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**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**  
**Thursday, 13 October 2005**

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

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

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

To inquire into and report on:

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

Specifically, the Inquiry should:

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

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

**WITNESSES**

**BRENNAN, Professor Marie, Head of School and Dean of Education, University of South  
Australia..... 1**

**GOODRUM, Professor Denis, Board Member, Australian Council of Deans of Education ..... 1**

**HARVEY, Dr Andrew Charles, Executive Officer, Australian Council of Deans of Education ..... 1**

**LOVAT, Professor Terence, Immediate Past President, Australian Council of Deans of  
Education ..... 1**

**WILLIS, Professor Susan Gay, President, Australian Council of Deans of Education..... 1**



**Committee met at 9.39 am****BRENNAN, Professor Marie, Head of School and Dean of Education, University of South Australia****GOODRUM, Professor Denis, Board Member, Australian Council of Deans of Education****HARVEY, Dr Andrew Charles, Executive Officer, Australian Council of Deans of Education****LOVAT, Professor Terence, Immediate Past President, Australian Council of Deans of Education****WILLIS, Professor Susan Gay, President, Australian Council of Deans of Education**

**CHAIR (Mr Hartsuyker)**—Good morning and welcome, and thank you for appearing before the committee. I declare open this public hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training inquiry into teacher education. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that the hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House itself. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission? If not, I invite you to make some introductory remarks.

**Prof. Willis**—The ACDE welcome this opportunity to present to you this morning. You clearly have our submission; we will not go over all the ground, although I would like to make a few points which reflect that document and which add some nuances. I would like to start by saying that we believe that Australia has reason to be proud of its teaching profession, that it is no accident that Australian teachers—indeed, often young and relatively inexperienced teachers—are in demand internationally. They are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, skilful, flexible and committed and they handle diversity and complexity well. These teachers are graduates of a wide range of teacher education programs across Australia. They represent a variety of educational philosophies and models of teacher education.

We believe that, on the whole, our programs have been doing a pretty good job and they have been doing it on the smell of an oily rag. Having said this, we also believe that there is room for improvement and renewal. There is a need for innovation and there is also a taste within the sector for a more consistent approach to accountability. So we welcome any assistance the inquiry can provide to help us further these agendas.

The ultimate goal of teacher education is to educate skilled professionals who can teach all students in all circumstances. Clearly this is a challenging prospect but one we are faced with; we cannot resile from it. Of course, the ultimate consumer of our product is not the students in our classrooms but the students in their classrooms. The purpose of our education is to enable our students to engage and transform their students to contribute to societies that we can only begin to imagine for futures we cannot predict. We are also increasing our knowledge about children and about learning and teaching, and teaching is becoming an increasingly more

sophisticated affair. All of this requires that teacher education programs change and improve—that they are forward-looking, that they find new ways and, indeed, that they take some risks.

The renewal challenge for teacher education is to find approaches to preparing teachers for new times based on new knowledge, approaches that are robust and that are sustainable beyond the enthusiasm of the moment. Short-term and bandaid solutions to ill-understood problems or even non-existent problems is not what we need. We believe that there are a lot of good ideas out there and I am sure you have heard some of them over the last months. We are eager to try new things and to rigorously assess those innovations. But, to be blunt, innovation has to be funded, as do evaluations of those innovations, and the resources are not there at present.

We believe that there is an urgent need for an investment fund to support innovation in teacher education. Such a fund would enable us to draw on the lessons of the various small-scale innovations around the country and to develop larger scale studies—evaluation studies and productive studies. Such studies would help us to understand what kinds of approaches work best under what circumstances. This leads me to the matter of accountability, about which I will make a few brief comments.

It is clear that the quality of entrants to teacher education programs has improved remarkably over recent years. This is partly because teaching is once again a career of first choice, for a whole range of reasons, which we have mentioned in the report, and partly because there is a shortage of places, so we are able to select quite able students from amongst those who apply. Nevertheless, it is also clear that there are a huge range of students in our teacher education programs and that there is wide variation in the entry requirements. Contrary to the views of some, we do not believe this to be a bad thing. Indeed, when you take that in conjunction with the variety of ways of doing teacher education and the variety of entry pathways, it enables us to address issues of equity and access and it increases the diversity of the teaching population.

In the early stages—and I hope not so often in the later stages—of their development, our students often ask us to tell them what always works in the classroom, and we say, ‘Nothing works all of the time and very little works none of the time. Approaches,’ we say, ‘work in particular circumstances, in some contexts, with some students.’ Surely we should expect no less from teacher education. There is no single, best model of teacher education. Different approaches will suit different locations, different contexts and different circumstances. So we believe that diversity in teacher education students and diversity in teacher education programs are both good things.

However, it does not mean that anything goes or anybody should get in or out. We must be prepared to stand accountable for our programs. We must be prepared to stand accountable for our graduates, and we are. So we would welcome the opportunity to participate in, and perhaps even lead, the development of a national framework for accreditation of teacher education programs, applicable across all states and territories and connected to other international systems of the same kind. Such a system should focus on setting exit standards for beginning teachers rather than input standards for programs. Accreditation should require that institutions demonstrate how their programs ensure that the standards are met rather than require them to have particular models or versions of teacher education.



The ACDE welcome teacher education being a national priority. We think it deserves to be, partly because we have looming teacher shortages but more importantly because the world is changing around us. However, as pointed out in our submission, so far being a national priority has cost us dearly. I often jokingly say to my students: if nursing is the caring profession, teaching is the hoping profession. Well, we hope that this inquiry will turn a Clayton's national priority into a real one. Marie will add to my comments.

**Prof. Brennan**—We had a meeting earlier in the week and one of the things that we were very pleased to note was that there is reasonable unanimity across all of the faculties of education that a practice based only approach will not work. We have been talking about that with a number of principals and other groups. We believe that we need to keep education in universities for a range of reasons. Firstly, you cannot do good practice unless it is connected to research, and I think that is a really important aspect from our point of view. Also, we need to have that there to effect daily practice in the programs.

Secondly, a lot of research allows us to understand that you need both on-the-job and off-the-job reflection and learning. It is the combination of those that is absolutely critical. Even in the VET sector, apprentices need the time out from their workplace to reflect, understand and build their knowledge clearly.

Thirdly, we have gone into some of the research, particularly in England and Wales with the Teacher Training Authority, and one of the findings and evaluations that have been made in the UK suggests that it is extremely expensive, even more expensive than the current model, to put student teachers only in schools. Also, the schools do not have the resources to do that. So we need some form of a hybrid system, such as what we have got. We are also noting that, as all of the programs go through their regular five-year reviews in the different universities, most of the programs, particularly the undergraduate programs, are putting in place a capacity for students to engage in research themselves. We need them to be helping to invent the new practices for the new times that are around at the moment. Compared, say, to 15 years ago, I think you would see that almost everything, except the one-year Dip. Ed.—and I have already presented on that topic—makes a really clear space for the research dimensions of schooling.

**Prof. Goodrum**—Sue has touched on the importance of resources. There is no question that there is a clear relationship between resources and outcomes in terms of what you are doing. If you look at the submission that we have made, you see we have tried to show that the data clearly explains that the actual human resources in teacher education have been substantially reduced during the last decade or so. That has had an impact. As a result of that, we have had to become more efficient, and we have done that. But the reality is that, if you look at the international studies in terms of student achievements, you see that as a country we are beginning to plateau. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and the PISA study indicate that the other nations are catching up and we are not getting any higher. If we want to go to the next stages, we will need the resources to meet those next stages in terms of our expectation. In what ways? In terms of the research dimension, obviously; in terms of innovations; and in terms of the greater emphasis on professional learning. The intellectual leadership required for each of those resides, obviously, in the university sector and, in particular, the teacher education dimensions of that. As I indicated, our resource base in terms of our personnel has been substantially reduced in recent years, so that is where the resources become so important.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for what was a very comprehensive submission. It really was quite enlightening. I had a question in mind in relation to national accreditation standards, and you mentioned those in your address. Would you like to expand on those a bit more or were your views fairly well fleshed out in what you said?

**Prof. Lovat**—ACDE have been very supportive from the beginning of the notion of national accreditation. We believe that the time has come to break down any old state and territory boundaries around accreditation, given the movement of population and the statistics as to the much more mobile profession that we have. Indeed—and I have had this conversation with Gregor Ramsay on many occasions—I believe that it actually needs to be even bigger than that and that we need national accreditation that is in tune with those of major provinces overseas, like the United States, with the NCATE and TEAC processes there, and the UK—the places where our teachers in fact do move to regularly and indeed where teacher training has the potential to become an international part of an enterprise in the future.

My own view—and I have had this conversation with the MCEETYA groups responsible for the intersections of the state, territory and federal areas—is that the various institutes that are being set up at the moment around the states and territories do very well the job of individual teacher registration. They are employing body kinds of overseeing groups. Some of that obviously touches on the business of accreditation. Indeed, if we do not separate the business of genuine higher education quality assurance from the business of individual teacher registration and all the very real concerns there—child protection acts and those sorts of things—the business of teacher education, the accreditation issue, tends to end up serving the registration issue. So it is a way in which I think we can use the federal system quite well to say that states and territories do the employment and that they need to look to the registration issue but that we need a national accreditation process that takes that—the needs of employers—into account but has a bigger vision about higher education quality assurance, making sure that we have the best internationalised programs in place.

**CHAIR**—On the issue of accreditation versus registration: in the interests of efficiency why wouldn't you just fold the registration process into a national accreditation process?

**Prof. Lovat**—It would not fit, to my mind, unless what went with it was a total federalisation of education. The beauty, in a sense, of a national accreditation system in Australia as against that in, say, England, is that the business of employability per se is taken out of it. It can then concentrate on a genuine quality assurance mechanism that could in fact dovetail beautifully with the sort of work that AUQA does.

**Prof. Willis**—There are also certain advantages in having something restored. You are likely to get some broad acceptance of accreditation: there is a fair bit of goodwill out there for such a thing, and the teacher education community is the community, in a sense, that has to all come onside about accreditation. They will have a national perspective because they are teachers and we are creating teachers for Australia and the world. You would have to get each of the jurisdictions to agree in sometimes finding nuanced ways with regard to registration, and that might be a little harder and take a bit longer. They may come on eventually if the accreditation is such a good deal.

**Prof. Brennan**—The registration authorities have an agreement to try to work towards national portability of that, in a much more detailed way than they have done. There have been some general agreements. Until very recently, only South Australia and Queensland had teacher registration. They are working towards that by the end of next year, so by the end of 2006 they will have some kind of a national system for teacher registration, and I think that body is the appropriate group to do that.

**Prof. Willis**—Funnily enough, the mechanism is already there for registration to be, in effect, common, because while they do not recognise programs—they do not accredit programs—they recognise registration. So if you are registered in one state, another state will deem you to be a registered teacher for the life of that registration. So if one state actually recognises registration and gives you permanent registration according to the accreditation, effectively the others already recognise that.

**CHAIR**—One of the questions that comes up repeatedly is: where does the money go? You have stated that education is frequently invoked to subsidise other disciplines. You state:

... it has not been uncommon to find the very large teacher education programs (having found ways of becoming relatively cost-efficient) being used to cross-subsidise the truly expensive end of higher education.

How do you know that is happening? What evidence do you have of that cross-subsidisation?

**Prof. Willis**—Maybe I should begin. I do not believe that happens heavily in my own institution, so I would have to put that on the table. It is variable in institutions because institutions vary in the transparency of their allocations. However, what is reasonably clear is that the sciences and the medical faculties, which have very expensive infrastructure costs—things like space and building up that infrastructure—are increasingly expensive. They are often very labour intensive parts of the university and the research enterprise is often very expensive. The overheads that come off the top, so to speak, in many institutions are disproportionately allocated to those faculties, yet all faculties are paying similar proportions. Some faculties of education may be charged proportionally the same amount of money—a proportion of the total amount of money coming into the institution—and that looks fair, but in fact they are getting less of it back. I think that is the way of cross-subsidisation. It is not so much that money is being lifted out of the educational spend over here; it is that the budget models mean that, in effect, that is likely to be happening. To the extent that you increase the transparency, it becomes more obvious. Terry, do you have something to add to that?

**Prof. Lovat**—There is a term of reference around this issue. I think we have addressed that as honestly as we can. It is not something that I am afraid to embrace, because a lot of it goes back to 1988—the DEET weights, the lack of revisioning, I suppose, and the lack of empirical work around what things really do cost in an institution. So the average vice-chancellor these days is faced with the dilemma of having to make a university function with a funding arrangement that really has little to no science behind it that is at least relevant to today. It is a bit of an international issue, not just for teacher education but, indeed, for the likes of arts courses and all the low-income but low-cost end as against the burgeoning costs around an engineering faculty or medical research. It just makes sense. It is not something to be frightened about; it is just a reality. It is not something to punish universities about. The formula would suggest that the way

around this is to take a bit of money, but that would in fact create huge problems for a lot of Australia's universities in the current environment.

One of the ways around it is the US way—to ensure that whole universities, which took responsibility for teacher education at the time of the unified national system, are 'conscientised', if you like, in a greater way to continue to fulfil the commitment that was made back then, in 1988, when the purpose-built colleges were rolled into a unified national system. Teacher education was just one of a thousand issues that had to be sorted out. It probably was not high in people's priorities. We know that certain universities did resile through the nineties from their commitment—closed things down in the face of national shortages et cetera. I think the way forward for a federal inquiry is to be conscious that teacher education is a genuine national priority—the university system is the system that has the responsibility embedded—and to ensure that that is very high in the priorities of university councils, presidents, vice-chancellors et cetera. That particular approach seems to have worked quite well in the United States.

**Prof. Willis**—Can I add something to that? I am in a university which has activity based costing, strategic cost management and so on.

**Ms BIRD**—Professor Willis, could you clarify what university you are at?

**Prof. Willis**—Monash. So, in effect, the whole of the allocation from DEST comes into my budget—not a penny goes off the top; the whole comes in—and then I have to pay for the services. So I know where the money is going. Everything is driven by quantifiable indicators. Whatever the student load is, that is multiplied by a certain amount, and that is how much money you pay for enrolments and so on; whatever the area is that you are using, that is multiplied by something and that is what you pay for insurance, cleaning and all that sort of stuff; whatever the library is—and whatever the staff numbers are, that is what you pay for HR. So I know what that is. Also, that enables me to do very detailed costings of the placement which build in all of the aspects of the placement, not just the teacher payments more or less.

Our Graduate Diploma of Education program never breaks even. We subsidise it from our masters programs. We do not get more than the weighting DEST gives—and many universities give more than the weighting DEST gives; that is the other side of that point. In my university, we get exactly what we get. At the moment, only 40 per cent of my income comes from the Commonwealth, so this is not largely Commonwealth funded. If we did not have international students and fee-paying students—they heavily subsidise Australian students; there is no question about that—we could not sustain the operation. When I do the costings, there are the grad. dips, and for many of our programs we have four-year programs, but they are double degrees, so we only teach half of them. The fact that we only teach half of them means that we only get funding for two years of the four years, but we have to cover all the placement costs out of that as if it were a four-year program. I have to tell you that we subsidise our teacher education programs from everything else. The rest of the university subsidises graduate and postgraduate programs from its undergraduate programs. It uses the undergraduate as the engine that feeds the rest. In education, it is the other way around.

**Prof. Goodrum**—I will just add to that dimension. Each of us in our responsibilities within the teacher education sector is tempted to go down the undergraduate overseas funding route. But the reality is that the implications of that for our own school system would be horrific—

**Prof. Willis**—Yes, you cannot place students.

**Prof. Goodrum**—and many of us are not willing to do that. But there is a challenge there, I guess.

**Ms BIRD**—Professor Goodrum, could you just expand on that a bit? My understanding is that much of the international training we are doing is in countries that are developing and buying our education programs and setting up their own training, and that that is going to be a significantly dwindling base for us to draw on as well. Would that be your experience at the universities? Places like China and so on are building.

**Prof. Goodrum**—In terms of China, most of our emphasis, again, is at the postgraduate level, not the undergraduate level. Will it continue? There probably is a finite dimension to that. But there is a potential huge market in undergraduate education from a number of countries. I guess we are not willing to go down that path because many of us feel that that will cause potential problems within our school system. For the practicum, which is an important component of our teacher education courses, we rely on the fact that our students go into schools on the basis of invitation. There is nothing that we would do to affect that invitation.

**Prof. Willis**—We put a very severe limit on our undergraduate teacher education international for exactly that reason: we are simply not prepared to take away the places in schools.

**Prof. Goodrum**—I think it is important to understand that. When you think of the funding arrangements for other discipline areas there is no question that, in terms of business, engineering and science, the potential for fulfilling the funding dimension from those areas is much greater. We do not have that.

I would also reinforce the impact of the \$1.3 million relative funding model of the early 1990s, the triennium 1991-93. That had a substantial impact on us, without question, and that has been well documented in the number of inquiries that have been held. We still are affected by the decisions of those days, even in terms of the clustering modelling that occurs at the present time. The universities do not control that; the Commonwealth controls that. But it has had a significant impact on our activity.

**Prof. Brennan**—That is one of the reasons that the staff-student ratio is such a problem. If you are only behind business and IT in relation to the staff-student ratio, a lot of those staff-student ratios are in areas where you are mostly dealing with mass lectures, or offshore lectures or lectures heavily subsidised by international numbers. In education, which is a human service profession, the way you induct people into the profession is by working with each other as colleagues and peers. You need a different kind of staff-student ratio. The fact that we are the highest in the university sector after ICT and business is a really serious worry. Most of the tutorial classes, where we have rooms big enough, have 35 students.

**Ms BIRD**—So you want maximum class sizes?

**Prof. Willis**—You cannot have 30.

**Prof. Brennan**—It is normal that people will have 30 or more in a class.

**Prof. Willis**—In addition to having big numbers in lectures. So you have the big lecture, and in addition the small group teaching is 30 students.

**CHAIR**—You are still a big group.

**Prof. Brennan**—That is right. So that is one of the ways inside the university that we miss out on our share of infrastructure: our staff-student ratios are extremely high. I am at the University of South Australia and at one of our campuses we do not have enough rooms to put people in, even if we could have the staff-student ratio. But I am sure we would find a portable.

**Prof. Willis**—Every year we knock out a few walls to make two rooms into one.

**Ms BIRD**—You really are appropriately culturally inducting them for the school system.

**Prof. Brennan**—Absolutely right.

**Prof. Willis**—I have to tell you that most of our students get a pleasant surprise when they look at the IT in schools.

**CHAIR**—I would like to expand on the question I have just asked. In your submission you say:

Additional problems lie in the criteria often established for redistributing funds within the university.

... ..

These central collective funds are redistributed according to criteria such as completions and fee-paying students, in which Education is relatively ill-equipped to compete.

Could you please outline the internal criteria by which the universities redistribute Commonwealth funds? Could you outline the criteria, whether the criteria are consistent across universities, who sets the criteria and how we track them?

**Prof. Willis**—I think they are quite inconsistent across universities. I know that this example does not happen in my institution but it does happen in others. The council of deans has had case after case where people would talk about how that happened. It certainly does not happen in every institution, and it need not. The fact that it does not happen in every institution means that it need not.

**Prof. Brennan**—The people who are responsible for this are the councils of each institution. They have a finance committee that deals with it. That body is an independent one set up under parliament in each state and territory. One of the issues for us is that we often do not get access. We do not know the internal processes of the universities. Some universities, for example, make public that they give 50 per cent of their money to the faculty or school level, others get even

less, and the rest goes on the infrastructure. So when you are talking about not getting the money back, the university might have a big fund for full-time doctoral students with scholarships, for example.

In our profession people go out to teach, and then they might come back to do a PhD. Most of them do that part time, because they come back midcareer. Many of them have family and work responsibilities so they are part time. So our students do not get the scholarships. They do not get the kind of medical laboratory infrastructure that Sue was talking about. Everybody knows that if you have a medical faculty it is like a yacht: the hole in the water into which you throw money. So those particular universities have a difficult job in working out how to subsidise all of their research equally.

You do not have a large number of undergraduate international students paying full fees, which is much more profitable for the university sector. It is not just that we cannot find places for them and are trying to make sure what places we do have fill the Australian teacher shortage; it is also that other countries do not particularly want to have their citizens trained by people who are from another culture. In Confucian cultures, teacher education and the role of teachers is quite different to the Australian version. For us that is not going to be a huge option, even where I could bring in any number of Indian and Chinese students tomorrow. Like Sue, we actually do place a quota on that.

Inside the university you also have to look at capital works. In my own university, unless we actually physically replace buildings, there will not be a university in 10 years time, because the infrastructure is so old. If you have capital works inside the university and you have a lot of faculties that are medical or heavy science or satellites or whatever, their buildings cost a great deal more than ones for us. So we do not get access to that.

**Prof. Willis**—I have one little good news story in all that—just to be enthusiastic. We have had a little bit of a win recently in regard to placements. It was not that hard to win, in fact. In Victoria we wanted to be able to place our students internationally. We thought that would be a terrific experience for them. The problem was that placements had to be in Australia to count as the number of days of placement. The Victorian Institute of Teaching has now said that the placement can be somewhere else in the world as long as the supervisors are registrable with VIT. They do not actually have to be registered. That is a real plus. We already had some London placements and we have some in the Cook Islands. We are now doing deals in Japan for Australian teachers to actually study in residence in Japan doing our course in placements there. There is some possibility of reciprocity, and that would be a very good thing to suggest. It is a good thing for Australian teachers to experience international placements. All it took was VIT saying, ‘It does not have to be in Australia, as long as it is somebody who we would recognise as a suitable person who supervises it.’ That is terrific.

**CHAIR**—To home back in on the funding, given that the government provides funding on the basis of places in education courses, should the government be able to ensure that universities actually spend that money on education by allowing the federal government perhaps to stipulate the criteria instead of the university administration?

**Prof. Willis**—No.

**CHAIR**—You don't like that one?

**Prof. Willis**—No, not at all. I like our system and I would not like to have some other.

**Prof. Brennan**—I recommend activity based costing. It is the way that many institutions are going to go. That will make it more transparent both externally and internally. There is a problem with one set of standards. Our situation at UniSA is that we do not have capital stock. We have to put more of our overall load into capital in order to be able to be a fiscally responsible institution, whereas another place may be very rich in capital but not rich in research, and they may need to put more of their money into that. The diversity of the system and the fact that it actually meets diversity is important.

**Mr SAWFORD**—So the key is transparency?

**Prof. Willis**—Yes, the key is transparency.

**Prof. Brennan**—Yes, I think the key is transparency. That is where I think activity based costing is a good way to go, but it is expensive to institute.

**Prof. Willis**—Can I also say—and I am probably a bit of a lone voice here—that one of the things that transparency of costing has done for us is that it also has persuaded us that we are a very high cost to the university. In other systems we have constantly assumed that we were subsidising the sciences, whereas there were some aspects in which we were being subsidised quite heavily. Just to give you an example of what I mean by that, in almost every state in Australia a very high proportion of teacher education programs are short. You basically have a large number of students going through one-year graduate diplomas or doing two years of education end on. We also have a fairly high proportion of masters programs. Equally, many programs are part time, because that is the nature of our beast. That all adds enormously to the cost of student enrolments and engagements.

In my university, our ratio of commencements to load is the highest of anywhere in the university. In my previous university we were only 10 per cent of the load and 40 per cent of the annual commencements, so we were incredibly expensive, not with regard to providing infrastructure for it but to administer. Activity based costing has shut me up. Now I look at it and I think every time we enrol a student part time we cost twice as much.

**Prof. Lovat**—My own view would be that, unless the Commonwealth, as the funding agent, the states, as the employing bodies, and the universities have some conversation at least about the ways in which public moneys are directed within universities, you have absolutely no hope of putting your money where your mouth is around a national priority—you have no control. And that goes back to the issue that Sue mentioned before: it is lovely to have the words 'national priority' against us—now we need the reality.

**Ms BIRD**—On that point, you are talking about also bringing in one of the employer bodies in, in effect, which is a problem with the states in that they have a dual role.

**Prof. Willis**—Yes, of course.



**Ms BIRD**—Do you not see a problem with them not bringing in the other employer bodies?

**Prof. Lovat**—The private employer bodies?

**Ms BIRD**—Yes.

**Prof. Lovat**—I would make it a total conversation. I think that is the system we have.

**Ms BIRD**—Particularly if we are going to ask them to kick in money.

**Mr SAWFORD**—This committee has a strong track record of being very supportive of all education sectors, regardless of the politics. We may do it in different ways, we may say it in different ways, but a lot of goodwill has been shown by members of this committee. I think there is a lot of goodwill in the parliament. But education, in all its sectors, is sometimes a very difficult sector to help. Sue, you made a point regarding transparency. I think transparency is useful for the organisation itself, and I think you have clearly stated that. Another part of the problem is the convoluted language that often comes to us in government or in opposition. It is convoluted and often it is synthesised nonsense—a ratbag of many things rather than an analytical approach, and it is often very difficult for us to respond in a very positive way.

Notwithstanding that, I congratulate you on your submission. I think it will prove a very positive influence on this committee, and we thank whoever put it all together for all their hard work. It was an excellent submission. Susan, you mentioned in your introduction the variation regarding the various teacher education models. Has anyone ever identified the different models and made an evaluation of them?

**Prof. Willis**—ACER has done a survey of a variety of different models. I remember years ago when I was on the 1990 inquiry into maths and science education we analysed various models. I think there have been partial attempts during inquiries, but I am not sure that there has been a systematic analysis of all the models.

**Mr SAWFORD**—Do you think there should be?

**Prof. Brennan**—Yes. I think it would be really useful to have even just a specification. I made my first submission in 1981 to the Auchmuty inquiry, and I was a relatively junior teacher then. I was actually a senior researcher for the education department at the time. One of the issues is that there has never been money for systematic evaluation. You can put in applications until you are blue in the face, There is not a specific education bucket of money; you have to go into the same bucket of money. Most areas have their own industry areas as well, and it used to be the case that each education department would have a large research branch. When I joined the curriculum research branch in 1979 there were 400 people in it. Those branches do not exist anymore, so there is no parallel. The department of primary industries will have a group or the rural area will have a group or the NHMRC will deal with medical and health related issues. There is not a parallel body for education. If you look at the submission—

**Prof. Willis**—Remember there was the ERDC years ago?

**Prof. Brennan**—Yes, there used to be an education research branch. For us, not having that group means that we tend not to get funded. If you look at the submission, the percentage of national competitive grants or ARCs that we get is tiny in comparison with our percentage representation in the sector. That is not to say we do not do good research. There have been a number of national inquiries into, ‘Why aren’t you doing good research in education?’ They find we are punching above our weight, we actually do stuff that is cited internationally and we do a whole range of stuff.

For me, if there was some more money for the sector, I would put it into some systematic research and capacity to get that funding. We need to follow our graduates through. We need to follow our graduates from the different kinds of programs. That would require a hugely complex and very large-scale study to be done. We need to follow them through for at least five years to see who works. Are the one-year Dip. Eds. actually the people who all leave early? Are some of those groups who do okay in the one-year Dip. Eds. those who fall over in this dimension, this dimension and that dimension? Do the ones who come out from the four-year undergrads or the double degrees last the distance? Who are the people who are actually leaving?

**Prof. Willis**—This is the kind of situation in which you are caught, in a way. We found in the review of teacher education in maths and science—and it would be similar for engineering, it would not matter—that there is a dipstick approach. It is premised on the assumption you already know what is good and you are comparing people to see whether they are good by the criteria you already know. We are saying that we actually do not know necessarily what is best. We do not actually think there is one best way, but we obviously have some broad ideas about what the criteria are. In a sense, we should say that, in order to be able to evaluate programs, first of all you have to have the longitudinal stuff which says, ‘What are the facets of a program that make the difference?’ It is not obvious. We all have opinions, and I suspect everybody in this room would think that they could go in and recognise one, but I suspect we will disagree with each other.

**Mr SAWFORD**—On the research thing, how do you know it is actually linked to what you are teaching in your faculty?

**Prof. Lovat**—To answer both questions, speaking personally and not too partially, I hope, I think the best inquiry to this point in time, no doubt to be superseded in quality by your own—

**Mr SAWFORD**—Obviously!

**Prof. Lovat**—was the ACDE one, which was a federally-sponsored and funded exercise from about 1995-98, and it produced *Preparing a profession*, the so-called Adey review. That was preceded by a genuine national conversation around criteria informed by the best international research of the time. I am not suggesting we just go back to that, because a lot has happened since then. But I would suggest that that still needs to be one of the ingredients for consideration. Why didn’t that work to provide the sort of national accreditation standards et cetera that we are looking for now? I think it is mainly because the Commonwealth, at the time, did not really know what to do with it. There was a fairly ineffective MCEETYA in terms of really having the heart and soul of the states and territories on board and there was nothing like NIQTSL. I think, today, if something like *Preparing a profession* came forward with the weight of information,

good research and indeed the sort of concerted state-territory-federal approach that was in there, you would just give it to NIQTSL and they could do something with it.

**Mr SAWFORD**—I want to go to the balance between research and teaching. During this inquiry, we have had a very mixed view of that balance: some highly in favour of research against teaching and some highly in favour the other way. Some very impressive places seem to be relatively well balanced. In some of the organisations, you get the distinct feeling that the research arm is rewarded far more handsomely than the teaching arm. If that occurs then obviously the teaching quality would fail and would be lessened. Would that be true?

**Prof. Lovat**—It is a difficult balance and it is not just something for teacher education. In many ways, we now have learning and teaching performance funds and the whole Carrick Institute phenomenon to, if you like, ensure that all of higher education pays more balanced attention.

**Prof. Willis**—I actually think I am fairly experienced on this, and I think that is not true. I think that is an urban myth.

**Mr SAWFORD**—This comes from the mouths of your colleagues.

**Prof. Willis**—I know.

**Mr SAWFORD**—It is not what we have stated; it is what we have heard.

**Prof. Willis**—I was not accusing you. I said it was an urban myth because I think it is out there. People say it a lot. I have sat on the promotions committees for six universities. Two have been my own and I have been the external person for the others. They have a proportional weighting system and, without exception, teaching and research are equally weighted. Having said that, one of the reasons that I think that in faculties of education that view gets out is that you are talking about a university wide promotion system and on the whole all our teachers come up well. So, in a sense, in terms of the probation criteria, they get the scores that you need, in a sense, in the promotion category. So it tends to be the research that distinguishes them. In other words, you have to be good at both to get your promotions and it tends to be that the obvious difference between those who do and do not get promotions will be in the research, because they are basically quite good teachers.

On the other hand, in some of the other fields—science, medicine and so on—you will find that people are not getting promoted. Why are they not getting promoted? Because their teaching is suss. But our teachers do not realise that they are actually coming up very well on the teaching things and therefore that is not turning into being the discriminating item. That has been my experience. It is only six universities but it is across three states.

**Prof. Goodrum**—Looking at it from a slightly different perspective—what I would call the actual and the ideal—the ideal situation is that research does inform teaching, and that is what we aspire to. The reality is that the amount of research going on in the country in education is not that high. We are spending literally hundreds of millions of dollars on, say, professional learning and yet our understanding of the effectiveness of those strategies is very limited. We

have not done the hard work that we need to do. Traditionally, unfortunately, there is a view that the type of education research that is being done has been of little value to the classroom.

**Mr SAWFORD**—So we are not measuring.

**Prof. Goodrum**—We are not measuring the things that actually make a difference in the classroom. I think there is a growing challenge for us to make sure that we engage in that type of research that does make a genuine difference.

**Prof. Brennan**—But that is the large-scale stuff for which we do not get access to the funding. That is our problem.

**Prof. Goodrum**—I guess the other aspect in terms of the research-teaching dipole is that there is a historical dimension to it. The historical dimension is the perception that still pervades the place that the teachers college has produced good teachers but they did not have a research dimension. As we have now graduated through that type of experience we are now into a university sector where research and teaching are equally important but we still have what you would almost call a residual effect of that previous teacher college mentality that pervades both our universities and, I think, the general public at large. We have to overcome that. That is the challenge that we have.

**Mr SAWFORD**—It is an interesting point you make about a little bit more balance in the types of research that we have.

**Prof. Willis**—I will add a point to Denis's point. I mentioned earlier that in 1990 or whenever it was I was on the quality review panel that looked at maths and science teacher education around Australia. We went to every university, categorised them and gave every university a score on four criteria from one to five for their maths and science teacher education programs. We went into it with the stereotypical view that we were going to find the good teaching out in the CAEs and the good research in the universities. We found that that absolutely was not true. We assumed that the professional development was going to be going on in the CAE sector and that the universities were not going to be doing that.

We found that those places which were research rich were also teaching and professional development rich and that the people who were active researchers—they did not necessarily spend huge amounts of time on research but were active-thinking researchers—were also highly engaged with their communities and very committed teachers, partly because we researched teaching so they are not as distinct as they might be in a physics department, in a way. You could look at that report now and find that it will say precisely that—that we were stunned because we came in with that assumption and it proved not to be so.

**Mr SAWFORD**—I have one last question, which has a few parts to it.

**Prof. Willis**—Do we need notes?

**CHAIR**—Rodney is not known for his brief questions!

**Prof. Willis**—Is there a hint of the answer in the question? That is always helpful.

**Mr SAWFORD**—How important is it for academics in teacher education to have recent classroom teaching experience?

**Prof. Willis**—We do. We teach all the time. Do you mean school?

**Mr SAWFORD**—How important is it for academics involved in teacher education to have classroom—

**Prof. Willis**—We do teach in classrooms.

**Mr SAWFORD**—experience with children?

**Prof. Willis**—With children? Right.

**Prof. Goodrum**—I guess you can see it in different ways. There is no question that one has to be at the top of one's research but one also has to have a good grounding in good practice. One can get that in different ways. The cliché assumption is that people should come straight from the classroom into the teacher education section. I only taught for four years, but I think I know a heck of a lot about the game of teaching and I believe I could walk into any class from year 1 to year 12 and effectively teach.

**Prof. Willis**—But you might get tired.

**Mr SAWFORD**—You would get tired, yes.

**Prof. Goodrum**—The challenges are slightly different in that sense. But the way in which you keep that grounding in terms of the practice is by the research dimensions of what you do. You make sure you spend time in the classroom in a research sense. That is where you get the greater knowledge of what is going on. The challenge is to understand the problems that teachers face and to try and assist them. That is the essence of the type of research that we should be doing and that many of us are trying to do.

**Prof. Willis**—I do not think that everybody who is in teacher education has to have that connection all of the time. I think it is very good for our students to leave school. For them to be too embedded in the culture of people who are like themselves is not a good thing. Having said that, I think it is important that a goodly proportion of people in any teacher education faculty has ongoing contact with schools. The research I did prior to becoming a dean, for example, was heavily based on case study. I sat alongside teachers, worked with them, interacted with them in classrooms, talked to them about their issues and provided them with support. That was in my research on both social justice and early childhood numeracy. So I believe that I was in a position to understand the realities of a classroom, even though I was not the person up the front teaching.

On the other hand, a colleague of mine taught a history class every Thursday in a local school, because that was the way he wanted to do it. Another one of my colleagues took an outside studies program and went into a school and worked there. So people do it in different ways. Another example is practicum. We visit our students and work with them. So it is important to

have the connection with and to experience the school. It is not necessarily the same as being a classroom teacher.

**Mr SAWFORD**—In terms of the supervision of the practicums, people have presented to us that a lot of those people are sessional and casual, working one or two days a week. That seems to be a grave weakness.

**Prof. Goodrum**—The reality is that that is the truth. In my own school, with the number of staff that I have, I make critical decisions on how they are going to be used. The first priority is to make sure they convene the major units within the program. It is embarrassing to have to bring in, as I have had to, a sessional staff member to convene a group of 200 students. Why? Because I literally do not have the resources to have more full-time staff, which is what we need. That then flows on, to the practicum in particular. Most of our practicums are resourced by sessional staff. It is the only way we can survive.

**Prof. Brennan**—But that is not always a bad thing, because you get the people who have current or recent industry experience and they are useful for that. Where it breaks down is when you do not have the resources to support the sessional staff to help bring them into the—

**Mr SAWFORD**—Both in salary and in time.

**Prof. Brennan**—That is right.

**Prof. Willis**—And there is no connection with what is going on in campus, so we are arguing for this relationship between the two—

**Mr SAWFORD**—It is not really a constructive position, is it?

**Prof. Goodrum**—It is not, far from it.

**Prof. Willis**—It is awful. We are arguing for a relationship between the two. I think using sessionals is terrific if what we are doing is getting professional experience and as long as there is a connection between what is going on in the two places. If there is not, I do not know anybody who would justify that. We are sometimes forced to do it, but none of us think it is a good or acceptable thing.

**Prof. Brennan**—I pick one year in four in our program where we have a significant proportion of the staff doing the supervision. In our four-year program there is no way—

**Mr SAWFORD**—Do you have any ideas on a way around that?

**Prof. Brennan**—We need to improve the staff-student ratios enough to be able to include that.

**Prof. Lovat**—It is the biggest shift in the 20-odd years that I have been in teacher education. When I began at Newcastle, we had about 1,200 full-time students. We had 120 staff. We now have about 2½ thousand students in teacher education programs, all having to do even more practicum because of state requirements, and we have about 50 full-time staff. It is the biggest single shift and it identifies a lot of the resourcing problem.

**Mr SAWFORD**—Does the employing authority have a much stronger role to play?

**Prof. Willis**—It is only tinkering at the edge—it is really taking something that is a crisis and making it moderately less a crisis—but one of the problems we do experience in terms of our placement is that the reason I cannot afford to have my lecturers doing this is that sometimes a school is two hours drive away and there is one student there. You cannot afford to have five hours of a day taken for one student. If you can put 12 students in a school then you can afford to sustain the person going out for the day. But you cannot afford to sustain it if there is one student. That would be one thing which would at least help, if we got more of a commitment to having more students in schools at one time. Sometimes it is one, sometimes it is three. Sometimes you are trying to juggle: on the one hand, this student needs somebody who has got specialist—

**Mr SAWFORD**—Sometimes the relationship between the university and the schools needs to be much tighter.

**Prof. Willis**—It does.

**Prof. Lovat**—The employer does have to take some more responsibility. We need a totally different sort of supervision regime that matches some of our professional training.

**Mr FAWCETT**—I go to the point Rod made about whether any of you, for example, actually get out—like that guy who takes a history class once a week. I come from an aviation background where I did a lot of line flying, a lot of instructing and a lot of supervising and ended up doing a lot of policy work. I know through experience that sitting alongside somebody who is flying an aircraft is by no means the same as actually being there, responsible for the flight, responsible for the passengers and the whole thing. By the time you get to the policy level, the occasional visit means that you are quite out of touch—not necessarily with the core job of doing your profession; the external environment that you work within constantly changes and, unless you are actually there and are personally responsible for understanding the interaction, you start losing things. Accepting that there is a resource consequence, I think it would be a very valuable thing for the education and training sector to look at saying: ‘We will require people’—perhaps one year out of four—‘to go back and take up a one-day-a-week load just to be back in touch with us.’ It would not be me observing a teacher; I would actually be in front of a bunch of teenage kids trying to do that job.

**Prof. Willis**—I do not agree with you there. I like your example, but I do not think you can generalise. Actually, most of our teachers are teaching. I would like to suggest that it may well be that if you are not flying, sitting next to somebody who is flying is not the same thing, but we are flying; we are just not flying kids.

**Mr FAWCETT**—My wife is a teacher. She teaches adults and she has taught high school kids and young kids. Particularly with the changing dynamics in the teen environment, I challenge anyone who has not taught teenage kids in the last decade to say they are competent and current as a teacher if they have not been in the classroom in the last decade actually responsible for teaching kids.

**Prof. Brennan**—I think there are a whole range of ways. I am one of the lucky few. I happen to have an ARC—actually, I have got two—which stretches my job rather a lot. Fortunately I am a part of a big team. I am out there working with people in schools, youth workers, health professionals and a whole other group of people. I reckon I do know—and a whole lot of my staff know—exactly what it is like. They do not want to go in and just immerse themselves in schools as usual. They are actually trying to invent new kinds of schooling. You cannot do that only from the inside. You need your people outside. For me, there is a really close balance.

**Mr FAWCETT**—I am not disputing that; all I am saying is that it is a valid thing to consider how you are going to incorporate it. You mentioned before, Professor Willis, that at the moment you have limited places and a pool of students to select from and you are getting fantastic outcomes, because you have got a selection process to help you choose people.

**Prof. Willis**—No, that is not what I actually said. We are getting them because we are doing good work.

**Mr FAWCETT**—You actually made the comment that you have got more applicants than positions—

**Prof. Willis**—Yes, we have.

**Mr FAWCETT**—Therefore there is a selection process. We have received a number of comments that the selection process should be determined on more than a TER score, that it should be based on a range of interviews, whether they be structured individual or group interviews et cetera. That has been a very consistent theme. Yet in your written submission you argue against what the Victorian government have suggested in terms of selection. I wonder if you would care to comment on that. There seems to be a bit of a disconnect.

**Prof. Goodrum**—I would like to make a comment, if I may. It is a question of resources and emphasis as regards the effectiveness of that type of selection committee. There has not been a lot of research done on that, but the limited amount of research I have seen suggests that the TER is still the best predictor in terms of university studies. The interview process is expensive. With the limited resources I have got, I would not invest in that. I would rather put them into the practicum.

**Prof. Willis**—I did the calculation. If there was evidence that an interview did a better job, then you might struggle to get that. We actually have supplementary documentation for many of our programs. It is just an extra sheet so people can talk about the fact that they taught in kindergarten or whatever. We have a one-pager because most of ours are grad. dips; they are already qualified. I had 1,700 applicants for 200 places. I calculated that if we spent only 15 minutes, which meant a seven-minute interview and the rest of the time on the administration of the process—and that is a fairly efficient administration, I can tell you—we would wipe out 25 per cent of the fees that we get for the 200 we enrol.

**Mr FAWCETT**—Sure, I understand that. In fact I agree. I question the value of a complete structured interview when you are talking the numbers you are. There are other options, though. There are personal profiles and things that people can submit. Do you use any of those kinds of tools?



**Prof. Willis**—Even if that takes 15 minutes, it costs the same amount of money. We do not have spare labour out there. It is not like we have got lots of capacity. Maybe you are saying that we do not play with our kids on Sunday—I know you are not saying that; I am being rhetorical—but basically we do not have the spare capacity. If it takes 15 minutes to do that—to administer and look at somebody’s document—that is the kind of resourcing you are talking about.

**Prof. Goodrum**—There are other, lateral ways. I agree with you.

**Prof. Willis**—It just costs us a lot.

**Prof. Goodrum**—One would be to use the school system itself. As we interact with the profession, if there was an interview or a basis of some documentation at the year 12 level—for the school leavers—that was fed to the university through some mechanism, then that would be a realistic way of trying to do this. There are still resources involved in doing all that, but there are possibilities—

**Prof. Brennan**—But it also tends to standardise. One of the problems is we do not want only clones of the people who are already in the profession. We actually need new people and the new generations are quite different. So I would be extremely concerned about trying to put criteria—none of which have been researched—into place.

**Prof. Willis**—Can I give you an anecdote about that, because I think it is very important. This happened years ago at my previous university, which had a vet school. In the vet school students were selected by interview and their score. The academic council had read all the literature on interviews and believed that there was a distorted population in the vet school and refused to let them interview any more. They were just furious. I can remember sitting through rows on the academic board.

**Ms BIRD**—The Virgin airline problem.

**Prof. Willis**—Yes. Two years later they sent a letter to the academic board and said: ‘You were right and we were wrong. It has changed the face of the students in the vet school for the better.’ They were basically just reproducing themselves.

**Mr FAWCETT**—The only comment I would make about resources is that I hear your comment about the burden of doing that interview. We need to be looking at it from a holistic perspective. We are looking not only at getting people into and through university but also at the drop-out rate of people post university. They graduate, get into education and then drop out within a couple of years. From a holistic systems perspective we need to identify what we can do to ensure that people who go in are going to do more than a couple of years before they drop out. Although they graduate, it is not actually a good use of money.

**Prof. Willis**—There are lots of very well educated people who are politicians who have got education qualifications. Surely that was not a waste.

**Mr FAWCETT**—That is true.

**Mr HENRY**—You are proposing the introduction of a number of targeted Commonwealth scholarships to boost diversity and quality of teacher education candidates. Do you think this could include the reintroduction of bonded studies? What is your view of the effectiveness of such proposals?

**CHAIR**—The committee will have to suspend at this point for a division in the House.

**Proceedings suspended from 10.44 am to 10.57 am**

**CHAIR**—Unfortunately, time has beaten us. You have put forward a very comprehensive submission. There is a whole range of questions we would like to ask, so we will put those to you in writing and get you to respond to those in writing.

**Prof. Willis**—We will try to be brief.

**CHAIR**—It has been a very valuable submission for us.

**Mr SAWFORD**—It has been excellent.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We will certainly be contacting you to get that additional information and the answers to the questions. If you could provide those answers to us as quickly as possible, we would appreciate that. It has been a very valuable morning and we look forward to the answers to those further questions. Thank you very much.

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

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

**Committee adjourned at 10.58 am**