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STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL
TRAINING

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING
Wednesday, 23 November 2005

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

Members in attendance: Ms Bird, Ms Corcoran, Mr Michael Ferguson and Mr Hartsuyker

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

BROOKER, Associate Professor Ross, Deputy Chair, Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania 16

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**PEACOCK, Ms Gabrielle, Director, Human Resources Management, Department of Education,
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SUITOR, Mr Greg, Chair, Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania 16

Committee met at 1.02 pm**JACOB, Ms Alison Joan, Deputy Secretary, School Education, Department of Education, Tasmania****PEACOCK, Ms Gabrielle, Director, Human Resources Management, Department of Education, Tasmania**

CHAIR (Mr Hartsuyker)—I declare open this public hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training's 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. The inquiry has generated considerable interest across Australia. To date we have received 160 submissions and we continue to receive more. We are now over halfway through our schedule of public hearings, having visited Victoria, Queensland, the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia. We have also held several hearings in the Australian Capital Territory. Today is our first hearing in Tasmania.

I welcome the representatives from the Tasmanian Department of Education. I remind witnesses that these public hearings are recorded by Hansard and a record will be made available to the public through the parliament's web site. 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, as such, warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House of Representatives itself. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament. Would you like to make an opening statement or some introductory remarks?

Ms Jacob—Yes, I would like to make a brief comment to start with. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the inquiry. To give you a general context, Tasmania is obviously small scale compared to some of the states you would be gathering evidence from, but our education department employs about 5,500 teachers. We estimate that around 70 per cent of the graduates of the University of Tasmania's Faculty of Education get employed within our department eventually. That is a very broad figure over time, but we are a big employer of the graduates of our local university's teacher training program. For example, in 2004 we permanently employed 167 base-grade teachers. The biggest proportion of those would have been from our local university, and more were employed on a temporary basis. We have a strong interest in making sure we have the highest quality teacher education possible.

Our relationship with the university is very strong. Given that they are the only local training institution for teachers, I suppose it is easier for us to have that relationship. It would also be true to say that, where they are unable to deliver in a particular area, they often take on a brokerage role to be able to work with other universities to deliver training through the local campus. For example, in areas like visual or hearing impairment, where we do not need to have people trained every year, we are able to use the university as a broker to get expertise in other areas, which works fairly well, rather than us having to shop around other universities.

We strongly believe—and I am sure you would have been told this a hundred times—that the quality of the teacher is the most important variable in relation to what is achieved in our

schools. So we are committed to making sure that we get the best quality teachers out of our teacher training program. Our research and evidence suggests that about 11 per cent of the variance of student outcomes in, for example, benchmark testing is attributable to the quality of the individual classroom teacher, added to the approximately seven per cent that you can attribute to the school where the child goes. Those two factors are by far the biggest factors—as opposed to things like the socioeconomic status of the child and so on. I am emphasising the importance of teacher quality in terms of us achieving what we want to do with students in our schools.

Teacher education has to be a collaborative process between schools, the school sector and the teacher education providers. We take that responsibility seriously. We accept the fact that, if we want the best quality teacher education in universities, we have to be a partner in that process and not just look to the universities to deliver. Some of the things we are doing in Tasmania are an indication of that kind of partnership. I will give you a couple of examples. They are mentioned in our submission, so I will not go through them in great detail. We established the Institute for Inclusive Learning Communities. The institute was funded by the Department of Education, with the University of Tasmania putting in equal funding. The institute is headed by a board that is chaired by Malcolm Skilbeck—a name which I guess would be familiar to you as he has had a lot to do with teacher education. Where there is an area where we as a department want to improve the level of the pre-service and in-service education for our teachers, we believe it is partly our responsibility to work with the university collaboratively to deliver that improvement. The institute is an example of that.

Next year we will be experimenting with some new models for school experience. The university was having difficulty placing students on school practicums and we believed a lot more could be done in terms of the quality of those practicums and the way the theory and the practice are integrated. We jointly appointed a person to act as a liaison officer between the school sector and the university this year and we are developing some models for using clusters as the focus for practicums rather than individual schools. Hopefully we will be able to get a much better relationship between the academic staff and the school staff in that cluster. Students will be appointed to a cluster on an ongoing basis rather than going to one school for a few weeks and to another school for another few weeks. I would be happy to give you more information about that. We are interested in developing it.

We have also done some things, which other people have done, which are not particularly innovative but which have helped to train teachers in their practicums. There is a program which allows students to be placed in rural schools and pays for their transport, accommodation and all that sort of thing. That has been very positive in the sense that many of the students who go to those rural schools end up being employed within them. That is certainly a pay-off.

Where we are looking at the feasibility of developing new schools—which we do not do very often in Tasmania, Launceston and Hobart—we have included teacher education as a component of those new schools. We are looking at how we can better integrate teacher education into the school building, with the capacity for teachers to have lectures and those sorts of things. That is also important.

In terms of the challenges for teacher education, it is worth putting on the record that, in general terms, we get positive responses from our principals about the quality of graduates from

our local program. But that does not mean to say that there are not some areas where we think preparation could be improved. Our newly qualified teachers tell us that they would like to have better preparation for behaviour management and being able to deal with the diverse range of students in every classroom. That is where our Institute for Inclusive Learning Communities has come to the fore. In Tasmania, we have a strong commitment to inclusive education and making sure that those students are, wherever possible, able to be educated in a regular school. The other area that teachers mention a lot is how to deal with parents. That is another area where more preparation could be done.

The biggest challenge for any teacher education program is the appropriate integration between the theoretical, intellectually challenging component and practical applications, and that is something that we are always trying to improve in trying to get the balance right. An example of that which I would like to put on the record is in relation to literacy. We think that there is a fair bit more work to be done, as does the university. They acknowledge that and we are doing a fair bit of work with them at the moment in making sure that, where there is a skill base which is absolutely imperative for every teacher, we do get the proper integration of strong intellectually based frameworks and the practical application of the framework so that teachers are able to apply those skills in their teaching practise.

I have already mentioned school experience, and I guess that is something that will come up in questioning. We think that that is an area where the school sector and the university have to work a lot more closely and not have the kind of toing-and-froing arguments about whether it is the responsibility of the schools or the universities to do something. We would accept that it is a collaborative responsibility.

My final comment is that we could do a lot more in terms of the selection of students into teacher education programs, rather than wait for things to go wrong as training proceeds or even until students graduate and we then have to deal with the problem of some students who do not get past the probationary stage because they really cannot make the grade. We honestly believe that there would be time saved eventually in having better selection processes at the front end, but we do understand that that has some implications in terms of the numbers game et cetera that the universities are dealing with. We would endorse any recommendations around better selection processes. In fact, we would be very happy to be part of that process as a major employer. I would be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIR—In your submission you referred to the focus of the Tasmanian government on taking education into the 21st century and meeting the needs of the 21st century. How is that being reflected in your views on teacher training and strategies towards teacher training? You also refer to the Essential Learning curriculum. Would you like to expand a bit on that concept?

Ms Jacob—In general terms, we think that the university is pretty responsive to the new conceptualisation of teaching, which I think is necessary for a teacher in the 21st century. That includes new approaches to the way that the curriculum is delivered, the way it is assessed and the way it is reported, including content pedagogy and assessment. We think that the university has been very responsive in working with us on the development and implementation of our new curriculum framework, the Essential Learning Curriculum Framework. The framework is around looking at what is essential for students to cover—

CHAIR—As the name implies.

Ms Jacob—Yes, as the name implies. The rationale for the curriculum came partly from the huge overcrowding of the curriculum and the fact that everybody wanted to put more and more in but nobody ever wanted to take something out. It was an attempt to say that it is much better to cover less in depth and do it properly and to really concentrate on enabling skills such as thinking, communication and things which would allow learning to occur over time rather than simply covering content at a surface level. That is not to say that content is not important. We still believe very strongly that it is absolutely necessary for students to be taught by teachers who have good discipline knowledge in maths, science and all of the other things, but we want to allow that content to be delivered in a more integrated way to allow less siloing of areas. A very practical example would be not to have short periods where students might go from maths to English to whatever over a day but to allow blocks of time where they might do a particular theme in much greater depth but allow components of the various disciplines to be covered at the same time.

It is interesting that—as you would know, I am sure—there has been a lot of media hype about our curriculum in Tasmania. There was a lot of interviewing done of students in the faculty about what they thought about the curriculum and there was an overwhelmingly positive view from the young students, and certainly from our younger teachers, who are really embracing the curriculum and taking on board what it means and all the challenges that it involves—probably more so than some of the older members of our work force. We are happy with that.

CHAIR—Finding new things to put into the curriculum is pretty easy. Finding things that should be discarded is much harder, given that there are no doubt always champions of those particular areas. What are the types of areas that have been discarded and that you have decided to drop out?

Ms Jacob—It is probably not so much a case of discarding them but rather about not simply having a curriculum that lists a whole heap of content that must be covered. Instead, we have a curriculum that lists the key understandings or key concepts that are important for students to be able to take on board. The way in which that might be delivered is very much left to individual teachers to work through. At the same time, obviously what we are doing is providing them with lots of examples and lots of content that they can access through their computers. We have set up quite a lot of electronic resources and things which teachers are able to access so that they get the support they need to be able to plan their lessons and all the rest of it. It is done by way of trusting teachers to be able to use content in a way that is suitable for whatever group they are working with in their own context.

CHAIR—In your response to the terms of reference, you say in particular that the separation between the training institution and teacher employers and their schools is generally seen as dysfunctional and can result in inappropriate selection. It is something that we struggle with. There are some who say we need better selection processes et cetera, but then when you look at the university scene, you see that they are potentially faced with a large number of possible applicants. The TER score is very much the practical solution to what is the very great problem of picking the right people to go into teaching. What are your thoughts on alternative selection models to the TER score?

Ms Jacob—As I said earlier, I think there is a strong case for having some kind of face-to-face interviewing of potential students. I know that is time consuming and a very resource intensive process, but I also believe it would save a fair bit of time further down the track when academics and departmental staff are often dealing with people who are really struggling and finding it hard to make the grade and so on.

I honestly believe that by the end of the first practicum you can usually tell which students are going to be suitable for a career in teaching. Most academic staff agree that it is fairly obvious early on. Maybe you have to give people a chance to at least prove themselves and not screen them out right at the beginning, but it would be much more sensible and it would also be fairer to the student if they were not allowed to proceed with maybe four years—or at least two years—of study when at the end they are not going to make the grade.

That should be a decision that is not made lightly. I certainly do not think that that should be one person's responsibility. The responsibility for student practicums falls on the shoulders of the colleague teacher or the supervising teacher, and they should probably not make a decision about whether or not a student is suitable. But it is something that they should have an input into. Most teachers very easily recognise when a colleague is suitable or not. I do not think that should be a one-person decision. It could be a collaborative decision.

What I am really saying is that, even if you do not select outright at the beginning, there is a strong case for doing so very early on, even if there is a probationary period or something. It is fairer on everybody to make hard decisions early rather than to wait for that to happen later on and then at the end of the a teacher's probationary period have people like Gabrielle faced with telling them that they are never going to be permanently employed. They might have wasted several years.

CHAIR—With regard to the issue of that interview process, the universities are telling us that their resources and staff are stretched and that it would be impossible for the ones taking large numbers of graduates to have a meaningful interview process. A significant number have expressed a view that those resources would be better allocated in the training process rather than the interview process. As an employer, and given your view, would you be prepared to resource the universities for the recruitment process?

Ms Jacob—We would be prepared to participate in it. For example, a number of our principals and people who we employ in schools would be quite happy to be part of that—

CHAIR—A panel or whatever.

Ms Jacob—and to take some responsibility for that. They would see that in the same light that I do: that it saves them effort later on. We all have an interest in getting the best calibre people through. To be honest, on some level there is some tension in the universities not wanting to select and that is because of the need to get more students and the funding implications and so on. In terms of delivering a high quality program, you are better starting off with a group of people who are most likely to be successful.

CHAIR—But the interview process can work the other way, insofar as it can give the university an opportunity to allow a student in who obviously displays a love of teaching but maybe has not quite reached the TER score.

Ms Jacob—That is true. We would all agree that there is not a perfect relationship between TER score and potential to teach.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Could you give an overview of how you see the work force generally in what have traditionally been known as the early childhood, primary and specialist areas of expertise for teachers? Most of this specialisation, I suppose, has arisen out of their early training—not all but probably most. Could you describe how you see the work force? In your view, does the EL framework support that traditional view of teachers being in those different strands?

Ms Jacob—Do you mean if they were trained in early childhood, primary or special education?

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Not special education; specialist teaching, such as maths and science.

Ms Jacob—So the specialist disciplines.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Yes. Could you give an overview of that and how the ELs fit around that.

Ms Jacob—As I said earlier, we still think there is a very strong need for there to be strong discipline knowledge in teachers and for students to have access to that. We would support any kind of model that very early on recruited people who were maths, science, geography or history specialists—whatever it might be—into a teaching work force and gave them, along with strong discipline knowledge, the capacity to be able to teach and to use that knowledge in a productive way.

As for what the EL framework says about that, the EL framework would endorse that view. What teachers need is a strong discipline knowledge, but they need to be able to use that knowledge in a way that is integrated and that teaches students to think and that allows them to develop capacities for communication, inquiry and reflection—for all of those things that we want all students to be able to do. We want to do that using the traditional disciplines. The EL curriculum does not in any way denigrate or put on the backburner traditional knowledge and the discipline areas. What it says is that there are other ways of being able to package that information or other ways in which that can be delivered so that it is more coherent and leads to better learning outcomes for students.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I have had a couple of teachers contact me expressing some concern. I do not know if it is a state wide phenomenon or more local. It has been put to me that in the north there are two schools that are moving away from that sort of notion. Under the EL, they are tending to find that the school week has been reduced from the traditional 30 periods to 20, and that around half of those—about 10—are set aside for what is called ‘inquiry’, where there is no subject teaching as such but more this focus on thematic, more generalised subjects of

interest. They include, for example, Antarctica or volcanoes. The teachers have expressed to me a concern that the actual end result is that the kids are not learning a terrible lot. What would be your response to that?

Ms BIRD—Before you respond, I am not a Tasmanian. Can you clarify for me as to whether we are talking about primary school or secondary school?

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I was referring to two secondary schools.

Ms BIRD—Can I enrol my son? It sounds wonderful.

Ms Jacob—The Essential Learnings curriculum goes from kindergarten to the end of year 10. So it covers both primary and secondary. That would be a very disappointing comment from a teacher and that certainly would not be my experience. With the Essential Learnings we are trying to make sure that students do not see knowledge and understanding as being divided into little compartments that have different labels, that they see that what we are talking about here is a whole world. A number of skills and understandings apply across a broad range of what were the traditional content areas. How do you make the division between what is geography, what is social science and what is economics? Someone has decided that that is a useful way to divide up content. What we are saying with the Essential Learnings is that the content is still important but maybe it can integrate better so that students can see the connections and see that there is some sense of coherence. But it is not in any way—and I want to emphasise this—saying that the traditional disciplines are not important. It is just making sure that students can see the connections.

Let's hope that when they were doing Antarctica that might have included a number of the traditional disciplines. The students might have had to do some work with experts in the field or solve a problem or synthesise a body of information and present it in a way that was understandable to a group of parents—which is another strategy. I also emphasise that we are in the early stages of implementation of the Essential Learnings framework and teachers are at different stages of their feeling of competence about it.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—This inquiry is not here to grill you on your curriculum, but it is relevant to teacher training because there are teachers who need to be trained to cope or to effectively work with the curriculum that is required. You have emphasised the importance of specialist content knowledge and specialist content teachers being in schools, but you obviously do not have a control handle over what the university provides. As we have travelled around the country one of the key questions I have put has been about work force shortages—like in maths and science. How do you see that playing out? Would you like to see the university more closely matching its training places to actual work force demands?

Ms Jacob—As an employer that would be nice, but we accept that it will not be possible to do that very neatly. Our graduate recruitment program allows us to recruit the best graduates in the areas where we have needs and in the schools where we need to fill positions. We are able to offer people permanent employment at a grade which is one above where they would normally enter the salary scale. It is a pretty powerful incentive to be able to recruit people in areas such as maths and science when we need them.

As far as how we get those people interested in teacher training in the first place, I would be in favour of a lot more work being done on combined degrees and involving those people in the early stages of their academic career. They should get involved in teacher training early on rather than do teacher training after doing a science degree—that is, having to start again and learn something completely different. Those two things could be implemented a great deal more. If faculties were prepared to work more across the faculty boundaries that would also be a huge plus.

CHAIR—We have had it said to us that it takes a whole university to train a teacher.

Ms Jacob—That is true. We have worked with faculties, for example, in the training of guidance officers, where we require them to have psychology training as well as education training. At the moment, the traditional model is that they do their psych and then they have to do two more years of education. We are trying to get some integration between those two things, because there is obviously a huge overlap between the content of those two courses. To get faculties to work together is not always easy but we are making some progress on that.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—How can we encourage a better participation rate in the teaching profession of maths and science teachers?

Ms Jacob—I guess like all of us, conditions of work, salaries and all of those sorts of things are important. Job satisfaction and teachers feeling they make a difference is a huge part of that. It is important to make them feel confident and competent in what they are doing and to give them something intellectually challenging in their teaching. That is where the ELF curriculum has been hugely beneficial to many people coming into the profession—they can see that this is intellectually challenging and that they can do well.

It is also important to raise the status of teaching in the general community and get away from the teacher bashing which is very common in some people's minds. It is important that teachers feel that they are respected members of the community and that what they are doing is important, is recognised, is well paid and offers career advancement. Teachers getting job satisfaction is important. Most teachers I know—and I am an ex-teacher—want to feel they have made a difference and that the job satisfaction is there.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I really meant at the training level, but I am taking up too much time now

Ms BIRD—I will take it up and pursue it further.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I was trying to find out how you get a better balance in the university that more neatly reflects what your needs as an employer are.

Ms Jacob—What I was saying was that you have to offer the promise of those things.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—But there are plenty of teachers being trained, but there are too many being trained in some areas—such as early childhood and primary—because you cannot employ them.

Ms Jacob—That is true.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—We need more maths and science teachers. I am sure you would acknowledge that. I just want to get a better handle on what you as an employer—one of the state's biggest employers and the biggest employer of teachers—are doing to encourage more university students to take up the appropriate qualifications.

Ms Jacob—As I say, I think that some of the things are probably indirect. For example, raising the status of teachers so that people see teaching as a valuable career, a career that they are interested in, a career that they can see has a status and—

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I do not want to be difficult but I do not think that is the problem because there are plenty of teachers being trained. There are more than you can employ.

Ms Jacob—But I am talking about people who have a maths or science background who might have a lot of other options—perhaps more so than some of the teachers who are in, for example, early childhood. The point I am getting at is that we have to be able to compete with other professions that might well recruit those people. Making sure that teaching is seen as a high status, well paid, satisfying, important profession is important to recruiting into the teaching profession people who might go in another direction.

Ms BIRD—It is an interesting issue and it links to so many other things that we are looking at—even the retention rate issue and so forth. You talked about the idea that there are some generic education theory-type subjects and that, as a follow-up to that, people could then specialise. Are you talking about the potential to have a common first year in a degree with a specialisation into primary, secondary and maybe adult learning being guided after that? It seems to me that we expect young people to choose and immediately lock into one or the other. Adult education, corporate training et cetera are other areas of potential employment for education graduates that some people who are not suitable for classrooms might be suitable for. Is that what you intended, or would you see value in that sort of model?

Ms Jacob—I certainly think that there are some generic areas of teacher education that probably would be common across all age groups. Maybe that could be done in a way that was common for the entire group of students. There clearly are also some areas where you do need to get specialised; otherwise people would perhaps be wasting their time. I also think that as an employer, we are more and more interested in people who can be flexible and who can in fact adapt their teaching skills across a range of age groups. For example, some of our best senior secondary teachers have been in early childhood at various times. So I do not think you can necessarily make any assumptions. We appreciate the fact that there would be a need for specialisation for some teachers but I also think that there are also some generic areas of the curriculum that all teachers need to cover. Whether you do that first, I am not sure. I have not really thought that through.

Ms BIRD—It interested me because we often have discussions about those people you can really spot as not being suited to teaching. It is one thing to say that we should perhaps not allow them to enrol, but there are a lot of other interpersonal skills based professions—such as medicine—where you could argue as strongly that certain people should never be allowed to be in the profession and we do not rule them out. These are over 18-year-olds and they make their

own decisions and can make their own assessments as well. I just thought that model might allow for directing them into a more a constructive career choice at that point.

Ms Jacob—Your comment is well taken. I certainly do not want to imply that I think you should exclude a whole group of people on the basis of a superficial process. My point was that very early on in teacher training you know—and I think the students themselves know—whether they are on the right path and whether it is the career for them. I suppose you would try to counsel them into making the decision for themselves rather than simply have some sort of officious thing that says ‘You can’t go on’, or whatever. You would want to give them a second chance, and all of those kinds of things; I accept that. It is also true that some people do come up to speed, and all the rest of it. But I also believe that it is not doing people any favours by allowing them to proceed through a training program that is leading them to a profession that they are never going to be comfortable in or successful at. Sometimes, I suspect, we put off making that decision, which is not fair to anybody.

Ms BIRD—An interesting comment that has been made to us on a number of occasions, taking up Michael’s point about maths and science in particular, and languages, is that part of the problem is that teachers in schools tell kids, ‘Don’t ever become a teacher.’ My eldest son is now doing science teaching, but it took him five years to come back to it because he was so disengaged by the way we teach science in secondary—which is why I quite like the model you were talking about—as it does not reflect their lives at all. Also, so many teachers said, ‘Don’t even think about teaching. It’s a horrible life. It’s a terrible job.’ Are there ways that, as an employer, you could perhaps address those realities in schools?

Ms Jacob—I have heard teachers say the same thing. I think it is really sad when that happens. I guess again it comes down to raising the status of teaching, celebrating good teachers, recognising when they do a good job and giving them community and public recognition. Some of the things that happen here, such as awards and scholarships and public endorsement of really good teachers pay a lot of dividends in the long run—saying to the community ‘Teaching is a really important profession and, not only that, but it is exciting and it is satisfying and it is well paid and it is a great job.’ We would certainly want to do that as much as we possibly could. We are always looking for opportunities to reward, recognise and so on. Sometimes that might be considered a bit clichéd, but I think that kind of recognition means a lot to most teachers.

Ms BIRD—From an employer’s perspective, there would be some discussion with teachers about stopping the practice of talking the profession down as well. I acknowledge that what you are saying is true, but those who tend to engage in those reward based programs are usually pretty positive about their profession anyway. There are a whole lot of others out there who become cynical and disillusioned and allow that to become self-fulfilling.

Ms Jacob—We all have to talk up our own profession.

Ms BIRD—We would agree.

Ms Jacob—I don’t think it helps when teachers get bagged—and they do get bagged a lot. That is not helpful to anybody.

Ms BIRD—You talked about some potential new school sites. You mentioned in passing building into the design plan of those schools an acknowledgement that ongoing professional training is a requirement for teachers. I had not heard that before, and it really stuck me in terms of our reference about ongoing professional development. The old system where you had a desk that probably would not even fit a computer on it these days and no common area for professional development is a real hindrance in schools to serious ongoing professional development. I am interested to hear the practicality of what you were talking about with that.

Ms Jacob—Again, I want to emphasise that both of those things are still at the feasibility stage. But it was certainly part of the terms of reference in both cases to look at not only the ongoing in-service for the teachers but at how could we have those schools designed so that in-service capacity is a possibility as well. Again, we are still at the exploration stage. But we do think that capacity for schools to do well hosting school experience for pre-service teachers, as well as ongoing professional learning, is an important part of what a school is. It is a place for learning that ought to be wider than simply having a group of kids enrolled.

Ms BIRD—It follows up what was said to us in WA by some students who said that they got all these wonderful ideas about how you can teach your subject area and then when they go into schools and see the actual resources and facilities it is a pretty dampening experience, because the schools not designed or resourced in ways to enable you to do all those great things you have been taught potentially to do. It was very interesting. Have you looked at models elsewhere or is this a very embryonic thing?

Ms Jacob—No, we have not looked at particular models, but it is part of the work. Because we are working closely with the university and the faculty of education about that, they certainly have had a lot of ideas. We are looking at ways in which we can have a better integration of the practical and the theoretical components of education.

Ms BIRD—Yes, it might be useful.

Ms Jacob—They are very enthusiastic about it as well.

Ms BIRD—It might be useful to provide a follow-up to the committee when you are a bit further down the track on that with some outcomes and what you have decided?

Ms Jacob—Yes, sure.

Ms CORCORAN—You talked in your submission about the BeTTR program, where first-year-out teachers have a reduced work load. Could you talk a bit more about that? I am interested in how long it has been going. Does it apply to all first-year-out teachers, for instance?

Ms Jacob—It is a program that gives first-year-out teachers two hours a week of time release so that they are able to have time for networking with other teachers, having some extra professional support or whatever. It has been going since—

Ms Peacock—It started in 2001.

Ms Jacob—The teachers are all first-year-out teachers and they have to apply to be part of it—it is not mandatory requirement. I think this year we had 113 teachers.

Ms CORCORAN—Out of a cohort of what? Are we talking about a significant part of the cohort?

Ms Peacock—Yes, it is a significant part.

Ms CORCORAN—If they had all applied, would they all have got it?

Ms Peacock—Yes, it is funded and available for everyone that comes in as a newly graduated teacher.

Ms CORCORAN—It has been going for five years. What sort of feedback are you getting?

Ms Peacock—Lots of positive feedback. It is recognition that that first year is hard and it is adjusting to the work force and applying all your skills practically. Teachers really appreciate it and schools appreciate it, too. It is an investment that is highly regarded and highly successful. We really do not get any negative vibe about it at all. It is a good thing to do.

Ms CORCORAN—The funding pays for another teacher to come in to take that time that the new teacher would normally, in a full load, have taken on?

Ms Peacock—Yes.

Ms CORCORAN—It sounds a bit like an internship we have been talking about for a while in other places. I had not heard of it before. My second question is about the cluster model of dealing with pracs. I do not think you referred to it in the submission?

Ms Jacob—No.

Ms CORCORAN—I am interested in how that works. I am also interested in a concept that was put to us some time ago that perhaps schools ought to be obliged to take on student teachers rather than just schools who feel they can do it. Do you have any comment to make on that?

Ms Jacob—I should emphasise the fact that we are talking about doing a pilot next year. It has not actually started yet, which is why it is not talked about in the submission. It is partly a response to how we get schools to accept that they have a responsibility to take students. It is quite clear that some schools do that very willingly and take a lot of students, while other schools do not and take very few or none at all. I think that it is also recognition that schools have an awful lot of things being asked of them at the moment. Being able to share the load across a group of schools seems to make a lot of sense. The idea basically is that we have clusters—that is our organisational structure in Tasmania, so the clusters are already established. We will be assigning students to a cluster and the responsibility for their practicums will be spread across the schools. In fact, we would even go further and say that where there are child-care centres and so forth within that cluster, we do not see any reason why students could not do some of their practicums in non-school environments.

Ms CORCORAN—Typically, how big is a cluster?

Ms Jacob—There are 27 clusters in Tasmania,. They vary from about four or five schools to 10 or 11. There is a bit of variety.

Ms CORCORAN—That would be early learning right through to secondary?

Ms Jacob—Right through to the end of year 10. The colleges are in a slightly different structure. We deal with those differently. What we are saying is that there would be advantages in the staff in a particular cluster forming a relationship with some particular academics at the university so they were not having to deal with a whole range of different people coming and going, and that there would be an advantage in the students getting to know a group of schools and the principals and the staff well and being able to have an ongoing relationship with a group of schools.

We think asking a school to do that on their own is a big ask. It would also be fairly limiting in the kind of experience a student would have. But by working across a cluster we think we could probably do that a bit better. It will be a trial, but there has been a fair bit of enthusiasm from schools about it. Again, I think it is trying to say that as a group of schools, maybe they can assume responsibility for something that perhaps an individual school would not be prepared to do or just would not have the capability to do.

Ms CORCORAN—And it might encourage a few schools that are not involved to be involved.

Ms Jacob—That is exactly right; yes. It is a big issue. I am sure it is not confined to Tasmania, but getting enough good quality school experience places is a big issue.

Ms CORCORAN—We are hearing that all around Australia, if that is any encouragement to you. On page 8 of your submission, you give us a whole pile of statistics. I am interested in the column headed, ‘Appointments through merit selection’. There were 22 appointments in 1999; in 2001 there were 101; there were 177 in 2003 and it drops back to 23 for the half of 2004. What happened in 2003? Is that just a blip, or is there a nice story behind it?

Ms Peacock—There is a bit of history to explain here. In the past, the department had a high level of fixed term employment of teachers, which meant that they were on temporary contracts for a very long period of time. Starting in 1999, we put in a structured program whereby people who had been in for four years or more were what we call ‘converted to permanency’ under the State Service Act. So what we are reflecting there is that the conversions went down as we started to advertise merit jobs in the normal manner.

Ms CORCORAN—And that explains the blip in the next column?

Ms Peacock—Yes. And then the January to June figures are obviously half a year, for 2004, so they do not really tell the picture, because most of our stuff is done later in the calendar year.

CHAIR—I have a question on literacy and numeracy. You highlighted the issue of concern with regard to literacy, and there is a module that is coming on-stream to address some of those

concerns. With regard to numeracy, your submission talks about the fact that the course outline is very comprehensive but cannot be well considered in the time available in the Bachelor of Education. That is a pretty important part of the course. I am interested in your comments on that.

Ms Jacob—Competing priorities for time will always be an issue. Whatever you put on the table, people will say, ‘We simply do not have the time to cover that.’ Do you spend more time on numeracy, or is it more important to learn about special needs children, or should we have a gifted component? I honestly think that, at the end of the day, there are some fundamentals that every teacher needs, and certainly literacy and numeracy—certainly as far as a primary teacher is concerned—are absolutely fundamental. And I do believe that the universities agree, and that that is an area we are all working to improve.

CHAIR—What is your solution?

Ms Jacob—It comes back to the overcrowded curriculum for teacher education, as much as in the schools, doesn’t it? I do think that, as I say, I would concentrate on some of those fundamentals, such as literacy and numeracy, that are important for every teacher. I think there are other generic skills that every teacher needs, such as handling behaviour, and assessment and reporting, and those kinds of things. I think they are all-important. I also do not want, in any way, to take space away from content knowledge. That is where I think some things like combined degrees—so that you are able to cover some of those things over, perhaps, the same period of time, but in a more integrated way—are the way to go.

CHAIR—In relation to beginning teachers’ early years in the workforce, do you have a comprehensive policy on mentoring of beginning teachers into the school family, as it were, and taking them through those early years?

Ms Jacob—No, we do not have a formal policy for that. I think a lot of that would come down to colleague teachers at the school level and senior staff and so on. But, no, we do not have a formal policy.

Ms Peacock—I suppose it is implicit in the BeTTR program but, in that first year at least, mentoring and other development is at the heart of things. But, no, there is not a particular program described.

CHAIR—Do you think that the department has a role to play in perhaps getting a more structured approach to mentoring, to try and discourage the attrition that appears to occur with some of our beginning teachers?

Ms Jacob—I think it would be really helpful. I think most new graduates would say that they do find it very helpful to have a colleague at their shoulder to whom they can turn for support and help with a few practical ideas and so forth. As for how formal that can be, sometimes it is very much a case of the beginning teacher knowing who they feel comfortable with and who is around and so on. But we would want to encourage that.

CHAIR—Thank you very much 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 copy of the transcript will appear on the parliamentary web site.

[1.59 pm]

BROOKER, Associate Professor Ross, Deputy Chair, Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania

COCKER, Ms Penny, Manager, Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania

LANZLINGER, Mr Andrew, Board Member, Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania

SUITOR, Mr Greg, Chair, Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania

CHAIR—Good afternoon. I remind you that public hearings are recorded by Hansard and that a record is made available to the public through the parliament's web site. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that these hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House itself. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament. I invite you to make some introductory remarks.

Mr Suitor—You are probably aware that we have sent the committee a submission, which you may have read. Initially, we would like to highlight a couple of its points and invite some questions from you to explore it a little more. One of the things that the Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania holds very dear is that, in relation to students who wish to become teachers, we believe there needs to be some extra process to look at the type of person who wishes to become a teacher. I would like to stress some of the points we have made. They should have a passion for teaching and to actually like children and young people—

Ms BIRD—To start with.

Mr Suitor—that is right—and have a desire to help prepare them for a successful life. While being self-sufficient and able to show initiative, they should be able to work effectively with others; be active learners themselves; have a sense of responsibility both for themselves and more widely; have good communication skills; and have attained specified standards of literacy and numeracy, which we think should have happened before their enrolment has been accepted. A process should be developed to help determine that. We believe that the current process, which is based on academic achievements, misses that key personal attribute that is so important for teaching. We would like you to look at that and investigate the possibilities for that to occur and to ask us some questions about it so that you are satisfied with what we are saying.

The other key point we would like to talk about initially is the experience had by people during their training to become teachers in terms of their practicums in schools. We believe very strongly that people who are not successful at that should not then go on to become teachers. It seems a contradiction. It is one part of young people's training where they are in contact with what their job will be and in contact with and assisted by experienced teachers. Experienced teachers should be listened to in some way. That is the other point.

The board also believes very strongly that teacher training is endless—that to train for four years before commencing teaching is only the beginning. Things change so much in education and learning that it is ridiculous to look at those four years as the sole criterion. It is a good foundation, but the experiences in people's lives and the years that they work are just as important. We believe that they should be recognised, taken note of and acted upon. Is there anything in what I have just put or any other matter that you would like to explore at this stage?

CHAIR—We might have an opening address from everybody and we will go to questions at the end.

Mr Suitor—Will there also be an opportunity later for people to talk about things from a personal level?

CHAIR—If you so wish.

Mr Suitor—The members might like to do that.

Ms Cocker—Would you like a bit of background about the board?

CHAIR—Yes, please.

Ms Cocker—The Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania is not quite new now, although it still feels pretty new. The legislation was passed at the end of 2000 and came into effect on 1 January 2002. It was the third teachers registration board in the country to be established. In fact, it was what I call the first 'second wave', because South Australia's and Queensland's had been in existence for nearly 30 years at that time. They had managed to hold back the various forces that wanted to do away with teacher registration in the early nineties. This has gone full circle now, as I am sure you are aware. There is teacher registration in every state and territory, except for New South Wales and the ACT. I believe that the ACT—I am not sure whether or not it has been released yet—is preparing a paper about teacher registration and New South Wales has gone down the alternative path of accreditation of teachers based on standards, which is not a registration process. So we were the first in the second wave and we have set ourselves up completely from scratch. It has been a very interesting process.

We have about 9,200 registered teachers. Nobody can be employed to teach in Tasmania unless they are a registered teacher or they have a limited authority to teach. That is a practical solution to a problem which the board wishes did not need to be there. A limited authority allows for a school to seek permission to employ somebody when they are not eligible for registration. The act refers to when a school finds somebody who has the necessary skills and experience that an available registered teacher does not have, so it allows for highly specialised areas. But it is still, in our view, most regrettable because an unqualified, unprepared person is being employed as a teacher. We require thorough cases for employees to justify such an employment in Tasmania. The most common usage is for music.

The public education system, particularly in Tasmania, has a very impressive history of music education, particularly in the primary sector, and there is not a history of qualified teachers being able to take all the music classes, particularly instrumental music and so on. It is a very proud history. There will be an absolutely fabulous evening at the Derwent Entertainment Centre next

month. It looks like thousands of primary school children from all around the south will turn up to present a musical evening on what they have learnt. That is a slight detour, I guess, but I wanted to make clear that LATs exist; they are a practical solution to a problem but they are not the ideal as far as we see it. The vast majority of people employed to teach in Tasmania are registered teachers.

There are two components to registration of particular significance. One is the fact that they must be qualified. As we mentioned in our submission, there are either three degrees plus the combined degrees currently available from the University of Tasmania. Our act requires courses to be approved. That is an important requirement, which we have not fleshed out a lot yet. You may wish to talk to us more about that later.

The other really important component to being a registered teacher in Tasmania is that the applicant must satisfy the board that they are of good character. This is an extremely important component. We are very proud of it, in the sense that our minister determined when the act commenced that every single teacher had to go through the registration process rather than having all practising teachers being deemed, which is a very tempting thing to do. That temptation was resisted, so we are able to say right from the beginning that every single registered teacher, and LAT holder, in the school has satisfied the board that they are of good character—we do a police check, an employer check and so on. So those are two things that we are quite proud of.

This is our fourth year of operation, and we are still doing things for the first time as we are getting going. We have a tiny team of only four permanent staff. I get very envious of an organisation like the Victorian Institute of Teaching, for example, with their enormous team; but of course they register 10 times as many people as well.

CHAIR—Are completing an approved course and being of good character the two components of teacher registration or is there more on top?

Ms Cocker—That is to start with. That is when you apply for registration for the first time. If you are a beginning teacher and you apply for registration, you become a registered teacher with the category of provisional registration, which is an indication of a lack of experience—or a lack of recent experience, in some cases. They usually have a condition or two attached to their provisional registration, the satisfaction of which makes them eligible for the category of what is at the moment called registration; in other places it is called full registration. It makes the language easier when you can call it full registration. They are eligible to apply for full registration when they have met the condition. The usual condition is the satisfactory completion of one full-time equivalent year of teaching to the satisfaction of the board.

A small number of people, because of the transition at the beginning, have been required to upgrade their teacher education qualification; but that is less than two-dozen people, and they are hopefully going to solve that problem very soon—if they have not already—and then we will have the more conventional satisfactory service as the condition. We have not yet implemented a notion of professional teaching standards. We can talk about that more as well if you wish. It is in the pipeline but it is not in place yet. Once teachers have the category of registration—or full registration—then they are required to renew that category of registration every three years. The

act requires satisfactory evidence of ongoing competence or professional development undertaken.

CHAIR—Could I ask another question, as you are going through that. With regard to the one year's practical experience, is that one year's full-time—

Ms Cocker—Equivalent. We very kindly define it as 185 FTE days because sadly not all teachers get what they want, which is a full-time appointment straightaway. Some will commence in the profession and get work by being a relief teacher, and that is ad hoc and spasmodic. Some might get quite a lot, so we tell them to maintain a record—a diary or a spreadsheet—and accumulate the days. If they are lucky they will get their creds up, somebody will see that, they will be in the right place at the right time and they will get a fixed term appointment for a term or whatever. Hopefully their career will develop from then. They are allowed to accumulate the days as well.

Ms BIRD—Can I clarify that. Is that teaching only in approved government or private primary or secondary schools?

Ms Cocker—Yes.

Ms BIRD—There is no equivalent experience if they go off and they do—

CHAIR—A child-care centre?

Ms BIRD—I was more thinking about adult education or something in the TAFE system or whatever.

Ms Cocker—You are absolutely right. No. The teachers registration was set up to register teachers to teach in government schools, which cater kindergarten to year 12; the senior secondary colleges; and the registered schools, which also cover the K to 12 years. That is our focus. Anybody working in child care prior to kindergarten is not our concern. Anybody working post year 12 in TAFE or university is not our concern. Our focus is on registering teachers to teach in those schools.

Ms BIRD—But you have secondary teachers—maybe you do not. In New South Wales we have secondary teachers who regularly teach at TAFE in the evenings. Would those hours taught in another environment count?

Ms Cocker—No. We want the teaching in a Tasmanian government school or other registered school because that is where the students are that they have to be registered to teach. Their other employment is totally up to them. They do not have to be registered to do that work. There is no concept of registration in the TAFE area. We have a very hard—and it annoys people a bit at times—but very well-defined line. That is where it has to be.

Mr Suitor—However, there may be people who are registered teachers who teach outside of school.

Ms BIRD—I have no problem with that. We have alternative HSC courses at TAFE, and secondary teachers teach those. It is the same as teaching at high school. Part of the dilemma we are facing in New South Wales and the complaint about accreditation is that it fails to recognise equivalent type work. That is not done.

Mr Suitor—That used to be the case in Tasmania many years ago. The higher school certificate, as it was then called, moved to the colleges, private schools or open learning.

Ms Cocker—I think our senior secondary colleges get us around that, don't they? We have the VET programs provided within the colleges.

CHAIR—Any further comments?

Prof. Brooker—One of the board's key interests with respect to teacher education is the approval of teacher education courses. We are currently in the process of developing a mechanism to do that, along with the criteria by which we will approve those courses. I guess the inquiry is timely in a sense because we will obviously be interested in the outcome of the inquiry as part of that process. At the moment, with only one university in Tasmania, the courses are effectively registered with the board.

Ms Cocker—They are approved.

Prof. Brooker—Yes. But we are at the moment developing a much more robust process by which we will approve courses for teacher education.

Ms BIRD—How do you approve them now?

Ms Cocker—It is a token process.

Prof. Brooker—Yes.

Ms Cocker—I was appointed in 2001 to set up the whole thing. We had to set policy in place and we had to have approved courses because the act refers to approved courses. It does not define what it means. At that stage there were simply three courses: the Bachelor of Education, the Bachelor of Human Movement and the Bachelor of Teaching. We were also aware that the graduates of those three degrees were and still are very highly regarded. Schools are thrilled to bits when they get new graduates appointed to their schools. There is an age profile question as well. They are in almost all instances highly regarded, so the board felt comfortable saying, 'These are the approved courses.' It is not acceptable in the long term, and you would all be aware of the MCEETYA decisions on the national standards framework and the requirement that there be graduate standards. We are going to tie together all of those things and develop them, as Ross said. We will have professional teaching standards and in particular graduate standards. We will also have—and they are soon to be endorsed—a set of standards which will be used for teachers to apply to go from provisional registration to full registration. Those are a lot of the big challenges for next year.

Ms BIRD—You must have had a huge part of your work force without a degree equivalent?

Ms Cocker—No. We have a very highly qualified teaching force in Tasmania. It is very impressive. The Bachelor of Education has been around for more than 30 years—I think 35 years. I am surprised how early it started. Prior to that, the Diploma of Education had been in place for a long time. Back in the sixties there were teachers who did a two-year teachers certificate in what were then called teachers colleges. There was one in Hobart and one in Launceston. I knew this because of my involvement in the profession, but I saw with all the applications that we signed off an extraordinary number of teachers with the older qualification and also one called the Diploma of Teaching, the three-year undergraduate course, which the faculty stopped offering about 10 years ago. An amazing number of teachers had upgraded those. They had done the Bachelor of Education in-service and got a Bachelor of Education degree later on. There has been an amazing commitment to upgrading and professional development through further study by Tasmanian teachers. It really showed up when I saw the thousands of applications coming through.

In 2002, obviously there was a transition, and the board could not simply say to a teacher, ‘You’re not qualified; you’re out. So the board set guidelines and we ended up registering, I think, 381 teachers who did not have a teaching qualification at all but had been teaching for 15 to sometimes 30 years in the system. They were practising teachers at the time and their employers had no questions about their competence. They were registered because of the extent of their service. But the board was fairly tough on smaller amounts of service. If they did not have a qualification, some were registered and told to go and get it—that was the couple of dozen that we talked about earlier—and some were told to go away and come back, and that is what some have done as well. But there was an extraordinarily high percentage of qualified teachers. Our annual report has the statistics and our annual reports are up on the web site if you want to have a look. They are all there and they have a chapter about the statistics.

Mr Lanzlinger—I am the Australian Education Union nominee on the board. I was one of the people in the mid-eighties, when I was on the state council of the AEU, who campaigned fairly strongly for some sort of teacher registration board. I had a wife at that time who was working for the nurses registration board and I saw the way in which that worked and how that made sure the qualifications and behaviour of the people in the profession were up to scratch. I always regarded, and I still do, our number one priority to be the protection and the welfare of the students in our care. That means making sure that the students have an education from people who are qualified and that the people who are standing in the front of the classroom, the people who are supervising them and looking after them and acting as their parents, if you like, are not only competent but also of good character. I think that is where the board has two major functions: to ensure (a) that the people who are registered by the board are qualified and (b) that the people who we put in the front of the classrooms are people who we believe are of good character. If the people do happen to step out of line, there is a disciplinary procedure which the board goes through. We have actually deregistered teachers already.

Ms BIRD—Can you explain how you establish good character?

Ms Cocker—On the application there are a set of questions where they have to declare whether or not they have been convicted or charged with any offence, including indictable offences. They have to answer questions such as whether or not they have been disciplined, dismissed or encouraged to resign and they also have to answer a question about whether or not

they have had their licence to teach withdrawn. That is a statutory declaration and of course it is an honour thing. They have to be trusted in what they say. That is one component.

They also complete a permission page and we conduct a national police check and see what comes back from that. Very little has come back. In fact, no teacher has been refused registration in Tasmania on the basis of a record of conviction police report, unlike in other states. We also send out lists of previous names as well as current names to the employers, schools, the Department of Education, the Catholic Education Office and independent schools and ask them if they recognise any of those names and there is anything known about these people that should be brought to the board's attention. We also ask on the application form for a character reference to be provided by somebody who has known the person for more than 12 months. That is all in a statutory declaration too in the application.

Ms BIRD—So there are pretty standard good character tests.

Ms Cocker—Yes. I should also say that the act defines good character and says the board must take into account any conviction or charge made against the person. It then defines good character in terms of their behaviour and whether or not they are fit and proper. It is a very good definition in the act that sets up the criteria for us.

Mr Suitor—I would like to add to that. When, on the very few occasions the board is tested in terms of having to determine, on the edge, I suppose, a person's good character, probably where there has been a complaint, all those things come into play, plus the judgment of the 10 board members who live in this community. They have a view about the sort of character that a teacher ought to have. They make that judgment. It is not written down. In the cases where we have been tested and people have appealed to the court system about it, the magistrates or the judiciary have come into play. They look at the judicial interpretation of good character. All the cases that we have considered have been backed up or supported, upheld, by the judiciary. It is interesting to look at the judiciary's interpretation of good character. That gives us guidance for other cases that we need to consider.

CHAIR—In your submission, you mentioned the need for a more comprehensive approach to the selection of potential or future teachers. The problem we have is that university resources are stretched. The academic staff are stretched; they are very busy. The interview process is very intense and resource intensive. What are your thoughts on coming up with a process, and who would pay for such a process, of a more rigorous examination of candidates to go into teaching?

Mr Suitor—In terms of who would pay for it, I suppose it would depend on what the nation wants and what it is prepared to put up. There are a lot of ways to raise money, I realise. If the nation, in its collective wisdom, decides that it wishes to have teachers who reflect the sorts of things I was talking about, I would imagine that would be paid for from the public purse. That is a judgment that you people collectively and state governments et cetera would have to make. However, it is possible to piggyback on some of the skills of the people who already are teaching. I am sure systems could be designed to capitalise on the skills of practising teachers in this process. Some system could be designed and developed to do that. That is something that is not done now. I am sure that many of my colleagues and former colleagues would be prepared to be involved in that in some way.

Ms CORCORAN—Do you mean the teachers of the students finishing off school and looking—

Mr Suitor—No, I mean teachers generally.

CHAIR—To participate on a panel of assessment or something?

Mr Suitor—Yes. You might call for people who are interested in participating and then have some process to see that they are suitable participants—go through some sort of training program that would give them the status to do that.

CHAIR—It is an argument that we are struggling with. Some people advocate that interviews are not necessarily the best way to assess suitability. Some argue that the TER score provides a very strong correlation—a good TER performance and a good performance as a teacher upon graduating from formal training. We have had put to us the argument that the resources involved in the intense scrutiny of candidate teachers at the front end before they go in would be better spent on the course itself rather than on the assessment process. There are some who hold the opposite view and say we should weed them out early and not waste resources and waste everyone's time on taking that person through.

Ms Cocker—There are the HECS fees they incur as well.

Mr Suitor—It may be within your power to initiate research into this to come up with some sort of definitive answer to those sorts of conflicting points of view.

CHAIR—There is quite a bit of research that already indicates what I said—that strong TER—

Ms BIRD—Whichever position you take, there is a piece of research to support it.

Mr Suitor—I know, I understand that.

CHAIR—There is plenty of research out there.

Mr Suitor—All I can say is that this is what people who have been teaching for a long time believe. It is fairly commonly held—I am only talking from the Tasmanian position, but I do not think it is any different from teachers anywhere around the world—that there needs to be something more than just the academic side of it, because of the nature of the job. It is a caring profession. You want caring individuals and individuals who can relate to people.

Ms Cocker—It is not commensurate with the TER score.

Mr Suitor—Unfortunately success in maths does not necessarily tell you that, I do not believe.

CHAIR—You are right.

Ms BIRD—Nor make a good maths teacher.

Mr Suitor—That is right. I am drawing on years of experience as a teacher and years of observing the sorts of things that happen—people’s academic aptitude versus all the other things that they do. There is a place to consider that. I do not think it should be the main thing but it should be part of it.

Ms Cocker—We actually suggest this in our paper. We talk about sharing responsibility around and having a number of panels. There is something that could grow out of that, because one of the things that we are also quite concerned about is that, when we have a thorough process for converting provisional registration to full registration, which would be people putting themselves up against a set of professional teaching standards, they will need to be mentored through this process. There is a little web here about experienced, accomplished teachers being on interviews panels. There is the fact that when beginning teachers are appointed they need to be mentored. There is also the fact that student teachers in their last year do a significant internship and go into schools and they should be supervised and/or mentored by experienced and accomplished teachers.

We actually have a lot of these people in Tasmania, but there is a capacity here for a role for the board, with teachers obviously having to volunteer but being trained to be able to be those mentors and supervisors and taking expertise. It is really the profession nurturing itself. The challenge, of course, is that teachers are utterly overwhelmed with work, because they are nurturing their own students—let alone worrying about another group. But there is a question here about the profession stepping up to look after itself as well. It would have resource implications, but once the group was skilled up and there was an ongoing process of skilling a few more each year there could be quite an impressive contribution. If you had enough people involved then it would not be too great a load per person, possibly.

Ms CORCORAN—You talk about there being a role for teachers on some sort of interview panel. I have two questions that come out of that. The first is: is there a role for the student’s current teachers—that is, the teachers who saw them through their senior high school years? They are the people who know them the best, presumably. With regard to my second question, I do not know if it is called TER in Tasmania. What is it called in Tasmania?

Mr Suitor—The same thing.

Ms CORCORAN—My second question is: what is the weighting, in your mind, between the academic TER score and this harder to define quality? Would you take a student if they were just below the benchmark but had excellent personality traits?

Mr Suitor—That is the wisdom of Solomon, isn’t it? You are asking if they are on the margin. You have to look at the current situation, I suppose, to give an answer to that. Currently, you look at a TER score and there is a line. Those people in that grey area, through a process of references and the skill interview board or whatever you like to call it, are given some sort of rating and, in combination with the TER score, they come up with some sort of formula, I would imagine. I would not like to throw this off the top my head now because I would like to think a lot more about it. There is the notion of people who have taught these students having some input, the notion of skilled people making some sort of assessment having some input and the notion that their academic achievement has some input. There are other things too that you could look at—community involvement and that sort of stuff. You look at the total person so you are

getting a total picture. I would not like to give the percentages—what percentage each of those is valued at—but I think all of them should play some role—more so than they do know. Does that help?

Ms CORCORAN—Yes, that helps, thank you.

Ms BIRD—I will ask the department this question as well: why would we buy into telling young people they cannot do something when they are 18? I am not convinced that selection into the course is the key factor government would put resources toward, for the very reason that it is very resource intensive. None of the other professions have that. If somebody wants to enrol in medicine or law, where interpersonal skills are critically important, they are not excised out because of other measures.

You mention the possibility of perhaps making the practicum a make-or-break factor in the course, which is not the case in university courses currently. What would be your feeling about the view that we are better off exploring those sorts of options and the stuff you are talking about—effective, good quality practicums. If an 18-year-old—or a 30-year-old—decides they are going to enrol in a graduate education course, why shouldn't they be able to?

Mr Suitor—You are taking this from two points of view—one is the economic point of view, I suppose, isn't it?

Ms BIRD—And the other is the freedom of choice point of view.

Mr Suitor—I do not know where the economic argument kicks in. Should we spend four years educating somebody and then, at the end of the fourth year, or at the end of the fifth year, when they start teaching, find out that they are not suitable to be teachers? You look at the waste that potentially—

Ms BIRD—With all due respect, people who do education courses do not just teach. There are a whole lot of other professions that people can go into, particularly in the commercial world and in adult education. There are other options for them.

Mr Suitor—We are only talking about people who are going into teaching in schools, you see. We are not necessarily saying that people who do teacher education should have to pass this process that we talked about. But, for people who are going to become teachers, this ought to be—right?

Ms BIRD—So where it happens is negotiable?

Mr Suitor—I suppose so, yes. In terms of a fair go, I suppose if we could find some sort of test—like a 100-metre race to see who was the fastest—that would be a silver bullet; it would solve all our problems, wouldn't it? But, unfortunately, there isn't such a thing. I believe that, as we get more into the knowledge revolution way of doing things, other professions will want to do things more like this, because it gets more competitive. You have got to try to get the best in there, and the nation is less and less able to afford to waste its resources. I suppose people are just trying to work out better ways of doing things all the way. So you really have to weigh all

these things up. You weigh up the loss of freedom of choice with the outcome. I suppose that is what you are elected for—you make those decisions, don't you?

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Following on from that, though, there is an enormous amount of maturing that can go on in four years for a person who commences a course at the age of 18.

Mr Suitor—We do not pick whether they are going to become a teacher when they are in kindergarten, do we? There is a maturity process.

Ms BIRD—That is why I would like you to develop the point. I would like to hear what you are thinking, because my preference is not to cull out at the intake point, but to be more professional in what we do—the advice and the support we give through the course, at the key points where those things become obvious. You made the point about the teacher in the classroom who is supervising the practicum and the feedback they give. I wonder whether you have thought through that more. Is it simply that the teacher can fail the student on the practicum and they can still get their degree? What exactly was the issue you were raising there? Do you see a format where we can give more hardline feedback to the student—‘This is not the career for you’, or, ‘Teaching secondary students is not a good option for you’?

Mr Suitor—You hear so many stories—I cannot quantify it, but you hear many stories—from teachers who work in an environment where they have student-teachers coming in. They find—not just on their own; the consensus view is—that this person is not suited to be a teacher. Yet the same person then reappears in the school in a few years time, and there is nothing that they can do about it. They wonder what the sense was in doing it.

Ms BIRD—That is the problem.

Mr Suitor—What was the other thing that you wanted me to talk about?

Ms BIRD—It was the issue of whether we address it at intake or whether we could more effectively address it during the course. Or are we, in fact, addressing the problems you are talking about, of the quality of our teaching profession, through organisations like yours, at registration point?

Mr Suitor—Currently that is having an effect, but the board still believes that they would like something else to happen along the way that does not happen.

Mr Lanzlinger—I graduated with a Bachelor of Education, a four-year degree, in 1978. I was in the first lot of university students to come through the University of Tasmania, starting in 1975 and finishing at the end of 1978 with a Bachelor of Education. It was a four-year degree; I was not somebody who did a Bachelor of Arts, Dip. Ed. and then upgraded it to a B.Ed. I did the actual four-year degree.

Ms BIRD—And that was new then?

Mr Lanzlinger—In the first year there were four subjects. One of them was called education, and in education you did your philosophy and your psychology and all of those. In the second year you did education again. In the fourth year it was all education; it was nothing else. You

dropped one of your arts subjects and one of your science subjects every year through. I did practicum in about my eighth or ninth week at university. I was sent out to a primary school and dumped into a grade 6 class. I sat there for three days watching the teacher and on the fourth day she said, 'It's your class.' At the end of the day she sat down with me and went through things and said, 'This is what you did well' and 'This is where you can improve.' She said, 'You've got 'em again tomorrow.' At the end of that practical session what I really appreciated was first of all the feedback I got from the teacher.

The feedback I got from the principal was really positive. I was on a Commonwealth Teaching Service scholarship and I had been told by the office through the Commonwealth education department here in Hobart that if I failed any of my practicals the scholarship would be pulled. I don't know whether that is being done now, but that was a real incentive to make sure that anything that I was told by a practising teacher out there in the field I listened to. I think that is pretty important. If the sword of Damocles is hanging over you and you are relying on the scholarship—

Ms BIRD—Now you are paying for the course.

Mr Lanzlinger—I know.

Ms BIRD—You are not being paid for it.

Prof. Brooker—There is potential in the first and second year of courses to do what you are suggesting. I think that is probably the proper place. That addresses your issue of not culling them before they get there. Certainly you can look at what happens in the first and second years of the course and develop some processes by which you can make some judgments about their suitability for teaching. That is not easy, but I am sure that it can be done. There are some models for it in the sense that there are programs which are two plus two. The particular program that I oversee at the University of Tasmania is a two plus two human movement program. The first two years are generic and they make a decision about a professional pathway at the end of the second year.

There are alternative pathways for them to take. That is the important issue—if a student gets to the end of the second year and through counselling and mutual discussion they decide that teaching is not for them, there needs to be an option for them to continue rather than being told, 'You have wasted two years; you have to start again.' If there are alternative pathways—which there are in a limited number of degrees—where you have a genuine choice, that would be helpful, because you can make some judgments in the first two years and then provide the student with an alternative. They might graduate with a 'bachelor of educational studies', which means they have a degree which will allow them to do some things but not teach in schools. The first two years have some potential in terms of doing what you suggest, rather than the expensive process, and maybe the morally indefensible process, of culling them before they get there.

Ms BIRD—I am particularly interested in asking the registration boards about this. Do you see a role for registration boards, in approving courses, to build into that approval a requirement about successfully passing? The reality is there is no such thing as a scholarship any more, so you are not going to be able to use that. These kids are paying for what they are doing, so you have some responsibilities beyond what has probably ever happened before. There may be some

role for a registration board when it endorses or approves courses—whatever you do—in terms of the importance of prac. Standards would have to be achieved in that component of it.

Ms Cocker—The board has already decided that. It is obviously preliminary at this stage, but the board is very clearly of the view that, if you do not pass your pracs and your internship, you do not graduate. There is no doubt about that at all in the board's mind. There is another assumption behind everything that has been said so far. You seem to be implying that it is open slather into the degrees, and of course it is not. There is a demand far greater than supply. It seems, therefore, immediately to me that there should be a sophisticated selection process. Having some first-past-the-post TE score or whatever and nothing else—

Ms BIRD—Go and talk to some of the big universities in Sydney and Melbourne and they will die when you say that.

Ms Cocker—Yes, but they have not thought more broadly about how the profession can help. And I also think that the suggestion that doctors and lawyers, who have no process of selection other than the TER score, are a good example is ridiculous. Doctors and lawyers who cannot look you in the eye—

Ms BIRD—That is the point they are making.

Ms Cocker—so I do not think we should take their example as one to pay attention to. The fact is that teachers have to be extraordinary people. They have to have, amongst other things, good communications skills and be able to get on with people. If you have someone who cannot do that, they may well acquire the skills over time. But if you have a great supply versus demand issue then you should be choosing the best of what is available. So of course some people will not get what they want, and some should not get what they want because they are way out of whack with what they think they can do. A lot of them are not 18-year-olds, either. An amazing proportion of them—Ross is probably best placed to say what it is—are mature age people who think they know what they are doing. Some of them are absolutely brilliant and some struggle, don't they, Ross?

Prof. Brooker—Yes, they do.

CHAIR—I would like to return to your role in course accreditation. We have heard from the Department of Education in Tasmania that they have some concerns in relation to focus on numeracy and literacy. With regards to focus on literacy, there is a new module starting in September next year. With regard to numeracy, and I will quote their words, the course outline 'is very comprehensive'; it cannot be well considered in the time allowed for the Bachelor of Education. What are your thoughts as the registration board on those two vitally important issues—literacy and numeracy—and the fact that the course is struggling to provide a sufficient focus, given the crowded curriculum?

Ms Cocker—We said in our submission that we thought it would not necessarily be inappropriate to have some entry-level standards to a degree, but there must be standards set which must be met as part of the graduation process. I anticipate they will be there in the standards when we have the graduate standards finalised. What they will be I do not know.

Prof. Brooker—One of the things that has disappeared—and this is probably pretty widespread across universities in this country—is prerequisites to get into university and teacher education courses. There was a time when numeracy and literacy at a level would have been required as a prerequisite to get into a university course. In many courses that has disappeared because, I think, it was seen as probably keeping people out. So it is a numbers issue. But there may be an opportunity to revisit that. Maybe numeracy and literacy to a certain level on exiting year 12 could be seen as a requirement for getting into a teacher education course.

CHAIR—Did the dropping of those requirements correspond to the fall in TER scores that teaching experienced at one point?

Prof. Brooker—I do not know the answer to that. This is anecdotal, but students are coming with lower levels of literacy and numeracy into teacher education courses. I have been in teacher education courses for about 13 years; it is anecdotal because I have no data. But I have dealt with students over those years and I think the standards of literacy and numeracy are lower for students coming in. That is the reason we are doing more remedial work within teacher education—to address that issue. You might argue that that is necessary and appropriate. There may be a way of relooking at prerequisites to bring them back in, at least around literacy and numeracy. That might help to address that issue of standards with respect to—

Ms BIRD—Are you saying that the TER does not reflect literacy and numeracy?

Prof. Brooker—Not necessarily. Again, most of my experience is in Queensland. In Queensland, one of the subjects that students had to do for TER was English. I do not think that is the case in Tasmania. Again, you have the issue of that not being a mandated subject. In Queensland, it was mandated that one of the TER units that you chose for year 11 and 12 was English. It is different across different states, but that just highlights that that is not the case and might be impacting here. The fact that English at some level is not a prerequisite to getting into teacher ed could be an issue.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Would it be fair to say that the sort of literacy and numeracy testing that we are now discussing would not be set at a very high benchmark?

Prof. Brooker—Within the university?

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—No—for entry testing. You would not have to do a pre-tertiary English subject to demonstrate that you had a good standard of literacy.

Mr Suitor—No. You never had to in Tasmania.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—We are talking about fairly basic levels, aren't we? These are people who have gone through an education system at whatever schools they went to, have graduated from year 12, have got a TE score adequate to go onto further education and yet do not have a basic level of either/or both literacy and numeracy.

Prof. Brooker—Traditionally, though, if you had to do English and maths at some level, those basic skills would have been developed at that point. That is really what the issue is.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—It is an embarrassing problem, isn't it, for all of us?

Prof. Brooker—Sure.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—I have just a couple of quick questions. Penny, you made some comments on the professional standards that you are now working on. Will those standards become a future criterion for teacher registration or are they more of a document of ideals of what level a teacher could be expected to perform to?

Ms Cocker—The MCEETYA ministers determined that there was to be a set of graduate standards in the May 2005 MCEETYA meeting. What they are talking about is that for every course that produces a teacher the faculty has to have a set of standards that it can say have been met when it says that a student has graduated. Every teacher registration authority and the accreditation authority in New South Wales has to have approved courses, by whatever title, in their legislation. Therefore, we all have to have sets of graduate standards, as they are called. Various versions of the process we have to go through have been well in place in Queensland for a long time; and Victoria and New South Wales are further ahead than we are. The processes of approving or accrediting courses more and more are based on standards. That is where we are heading.

I would like to put on record too that all the teacher registration and accreditation authorities have formed what is called the Australasian Forum of Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities, or AFTRAA, and New Zealand is also involved. We are a cooperative body that meets twice a year. We all have varying legislation and various sized acts, but we all have the same things to do in principle. We all have to have approved courses and, because of the education minister's decision, we all have to have graduate standards. The way I see it is that there will be sets of standards developed and then the faculty will demonstrate—and there is a lot of work around this; it is so easy to say that—the course that the students do and then that, by completing the course and graduating, they have met all those standards.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—That clarifies it for me.

Ms Cocker—Can I go just a tad further? A lot of work—very impressive work—has been done already in Tasmania on developing two other sets of standards. They are called dimension 2 and dimension 3, and our graduate standards will be dimension 1. The work that we have to do to develop dimension 1 will fit them in with dimension 2 and dimension 3. Those two dimensions, 2 and 3, are to be endorsed next month by all the key stakeholders. It is a fine piece of work. We are the only state that has cooperated with the Catholics, the independents and the public sector. The unions have been involved, as have the professional associations. Actual real teachers have been involved in what has been a really big committee, and they are most impressive sets of standards. The plan is that we will use dimension 2 for our provisional to full registration teaching standards, and we have to make this dimension 1, which Ross first of all referred to. So, when a student graduates, it will say that they meet all of those standards.

It goes back also to the preliminary work you might do with students; before or shortly after they start a degree they would know about these standards. They would know the standards and they might think, 'Crikey, that doesn't quite sound like me,' and have a rethink or, 'This is me; this is where I'm at,' and off they could go, knowing that was where they were heading. We are

also setting up and are just about to finalise a code of professional ethics for the teaching profession. My view is that I would expect the faculty to invite the board to talk to students in their first year about the code of ethics so that, again, they would know at the beginning that this was the behaviour that was expected of teachers, and again they could have a little think about it. They could think, 'Is this for me or not?' All those things are going to come together beautifully, I hope, in the next year or so.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—My last question is related to matching student placement at university in terms of their specialisation and future employment prospects. I was really pleased that your submission highlighted this. It was not something, from memory, that was in our terms of reference, but you and others have identified this as a problem. I am sure you, being local, would acknowledge that it is a remarkable problem for us in Tasmania with people being trained only to graduate and find that they cannot get work. I think it is crueller even than the scenario we heard before where people are going through a degree program who perhaps are not really cut out for teaching in the classroom. That is cruel enough, but I think it is crueller that they are suited to classroom teaching but cannot get a job at all because they trained in an area where there is no work force need, such as early childhood and some early years in primary.

Ms Cocker—That is what the department tells us, too.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Yes. I was very pleased to see that comment, although it was brief. It sounds like you would support a recommendation from this committee that universities should be offering training places that more closely match what the work force demand will be on graduation?

Ms Cocker—It is one of those things that I think every member of the board would personally agree with, but it is not strictly speaking the board's brief; our brief is to register teachers. So whatever they come up with, hopefully they meet our policy and they are through. But certainly, as members of the profession, we probably know even family members and friends who have adult children who cannot get the work that they want. The department has been telling us for a long time that early childhood is oversupplied and there is this imbalance. It is probably a question to put to the faculty rather than to us.

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON—Yes, and I will.

Ms BIRD—It is university funding.

Ms Cocker—Yes. The other issue that I think you started on was this whole issue of practicums and placements. I was hoping you might want to talk about that. Had you been planning to ask a question about practicums and teaching?

CHAIR—We are always interested in practicums.

Ms Cocker—It is such a complex issue. Ross, again, is probably better placed to comment, because his own students have to go and do them. It is this whole issue about getting real about what is involved. Student teachers are usually 21, 22, 23 or they are in their 30s—they have lives. They have to have part-time work, because that is the only way they can survive. They have jobs and all of a sudden they have to disappear for four, six or nine weeks to somewhere

else. Often they are in rented accommodation. There are all the practical costs of going somewhere else. Ideally we would all say, 'They should have a variety of experiences—a district high school, an isolated school, a big-city school or whatever.' But the sheer practicalities are extremely difficult.

I feel sorry for the chap in the faculty in Launceston who has to organise the placements. He is bald now, isn't he, with worry trying to work out how to place them all? Then of course there are the schools that can accept them as well. There is a really big issue here about how to have a greater professional involvement in supporting students in their practicums and internships. Even if we had the most fantastically brilliantly resourced process in place, there is still the issue of the students being able to leave Hobart or Launceston to go somewhere else without being seriously out-of-pocket. I gather that government assistance does not work at all to help them do that. So it has to be something completely innovative to enable it. I presume it happens more so in the bigger states. There is also the fear of the non-urban and the isolated, so students want to stay where they know, which is Hobart or Launceston, rather than going further away. If they actually did some internships in more isolated schools, they might realise they are fantastic schools to work in. But for someone to leave Hobart to go to Queenstown to do a prac is practically impossible for them financially. There is a foundation of really practical issues that need to be addressed in there as well as all the more professional ones.

Mr Suitor—I would like to say something further. I know when you do this sort of thing you tend to dwell on the negatives. There is a tendency to do that because you are trying to get better, so you look at the negative side of things. But in my experience and observation teachers as a group are much better than they were 30 years ago or 40 years ago—they are more qualified, they are more experienced, they understand more about how people learn and they are more prepared to develop those sorts of things. We need to remind ourselves that we are not looking at a situation where teachers as a group are worse than they were. I think as a nation we are improving. Part of this inquiry I suppose is to further that so that we get better still. There is no harm in getting better, but I think we need to remind ourselves that we are getting better. If you can look over a period of time, my observation is that teachers as a group are much better than they were 40 years ago.

Mr Lanzlinger—I would make one other point in the same vein. For example, it is very unfair when you use literacy and numeracy figures to allocate funding. There are schools with poor demographics and ethnically diverse mixes within their populations, where large numbers of students have difficulties with English. When you begin to say to such schools, 'Your literacy skills or your numeracy skills are down; therefore, we will remove funding from you and give it to the school down the road'—which has a higher white Anglo-Saxon Protestant population—you are slapping in the face the teachers who work in those difficult-to-staff schools. Last year when that happened, many teachers at Ogilvie High School, where I work, became very upset and angry. They said, 'How dare they do that?' They saw that as being grossly immoral. They said that it was unfair on the students in the school, many of whom have difficulties anyhow. Many of them have problems in adjusting to the Australian community. The teachers who work in those schools work in unbelievably stressful situations and then to have that happen really angered many of them.

If you are going to talk about retaining teachers, it is most important that teachers are shown a degree of respect for the work they do. At the moment, their workload is absolutely crippling.

From the time you walk into school, the amount of time that you spend with students and on assessments, marking and reporting has not changed as a proportion in 30 years. The amount of work we do with administration, report writing and so on means that we are working more and more outside of normal school hours. Last week I worked an 85-hour week for a 37½-hour a week pay packet. Not many people in many professions do that. I could not do anything else because my reports had to be on the education department's mainframe computer so that the reports could be printed off next week—and I have a full teaching load.

Ms BIRD—Technology has not made our lives easier, has it?

Mr Lanzlinger—No. However, be aware that teachers are under an enormous amount of strain. One of the reasons for many teachers not being employed is that there are teachers like me who work three times the workload that we should be working. Maybe that needs to be addressed. Then many of those teachers that we are talking about who are highly qualified could get jobs. Believe me, the kids would get a better education if they had a teacher working on eight hours of sleep rather than 3½ hours of sleep.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for appearing before the committee today. The secretariat will contact you if we need further information. A copy of the transcript of your evidence will be provided and will be posted upon our web site.

Resolved (on motion by **Ms Bird**):

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 2.57 pm