year. I think that type of thing would be extremely valuable for us.

The other issue I have is money, of course—and I guess that is why we are all here. I am going to do a practicum in another two week's time. During the four weeks of that practicum I will not be able to work. Petrol is up to about $1.38 a litre, and I am on Austudy. Probably nearly everyone who is here today is being paid. The students out the front here today are probably the only ones who are not being paid. How much incentive would you have to come here today if you were not being paid? Yet we are supposed to find the incentive to go into schools without being paid, at considerable expense to ourselves. It is a major issue, and it tells me that you do not value student teachers and you do not value children. It is a simple as that.

Mrs Li—From a mum's perspective, I have to organise somebody to take care of my child. That usually involves some form of payment. I have various family members, but they cannot be there all the time. For me to be here today is costing me.

Mr Ching—In talking about supporting student teachers in their pracs, I think there is one more thing. I think support from the uni as well as the school is very important for first-time prac teachers. I found that the uni could have done more to support student teachers in their practicums. From talking with my classmates, sometimes when they did their major prac they did not have their university lecturer or liaison person visit them until the very last week of their eight-week prac. Quite a few schools are very supportive of their student teachers, but at times there may be some problems during the major prac. If that happened and the university liaison person was not ready to aid or assist a student teacher, that would be quite troublesome, especially when they were doing their final prac.

My suggestion—and it may be a bit bizarre—is that to make the whole teacher education program better the university lecturer should put their research, theory, ideology or anything else into practice. That would mean that they would take the practicum in the school setting themselves to see if their research and theory is actually working. I think that is very important because they are responsible for teacher education. They are preparing us to be teachers, and they need the actual teaching experience also. That is just my suggestion.

Mr SAWFORD—I have one last question about the living allowance. It was mentioned by one of the professors earlier this morning. You seem to be putting forward a very powerful argument that there needs to be a degree of support. Perhaps this committee has to consider a living allowance, particularly—and I am sorry about the school leavers—for those people coming from other professions and taking significant drops in salary, people who perhaps have families or children. Other than Austudy, what sort of figure would you be looking at? You said that a figure of $500 would make a huge difference to being able to do what you want to do. I have always thought that the amount of money is not as significant as some politicians think. There is that one-off thing that you need—the $500—but there is also the living allowance. It seems to me that there needs to be a static allowance, of maybe $1,000, but what about a living allowance? What sort of figure would you be looking at?

Mr Byrne—I know that $325 is the maximum you can get from Austudy per fortnight. That covers food. On the dole, I think you get about $460 a fortnight—I am having a guess—plus rent assistance.

Mr SAWFORD—So, dole equivalence and rent assistance. What if it were just dole equivalence? Would that make a significant difference?

Mr Stephens—A hundred dollars is a significant amount of money to us. I know it sounds trivial, but it actually is. When you have to eat and it makes the difference between being able to go out and have some takeaway food or cooking at home, 100 bucks makes quite a lot of difference to your lifestyle. It really does.

Ms Stephens—Just to give you a real face of Richard and I: we are on Austudy and we get $300 between us a week. Our mortgage is $200, so we have 100 bucks. Over a year that is $5,000 to pay everything—fuel; car registration; food; private health insurance, which we upkeep because we do not want to fall out of that. It is almost not doable.

Mrs Li—You also have to buy text books, and they are expensive.

Mr SAWFORD—There's no taking these academics—what they want for books!

Mrs Li—If you are a full-time student you are looking at four courses for one half of the year and then four courses for the second, that is at least four text books, one for each of your courses. If the text books are averaging around $60, $70, $80 or $100 a book, that is a lot of money every six months. I have been putting X amount of money aside each week, which is a textbook fund, but that is difficult. If the car breaks down, guess where that money comes from? A number of students that I know within my program have made conscious decisions about which books they are going to purchase and which they will not—not because they do not want the book or they do not think it is valuable but it is simply a case of: 'I don't have the money for that one, maybe

I'll get it later on; this one looks a bit better, maybe I can use it in more courses.' I do not think those kinds of decisions make for good teacher education outcomes.

Mr SAWFORD—So there is an argument for both a studying allowance and a living allowance.

Mr Byrne—I would like to mention something about the course that I am doing, which involves the core courses: maths, English, science, PE, arts, soc and all the carry on with those. With the introduction of new literacies, your media stuff, that is going to be added as another core subject so one of them has to get pushed out. I think it would be very valuable to go to primary school teachers and maybe do a national survey and ask them what they believe should be core subjects at university. I can pretty much guarantee you that everyone would be trying to manipulate that into their favourite subject. If you love the arts you are going to try to push for that; if you like PE you are going to push for that. I think that filters down to us.

We have found that, if you are doing the arts, it used to be visual arts and drama in the one; now you have visual arts, drama and music all in one. I remember for visual arts that I think I did 18,000 words for one assignment. That is a thesis. You try and push all three of those into one semester; it is almost impossible to do. I think the core subjects have to be really focused on and re-evaluated, and maybe teachers should be asked around Australia what should actually be in the core subjects. I find that I am doing two core subjects that could have been moulded into one and one that could have been split into three. For example, in my opinion social context, and society and the environment, could have been pushed into one. But I do not know the way it works.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee. A copy of your evidence will be provided to you by the secretariat. It will also be posted on the web site. We really appreciate your time; it has been a very enlightening session. As with the other students we have come across, your enthusiasm is almost boundless. It is fantastic; keep up the good work.

Proceedings suspended from 12.49 pm to 1.35 pm

MORONY, Mr Laurie William, Executive Officer, Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers Inc.

CHAIR—Welcome. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that the proceedings are 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 a statement in relation to your submission?

Mr Morony—I would like briefly to give a background to the organisation, so you understand where the opinions are coming from, and then perhaps just highlight a couple of points from the submission that we think are especially important. The Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers is a federation of state and territory associations. It is the premier national organisation of teachers of mathematics in this country. We have 5½ thousand members. About half of those are schools, so conservatively I would say that at least 20,000 teachers are associated with us. We include teachers from pre-K to 12-plus, from all state and territories and from all sectors. So we are a very comprehensive organisation of teachers committed to the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Our mission is to support teachers and their work in classrooms and with students, to promote the learning of mathematics, to represent teachers' interests and to promote interest in mathematics education generally. We undertake a range of activities which are probably familiar to the committee in the work of professional associations—involving journals, conferences, web sites and professional development activities. We are a major supplier of niche market materials. We search the world for interesting things that teachers in Australia may not see in mathematics education and try and make those available and try to share things between states.

We also undertake research and development activities. I would like highlight that the work that the association has done over the last six years in the development of professional standards—the Standards for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics in Australian Schools. The standards have come to underpin our position and our thinking about mathematics education, as our description of what really good teaching looks like, and so they have a very important place in our work. It is our goal to have them become the framework for professional development throughout the careers of teachers of mathematics, to have them as the language that is used to talk about mathematics teaching. So that is a very important basic position from which we come. I guess in terms of this committee's inquiry we would like to see work to further develop teacher education in mathematics take serious account of this document and our position, because it is what the profession of teachers of mathematics believe are high aspirational goals for all.

Referring to our submission: I guess it would be true to say that there is frustration at the review syndrome. In my recent working life there have been three major reviews of teacher education in mathematics: from the end of the 1980s with Kwong Lee Dow; the review of teaching and teacher education in mathematics, science and technology in the last few years; and now this inquiry. I guess it comes through in some of our respondents that they really hope something changes on the basis of the effort to try and inform the directions taken.

One of the things we picked up in the 2003 Review of Teaching and Teacher Education is that it is crucial that we welcome entrants to the profession better than we have. It was a real eye-opener for us as an organisation to realise that we really did not have much going for new teachers as far as bringing them into the organisation and playing a significant supporting role in their professional lives. We started to address that at our council meeting in January this year, and we will continue that work with the state and territory associations. I think it is a key area that we have missed. In saying that, it is obvious that those efforts need to be articulated with the people involved in teacher education of those people who come out as teachers of mathematics. That highlights the general point I wanted to make.

In closing, our members are the people who are committed to the teaching of mathematics in our schools. They are the ones who really care. We would like to find ways of communicating with our colleagues in university school sectors to improve the provision of teacher education both pre service and in service. As a volunteer organisation, it is difficult to resource that off the back of goodwill in a permanent way. I think I will leave it there and throw it over to you.

CHAIR—In your submission, on page 5, there seems to be a bit of an each-way bet on this. It states:

> In some institutions entrants need to have at least a specified level of Year 12 mathematics for entry into a primary pre-service course. It is not clear whether enforcing such a requirement is appropriate. On the one hand the mathematics of the year 12 course is likely to be unconnected with the teaching that the student will end up undertaking. Doing such a course while at school may only fuel negativity towards mathematics. On the other hand, a person who has opted out of study of mathematics during their schooling—for whatever reason—is probably less likely to become an effective teacher of mathematics. They are very likely to lack the requisite enthusiasm for the task and their own continuing development as a teacher of mathematics.

On that issue, there has been a lot of discussion about the literacy of some students undertaking teaching courses. There is fair bit of indecisiveness in that statement as to whether we should be having year 12 as a requisite for maths. Would you see that stronger maths delivered by teachers who are better mathematicians right from primary school up would in some way address the tendency for people to stray away from maths? A lot of people are avoiding maths rather than embracing it—at high school level and at university level. Do you think we are in a bit of a downward spiral there and we should be trying to snap out of it?

Mr Morony—With respect to a prerequisite at year 12 level in mathematics, if I had a magic wand and could create a really well-targeted year 12 mathematics course for those people who might wish to become primary teachers, and if that course was well taught within the school setting and rigorously assessed, the organisation would have no trouble in saying that should be a prerequisite for primary teaching. What we do know from the research is that it is not how much mathematics you know but rather how you know it.

If a student has passed a year 12 mathematics course by rote learning and has developed a view of mathematics that it is simply jumping through hoops, that is not the contemporary view of what is needed for teachers. I think the ambivalence there is, yes, a good year 12 but not a poor year 12.

Regarding the quality of teaching being maximised from kindergarten through to year 12 in ways that encourage young people to stay with mathematics both for its utility in careers and for its study in its own right as one of the great disciplines of humankind, this association exists in one sense to promote quality teaching and so, yes, we would like highly qualified, mathematically capable teachers at all levels. The reality is that we are a long way from that. On the question of strategies to more closely approximate that, a knee-jerk year 12 requirement may not help—that is the reason for the ambivalence.

One more factor is that we are finding quite a lot of mature age people are re-entering study and becoming primary teachers—it is a not uncommon experience of people in universities. If we had a rigid year 12 requirement, those people—who may have left school at year 10 but have extensive life experience that sets them up very well for being teachers, subject to quality teaching of mathematics education in their teacher education courses—can become very good teachers. That is anecdotal, but is certainly strongly anecdotal.

Mr SAWFORD—Mathematics teaching in this country has become very problematic. In the last 20 years the number doing pure mathematics at tertiary institutions in Australia has fallen from 100,000 to fewer than 16,000 a year. That is a crisis number in itself. When you often talk to principals they will tell you that teaching in many ways is a non-desirable profession. In fact, at Scotch College in Melbourne the principal asked his 3,000 students and not one of them wanted to be a teacher. I think that is a big problem. Some of the negativity seems to be traced to teachers themselves saying to their students, 'Don't be silly, don't ever be a teacher.' And part of it seems to be traced maybe to the lack of a career structure for mathematics and science teachers and, I suppose, the competition of more significant remuneration from other fields. Firstly, have you got a comment about the huge drop in the number—which is not in the national interest in my view—because that is a very drastic statistic that was given to us by DEST a couple of years ago? So no-one doubts the figure? Can you comment on that and on the negativity particularly coming from the teaching profession itself? And maybe the third part is: how do we encourage people who are mathematics and science teachers to stay in the game?

Mr Morony—The drop in numbers is extreme and well-documented. I cannot comment on the particular figures you have quoted, but it is a major concern within the mathematical sciences, of which we consider ourselves a part. Why is that happening? I think it is substantially societally based. The pathways for young people have expanded; the rigid enforcement of prerequisites for university courses have largely disappeared over the period of which you speak and, frankly, I believe other subject areas in schooling have marketed themselves better to young people, both in thought and deed.

Mathematics has always been: 'You need it.' But there is ample evidence of people who appear not to have substantial mathematics making very good livings, and that is appealing to young people. So I think mathematics in schools has to make itself more relevant and powerful in young people's lives to begin to address that. And certainly that is not a job only for teachers; it belongs to the media, it belongs to government, it belongs to scientists and mathematicians themselves.

The negativity of teachers is something that frustrates our organisation a great deal. Without having the deep evidence about it, I think there are many people who would say, 'If I could just stick with the teaching it would be a great job.' There are matters that, in their view, sit outside of

the teaching—they commonly refer to administrative tasks and all of the other things that get in the way of teaching and also to the complexity of society and the expectations on schools to go beyond delivery of curriculum. I think people are frustrated by 'the work'. So many of our people just love the work that they do, but in speaking to young people about career choices they may well look at the whole package rather than at that bit which really turns them on. Our approach to it is to try and celebrate that it is a terrific occupation and make a public statement about what good teaching is about. We have an award system for people who reach high standards.

Mr SAWFORD—Mathematics to me is exciting, it has got a spirit. You can compare it with music. I do not see the enthusiasm for mathematics at a university level—there are exceptions, of course. I do not see it at secondary schools. I take your comments about what is happening in primary schools—basically, mathematics is a misnomer and what happens there is numeracy, and pretty ordinary stuff at that. How come we have gone from being up there with the best in the world and having high participation in pure mathematics—exciting stuff, cutting-edge stuff—and, in a generation, we have gone backwards. In football parlance, we are kicking uphill, against the wind, and there is a gale coming. It just seems to me that your association can play a very important role. Are your links with teacher education courses strong or are you just associated?

Mr Morony—They are patchy because they are person dependent rather than institutionally defined in most cases. If a lecturer in this place is connected with the local mathematics teachers association then the lecturer may well use those contacts to bring enthusiastic teachers from the classroom into tutoring roles or to deliver a few of the lectures to try and give that spark and that image of what is feasible. If the lecturer does not have those networks then that is much less likely to happen.

Mr SAWFORD—If I were a young teacher or just a graduating teacher—and it does not matter if I were primary, middle school or senior secondary—and I wanted to go and see someone display outstanding teaching skills in mathematics what would I do about it? How would I do it? Could I do it?

Mr Morony—I would hope that you could ring the local maths teachers association and get some contact, come to one of their meetings and lock into the networks that are possible there. I was recently at the annual conference of the association in New South Wales and had a chance to speak, just in passing, to four first-year teachers. Their eyes were wide open at the smorgasbord of good teaching practice that was on display in this conference. All of those people came because one of their colleagues, either in their school or whom they had known through their prac teaching, brought them along or said, 'You've got to come to this.' This was in their own time, over a weekend. Probably they had to pay for it themselves. So there was a connection through the association.

This cycles back to the general point I made that we acknowledge that we have not been tuned into the fact that we need to make deliberate and useful contact with the beginning teachers. I probably made it sound a bit like a matter of chance, and it probably is today. I hope that in 12 months or two years time it is not a matter of chance and that we have been able to contact our colleagues in teacher education and set up some real connections that create a transition into the profession, in much the same way as other professions seem to do. The engineers, for example,

seem to do a very good job of this, with Engineers Australia welcoming final year students and beginning engineers by providing things for them.

Ms CORCORAN—In your submission you quoted a person who wrote to you, talking about the thousands of other inquiries that have been held, and you made the point—I do not know whether they were your words or those of someone else—'I hope something changes now.' I have two questions. They might be the same question. What is it that you or your association want changed? Are there particular recommendations that have come out of the earlier inquiries that have not been picked up and that you would like to have picked up? So the first question is about the statement: 'I hope something changes'. What is it that needs to be changed? What is the broken bit?

Mr Morony—Carrying on from my response to the previous question, the thing to change is to institutionalise the involvement of organisations like ours at a national level—but more so, probably, the state and territory organisations—in teacher education and flowing through into the work of beginning teachers. Mentoring is an obvious and probably very productive thing to try and set up, but that has a time cost, which—as I think we note in the submission—is just not there in the busy life of established teachers. But some small capacity to have some time to really mentor younger teachers can only be good for their professional growth, their induction into the profession and, as well, their staying in the profession. So that needs to change.

Another change harks back to the Speedy inquiry, which is the second part of your question. There is no doubt that there was a substantial increase in the time allocated to mathematics and science in teacher education courses as a result of that inquiry and its recommendations. I recall speaking to some people who were doing a follow-up study and they did identify quite marked changes. I have not seen a current breakdown of that, but all of my instincts tell me that the gains made there have been whittled away in the construction of, particularly, primary teacher education courses. I would hope that you could have a look at the hours allocated to science and mathematics in those courses, because I think that is another thing that needs to change. Simply, these people do not have sufficient time on the task of learning the business of teaching mathematics, and I suspect science, as I say, particularly in primary schools, but it is also true in secondary.

Ms CORCORAN—Are your members primary teachers as well or mainly secondary teachers? Do you have primary teachers in your association?

Mr Morony—Yes, it is K-12.

Ms CORCORAN—One of our terms of reference is looking at the philosophy behind the teacher training that is done and the extent to which that is informed by research. Are you in a position to comment on whether the training of teachers being done at universities now is well informed by research?

Mr Morony—I cannot comment in a global sense around teacher education courses. However, the vast majority of those who teach in teacher education also research in mathematics education. So there is in many places a very strong connection between the research that people are doing and the teaching programs they have.

Mr FAWCETT—I have a comment, I guess, and a question. We have had some discussions not only here today but in other places about engagement with industry sectors to provide a pull factor and, if you like, a motivation for both students and teachers to tackle a subject area. I look at things like the national mathematics competitions, where there is sponsorship by industry sectors that actually fund the competition per se. One of the powerful things I have seen in the life of my own daughter, for example, and certainly in many other situations, is that when she understands the context of where maths could be applied she has a far greater interest and motivation. That is true for all kids. To what extent do organisations like yours play a role in actively seeking to engage industry on behalf of maths teachers and on behalf of the curriculum subject of maths to actually put some money into teacher education awareness programs for kids so that enthusiasm is actually there? I have to say that the maths evenings that my daughter has attended would be enough to turn me off for life, because it is presented as a very grey 'maths for the sake of maths' thing. It strikes me that your association would have the potential to really focus both industry and teachers and the trainers of teachers on some of the linkages between maths and the application of maths that provides that motivation. Do you do that at the moment and, if not, why not?

Mr Morony—Yes, your daughter is typical in her desire for relevance—how is this relevant and how does this fit? There is plenty of research that suggests that connecting with industry and seeing those real-life applications can be both motivating and good learning in itself.

I would agree that in principle we are at the front line of direct teacher support and engagement with industry, particularly our state and territory organisations. I do not think it has been a high priority for them at all. My experience is that it is pretty difficult to engage industry to get past some personal negativity to mathematics. A few years ago we had a project where we had teachers work shadowing people in the workplace at a large firm to pull some mathematics out from there—the sort of thing you might be alluding to. The human resources manager said, 'The only person who uses mathematics in this place is the accountant.' Once our people were able to get behind that negative view or lack of vision, the work site was rich with applications. We were able to translate some of those into some teaching materials and so on. But it is a difficult matter to engage with industry. The other thing is that the state associations are almost totally voluntary, except in the two big states; therefore, their capacity is limited by the voluntary time that is available. It is something that we certainly should continue to think about and work on.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—There is a very low number of students training to become teachers of mathematics as a specific specialisation probably in every state and territory. In so many high schools—to a lesser extent in colleges, but certainly in high schools—maths is taught as a specific subject and students are often being taught by people who do not have a specific interest or background in mathematics or expertise in teaching it. Do you think it is fair to say that the teaching of mathematics as a profession or craft passed from one generation to the next is pretty unsustainable? Is that a fair comment?

Mr Morony—The number of people training is a serious concern. It is part of the supply and demand issues that I am sure you are all well aware of. One of the potential and actual growth areas for teaching mathematics is mid-career entrants. One of the young people I mentioned meeting at the New South Wales conference was an engineer in the Navy. She has changed her career and is now a mathematics teacher in a secondary school. So there is great potential to

recruit from those sorts of people who are looking for a change in the middle of their career. That is something we should exploit not only because it helps with the supply side but also because it brings people with relevant industry experience they can bring to their teaching of mathematics. That is not going to solve the numbers problem, however. We would be keen to engage with any sorts of initiatives that assist in the recruitment of young people into mathematics teaching.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—There are four institutions in South Australia that offer teacher education. The University of South Australia alone has over 3,000 students. I do not know how many of those are in programs that will allow them to be specialist mathematics teachers but I do not reckon it would be a very high percentage. That is just a guess—

Mr Morony—It is a very good guess.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—based on what we are seeing all around Australia. It seems to be very much supply driven, even though there is going to be a teacher shortage in a very small number of years to come. So there is a need to train as many teachers as we can. But that problem, I am sure you would agree, is much more serious in both science and mathematics. So it seems that our preparation of future teachers is very much supply driven rather than trying to massage the cohort of students going through university as much as possible into where the demand will be. Do you think that there is merit in this committee considering a recommendation that goes to encouraging universities to try to match up, to the extent it is possible, places in the very areas where there are jobs in the future and where there is demand?

Mr Morony—Currently there is an active disincentive to become a secondary teacher of mathematics or science through the differential HECS fees for science degrees. That is something that seems untenable, given the fact that we have a shortage.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—So you are saying there is an incentive, if you want to be a teacher, to be a primary teacher—just on the HECS, I mean.

Mr Morony—No, to be a geography teacher, because your potential income is identical to someone who is teaching mathematics but their debt is greater.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—So what do you think this committee should be looking at in terms of a recommendation to the government or to governments? We cannot let this continue like this because we will get to the point where we have entirely lost our critical mass in terms of replacing retiring maths teachers, and the craft will be permanently diminished.

Mr Morony—I am harking back, I think, to our submission to the review of teaching and teacher education—the Kwong Lee Dow report. I believe we argued very strongly there for a return to bonded scholarships for teachers in demand areas like mathematics and for that to be full HECS remission and to create some substantial incentives rather than the continuation of what I have identified as a disincentive currently.

Mr SAWFORD—I totally agree with you. I think you need to slash the differential between HECS and, if they are teaching, between maths and science and other subjects. I think that is straightforward. But I think you need to do more than that. A way of doing it is your suggestion, or maybe a scholarship form—putting a three-year bond on it. If you are looking Australia wide,

to have any impact whatsoever you would probably need to do 1,000. That would just be a drop in the ocean in some ways but, from a South Australian perspective, at 10 per cent it would mean 100 extra in the teacher education system in South Australia. How does the figure of 1,000 bonded scholarships appeal to you as a beginning?

Mr Morony—I think it would be terrific. I am of an age where I was not a personally bonded student of the South Australian education department. My wife was and it has been a wonderful career. She would not have had a tertiary education otherwise. I think it has a lot going for it. It has been used, I understand, in the medical profession in terms of country doctors. I think the shortage of mathematics teachers is differential and more marked in a number of regional areas, so targeting people from those areas for those scholarships to return to teaching in regional areas is probably a good caveat to put on any initiative of that kind.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I accept what you are saying and I will let go of the bone in a minute, but my question was more directed at, in the absence of those strong incentives that you have suggested, asking or requiring universities to give further thought to the actual places that they are offering to students. Obviously universities offer a certain number of places in education, in nursing and in engineering, but within education it seems that the educational opportunities and the specialisations that people choose do not match the work force demand. There is probably overtraining in some areas and clearly there is undertraining in areas like mathematics. My question was: do you think that we should be considering a recommendation around that?

Mr Morony—Yes.

CHAIR—On page 11 of your submission you talk about anecdotal evidence that the time allocated for the maths component or the numeracy component of primary school teaching has been curtailed in many situations. Do you want to expand on that?

Mr Morony—It is anecdotal evidence, but it comes from experience post Speedy. From recollection, I think there were some minimum target hours set for university programs in terms of mathematics and science. The people who I speak to in teacher education have indicated that they have been diminished over time. I made the point earlier that it would be good to get some data on that. I can accept that it is just opinion at this stage.

CHAIR—As there are no further questions, we 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 your evidence and a transcript will be placed on our web site. Thank you very much.

[2.21 pm]

DAY, Ms Judith Christine, Acting Executive Director, Strategic Human Resource Management and Organisational Development, Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia

WAIBLINGER, Ms Louise Elizabeth, Director, Organisation and Professional Development Services, Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia

CHAIR—Welcome. 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 the parliament. I understand that you have forwarded a submission. The members of the committee are yet to be provided with a copy of that submission, so I ask you to make some introductory remarks and perhaps walk us through the key points that are contained in your submission.

Ms Day—Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our submission to the Commonwealth parliamentary inquiry into teacher education. As a department, we are very pleased to have been consulted. This has been very timely for us because, over the last 12 months, we have had a review into the South Australian Certificate of Education, which is our senior secondary accredited program. We have also had an inquiry into early childhood education in South Australia. The Commonwealth inquiry has tackled some of the hard issues which we as a department also see as being of great importance for us and for the future of our children and students.

The Department of Education and Children's Services have worked closely with our strategic partners—the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation—in developing this submission. DFEEST and DAAR have a major influence on the education of the students and children in our care. As you will see when you eventually get our submission, attachment 3 lists all of the people who contributed to our submission. It represents a very diverse group of people with a very wide range of views. It has been our role as a department to bring those views together and to make recommendations to the committee.

We are a little different from other education departments across Australia in that we cover from birth to age 18. We have the responsibility for education and care for children and students from nought to 18. So, from our particular perspective, the inquiry is a little narrow, because we have the responsibility for training preschool directors and early childhood educators as well as primary and secondary teachers. Our teacher training programs need to address the pedagogy and curriculum from birth to 18 years of age. In South Australia, much work has been done on developing in our teachers an understanding of brain development in the first six years of a child's life. These learnings really highlight the need to include the emotional, physical and social components as well as the academic components when preparing teachers for our preschools and schools.

Our submission includes a number of important recommendations, but there are some points which I would like to highlight. I think we need to examine and assess the criteria for selecting students for teacher training. Currently in South Australia, that is done through the tertiary entrance score. Because of the changing context of the environment from which our students and children come to us for education and care, it is really about engaging those students in learning and understanding their environment and the other influences—and they are fairly major influences—on their life and therefore on their learning.

We would like to see a broadening of the criteria for selecting potential teachers. In South Australia, as may occur in other states, this happens with students wishing to enter medicine at Flinders University, for example, where they look at, I suppose we could call it, interpersonal relationships and their ability to relate to their patients. We would like to see some form of interview and portfolio—really looking at emotional intelligence—as well as an academic score and academic ability. We would also like to look at simple pathways for entry to teacher training and the opportunity for prior learning to be acknowledged. With a growth in vocational education and training, I think industry and business experience is a huge advantage, and we would like to see the opportunity for people to be able to get acknowledgment for that experience in moving into a teacher training program and for people wishing to change careers—for example, a mathematician or a scientist wanting to go into teaching at some stage during their career.

As I mentioned, I think much greater consideration needs to be given to the context in which our teachers work. We are looking for teachers of students, not teachers of subjects. There needs to be a much greater understanding of the environment from which our students are coming—as I said, the social, the emotional, the physical and the cultural. We have a very diverse group of students in South Australia. We have students in the Anangu-Pitjantjatjara lands, students who have been living in detention and asylum seekers who have been through considerable trauma. We have a huge range of socioeconomic backgrounds and a large number of Indigenous students in metropolitan, rural and isolated communities. So it is a very diverse range of children and students, and I think we need to be very aware of that and how we relate and how we engage those students.

We would recommend also that an increased emphasis be placed on teacher practicums, as we believe that is the best way for people to learn on the job while being closely supported by quality teachers who can act also as mentors. At some stage during a preservice teacher training program, we would like to see perhaps a 12-month practicum.

I understand the implications of that from the resourcing perspective of not only universities but also us because of the increased resourcing that would be needed at the site level—the school or preschool level. We would need to be very cognisant of the quality of the teachers who support preservice training and mentoring of people and of the issues from the students' perspective. The majority of students, I would say, have part-time employment and putting them in a 12-month practicum will obviously influence that employment. To put them in a country location for 12 months would impact on their housing, lifestyle et cetera. Many issues would need to be considered, but I believe that the quality of the teacher and the greater understanding of the student would be of huge benefit. It would also assist us to address one of our problems, which is retaining teachers once they have graduated and entered the work force. Louise and I would be happy to expand on any of these points and answer any questions that you may have.

CHAIR—I will start with the issue of practicum. We have heard a couple of views. One is that, for some universities, it is very difficult to organise practicum; it is very resource intensive to make those links. Other universities that have stronger partnerships with schools do not find that as big a problem. With some witnesses, we have discussed the possibility of some form of systemic approach to an automatic placement of students with schools, with all the potential problems that may cause with regard to the suitability of the placement to the graduate. What are your thoughts on building a systemic approach and perhaps an anticipation by schools that they would receive so many prac teachers a year, whatever the case may be?

Ms Day—I view that very positively. At the moment, in South Australia, we are having a lot of difficulty staffing some of our rural and remote schools in what I suppose we could describe as the 'less desirable' locations. A number of years ago, we introduced what we call a graduate recruitment program, with which there is very close liaison between the department and the universities. Part of that graduate recruitment program is the concept of teacher practicums that are in the country. The person managing that program, who works jointly with the universities and the department, liaises very closely with our district directors—those who are in charge of the districts—and the sites to identify suitable locations for teacher practicums and to ensure that they have the greatest opportunity of success. That has certainly helped us to staff some of our more difficult locations. In addition, we target some of the subject areas that, in attracting staff, cause us the greatest difficulty.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Thank you for your evidence; there is some really interesting material there. You have just made the statement that you would welcome a greater involvement at departmental level—and I am sure that my colleagues and I would consider such involvement very welcome. I am sure that the universities concerned would welcome that also. What did you think of the evidence—if you were able to hear it—from the previous witness, representing the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, regarding my question about perhaps putting more effort into matching up the supply and demand in universities? I know that you will not be able to match it position for position or person for person, but what did you make of that discussion about attempting as much as possible to match up teacher training positions in universities with future systemic demands?

Ms Day—I think it is absolutely critical. Currently, we have a shortage of teachers of maths and science—it is becoming more and more critical—as well as technology and home economics. It is really important. At the moment we have not an overall teacher shortage but an ageing work force. I believe our work force is older than that in other states of Australia, so it is an issue and will become more and more of one down the track. It is absolutely critical that our work force planning people work very closely with the universities and target those areas that are difficult to staff.

You could also do this through the practicums. You could look at where the practicums are offered and organise them to be in locations and subject areas that we know will be difficult to staff. The department and, in particular, our work force planning and recruitment people should work very closely with the universities to target the areas that we know will be difficult to staff.

Mr FAWCETT—As employers of teachers, many people—including the previous witness, a maths teacher—have spoken of the option of bonded training of teachers within areas of work force shortage.

Ms Day—Yes.

Mr FAWCETT—Would DECS consider that, saying, 'We need maths teachers. We will pay your HECS fees; we will help out, as long as you give us three, four or five years of service'?

Ms Day—I was a bonded students, which probably shows my age. We have introduced a country scholarship scheme, which is very similar to bonding but is not for particular subject areas. It is about students from the country being paid to come to the city to train as teachers, on the understanding that they return to the country for a period of thee years and get permanency. It is very successful. At present, we get far more applications than we are able to fund. Yes, I believe it is an option that needs to be pursued.

I certainly do not agree with differentiated HECS and people studying maths and science having to pay more—because I myself studied maths and science. I believe that we should look at either reducing or removing paying HECS fees in subject areas that are very difficult to staff. In a way, we are doing that through the country scholarship program. As the maths-science teacher shortage becomes more and more critical, I think we will have to look at that more. Would you agree with that, Louise?

Ms Waiblinger—Yes.

Mr FAWCETT—I have a similar question on a smaller scale. We had a witness who is a mature age student just before lunch who is based in the metropolitan area but wants to teach in the country. She is having to give up part-time work, having to fund the petrol to get out there and is saying, 'I don't think I can do it or if I can it's going to have to be scraping off family members to get the money together.' Can you do anything for somebody like that at the moment under your current guidelines or is it something you would consider to entice and encourage people to do those country practicums?

Ms Day—That is exactly what I was referring to when I talked about the resourcing issues around practicums. With the graduate recruitment program that I referred to earlier, it is one of the issues and it is a big difficulty. We need to look at the resourcing both from a university and a department perspective to support students like that.

Mr FAWCETT—The reason it is important to get a feel for that is that we can make recommendations till the cows come home but if DECS and your equivalent in other states would not even consider it—

Ms Day—I think it is absolutely critical that we pursue that because it disadvantages those people who want to go to the country. We have great difficulty in getting people to some country locations in some subject areas, and so I believe we are going to have to look at targeting.

Mr FAWCETT—My last question comes back to the point you made about resources for practicums. The feedback I have had not just through this inquiry but from other student teachers is that they go to some schools and the school culture is to make teachers available in terms of time, resources et cetera to be a mentor. Other school cultures are: 'You were last in the staffroom today, so you get the student teacher,' and the student teacher is made to feel

incredibly unwelcome. Very little preparation is done and it not only colours their perception of teaching but also sometimes is reflective—

Ms Day—Puts them off.

Mr FAWCETT—of the marks they get. In terms of increasing resources, are you looking at having some kind of standardisation or some direction for principals so that when you get a student you will get these additional resources to enable them to have a mentor?

Ms Day—I agree with everything you are saying. I referred to the graduate teacher program and that is why we have the person in charge of that program work really closely with our district directors—this is in the country and that is how it is currently happening—in ensuring that the preservice teacher is going to be welcomed and supported, they will have somewhere to stay, somebody will be looking after their physical needs—where they are going to live; how they get around the place et cetera—and we will place them with quality teachers who will continue that mentoring role following the practicum.

Mr FAWCETT—Is that thought process going to extend to your metropolitan schools as well?

Ms Day—That is part of what I refer to when I talk about what we would like to do as far as extending the practicum program is concerned. The level of resourcing for that is something that needs to be investigated.

Ms Waiblinger—We have two new initiatives in our department to try and increase the numbers of teachers who want to take on mentoring roles. Firstly, we have just introduced an advanced skills teacher level 2 classification and that includes salary implications for those teachers. One of the criteria is around taking on mentoring responsibilities. We are hoping that is going to increase the quality of teachers because there will be quite a bit of rigour around what they need to demonstrate in that. It will increase the numbers across a range of schools that will be better suited and more willing to provide that kind of input.

The other thing we have introduced is professional standards for teachers, and we have a teacher leader classification in that group. They are based on the MCEETYA professional standards for teachers. With the teacher leader level, which we are looking at linking with AST2, that again talks about mentoring. So the idea that we have aspirational standards for teachers to think about adding back to the profession are two of the strategies we have introduced to try to combat that, because resourcing is going to be an endless issue for us.

Ms CORCORAN—I want to take you back to a comment you made—and I hope I have accurately written down what you said. You talked about a recommendation that you wanted us to pick up to examine and assess the criteria for selecting students and broadening it from the TER and bringing in emotional capacities and that sort of stuff. Do you make that because you see a gap at the moment?

Ms Day—I believe that the students of today live in a very different world from what they did 10, 15 or 20 years ago. All our research and our experience show us that the ability to form positive relationships with students is the thing that has the greatest impact on their learning. In

order to develop those positive relationships with students and to engage them in their learning, that is what I mean when I say that we need to look at teaching the student, not necessarily the subject, which is how it used to happen when I first started teaching. It is not just the academic content and the academic ability of a teacher which are important; it is all those other personal qualities which, I believe, are equally as important. You can be a brilliant mathematician but if you cannot relate to your students and if you cannot engage your students, they will not be successful.

Ms CORCORAN—If we are going to go down that track of broadening the criteria upon which we take people coming out of secondary school into teaching education, is that done by interview? How is that done? How do we go about selecting those students?

Ms Day—There are a range of ways. I would include a variety of indicators. I think the TER score is important, but I would also look at an interview, because during an interview you would be able to gauge communication skills and the ability to relate. A portfolio would be another way of doing it and referee statements. They are some of the things we could look at.

CHAIR—Other witnesses have addressed this point and basically said that the sheer number of graduates or beginning teachers going into a teaching course limits the options they have for looking at new students because of the workload in carrying out the process you are referring to. The TER score is a measure that is very efficient. It is probably not the best way but it is very efficient.

Ms Day—I understand that. Once again, it is a resourcing issue, and it is a time factor and a money factor. If we are really genuine about wanting, needing to get the right people into teaching and to retain them in teaching, it would be a worthwhile investment.

CHAIR—From a funding perspective, is that something your department would consider contributing to to assist the universities?

Ms Day—I am probably not in a position to commit departmental funds, but of course we are always open to ideas.

Ms CORCORAN—You also talked about the need to acknowledge prior skills, prior knowledge, when people come into teaching from other positions. We have heard evidence this morning and in previous hearings of courses that already do that. I assume you are aware of that. Are you suggesting that we need to go even further? I do not know the extent to which it happens. It does happen here at the University of South Australia. Do you think that not enough universities do it, or that we need to do it in a bigger way?

Ms Day—I think we need to do it in a bigger way. I look at some of our year 12 courses, for example. In courses such as hospitality and tourism—which are very popular subjects, by the way, and they can certainly lead to jobs for students—you can get the theoretical component of that through your teacher training, but to actually have worked in that industry and gained an understanding of that industry from first-hand experience would be a huge advantage. But I think it needs to be a two-way process. To take somebody from the hospitality industry and put them into a school and expect them to be successful teaching year 12 hospitality without the

support of some teacher training would be equally as difficult. Do you want to add to that, Louise?

Ms Waiblinger—Some of our thinking around that has been experimental in terms of working with graduate certificates in literacy, numeracy, social inclusion and behaviour management, where we have numbers of already very skilful teachers in our organisation who do not want us, for want of a better term, to teach them to suck eggs. So we have looked at having programs that recognise that valuable experience and theoretical base and have a recognition of current competency or prior learning pathways. When the contributors were thinking about that particular issue, their thinking was that there are a number of very skilful people who may want to take up teaching as a second career or, as Judith as said, who come from an industry that has a growth in terms of a course offering in a school, and we would not want to see them have to do a four-year teaching qualification to be prepared for that.

I guess it affects people who are in the situation of not having a first degree. If you have done a bachelor of arts or some other kind of first degree, you can do a one-year teaching qualification and go on and teach. But people who have come from hospitality, tourism and a few of those other kinds of industries may not have a first degree. Some may have TAFE qualifications or done competency based training of some description but others may not, so we would want to find ways to assess their skill levels so that they have less time spent at university so we can access them quicker as suitable teachers for the classroom.

Some of those other entry mechanisms that Judith was talking about—maybe doing some emotional intelligence testing or looking at communication skills, in particular—might be another way of helping to move them through a little more quickly as well, because they come with a range of diverse skills that are useful for teaching. That was our thinking on that.

Ms CORCORAN—I do not know if this is a point I want to make or a question of some sort: you mentioned the idea of removing HECS to encourage students into maths and science. I do not know whether you meant removing HECS or somehow funding it?

Ms Day—Funding HECS somehow, yes.

Ms CORCORAN—I do not know where I am going with this comment, but if it is suddenly a whole lot cheaper for me to do maths and science, am I going to rush in and do that when in fact I may not be the person that you want? I understand what you are trying to do, but you might get the wrong person. I do not know what the answer is; it is just a comment.

Ms Day—I do not know the answer either, but I think it is something that we need to look at. We need to develop some strategies to attract people into maths and science teaching. You made the comment about your daughter's attitude to maths, Mr Fawcett, and I can understand that; perhaps the way students have themselves been taught influences where they want to go. We have recently opened an Australian Science and Mathematics School in South Australia, where the focus is very much on innovative, forward-thinking ways of teaching maths and science and engaging students. Hopefully that will lead to a greater desire and willingness for those students to go on with maths and science. I am sorry, I got a bit sidetracked on that, didn't I?

Ms CORCORAN—That is fine; I just wanted to float it, that is all. Thank you.

Ms Waiblinger—I would just like to add one thing to that. I think that we would never want to see the entrance scores removed. Perhaps we could look at reducing HECS fees. Or we could make it easier for some by ensuring those who enter teaching doing maths and science have less HECS to pay. That way we are not going to get a massive rush, but we might pick up the best of the best and do a little bit of both.

Mr SAWFORD—We are about a third of the way through this inquiry and we are probably looking for 10 direction markers as major recommendations, and there are probably one or two just lying on the oval out there but we have not actually picked them up and stuck them in the ground. And we have not found the other seven—not yet. But one of the markers that has come up is the idea of partnerships.

With the exception of the University of South Australia this morning, much of the evidence we have been given is that there are very strong—maybe different, but very strong—relationships between the universities and participating schools in terms of practicum. But the link with the employing authority, be it private or public—and, in the main, it is Catholic or public—is very, very wussy. Reference was made here this morning that the relationship between the employing authority, yourselves and this university is very strong. Yesterday, I think we got a contrary point of view—that it was exactly the opposite. How do you describe the links with all four teacher education groups in South Australia?

Ms Day—Louise may be able to answer this better than I, but I would say that DECS's links with the University of South Australia are very strong. I think we can certainly see the positive benefits of that. They work closely together on the graduate recruitment program, as they do with Flinders. I do not think that the links are as strong with Adelaide University.

Mr SAWFORD—Is there a reason for that?

Ms Day—I cannot answer that. What would you say, Louise?

Ms Waiblinger—I think there are a couple of things—

Mr SAWFORD—We will ask them tomorrow, but we would like to hear your point of view.

Ms Waiblinger—I guess the thing that springs to mind when you ask that question is that Tabor College and Adelaide University are the minor players in terms of providing students for us. University of South Australia is overwhelmingly the major player in terms of preservice education for us.

I think that it is also largely to do with committees that we set up. University of South Australia and Flinders are very keen to be involved with us and, even on some of the federal projects like the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program, they very quickly and very keenly get involved. We do not seem to have that same level of interest from the other universities. They are certainly invited to all of the forums that come there. I guess when you are dealing with the University of South Australia, which I think provides anything up to 80 per cent of our teachers in a given year, you tend to work more strongly with a university that has the most impact on you as an employer. I would say that it is not that we are uninterested, or that there is any particular relationship problem, it is just that they are minor players.

Mr SAWFORD—Should all universities have teacher education?

Ms Waiblinger—All four of them do, yes.

Mr SAWFORD—No, should they?

Ms Day—That is a good question.

Ms Waiblinger—From my point of view—and it is a personal one; I cannot say it is a DECS point of view—I think that having more universities in rural locations to provide teacher education would be a good idea because a lot of people come off the land or leave the country to come to the city to train. That is purely a personal point of view.

Mr SAWFORD—We were very impressed this morning that the University of South Australia have a 39 per cent, I think, targeted equity program in terms of getting entry into the graduate programs. That is not the impression we get Australia-wide; in fact, it is very much the opposite. We get the impression that the overwhelming majority of entrants are metropolitan, middle-class and female. There is nothing wrong with any of those criteria, but there seems to be a dearth of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, people with disabilities, people from Indigenous backgrounds and rural, remote and provincial people. What is the situation like overall in South Australia from your department's point of view?

Ms Day—That is exactly why we have introduced the country scholarship program.

Mr SAWFORD—How many do you do?

Ms Day—Thirty a year, is it?

Ms Waiblinger—Up to 40 a year.

Mr SAWFORD—It is just a pinprick, isn't it?

Ms Day—Yes. More resourcing would enable us to have more. There is certainly the demand there. I think we had about 200 applicants this year.

Ms Waiblinger—Yes, we did.

Mr SAWFORD—I applaud you for the country scholarships. I think that is a great initiative. Why aren't you doing anything about disadvantaged people?

Ms Day—I take the point. I can explain what we are doing about Indigenous people. We have recently developed and are in the process of implementing an Aboriginal employment strategy.

Mr SAWFORD—We had Allen Campbell speak to us yesterday and that was a very impressive—

Ms Day—Allen is the person who manages the graduate recruitment program.

Mr SAWFORD—I am just conscious of the time. I know we were very impressed with that. That is one group of disadvantaged people. I think it might have been Mike Elliott from the University of South Australia who said that, in the area of Playford, for example—and I would suspect that in the north, south and west of Adelaide there may be similar stories—there are a decreasing number of young people going into universities, full stop. Of course this must have a major impact in terms of entry into teacher education. What as a system are we doing about it?

Ms Day—There is the Fairway scheme, which is targeting students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Mr SAWFORD—How many?

Ms Day—I cannot answer that.

Mr SAWFORD—It is a fairly minimal number, isn't it?

Ms Day—Yes. I believe it is an area that we could be looking at more closely.

Mr SAWFORD—Some people gave us some information yesterday in response to an open-ended question that I put to them: should we double the amount of money that is available for the practicum? David asked a question on behalf of that young undergraduate this morning who wanted to go to a country area and be able to pay for some board. It seems to me that the amount of money for the practicum is nowhere near what is necessary and it is straight out a payment to supervising teachers, when it ought to be more than that. Shouldn't it also be to cover costs of accommodation and travel to remote, rural and even provincial areas? Is that a recommendation that we ought to consider?

Ms Day—That is exactly what I am suggesting—that we need to put a major emphasis on greater resourcing for practicum.

Mr SAWFORD—You will have to answer this question with your personal view rather than a departmental view: sometimes Commonwealth governments put money into the states and it disappears into the proverbial general revenue hole. Do you think there is a case that, if we recommend that the Commonwealth pay a certain amount to add to the practicum to add to flexibility, there ought to be an equal or a part responsibility for the state to do the same?

Ms Day—As you say, I cannot answer that from a departmental point of view, but from a personal perspective I would be supportive of that.

Ms Waiblinger—I guess I have two minds about that. Partly I do think we have a responsibility as employers to make ourselves attractive as an employer, and certainly we want to have a really good supply. One of our experiences, though, is that many of our students do not come to us as the final employer. So perhaps there need to be a range of ways in which that is funded, because Independents, Catholics and other states do take a vast majority of our students. So we would need to think that through. I like the idea of a bonded kind of program, because I think that, if we know these students are going to come back to us, there is obviously a lot more incentive as an employer to put money in. And I do think we have some responsibility to the state in terms of supply and the other issues that you were talking about in terms of students of

disadvantage. But I think, right now, as an employer, we would have to be really mindful about putting money into something that does not necessarily produce something at the other end before we would add some funding to it.

Mr SAWFORD—Just to put it on the record, although you may not want to: what is the major constraint of reintroducing a bonding system in either a full or a limited way?

Ms Day—I do not know. We have done it with country scholarships.

Ms Waiblinger—We have, yes. I think, for us, it is something we genuinely would like to do, but resourcing is thin. That would be our constant overriding issue as an employer: how we put that money to something like that.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—In response to your answer to Rod's second-last question relating to the resourcing of practicum, I wonder what you think about an idea which I think we kicked around yesterday. It would not be a popular suggestion, but the amount of money which is paid to supervising teachers, principals and everybody else who seems to get a slice of it is really so minimal that it is hardly worth bothering with. Unless you are going to boost it significantly, you may as well just do away with it, which would free up some resources which might be able to go towards some of those costs that students incur in doing their pracs, such as fuel costs to remote rural areas. Obviously there are implications for awards and so on, but, shooting from the hip, what would be your response to that?

Ms Day—I do not know that I would be terribly popular with the teachers—

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—You can reward teachers in other ways.

Ms Day—We basically do it on the smell of an oily rag, so to speak, at the moment. If we are really genuine about increasing the relevance of the practicum, if we see the practicum as being particularly important, then we have to be prepared to put the resourcing into it, instead of taking the money away from the teachers. As Louise said, we are introducing an AST2 level, which is a higher level of pay. I would see part of the responsibility in being an AST2 to provide that support for preservice teachers.

Ms Waiblinger—Yes, absolutely.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Just by way of anecdote, when I was a teacher, for my last student teacher I received $33, a group certificate and all the paperwork that went with it, so it was really not worth it.

Ms Day—No, I would agree with that.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I would have appreciated a couple of hours a week off instead to do PD.

Ms Waiblinger—You have just hit on a point which I was going to make—that is, I do not think the money is an incentive. There are people who do not do it and would not do it regardless of how much the money was, and there are other teachers who would do it anyway because they

like to do that kind of work. I think we would be better off looking at other incentives for teachers who take that up, like helping them get to AST2, giving them PD time or those sorts of things. But we would have to replace it with something. The other thing that always ticks over in my mind is that we do have a union that we would have to negotiate those types of issues with as well.

Mr SAWFORD—It is interesting that on the record teachers will talk about time, and then off the record they will talk about status, which is the advanced teacher or leader sort of concept—

Ms Day—That is right.

Mr SAWFORD—and they will talk about money.

Ms Waiblinger—That is true.

Mr SAWFORD—I think probably all three are important. I think it was you, Judith, who said, 'We want teachers of children rather than subjects.'

Ms Day—Yes.

Mr SAWFORD—But isn't it also true that you need both?

Ms Day—Yes, absolutely.

Mr SAWFORD—Just as you need scholarship and research in teacher education; it is not one or the other.

Ms Day—No, I agree with you. I suppose the point I was trying to make was that, however well qualified you may be as a mathematician, physicist, biologist or whatever, if you cannot relate to your students, if you cannot engage your students, then all of that academic knowledge is really not—

Mr SAWFORD—But the reverse is also true.

Ms Day—The reverse is also true, but I think, particularly with the nature of adolescents and particularly the early teen years now, being able to engage them is absolutely critical, otherwise we lose them.

Mr SAWFORD—But there is another part of the trinity that may also be needed as well. You need a belief system.

Ms Day—Yes.

Mr SAWFORD—You need a passion. You need an attitude.

Ms Day—Absolutely.

Mr SAWFORD—You need a spirit.

Ms Day—I could not agree more.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. The secretariat will provide you with a proof copy of your evidence, and a copy of the transcript will be posted on our web site. Thank you very much.

Proceedings suspended from 3.10 pm to 3.28 pm

COMBER, Mr Kevin Daniel, Senior Education Adviser, Learning and Student Wellbeing Team, Catholic Education South Australia

O'BRIEN, Ms Helen Fay, Assistant Director, Catholic Education South Australia

WILLIAMS, Ms Monica Bernadette, English as a Second Language Consultant, Learning and Student Wellbeing Team, Catholic Education South Australia

CHAIR—Welcome. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that hearings of the committee 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. I would ask you to make some introductory remarks.

Ms O'Brien—Thank you. We very much appreciate this opportunity to be with you and have this input and a conversation to follow. We are here because we all have a very significant role in teacher education. We want to talk briefly today about our commitment as a sector to teacher education. We think that we are one of the key providers in our state. We also want to talk about the key strategic relationships we have and the importance of those relationships. We want to talk about the nature of the teacher education that we offer and some of the values underpinning that, and we want to talk about accountability requirements. If I were to think about some points that need to underpin all of this, we want to stress the importance of teacher education. We think that it is a lifelong pursuit for teachers—that learning is something that needs to be rich in all of the years of a professional life.

As I said before, we think we are a key provider in learning opportunities and we take that role very seriously. I guess we would want to have a conversation today to ensure that what we do in the future actually has a futures orientation. We would be saying that in a climate when there is a capacity to look back over the shoulder with a nostalgic view—perhaps to want what was in the past. We are saying that we need to keep our eyes firmly into the future. We will be making some of those points today.

Briefly, we have a very strong commitment to teacher learning. We work with the universities with student teachers, but once teachers come into our sector we see them as lifelong companions in their professional life and we provide a vast array of opportunities for their ongoing learning. We provide a lot of PD; we have a very broad consultancy. Underpinning the PD opportunities is a constructivist model, so we try to engage teachers in a constructivist model in their own professional learning so that they can be teachers using a constructivist approach. Our PD is long term; we have a strong consultancy basis. We try to get our consultants to work with teachers so that they synthesise practice and theory. We depend very strongly on research and we are outcomes oriented.

We cannot do that by ourselves. We can only do that with some other partners. Of course, the Australian government is a key partner for us. As you would know, it provides us with a very significant amount of money to undertake that sort of work. We complement that money with a very significant amount of our own funds that we gather through student fees or whatever other

means we have. So we are not only serious about that in terms of the structures but also we are serious about it in the provision of resources.

We have very strong relationships with the other educational providers and we work very hard at maintaining that. So it is not uncommon to see DECS and AISA—the government and the independents and the Catholics—working at the most strategic levels and sharing PD right down to the teachers. Those relationships are critically important to us in a small state. Similarly, we have very rich and strong relationships with the majority of the universities, particularly those that have a strong teaching focus. We are involved with them in some of their work and their committee structures right down to funding some of the positions that are held at the university level. I will now hand over to Kevin, who is going to tease out some of the elements of the constructivist approach.

Mr Comber—My comments relate to organising professional learning for teachers already in the work force. Catholic teachers aim to assist in the development of the students in intellectual, moral, spiritual, physical, religious, social and emotional ways. Our state curriculum framework, SACSA, is underpinned by the constructivist theories of teaching and learning which Helen mentioned. Such approaches begin with establishing and valuing what the individual already knows and understands, and they are respectful and value the backgrounds from which individuals come. The teacher supports the students to build on this prior learning, understanding and disposition, and involves the students in active ways to connect new learning to what is already known.

Our ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers are predicated on the two complementary ideas relating to the primacy of individual development and constructivist theories. In fact, the sort of teaching that we want for students is similar to the type of professional learning opportunities that we want for teachers. So we are aiming at the congruence between what the teachers are doing in the classroom and the sorts of things our consultancy is saying to teachers, and we are hoping that they will be pretty much the same in process.

In recent times our professional development has attempted to focus teachers on what quality teaching might look like, be it literacy, professional development, Indigenous education or numeracy. We have just stepped back a bit and said, 'What does quality teaching look like?' And key to some of those discussions have been intellectual rigour, inclusivity of approach, enabling classroom environments and a relevant connected curriculum. My colleague Monica Williams will expand on these points in a moment.

In Catholic education we try to provide ongoing learning opportunities for teachers which challenge them to reflect on their practice often through explicit action research. One current example of this would be an 18-month research project in collaboration with the University of South Australia where we are investigating the literacies of boys at risk in the middle years over six schools. We are looking at their home literacies, their community literacies and their school literacies, and we are saying, 'What can we learn from this research that might inform the way that we teach boys from these schools?' That project has been underway now for nearly six months, and we are already learning quite a deal using this action research model.

Across our consultancy we are trying to encourage our consultants, where possible, to work with teachers in their classrooms rather than for the teachers to just come to a course, and to develop a mentoring relationship. The potential for change and development in teachers is heightened by these action research and mentoring approaches, where consultants can celebrate preferred practices cognisant of the local context and extend teachers in their own understandings.

Some other things we have learnt in recent years about running professional development for teachers include the importance of the principal as the educational leader on that site. Where possible we seek her or his direct involvement in the learning opportunities that are available. It is not always possible, but we really do like to position the leader as the leader of the learning in that school.

We also try to position anything that we offer to a school as being part of its broader school development plan, so that it is not just a once-off—that it exists within the community that is looking to develop professionally in certain ways. Within that we try to counsel schools that apply to do professional development with us to look at their overall plan and not to take on too much in any one year, so that they get depth rather than breadth in the PD that we offer. We think that is more likely to be a nurturing environment for real change to take place.

In summary, we celebrate that many teachers are rightly engaged in formal tertiary study and we see the PD our sector provides as complementary to that. We believe the professional learning opportunities that we offer should have these constructivist underpinnings which I mentioned and therefore allow teachers to celebrate and validate what they are already doing well. Often in professional learning opportunities there is not that chance for teachers to shine and be expert. At least that would be the case in the past with some of what we have offered. But in more recent years we have tried, at least in the beginning, to say, 'Let's concentrate on what we already do well and try to articulate what it is that helps us do that.'

As well as those opportunities, we want to engage teachers with their own theories and practices in a supportive and reflective way. We are trying to help them to step back and to think carefully about what it is they truly believe about teaching and how that impinges on their practice. We also want time for them to engage with the theories and practices that are there in the literature in whatever field it might be, so that there might be some extension, broadening and deepening as a result of looking at that particular field. That will involve some professional reading and discussion. We like to give teachers opportunities to try out these new theories and practices in their own classrooms or perhaps to revisit some of their own wisdom in new ways as a result of reading and discussion. Finally, we hope that there is an opportunity for them to reflect on the outcomes of the action research that they are doing in the professional learning opportunities that they have with us and then make some decisions about future practice. I did mention that we have been focusing on the qualities of good teachers and the qualities of good teaching. Monica is going to, among other things, expand on that idea.

Ms Williams—I am going to look at the importance of research to inform practice, building on from what Kevin said, and in particular on critically reflective practitioners—that being a very important part of the quality of a teacher. Reflective practice involves teachers questioning their practice in a number of ways, such as: does it have intellectual quality and depth? Are respectful relationships integral to the classroom environment and is that environment so

supportive that it fosters engagement and scaffolds students towards interdependence? Does the teaching and curriculum support diversity and cultural inclusion? Is the teaching and curriculum connected to the students' background, other learning areas and the wider world? Are students required to engage in problem solving to construct new knowledge?

As reflective practitioners, teachers are lifelong learners with a real capacity to learn. They are excellent listeners and observers and have excellent practices around analysis and assessment of student demonstrations of learning. Another important quality in teachers is their capacity and competence in a wide range of pedagogical practices and these practices are embedded across all of the learning areas. Teachers have a strong conceptual understanding of what it is to be literate and numerate and embed this into their classroom practice. Collaboration is emphasised as part of the learning process because social interaction and the opportunity to work with others to be innovative problem solvers is an important part of students having social skills and the skills they will need when they leave school. Understanding student engagement is critical to providing optimum learning opportunities and resolving issues of student behaviour. CESA can contribute to all of those qualities, particularly by supporting the development and sustaining of effective pedagogical practices in our teachers.

For all teachers, particularly for teachers of students with special needs, it is important that they believe that their work will make a difference to these students and that they use inclusive pedagogies and methodologies that support atypical students. In the ESL context, the SACSA Scope and Scales is used and student literacy achievement is measured and it provides demonstrations of learning that will build on students' competence and highlight the areas that students need to grow in. For students with disabilities, teachers need to have a good understanding of the skills and the collaborative practices which enable them to work well with ESOs, paraprofessionals, occupational therapists and other specialists. Catholic Education South Australia makes a significant investment to provide ongoing support for teachers through broadening and deepening their repertoires of practices to support students with special needs.

Ms O'Brien—I guess what we are trying to say there, again, is that we take that role very seriously. We think that we are reasonably good at reading the trends, reading the needs, analysing those things and actually making a specific response to those so that the outcome of that is what we consider to be creative programs of professional learning that are deep and rich opportunities for teachers. That is not to say that there are not challenges. That is the wonderful thing about education. You never ever get to the end point. There is always a bar out there, and hopefully that bar is continuing to move forward.

I want to make a quick comment about practicums. We know that the selection of the supervising teacher is absolutely critical in a practicum. It does seem to us that there is an opportunity to link that with the emergence of the teacher standards frameworks that are being developed around the nation and through NIQTSL as well. We think that that would be a really good thing, because we see that sometimes a student teacher is assigned to a teacher who might not be the very best teacher that they could get. We think there is some matching that could occur there that would be supportive of student teachers in ensuring the very best outcomes for them.

I want to say something quickly about accountability too. As a sector we are committed to accountability. We try to build accountability and monitoring measures into all of the projects

that we run. However, in saying that, we believe that there needs to be a balance between delivery of programs, monitoring progress and reporting outcomes. We think that they need to be in absolute balance and that, when any one of those has a greater focus, then the opportunities for outcomes for teachers who are undertaking that learning are reduced. I guess that is a call for ensuring that accountability, monitoring and reporting is in proper balance with program delivery et cetera.

In summary, I think we have got a lot to celebrate. We have got a lot of challenges too. But I think that as a sector we are in a pretty healthy shape to be able to work with our strategic partners, with the Commonwealth, with other sectors and with universities in addressing those challenges. We do celebrate that we never reach that bar. It is a really wonderful thing. I think the cause for concern is when that bar is a constant. We would want to work towards ensuring that it is not.

CHAIR—I am glad you raised practicum at the end of your address. One of the things we have been discussing with a number of witnesses is the issue of placements by universities. There seem to be two schools. There are the universities that have very strong partnerships with schools that seem to make their placements relatively easily, and there are the other universities that seem to have some considerable difficulty in placing the large numbers of undergraduate teachers that they need to place. We have been discussing the possibility of a more systemic approach to placing students with schools: some form of mandated approach or a quota system. Quite obviously there is a need to match the needs of the students with the ability of the schools to provide worthwhile experience in those areas. I wonder what your thoughts would be on receiving a regular number of student teachers by way of some form of quota to take out some of the administrative burden that currently exists for universities trying to place their student teachers?

Ms O'Brien—I would have to take some advice on the concept of a quota. I would prefer to see a structure which said to good teachers, 'This is a responsibility.' I think good teachers know that and enjoy taking on students. I would prefer to see something built into the teacher standards which said, 'When you reach this standard of proficiency in your profession, you are well equipped to take on students,' so it is actually something of a status, rather than, 'Here's a group of students.' Luke, I am not suggesting that you are saying, 'You have to place them.' It is not as blunt as that. How do you achieve that outcome by saying to teachers, 'You are able to engage in this work when you have demonstrated your level of proficiency, when you are regarded by your peers as somebody who has something to say to student teachers'? I would consider that to be a professional approach, rather than a mandated one. Sometimes you have to have a bit of both: a bit of the mandated or an expectation or whatever. I do not think that we would be averse to that. I think the greater emphasis needs to be on saying to teachers, 'You get this privilege when you have attained a particular level of proficiency in your profession.' I think there could be some really fruitful work done around exploring what that might look like, rather than a mandated approach.

Ms CORCORAN—I want to follow up the question on the practicums. Do you see a role for teacher registration boards in perhaps accrediting teachers who have reached that level of competence?

Ms O'Brien—We have a very fine Teachers Registration Board in South Australia, and I certainly think that that board has the capacity to do those sorts of things. In fact, I am a member of the board, so I can say it is a fine organisation! I am a member of the board and I know that they are working on a teachers standard at the moment. All of those sorts of things are under the microscope, if you like, right at the moment. They are asking, 'What constitutes good professional practice?' I think it is an idea worth exploring.

Ms CORCORAN—Do you think that sometimes the teacher ends up with a student teacher who is perhaps not the right person?

Ms O'Brien—I think there is potential for that to happen. I would not say that that is a regular occurrence, but I think the potential is there for it to happen. I think of my own experience: I do not think I was with somebody often who was 'futures' enough. They were probably the rock-solid teacher about whom the principal perhaps thought, 'Oh yes, this teacher can cope with it.' I do not think that is what we want for student teachers. We want people to train these teachers in practice in the classroom who really have a vision for the future, who really are asking the critical questions around teaching and learning and are being courageous enough to experiment—not to take silly risks but to experiment. That is what education is based on. It is not staying with the present; it is always stretching. I think they are the sorts of teachers whom we want to be the supervising teacher.

Ms CORCORAN—It has been put to us by different people that the first-year-out teacher needs special care or mentoring. I do not know what happens in South Australia, but do you see any benefit at all in something special happening in that first year or two out and a role for schools in that?

Ms O'Brien—Yes, I think it is absolutely critical that those people get some sort of support. We have made some tentative forays into this area in the last two years. We have what we call a beginning teacher consultant. The work of that person has mostly been focused in the country areas where we have most new people starting. We have been overwhelmed at the positive response we have had from beginning teachers about that: how that person has been a lifeline to them and has been able to help them with practical things such as how you program—the sorts of things they have sometimes been just a bit too frightened to broach with either their colleagues or certainly the principal.

That is only one structure. There are probably lots of other creative things that need to happen to support those people. It seems to me that there is potential for a big fallout. I see people taking up these jobs and then they get to five years and I wonder whether they are going to make the long haul. I think we are the last of the long haul of professional people—people are going to move in and out of the profession more. We have got to do more to ensure that the early years are successful, that people are supported in the ups and downs of the emotional part of learning their craft. We have had this tentative start, but I think there is a lot more that we could do. Kevin or Monica might want to add to those comments.

Mr Comber—In answer to Ann's question, we have also got what we call a beginning teacher's literacy professional development project. It is a pilot project which we have been running for 18 months. Not only first-year-out teachers but also teachers who have been out one, two or three years are invited to come and be part of five days of professional development—not

all at once—in the literacy area. We provide mentor teachers for them and part of the in-service is face-to-face work with our consultant. But they also visit other schools with experienced teachers—sometimes quite young teachers—to see how the literacy theory and ideas that they have been exposed to in the course might pan out in practice. So they get a number of visits over a year to mentor schools and the consultant visits them as well as providing the central in-service. It is really to unpack further a lot of the good information that they have learnt in their undergraduate years—after having had some solid teaching behind them just to revisit there. It is for teachers in their first three years of teaching, and we have been getting extraordinary feedback about it, particularly regarding the visits to watch other teachers trying to put into practice some of the theory. Again, it is a pilot project. We had a hunch, I suppose, that this might be useful and it seems to be turning out that way.

Ms CORCORAN—That is here in South Australia?

Mr Comber—Yes.

Mr FAWCETT—We have had feedback from a number of people in areas of teacher shortage—maths teachers et cetera—that we should be looking at the bonded training option again. For example, you might pay the HECS fees of somebody who wants to become a maths teacher but in return they guarantee that they will work for you for three years, five years or whatever. For practicums where the students have to give up their part-time jobs—which are often what keeps body and soul together—particularly where those practicums might be out in the country with travelling costs and accommodation costs et cetera, the employing authority could perhaps contribute. Do you currently do anything like that, or would you consider bonded options?

Ms O'Brien—I do not think we would consider a bonded option. But I think there are ways of bringing a futures perspective to that previous practice by saying, 'What could an option look like where you have some incentives built into it?' We have had an incentive approach, I guess—I am not sure for how many years, but I think it would be for about three or four. Students coming through the University of South Australia and undertaking studies in the religious education component—we have a strategic relationship with that university around that—are interviewed by us as potential employees within our sector. So by dint of having undertaken the courses, which are foundational for teaching in Catholic schools, they have an opportunity to take up positions in our sector. They still have to win the positions but it is a bit like a foot in the door. That has been very successful. I think we have placed almost every one of the students coming through that course.

In addition, because they have come in through that course, we do things such as increase their salary level at particular points, pay their transport costs for shifting if they go into the country and all other sorts of incentives. Also, a very significant study option is paid by our sector to encourage our teachers to continue to study. We call it SIP, the Study Incentive Program. Teachers can apply each year for a grant to help them with their HECS fees and other things; that applies immediately from their taking up work with us in the sector. We have tried to do a range of incentive based things to attract teachers.

There is merit in looking at that notion and seeing whether more could not be done there. I am not sure that today the concept of being bonded, as when I did my training, would appeal to too

many. The labour market is such that people have plenty of choice as to what they might do—talented people—but I think you could bring a future perspective to that and make something of it.

Mr SAWFORD—I have a couple of questions, and one concerns language. Monica, you defined critically reflective practitioners with a huge range of attributes. How would you define 'constructivism'?

Ms Williams—Constructivism is building on anyone's knowledge. Kevin was talking about the type of pedagogy that we deliver to teachers, and that is based on constructivism. So it is building on the knowledge that they have already and valuing what they have done. For students, it is taking whatever knowledge they have and bring to the school and building on it.

In the context of ESL, it is looking at, for instance, the language that the students already have, such as their English, and recognising and affirming that and then looking at the particular things they need to learn to move to the next level. For instance, in the area of ESL, we have a particular document in South Australia called the SACSA Scope and Scales, which has 14 scales. That document details exactly the written and oral linguistic development of students. From a constructivist's point of view, you find out and build on where those students are at, knowing exactly what learning opportunities they will need to move to the next level.

That is just a particular example, but the same theory is used in all areas of learning for the students. At Catholic Education Office, we endeavour to provide our teachers with professional development based on building on their own learning; that was the mentoring that Kevin referred to. Apart from getting some general understanding of perhaps critical or visual literacy, it is actually working with the teacher in the classroom so that learning is built on their practice. The consultant is working with the teacher to help them reflect on what improvements they need to make to take their practice to the next level. Does that answer your question?

Mr SAWFORD—It does, in a very long way.

Ms Williams—I am sorry.

Mr SAWFORD—One of the things that worries me about education is the longwinded explanations of simple, basic and absolute truths. Ernest Hemingway wrote a wonderful book called *The Old Man and the Sea* almost in monosyllabic terms, but it was very powerful. Take a political person like Bill Clinton. If any of us here could get within even 10 per cent of the communication skills of a Bill Clinton, we would be absolutely enraptured. They use very simple language. There is a quote here:

Literacy is a flexible and sustainable mastery ...

And it goes on. No, it is not; it is just reading, writing and listening in all its forms. Constructivism is starting off where the kids are, so why don't we say that? We say on one hand that we are practising inclusiveness, yet on the other hand we are excluding a whole range in the community by using a language that is known to an ever-decreasing small group of people. Most people, if you got up in front of them and said, 'a reflective practitioner' or this, that or the other,

would not know what the hell you were talking about. People would not what you are talking about. Why don't we speak in plain language? That is my question.

Ms O'Brien—I think powerful communication is knowing when to use the discourse and when to use plain language. That relates to your context, audience and purpose. There are times when it is absolutely critically important to engage in that much more sophisticated discourse because you want to say something that is very specific and deep in particular aspects of meaning. There are other times when you want to simplify that message because the context that you are sharing it in—the audience for it—requires it to be deconstructed. I think a good communicator is one who has the capacity to know what language to use in what context and for what audience. I hope that was not too longwinded!

Mr SAWFORD—One of the things that has come to this inquiry is the types of people who are entering teacher education courses. Though there seems to be an increasing trend for more mature age people to come into teaching, coming from a wide range of former occupations, which I think in the long run will be a very healthy thing for teaching in Australia, you would have to say that the majority of people entering such courses—and this university is an exception in that it has a targeted equity program of about 39 per cent in terms of a range of disadvantaged groups—are middle-class, metropolitan and female. There is nothing wrong with any of those criteria. We heard again this morning that people from disadvantaged backgrounds, even in metropolitan Adelaide, seem to have a decreasing chance of accessing university, let alone teacher education. That happens in country and provincial areas, and it is very dramatic in rural and remote areas. Does Catholic Education South Australia have a view about remedying that?

Ms O'Brien—It does not have a view. It would not be unusual for conversations to occur around that, to note that sometimes there seems to be a skewing of people entering university, but Catholic Education has not done anything specific about it. I think that there are some long-term impacts that come out of that circumstance that are of concern, and I think that as a nation, if we can demonstrate that that is more than just anecdote or whatever, we ought to be doing something about that, because the best quality teaching profession is one that is representative of all of the sectors of our community. One of the things that we have found really hard to do—and we have worked hard at this—is to get any Indigenous teachers. We fluctuate from having one or two, at the most, to having none, yet we have had some structures in our office where we have supported some of the people who are in our Indigenous education team. They are not professional people, but we have paid for their attendance at university and have created all sorts of supportive structures around it. However, we do not believe that we have been successful in that. I think that as a nation we have to be a lot more strategic about how we do that. I know that our sector would welcome opportunities to work with the Australian government in resolving that.

Mr SAWFORD—Maybe we need to talk to people here. Thirty-nine per cent of the total intake is a pretty high percentage of people from disabled, rural, Indigenous, disadvantaged backgrounds. This is the only university where we have got this information, by the way. In the main, it is basically the other—metropolitan, middle-class, women. I think that is a big problem for the future.

Ms O'Brien—We would regard this university as one that has a really sharp orientation to social justice, and that resonates very strongly with who we are as a sector, because we try to build that into our programs and procedures.

Mr SAWFORD—How often, and in what capacity, would you meet with people here at this university?

Ms O'Brien—We hold positions on the most senior-level committees, such as the advisory committee to the School of Education. We regularly attend sessions put on for students to talk about opportunities in our schools. As I said before, we fund two places at the University of South Australia to teach religious studies and religious education. So we would have the sorts of strategic conversations that would have to sit around those sorts of structures. We feel that the university includes us to a very great degree. If they are thinking about a new course, we have an opportunity to critique that. We would be on a first-name and relationship basis with most of the senior people in this organisation.

Mr SAWFORD—If you were to give a recommendation to this committee, and it was the be-all and end-all, what would it be? Where would you start? A lot of reports come up with 70, 80 or 90 different recommendations. We are, quite deliberately, going to consider 10 or so major ones. What would you be recommending to us that we should consider first?

Ms O'Brien—It is our view as a sector that professional learning is the key to most issues. We think that if kids are not succeeding in X, we need to look at the professional learning that needs to sit behind challenging that assumption or that situation, and how we can do that creatively. In Australia, and particularly in South Australia, we are so fortunate because we have incredibly creative people in our three education sectors and in our universities. We have very rich relationships. It says to me that we have the capacity to provide whatever PD we discern is needed or is directed from the Commonwealth or whatever.

Mr SAWFORD—It is interesting that the university here said that professional development is in fact diminishing in South Australia, for a whole range of reasons.

Ms O'Brien—It certainly is not in our sector. We are one of the few sectors in Australia that has kept a strong consultancy basis. We all come from the learning and student wellbeing team. We have about 70 people in our team.

Mr SAWFORD—That is not bad.

Ms O'Brien—For a small sector in a small state, that is a very significant contribution that we continue to make—much to our director's feigned horror. When he sees the increases we say, 'We need a consultant for this,' because we want to provide—

Mr SAWFORD—Is that how you distinguish yourself from, say, the department—that you do have a strong consultative base?

Ms O'Brien—We don't distinguish ourselves from the department.

Mr SAWFORD—You just did.

Ms O'Brien—I am describing who we are. I don't know what the department's actual consultancy base is, so I would not want to be seen to be making a comment about that. They do have a different orientation in some of their areas to ours. Ours is very much about ensuring that we have this model of professional learning which is based on research, which is theory plus practical, pulling that together long term. We have not only held on to that for some time now but we have tried to develop it, particularly over the last five to 10 years. We think it has been pretty successful. We are not coming here saying that we have ironed out all of our issues. We have not. There are lots of challenges in front of us. But we know that providing professional learning opportunities and all of the other requirements that need to sit around that for a teacher, like time, recognition and all of those other facilitating components, is critical to the wellbeing of our students, our sector, the state and even the nation. We would be saying that we need to continue to support teachers in their learning—and really support them.

Mr SAWFORD—I think you have raised a very important point, and a point of difference. I will check this with the department. I used to be a consultant in the education department here, and there used to be a whole set of advisory teachers who were a very practical link between the universities and the schools. I do not believe that they exist any more in DECS. It is interesting that you still have them.

Ms O'Brien—We have chosen to build on ours, because we firmly believe that is the key. If you have an issue about student outcomes you have to have your teachers being able to address it. The way to do that is to make sure that they have the very best professional learning opportunities and environment around them to be able to do that.

Mr SAWFORD—So the three of you organise professional development in the Catholic system?

Ms O'Brien—Yes.

Mr SAWFORD—All the time, continuously?

Mr Comber—We have various other roles, but that is certainly a key role. For instance, I manage a team of consultants in one particular area. There are also other responsibilities where perhaps we do not have consultants but we try to have somebody within the central office who can at least take inquiries or speak on behalf of the organisation in some way. For instance, I would manage a team of seven or eight literacy consultants but often there may be an inquiry from a parent about gifted education. While we do not have anyone in the central office who is named as having the key expertise in that area, I would take that inquiry and try to support that parent in whatever it is that they need to find out. Similarly, all the other senior people in the office have designated responsibilities but they have a range of other management and curriculum responsibilities.

Ms O'Brien—We buy in a lot of other services as well.

Mr SAWFORD—Yes, I understand that, but that is a significant difference.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We will get back to you if we have any questions we need answered. The secretariat will provide you with a proof copy of your evidence and also a transcript of that will be placed on our web site.

Ms O'Brien—Thank you very much for this opportunity.

[4.14 pm]

BARTHOLOMAEUS, Dr Pamela, State Council Member, South Australian Association of State School Organisations

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

Dr Bartholomaeus—I mention that as well as representing SAASSO, I am here representing a group that works with parents in the state system, I am also heavily involved in teacher education. I work in two different organisations in the education section, but I am trying to confine my comments here to a focus appropriate to SAASSO rather than to my professional expertise; otherwise, I could well keep going forever.

CHAIR—Thank you. 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. I now invite you to make some introductory remarks.

Dr Bartholomaeus—First of all I would like to point out that SAASSO is a body that represents to the state education department and the state parliament the organisations which we have for parents relating to governance, so either they are governing councils or, in some schools, they are school councils. We very much have a focus on the role of parents in schools, particularly their role of governance. I have addressed just a few of the criteria that you have for the review.

Firstly, as an organisation we think the fact that teachers come from a diverse range of backgrounds is important. You have talked about a lot being middle class, metropolitan and female, but we are certainly aware that there are a number of teachers who are different and that, through that difference, they bring some really interesting richness to schools and that their students benefit as a result.

Several people on the state council of SAASSO indicated that they thought that teachers being well qualified was important and that, in particular, teachers of senior secondary students have a really good academic background in the areas in which they teach. One person indicated that he thought it was important that they should have at least a major in the particular area in which they teach or even an honours degree. In the early years of teaching they should have up-to-date information, expertise and enthusiasm in that field. We also think that they need to be well aware as teachers that, although they have completed their education, they need to continue to keep up to date in their field. For example, if they teach physics, chemistry or the performing arts there will be some really major changes in those fields over the years and they need to keep up to date with those changes.

On point 5 of your review, on the educational philosophy underpinning teacher training, again we make a point about teachers keeping abreast of current research in education and pedagogy

as well as the field in which they teach. Teachers need to be aware that they are training to be teachers but that that is just the beginning stage of their careers. Another point, and this is one that I make in my role teaching in the teacher education faculties, is that I do not see any emphasis on the role of parents in education. We certainly mention it, but people on the governing council have a role in the formation of policy in their schools and yet this seems to be a relationship that is fraught with difficulties at times, particularly if teachers do not recognise the expertise and the knowledge that parents have about their community and about their children, and the characteristics and the knowledge that they bring to school. Also, each community differs in the aspirations of the people within that community. Too often there will be negative discourses about communities if they are different or they are disadvantaged, rather that focusing on the resources that students bring to school and then working in concert with the parents to ensure that students stand a good chance as they complete schooling of achieving the credentials that they want. For some communities, such as rural communities, those outcomes are really important.

The role of parents and communities in schools is a tricky field because these days there is a really strong discourse in Australia about education being a private good. It is part of the reasoning for students being asked to pay HECS and it is part of the reasoning behind the different levels of HECS, because the education they are receiving is a private good. However, when people go out into the community and work and are participants in the community, that education can also become a public good. If it is a community that is finding life difficult and there are pressures because of globalisation or whatever, we actually need people who are flexible and innovative to help to make a difference in the community. I am not sure that educators understand that that is what is going on in some communities, what the difference is between some communities that thrive and others that continue to languish—the fact that some people are able to be leaders, think innovatively, think flexibly and also lead change in their schools. So that is an interesting challenge.

My last point—this is not included in my submission; my other comments have been highlighting the submission points—is that parents can have a role in the provision of practicum placements particularly if they are in communities that are distant from Adelaide. You talked about the difficulties in attracting students to rural placements—I should add that rural education is one of my fields of expertise and interest—but parents and their schools can put together parcels of characteristics that would attract student teachers. They can make it easier for students to locate what it is that they need to make the practicum more possible—for example, facilitating the locating of accommodation or maybe even providing billets. It is not simple but it can help. I think that is something that my organisation needs to work on: encouraging governing councils to see that they can have a role in their schools attracting students for practicum placements. That is the end of the comments I would like to make, so I will give you a chance to have a go at me.

CHAIR—I have a quick question that I have been asking a number of the witnesses. We have heard that there are basically two strands: one group of universities that has probably fairly strong partnerships with a range of schools and can place students relatively easily, and another group of universities that has great difficulty in placing students and where it consumes a lot of resources. We have been discussing the possibility of perhaps a more systemic approach to the placement of students with schools, particularly in the harder to staff areas, to introduce potential students or potential teachers to their future schools. What do you think of the idea of some sort

of—I will not call it a quota—arrangement where schools receive students and trainee teachers in regular numbers on a regular basis, provided that the skills match up with the ability of a school to provide relevant experience?

Dr Bartholomaeus—I thought that all the universities in South Australia had difficulty placing students. I am involved with Tabor College and Flinders University, and certainly from both of those places the last students can be quite difficult to place. On the idea of a quota, that is not quite how the system works at the moment. The schools have been divided amongst the different institutions and then they work to place as many people in those schools as they can. Yet there are other schools that would like to have students but do not receive students, for a variety of reasons. I think working to overcome some of those difficulties would be more constructive than saying, 'You need to take a particular number of students.' Again, it is rural schools that seem to not receive students and yet think they would like to. Because those schools are not on the list of the university—I think it is just metropolitan schools that are divided amongst the different institutions—it is sort of luck, when students say 'I'd like to go to' and then name a school, but then they are left to work out how they will get there. I think assistance with that side that would be more constructive.

Mr SAWFORD—Just following that on, I am sure yesterday when we were talking to people at Flinders and we were talking to some of the principals some of them indicated that they would like to be a part of the teacher education program but their school is never asked.

Dr Bartholomaeus—Isn't that interesting.

Mr SAWFORD—And the reasons that some of them gave as possibilities included that it was not convenient for the lecturer who was supervising them, it was too far away from home, it was too difficult a school and it was not a desirable area. There were all sorts of reasons. Is that an issue?

Dr Bartholomaeus—That is an issue. Because my expertise is in rural education and I divide my life between a metropolitan home and a country home, I am very likely to be given schools near where my rural home is. That then means that I need to spend at least two hours each way travelling to get there. It does not sound like a lot, but in a really busy week it is substantial. There is no compensation for that time. If I take a university vehicle, it is 1½ hours of travelling to the university and then back to more or less where I came from before I began the journey. So there is a lot of travel involved. That is just simply the travel and the time. I am sure that for some others there would be other factors that would complicate it.

Mr SAWFORD—Does SAASSO have a view as to how you could solve that problem?

Dr Bartholomaeus—It would certainly be easier if the time travelling were included as part of my load when I was allocated schools. I need to spend 38 hours, I think, in the next few weeks supervising students in schools but that would simply be my time in the schools without the travelling, which would be 12 hours—four hours for each trip—quite apart from travelling between the schools, which are usually further apart. That would be the main thing that would help me.

Mr SAWFORD—What kinds of issues do your members bring to your organisation about teacher education?

Dr Bartholomaeus—Part of the reason for this brief submission is that there is really nothing that comes up for discussion. When we decided to put in a submission, one of the main contributions was about the level of expertise of teachers in schools in relation to academic fields. That was from a member of state council who was a previous vice chancellor of a university, so he had a vested interest or insight. The main concern we have is with teachers understanding the sorts of input policy-wise that parents can have into schools. As I said, that is really not addressed directly in the teacher education that I am involved with—it is indirectly, in our discussions about social justice, but that would be as far as it goes.

Ms CORCORAN—If we are to pick up on that comment—and it is one I am ashamed to say I had not thought of earlier—what sort of recommendation would you like to see us make in our report? I am happy if you would like to take that on notice and write back to us.

Dr Bartholomaeus—I do not have anything in the way of academic references that I can provide but it has to do with understanding more clearly that the education of young people is a joint project between schools and parents, with heavy community interest in and reliance on the outcomes of the education of its young people. There needs to be a clear recognition of that role, and it needs to be worked out where in the various education courses that fits. There is one way in which that is happening, and I hope it will be to a growing extent, and that is in discussions about place based education, which involves a recognition of the nature of the community from which students come. That is not easy.

The example is Norwegian education. It was explained to us that it is bit like a strand through the education curriculum which narrows as you get towards the top. In the junior years of education the curriculum should be focused to a great degree on the local community, the resources that are there and the things that are interesting to the local community. A colleague whom I have met a couple of times tells me that it does not work like that. Because teachers need to spend so much time gathering new resources and new topics for their curriculum, it is easier to use what is tried and true and works everywhere. But an increased focus on place based education and on informing teachers about what that is, why it is important and the ways in which the community can enrich the curriculum, would be a really big contribution.

To give you an example, I used to be a member of the soils board in the community I come from. We have a fantastic big field day every year, with a whole lot of controlled experiments that have been put together by agronomists, fertiliser firms and so on. Our students never went to that field day. They read hypotheses and experiments in textbooks without seeing what these ways of investigating scientifically could look like, and yet a number of their parents would be going to the field days. It was a really brilliant opportunity that was missed, with an important scientific principle being applied to an industry that is important in the community. It is almost a trite example of place based education, but I think it is one that works.

Ms CORCORAN—So somehow it needs to be built into the courses that teachers do at university that this is another resource that should be taken into account—as simple as that, perhaps.

Dr Bartholomaeus—Sure. Next year at Flinders University we are implementing a new Bachelor of Education program. A colleague and I are putting together a revised literacy and numeracy course and we are going to start with place based education as a way of situating the literacy practices or foregrounding those practices for our students as they think about them.

CHAIR—As there are no further questions, thank you for appearing before the committee today.

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

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

Committee adjourned at 4.31 pm