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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Reference: Teacher education

TUESDAY, 4 APRIL 2006

WOLLONGONG

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Tuesday, 4 April 2006

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 Hartsuyker and Mr Sawford

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

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

Specifically, the Inquiry should:

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

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

WITNESSES

BHINDI, Associate Professor Narottam, Director, Australian Centre for Educational Leadership, University of Wollongong 42

BRICKELL, Dr Gwyn, Lecturer, IT Education/Science Education, Director, Loftus Program, University of Wollongong 42

BROWN, Associate Professor Ian, Associate Dean, Undergraduate, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong 1, 13

CARROLL, Mr Chris, External support, University of Wollongong 42

CLINCH, Ms Pippa, Student, Primary Education, University of Wollongong 22

DINHAM, Professor Stephen, Professor of Educational Leadership and Pedagogy, University of Wollongong 13, 42

FERRY, Associate Professor Brian, Associate Dean (Graduate), University of Wollongong 1, 13, 42

FRAZER, Miss Ricki, Student, Primary - Diploma of Education, University of Wollongong 22

HARPER, Professor Barry, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong 1, 13, 33, 42

HAWKINS, Mr Stephen, Student, Science, University of Wollongong 22

KIGGINS, Dr Julie, Lecturer, Knowledge Building Community, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong 33

LYSAGHT, Dr Pauline, Sub Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong 1

McCANN, Mr Paul, External Support, University of Wollongong 42

MCKEEN, Ms Kim, Deputy Director GDE, University of Wollongong 33

NEVILLE, Miss Lee-Ann, Student, Early Childhood, University of Wollongong 22

O'DONOGHUE, Miss Karen, Student, Early Childhood, University of Wollongong 22

OKELY, Dr Tony, Senior Lecturer, Physical and Health Education, CORe Coordinator, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong 42

PREECE, Mr Tor, Student, Secondary Education, University of Wollongong 22

SCHMICH, Ms Kate, External Support, University of Wollongong 42

STEVENS, Miss Rebecca, Student, Physical Education, University of Wollongong 22

TURBILL, Dr Jan, Director, Field Experience Program, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong 33

WALTON, Mr Russell, Honours Student, University of Wollongong 22

WHELAN, Professor Rob, Dean, Faculty of Science, University of Wollongong 42

WRIGHT, Professor Jan, Associate Dean, Research, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong 1, 13

Committee met at 9.18 am

BROWN, Associate Professor Ian, Associate Dean, Undergraduate, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

FERRY, Associate Professor Brian, Associate Dean, Graduate, University of Wollongong

HARPER, Professor Barry, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

LYSAGHT, Dr Pauline, Sub Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

WRIGHT, Professor Jan, Associate Dean, Research, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

CHAIR (Mr Hartsuyker)—Welcome to the inquiry into teacher education. The inquiry has examined a broad range of issues which impact on how well we are preparing teachers for their complex, demanding and critical role in educating our children. It has generated considerable interest across Australia. To date we have received some 165 submissions. We are now nearing the end of our schedule of public hearings, having visited Victoria, Queensland, the Northern Territory, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. We have also held several hearings in the ACT and New South Wales. I call representatives from the University of Wollongong. May I remind you that these are public hearings, recorded by Hansard, and that a record is made available to the public through the parliament's website.

Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that the hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House itself. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament. I invite you to make some introductory remarks. I understand that today's sessions will be divided into a range of sections and that we will treat each of those individually.

Prof. Harper—I would be happy to make an introductory remark. First of all, thank you for the opportunity to give additional evidence to your committee—beyond our submission from this faculty and the submissions that we have also contributed to from the Australian College of Deans of Education and the New South Wales Teacher Education Council. The schedule we have in front of you today has been structured to allow us to have the most appropriate people here to address you on your terms of reference listed in each of those timeslots. We substantially support the Australian College of Deans of Education and the New South Wales TEC submissions. We disagree on some minor points and some foci, but we substantially agree with both of those submissions.

The faculty of education graduates annually about 620 teacher education students through six teacher preparation programs. We prepare early childhood, primary and physical and health education graduates through the Bachelor of Education. We are currently phasing out our early childhood and primary programs that were three-year Bachelor of Teaching programs and moving those to a four-year program. We also prepare science and maths teachers—as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, referred to—through our Bachelor of Science Education and Bachelor of Maths Education programs. They are actually based at our Loftus campus.

Additionally, we offer a pathway to teaching for graduates through our Graduate Diploma in Education, which covers most secondary curriculum areas as well as a primary program. With two of these programs, we also offer small cohorts of students an innovative, experimental program called the Knowledge Building Community Program. Some staff members could answer questions on that later if you are interested in hearing further detail.

At the postgraduate level we offer a full suite of graduate certificates, masters, masters by research and doctorate of education and doctorate of philosophy programs in seven specialisations—educational technology, language and literacy, special ed, educational leadership, adult and vocational education, TESOL and physical and health education. Additionally, we offer a raft of targeted professional development programs both face-to-face and online. We have significant expertise as a faculty in the area of online learning, supported through a strong and extensive history of technology use. Our largest research group within the faculty supports this program.

We are one of nine faculties within the university. We are not a subset of any other faculty and, as such, we are well recognised within the university as first-class citizens. We know that there are many ex-faculties of education that are now schools of education and there has been some comment by the Australian College of Deans of Education about the appropriateness of that and the sorts of issues that face those groups. We do not face those issues, because we are an independent stand-alone faculty.

We think our programs are of high quality, and they have been judged that way. The recent AUQA committee report on our university indicated that we have very good systems and our teaching process is of very high quality. Additionally, the university achieved the highest ranking in the recent teaching and learning performance funding allocation from DEST. The annual national course experience questionnaire shows that this faculty has the highest student rating in this university and we are well above the national average for teaching and overall course satisfaction. So I am a very proud dean. We have close contacts with our community, who, as our local member can testify, are proud and supportive of the significant achievements and standing of this university generally.

There have been many inquiries into teacher education over the last 20 years. Your terms of reference will allow you to address many of the continuing issues that we have. But, for me, there are two very significant issues that I would like to raise. The first is the quarantining of fees for teacher education. Despite the good intentions of this policy, it has the potential for education faculties to lose parity with other faculties and it is, in effect, a limit on our income. I know this has been a theme that other institutions have raised with you.

The second major issue for us is the funding of the professional experience. I have no doubt—and our experimental programs have all shown that this is the case—that, if we could improve the quality of our student professional experience programs, we could improve the quality of our students. I am not talking about quantity, but quality and both of those issues combined. What is needed is additional explicit funding for professional preparation that is not rolled into the Commonwealth contribution, similar to nursing. I would like to commend to you the proposal from the Australian College of Deans in this regard, although I would note that, for us, it is a little mechanistic in terms of talking about days rather than how one thinks about the quality of that experience.

Each of the panels we have put together today have specific terms of reference associated with them. The first panel in front of you would be happy to address the issues of student selection, student quality and attrition, staffing selection and funding for our programs. Each of the other panels that will be in front of you today will have specific terms of reference, but they will be happy to address any other issue that you would like to raise.

CHAIR—I will start with a couple of questions. Firstly, there is the issue of the way in which students are selected. The UAI score is one method. Some have talked about other methods such as interview, and there are obviously arguments for and against with regard to whether resources are best spent on an alternative method of assessing students. What are your thoughts on the value of interview or alternative selection processes as opposed to a TER or a UAI score?

Dr Lysaght—As you say, there are many methods of assessment and they all have value. I guess it depends. We have to strike a balance at the moment because we have students coming in with UAIs, so we are looking at quota and where the cut-off is. But we also have the opportunity, which I think is a fantastic opportunity, of inviting people to apply so that they can put a resume or a CV together and apply as direct applicants. Through direct application, again there are a number of avenues. I would hate to lose the opportunity that we are able to give to people who come from a whole range of backgrounds and with different experiences. I would hate to lose that by having only the UAI cut-off.

In terms of effort, time, money and resources, a UAI alone is the simplest way to do things. There is a clear cut-off. Some people would appeal on the basis of special consideration, but I think we would lose the richness of the students that we see in terms of the different experiences they bring. Our students may apply directly and come straight into the faculty. Perhaps they would be told that they have a conditional offer. They could go to the university college for a year or a session and do something relevant there. Perhaps they are students who have been disadvantaged in some way or are part of a DEST equity group. In that case, they can go into the STEP program if they are coming straight from school and, again, they have a conditional offer to come in. Also, perhaps they come in through the alternative admissions program, such as through the Aboriginal Education Centre. If we go to a UAI alone, we lose the opportunities for those people. I am not sure that is what you are looking for, but that is as honest as I can be.

CHAIR—Thank you. Could you expand a little on the Indigenous entry program for us, because I think we can do a much better job on encouraging more Indigenous people to become teachers?

Dr Lysaght—Absolutely. I think that is one of our biggest challenges. We work very closely with Woolyungah. They have an entry program and students and people elsewhere contact them. So either kids come in from schools and contact the centre or mature age students contact the centre through various avenues. I then interview the students who say they would like to come into education. Every student who applies through the Indigenous Education Centre is then interviewed by me.

CHAIR—Typically, how many students would that include in any one year?

Dr Lysaght—This year I conducted about eight interviews, which was not many. In previous years we have had up to about 14 students. So the number is not great. We are only one faculty, though. Obviously other faculties are also—

Ms CORCORAN—How many kids come in first year?

CHAIR—620 each year.

Prof. Harper—No, 620 do not come into first year, because that includes about 250 who graduate from our graduate diploma, so they are already graduates.

Dr Lysaght—So maybe 350 overall would come in.

Prof. Harper—Brian Ferry has just been involved in a submission for a tender about a specific program for training Aboriginal teachers.

Prof. Ferry—The Department of Education and Training in New South Wales want to run a pilot program to train Aboriginal teachers, and we have put in a tender. We have collaborated with the Woolyungah Indigenous Centre to attempt to write a program that would encourage more Aboriginals to become teachers. At present, the pilot program is a graduate program, so you need to basically be in the last year of your degree to get into it, which means that if there are people in the system around—and they do not have to be from Wollongong—then the idea is that we would have a program which particularly takes advantage of our Shoalhaven campus, which is in an Aboriginal community at Nowra, and links with those people there.

That has been something that has been near and dear to my heart, and the hearts of lots of people around this table, for a while. The only reason we have not gone ahead up until now is because we have not had enough money to do it. You are talking about a small cohort and an experimental pilot program using a different approach and some of the knowledge that we have gained from some of our more innovative programs. To do that, obviously we need some support. But we are looking to try that down at the Shoalhaven campus and involve the Aboriginal community. This tender is the first one. We do not know if we will get it, because there are lots of universities applying, but we are out there trying.

CHAIR—You said you had eight people apply for this intake. What is the typical cohort which applies? Are they older females who were teachers' aides at a school?

Dr Lysaght—They are as diverse as the students who come in through direct entry across the board. When I said that I interviewed eight people, there were many more students than that who contacted the centre and were looking for entry. But a lot of those students then ruled themselves out of interviews because they achieved UAIs that got them straight in, either here or to other universities. The people I interview are a smaller group than the people who contact the centre. What did you ask me before?

CHAIR—There were a couple of things I was interested in.

Dr Lysaght—The nature of the group?

CHAIR—Yes.

Dr Lysaght—They are from across the board. There are kids who are coming perhaps straight from school who did not achieve the UAI for all kinds of reasons. There are others who have been out of school for a couple of years and who maybe have tried other things and been unhappy and have sometimes not known that there was another pathway into the university. A perfect example is someone I interviewed this year, who is in the PE program and who has a disabled son. Her understanding of medical technology and anatomy is incredible because she has had to know about all those things. Her son is now about 17- or 18-years of age. She has had to know all those things. She has had to find out for herself. She has had this enduring interest. She is older than some of the other students in the PE program, but she is every bit as fit and probably a lot more knowledgeable. There are a really wide range of people coming in through that avenue.

CHAIR—Adding to the eight who came in through interview, how many Indigenous young people would you get entering your teaching faculty through the standard route?

Dr Lysaght—It is impossible to say, because they are often not prepared to identify themselves for all sorts of reasons. I know of 10 students across the board, but I know there are many others as well.

Mr SAWFORD—Just a comment on your introduction, Barry. We realise that we are under the pump as a parliamentary committee in terms of those numerous reviews over the last 20 or 30 years. A criticism is that many of them have gathered dust, albeit that they contain many valuable recommendations, many of which have not been implemented. We are very well aware of that, even though this is the first time that the House of Representatives committee has ever taken on teacher education. It seems from the evidence that we are getting, and you are confirming it, that the teaching profession is becoming very middle class, metropolitan and—in some ways—very mature aged in terms of its entry, and it does not have the diversity, other than in a token way, that perhaps it should. We are having difficulty in getting teachers into provincial and regional areas. We do not seem to be doing as well as we should with Indigenous entry into teacher education, and nor do we do well with some particular ethnic groups as well. If the current means are not doing well with that, can you suggest to this committee any other ways we could be doing things? Ought we consider something a little bit more radical?

Prof. Harper—I will take you up on your statement, first of all. Wollongong is a little different to maybe what you have seen elsewhere, because we are culturally a very diverse city. We have a culturally diverse range of students. You will not see the profile here that you might see, say, at Edith Cowan. We are doing a pretty reasonable job—not by intent necessarily, but partly because of our location. We also have a positive discrimination in our entry program, as you will see in my submission, for school leavers. I would also challenge you a little on your statement that we are heading towards more mature age teachers.

Mr SAWFORD—I am talking generally. This is what the committee has received.

Prof. Harper—I understand. I would like to just tell you about our case as an illustration. We have intentionally put our UAI for our category B students—our mature age students—up to 86, compared with 78 for our school leavers, in order to get a balance. The balance we are trying to

get is 40 per cent mature age and 60 per cent students straight out of school. We are trying to keep some sort of diversity balance there by giving school leavers plenty of opportunities, but also having opportunity for mature age entry.

Ms BIRD—Just to qualify, mature age is anyone over 21?

Prof. Harper—Anyone over 21, yes. We call them 'category B'.

Prof. Ferry—We have had people over 60 years of age come into our teacher education program and graduate and go into schools, so we do get people at that age coming in. On the point you are making, I would like to suggest that one mechanism is to think about having targeted scholarship. I know that is spending more money but, if you are really serious about it and you want a particular group, you have to put your money where your mouth is.

Mr SAWFORD—Totally true.

Prof. Wright—I want to say something else about school leavers. There is sometimes an issue with having school leavers come directly into a program anyway. In terms of students who have actively made a choice about their careers, having procedures and measures that allow people to come into universities two years after would be useful. Some of those measures are being eroded, because deferments and those sorts of things are being made more and more difficult. We need to balance the idea of providing school leavers with something that they know that they are going to be able to do with the idea of people having more experience before they come into teacher education particularly, which is so highly vocational. You are asking people to make a very strong commitment very early on in their lives.

Dr Lysaght—I want to add to what Barry was saying. One of the things that the university prides itself on is the fact that we have so many first in family students here. If you went in to, say, the lecture that is on this morning for our first year students and asked students to raise their hand if they were first in family, you would see that it was the majority of students—at least in education. That is true across the university. We are seeing people coming in from diverse backgrounds, for a whole range of reasons, but the first in family thing is often an indicator of exactly what that means in term of diversity.

Mr SAWFORD—As Barry said, is the reason for that your circumstances rather than intent or is it a combination of both?

Dr Lysaght—I think it has arisen through circumstance, but I can assure you that we are more intent, at the moment certainly, on really supporting that. One of the things that we are doing as a university is putting together a range of strategies. One of those strategies in particular will be looking at first in family and how we can not just attract people but also support them when they are here, because there is no point in opening the doors and then not providing the support. That is something we are really serious about.

Mr SAWFORD—I notice that in PE, health education, maths and science courses that gender balance is quite easy to achieve. Forgetting the early childhood program for the moment, why is it not easy to achieve in the primary and the other secondary areas?

Prof. Brown—Over the last few years, there have been a number of reasons. There is a perception about males in the teaching profession and there are child protection issues, which have had a big effect, I think. If we go back to the early childhood program, a couple of males come in each year and we have to try and keep them in that program. For about the last two or three years we have done that, but at the time when child protection was quite an issue we lost a couple of them from that program. I think there is a perception out there that it is quite difficult for males to be in the teaching profession within the primary area.

Mr SAWFORD—Where do you think that perception comes from?

Prof. Harper—Bob Meyenn from Charles Sturt University is about to finish a big study on males entering the teaching profession. Some of his early research supports what Ian has just said—that is, male students in early childhood programs have the perception that they are under the microscope all the time in terms of child protection issues. I think that is unfair. It is a misconception in many ways, but nevertheless it is their perception. There is no doubt that that was partly fuelled by the media at the time. It is hard to understand why it is occurring.

Mr SAWFORD—It seems to me that often the countervailing views were never put forward. Do you think that both the government and the university, on an education profession level, were a bit guilty of not defending them?

Prof. Harper—I think the answer is yes.

Mr SAWFORD—The countervailing arguments are seldom put.

Prof. Harper—Yes, that is true. We certainly put them when we are recruiting for students. We argue that point, but the perception is there.

Prof. Brown—There is an interesting point in recruitment times as well. When the government made a big push to get males into teaching, there was a perception that the males were going to get scholarships, go ahead of the females within the group or would be selected to come into it. I got lots of phone calls from young guys saying, 'I heard that you're pushing for males. I've got a low UAI. Will I be able to come in?' I think that has to be balanced in some way so that you do not go the other way and it looks like you are actually favouring one group over the other.

Ms BIRD—There has been a range of other issues, including the fact that, with the glut of teachers for a long time, people made very sensible economic decisions—that the reality was that you were not going to get a job unless you were willing to move dramatically out of your area. That obviously had a major impact. The outcome of that is that you often sought a career based on your experience. So if your experience was that only women taught you in primary school, it becomes a bit self-perpetuating. I do not know that that is all that different to how it has always been, unfortunately. It was interesting that you mentioned scholarships. We had the experience of one of the Catholic education institutions offering targeted scholarships. They could not get enough young men to take them up. So, even when they managed to get that capacity, they could not do that, which would tend to say to me that views on career opportunities are a little bit demand driven as well. Would that be the experience that you have had with what you have tried to do?

Prof. Harper—It is a very complex issue. It is really easy to come up with a simplistic answer for an issue like this. Sharon, I think you have hit the nail on the head about many of the social aspects of this. We certainly have not been able to come up with a solution that allows us to bring large numbers of extra males into the program under the normal process.

Mr SAWFORD—There is a problem in the sense that Aboriginal girls in education have done far better than Aboriginal boys. Girls from certain ethnic and religious backgrounds have done far better than boys of the same generation. If you have had experience with those boys, you know that they react differently to females than to males. That is the way it is. Many of those young boys who are off the rails—and this has been happening for the last 30 years and it is getting worse—do react far more positively to male teachers, maybe even inferior male teachers, than to female teachers. How do we deal with that?

Prof. Wright—We are getting into huge debates here.

Mr SAWFORD—I know. That is the whole idea of these inquiries.

Ms BIRD—He has that effect. That is not to mention on this side of the table.

Prof. Wright—I think you are dealing with particular notions of masculinity. Some notions of masculinity cause some of those problems and also from my point of view result in the low interest of males and probably the low UAIs. I think it would be quite interesting to look at the UAI range that gets into university and to see whether the middle-class boys who have high UAIs head off to science and maths. I suspect that more young women than young men with UAIs in a certain range see teaching as a possible profession. I think there is probably something there about the way UAIs are now panning out in terms of different groups of young men and women in different ranges of UAIs. That is one of the issues.

I do not necessarily think that having male role models, which is not usually a term I use, for young men, particularly if they are not good teachers, is going to solve any of our problems. I think that you want to encourage different forms of masculinity, not the anti-intellectual forms that you are quite concerned about. I do not know that having men who may not be modelling good forms of masculinity in our schools is the answer to our question.

Mr SAWFORD—I remember a boys study carried out, I think, by Slade from Flinders University in South Australia. They interviewed 1,500 secondary boys, and there were quite clear indications from the boys that they found a lot of female teachers used implicit rather than explicit language, used passive learning rather than active learning, discriminated against competition and were always pushing collaboration. In other words, there was a style of teaching that the boys often resented, and they wanted a far more active teaching style with a far greater sense of humour. I do not think that should be ignored either. I think men and women do teach differently. Certainly one of the most effective principals in my particular area is a woman who comes from a maths and science background. Her teaching is very analytical, very explicit and very effective, but not all women teach that way.

Dr Lysaght—Not all men teach that way.

Mr SAWFORD—Not all men teach that way; that is exactly right. What I am arguing is that a balance is required. I think boys are arguing that the balance or the opportunity for balance is sometimes not there in their educational career either at primary or secondary school. I do not think that should be ignored, should it?

Prof. Brown—That could easily be the understanding of the learner. The important thing to do is adjust the style of teaching within your classroom to cater for different groups within your classroom. It is not a gender thing; it is just about the way the teacher operates within the classroom.

Mr SAWFORD—I agree.

Prof. Brown—A good teacher will change their practice according to the types of students.

Mr SAWFORD—But one gender does operate more effectively one way than the other. That is the way people are geared. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with that. All I am saying is that sometimes kids complain about the lack of balance, and I think the lack of balance is seen in terms of where we are getting teachers Australia wide. It may be different for you, but in my area our teachers are largely metropolitan, middle-class and female. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with any of those criteria, but when the youth are provincial, regional and disadvantaged in a whole range of areas, it is a problem.

Prof. Wright—I do not think any of us would disagree that we should increase the diversity in our teaching profession. I am a physical and health education teacher and, while you say the balance is fifty-fifty, I have to say that it is one of the areas in our university where we tend to get more—

Mr SAWFORD—No, you say it is fifty-fifty.

Prof. Wright—It is fifty-fifty, but it is one of the areas where other forms of diversity are less represented because it is an area where there are usually good sports people and they tend to be from a middle-class background. None of us would disagree that having more diversity within our teaching profession is really important. A lot of the research on young men points to the disadvantage of young working-class men, not necessarily because they have had poor education but because of what it means to be a young working-class man and also because of other opportunities, such as apprenticeships and TAFE. If you are looking at what is available to young women and young men in that kind of socioeconomic and educational group there are more opportunities for skilled employment, so you have got the competition there of being able to go into what eventually will probably be better paid, more immediate work. In that context, teaching is not a very attractive profession and it also has a UAI that some of those boys will not be able to achieve.

They are some of the issues that we need to be addressing as well. Partly it is about making teaching a profession that is competitive with those skills which are also part of the defined notions of masculinity. So we have to see it as a complex thing, but certainly not talk about it in ways that I think confirm stereotypes or suggest that women teach in a particular way or men teach in another way.

Mr SAWFORD—We should not deny there is a problem either.

Prof. Wright—No, I am not denying that it is a problem. I think we all want more diversity in our teaching profession.

Ms CORCORAN—I want to go right back to your opening statement about the fact that you are a faculty here, not a school, and that that is an advantage to you. Can you explain that? Is it about control of your resources, financial and otherwise? What makes a difference between being a school and being a faculty?

Prof. Harper—We have always been a faculty, but I have been involved in a number of reviews around the country so I understand how other institutions work and we have read the various reports that have come from other institutions. The advantage for us is that we are in control of our own destiny. We do not have a dean who has a variety of interests to manage. We are one of nine faculties that compete for various resources but in a very collegial way. So, firstly, we are in control of our own destiny. Secondly, we can respond very rapidly to the changes that occur within our environment and the accreditation processes and so on. For example, the New South Wales Institute of Teachers is just being put in place. It is a slow and arduous sort of process but we are getting there. If we were a school within a bigger faculty I would have a lot of trouble getting my hand raised and saying: 'We need some additional resources here. This is a big issue. We need to address it in these ways.' But as a dean I can do that directly with the vice-chancellor and the deputy vice-chancellor. So, for me, the difference is that we have control over our own destiny and we have access to decision makers beyond what I think schools of education often have if they are schools within bigger faculties. A third point is that we are able to manage our resources not in competition with another set of schools within a faculty but as an individual faculty.

Ms CORCORAN—When you talk about resources you mean money as well as buildings and staff.

Prof. Harper—Yes.

Ms BIRD—A few practical issues have come up consistently across the university sector which I think inherently go back to the fact that the model grew out of the old teachers colleges. I notice you make the connection with nursing and some of the similar challenges they face. One of the things that is raised with us consistently is the issue of the practicum and, in particular, the funding for that. You make a comment about the capacity to look at quality rather than just quantity. I think the Queensland institute accrediting body are saying they are not going to put hours but outcomes as part of their requirement, which seems eminently suitable, although I do not think New South Wales is going that way as yet. I am wondering if you have instituted any quality changes in the practicum and if you could give us examples of what you mean by that or what you might like to do that the model prohibits you from doing.

Prof. Harper—We can certainly answer that. There is a panel that will be before you at 11 o'clock and most of those people are involved directly with the practicum. One of the issues, I think, for every university with a faculty of education is getting enough places to start with. We are probably ahead of the game with that because we have very good relationships with schools in the region. As you know, there are a number of initiatives across the country. For example,

Edith Cowan has a very good model of school partnerships. We are doing that in a way, and just developing that a little further in our first-year program with an experimental program of mentoring. The panel at 11 o'clock will be better placed to give you the fine detail about that.

Ms BIRD—I suppose I am looking at how the way it is funded either frees you up to do stuff or prohibits you and whether that is an issue. Do you have some proposal—other than it being a bigger bucket—about the way that funding might be more useful?

Prof. Harper—The issue here is that, through the work we have done with the knowledge building community and recent research, we know that a mentoring model for the practicum experience or professional experience is a far more effective model. It adds enormous value in terms of our students linking theory to practice. It adds enormous value in terms of their understanding of the society and the environment they are going into—the school system and the schools. We know that.

But what comes with that is a different sort of cost to the traditional costing of a practicum. What we have to do is find master teachers who will work with us in those programs. We have many of them that work in the Illawarra. There are many outstanding teachers who have worked with us for a long time and we are very grateful for that. But there is a much higher cost with that process because, in effect, we have to pay to have those people out of a school for a day as part of that mentoring process. I am sorry; they are not out of the school. But we have to pay for their services for a whole day when they are replaced in their classroom and where they are spending that day on a regular basis with an individual student, mentoring them through the process.

That is a much more expensive process, we know. We can cut down the number of days but then that does not solve the problem really. It is a much more expensive process than the process with the majority of our students, where we send them out to schools, we come there as coordinators and all of my members of staff actually go out to schools as part of that process. But we cannot choose the quality of those teachers. As I said before, most of the people we work with in schools are absolutely magnificent and do a wonderful job. We and our students are extremely grateful. But you get a small number who do not model good practice or the theory and pedagogical knowledge that we have been talking to them about.

So we have a multiple dilemma there. If we go to models that we know are effective, we cannot pay the amount. If we stick with our model that we know is not as effective but which is doing the job at present—because we know our students get employed and we know the quality of them at the end—we are not really doing them the justice that we think and the research has shown that we should be able to.

Ms BIRD—Will the development of the institute, if they are going towards an hours-per-practicum type accreditation process, limit those capacities as well?

Prof. Harper—We are working closely with the institute. A number of times we thought we had won that argument—that is, the number of days is not the issue; the quality of the experience is the issue. There is a relationship between the two.

Ms BIRD—I suppose it is like the UAI—it is much easier to measure the number of days.

Prof. Harper—It is much easier to measure, but it is not a measure of the experience. We think they are going to have a variety of parameters. We are hoping that is the direction they are going to go in.

CHAIR—We might move onto the next section of teaching, if we may. If you have a further statement to make with regard to that section, I invite you to start.

Prof. Harper—No, I think we are fine with the questions you have asked.

[10.01 am]

BROWN, Associate Professor Ian, Associate Dean, Undergraduate, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

DINHAM, Professor Stephen, Professor of Educational Leadership and Pedagogy, University of Wollongong

FERRY, Associate Professor Brian, Associate Dean, Graduate, University of Wollongong

HARPER, Professor Barry, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

WRIGHT, Professor Jan, Associate Dean, Research, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

CHAIR—We will now commence the next session.

Prof. Harper—I will not make a presentation for each of these panels, but I will introduce Professor Steve Dinham. He has been with us now for nearly two years. He is a professor in educational leadership and pedagogy. We brought him into this panel because of his experience and expertise in underpinning research and his general knowledge about preparation of primary and secondary students.

CHAIR—A witness who employed teachers indicated that, in their view, graduating teachers were quite strong in literacy and numeracy but where somewhat lacking with regard to some of the elements of classroom management. I asked whether that was perhaps a function of a shift in the curriculum to focus on literacy and numeracy and away from classroom management skills. Their response was very much along the lines that the classroom was changing and that many of the factors associated with classroom management that beginning teachers faced were becoming more difficult in a changing world. Given terms of reference vii, I am interested in your thoughts on the balance between the academic side and the classroom management side with respect to your course structure.

Prof. Brown—Classroom management is a major component of our courses. We have individual subjects within the undergraduate program that look at classroom management. It is also embedded in all of our other key learning areas, KLAs. I am not sure that I would agree with that statement. I agree with the last part of the statement, in that they are confronting different classroom behaviours, but I am not sure that they are not developed enough in terms of going out and working within a classroom. We put our graduates into the classrooms within the first three weeks of their course. We think that that is important so that they actually get an understanding of what it is like. Whether it is the one-year DipEd or across the three years of our undergraduate programs, they are getting a variety of classroom situations and seeing a variety of behaviours.

It probably opens up the issue of what happens to our graduates once they leave and how much they are being supported by the employer in terms of the in-service that is taking place.

There is a perception that they are going to have everything by the time they start on that first day, and I do not think any of us agree with that.

CHAIR—That particular witness did acknowledge the fact that they were cognisant that, for a beginning teacher, it is only that start of their career and that mentoring is a part of that. I do not believe it was naive view. I did not fully quote them.

Ms BIRD—Some of the evidence that we have heard has been about models where, in a four-year course, the last year is much more of a transitional year where it is like an internship. Students might do a 50 per cent load or 60 per cent load in a school and come back to the university to do some reflective learning and so forth. I understand that that obviously has funding implications for both the employing bodies and the universities. I would be interested to know what your feeling is about that sort of model.

Prof. Brown—There is an interesting point on that one as well. As Barry said earlier, we are moving from a three-year degree to a four-year degree. As part of the four-year degree, we will have an internship. Originally, when we did our planning, we were looking at a long-term period. In our consultative processes, which we have gone through a lot, we use our students as a base reference group and actually take things back to them. One of the concerns they had, which is not one that you have just raised, is that a lot of our students are relying heavily on funding themselves to get through university and they feel that it would actually be quite a burden on them in terms of the amount of time they would have to give up work to be able to go into schools for five days.

Ms BIRD—That is not an internship where the employer pays them 50 per cent of the teaching wage to be there?

Prof. Brown—No. It is based on the practice that we work with at the moment where there is a reduced rate for interns in a classroom in terms of the amount of money that we have to pay teachers for supervision.

Ms BIRD—The model that was raised—I think it was a Scottish model originally—was that the department, under the accreditation, employs people in whatever category that New South Wales uses for that first year of temporary approval to teach. It is on a reduced loading and it funds them doing a percentage of their workload back at the university.

Prof. Brown—From a student's point of view that would probably be very helpful.

Ms BIRD—Would that address some of those concerns?

Prof. Brown—It was through the consultation process that it came up. We had not even thought about it in terms of the amount of time that they would be out. A lot of them expressed the view that they probably could not have taken up the university course if they had known there were going to be three months in their final year in which they were going to have to either give up work or—

Ms BIRD—Certainly, we hear from students already about the practicum requirements during the original years. The impact that has on them in their working lives is quite dramatic. They find that difficult to manage.

Prof. Brown—I think this goes back to our earlier comments about the changing nature of the students now. If you had asked us the same question eight years ago, we probably would have said, 'No, they'll be fine.' But, at the moment, the students we are getting in are self-supporting. They have families and all of those sorts of things.

Mr SAWFORD—Can I go back to term of reference 2 on attracting high-quality students and teacher education. You make the point—and lots of other people have too—that the profession is seldom promoted in the community by the profession itself. That is commonly given to the committee. At the same time, we seem to be attracting a great number of people. How do you reconcile that? We are not promoting the profession, yet a lot of young and middle-aged people want to get into teaching.

Prof. Ferry—If you ask people wanting to come into teaching, they say they want to make a difference in people's lives. That is no different to any other service profession. They say that very clearly. They might hear negative views of the profession from other people, but I do not think they take that much notice of it, to be honest. I think they say, 'I want to make a difference in somebody's life.'

Mr SAWFORD—That probably leads onto the attrition rate. The attrition rate is pretty low compared to other areas, yet we seem to be learning that the attrition rate within the first five years of teaching is probably much higher than people would want. Without putting words into your mouth, what do you put that down to? What anecdotal information do you get about why that is the case?

Prof. Dinham—The easy answer is that it is deficiencies in the program. We know that is not the case. The fact is the people can—

Mr SAWFORD—I was not leading to that.

Prof. Dinham—No, but that is the quick answer that some people give. But, in actual fact, when you look at why they resign, it is for a wide variety of reasons. One of the first things is that they can be sent anywhere or take up a position in any context. That can be difficult. We had this thing in the past where we sent our raw recruits to the most challenging schools—it was a sort of a baptism by fire—and if they could get through that, they would get a more favourable posting. That is an issue.

The other real variable we see is the support they get when they get into the school—that is, aside from personal things in their own lives. It is highly variable. They can go into a school where they are welcomed, supported, mentored, valued and assisted or they can simply walk into the school and be told, 'There's your classroom and here's the key to the photocopier,' and that is it. Those people find it very difficult.

I think also we have a situation with the ageing teaching population. The average age is something like in the high forties. Unfortunately, some of our graduates come up against a

culture which is not welcoming, positive or supportive. On the other hand, others do not come up against that. The other thing about resignation within the first five years is that it is not dissimilar to other professions. The thing you need to realise with this is that many of those people who resign stay in teaching. This is where the figures are quite rubbery. They may go into a private school, teach in England or go casual. So the loss is not quite as it seems.

The other thing is that there is a hidden spike about 10 years out, and that is not widely recognised when you look at the statistics on teacher resignation. That is the point where people reach the top of the salary scale. Eight to 10 years out, you get to a point where you say: 'I'm a classroom teacher. I am at the top of the scale. What happens now? If I am going to do something else, this is probably the time to do it.' We really need to focus on the top end. We have had various attempts to do this in the past with advance skills teachers classifications and so on, which have basically been a failure. There is that wastage there which, in some ways, is more important than the wastage in the first five years, because these are people who have 10 years under their belt. We do not want to lose those people.

Mr SAWFORD—There was an article in the *Age* education pages late or early last week which showed quite clearly that teachers had lost 10 per cent of their salary compared to other professions over the last eight or nine years. That is a significant drop, and people are responding as you are saying, Stephen, by going into other careers.

Prof. Harper—There is another part to that as well. These students that we train, after five years, if you look at their skills set, you see that they are highly marketable. They are incredibly efficient time managers, they can manage groups of 25 to 30 people, many of whom do not want to be there or have different issues to manage. They can work directly within a system that has a set of constraints that they have to be able to manage. These people are highly skilled and many of them do not recognise how marketable they are, but many of them start thinking about how marketable they are at five to six years and 10 years. There is also some recent research that shows that at least 25 per cent of people who start teaching do not intend to stay longer than five, six or seven years. This is a way in which they develop their skills: they become expert teachers and then ask themselves, 'What else can I do?' As with any complex problem, there is no simple trivial answer. I do not think we should be worried about that issue as much as people think. We certainly think it is a good thing that some of our students recognise that they have a set of significant skills that are marketable in other areas and they use those skills.

Mr SAWFORD—But other people have often said that that 10-year group is often comprised of highly experienced and very expert people.

Prof. Harper—Yes.

Mr SAWFORD—They are being lost, because they are marketable in other professions. The profession does not seem to be doing anything to retain them.

Prof. Dinham—There is an issue there which, again, relates to salary. If you take a promotion about that time in you career, what you get in terms of dollars and cents is very small. Often, you still have a fairly substantial teaching load, and suddenly you are supervising 15 people in a faculty or whatever. People look at that.

Prof. Brown—The other thing too is that the only way you can get promoted is out of the classroom.

Ms BIRD—When we raised this with the vice-chancellors, a comment was made to us which was quite interesting about generational change and that this is not a generation that will create life careers. Perhaps that is reflective in what you are saying about a quarter of them coming to it not thinking that they are going to be there as a long-term career option. It is also just some feedback from my own circle of my son's friends. When I ask about scholarships, he says, 'They're going to make me go somewhere.' This is what they all say. They are not willing to make those sorts of ties and commitments as a generation. Is that your experience as well that there is a bit of a generational career perception change going on?

Prof. Dinham—There is. In fact, we have a consortium with the Australian Catholic University. We are about to kick off a research project across Australia looking at what we call 'generation' leaders and looking at attracting and retaining that next generation of leaders and what sorts of things they are looking for in terms of how the job is configured. The thing about middle-management leadership—and I have been writing this up this week for a project, so it is very fresh in my mind—is that it is not what people think it is going to be. They think it is going to be about leading, mentoring and taking a leading role in various things. It tends to be about interpersonal relationships, conflict management, administration and budgets and so forth. A lot of people do not find that terribly attractive, surprisingly. With regard to people who are looking to be educational leaders, the traditional steps up the ladder may not be what they want.

The other thing about people leaving and so on is that, up until recently, the big systems like the New South Wales Department of Education and Training have made it very hard for people to come back—people lose seniority and everything else. There is a more enlightened attitude occurring now where they are allowing it. It is actually very beneficial for someone to go off and work in a different country, a different system or whatever but, in the past, it has been seen as a one-way street. What we need to have—and I am sorry that I missed the earlier conversation—is mutual recognition across Australia of teaching credentials and so forth so that people can be much more mobile and flexible, rather than having this idea that you work in one system and, if you go, you lose much of your superannuation and lose your seniority et cetera.

Ms CORCORAN—I want to go back to a statement you made about research expertise and experience and how you use that confidently to inform your programs and to redevelop things. That sounds really good, but could you put some flesh on that for me? Can you give me an example? How many of your staff are involved? Are they all involved in research?

Prof. Wright—In the submission you will see that we have full-time staff and quite a lot of part-time staff who are from schools and bring a certain credibility with them, which is quite an important part of our program. Of the full-time staff who are here, I would say that something like 70 per cent are involved in research—some more so than others. Some around the edges are much more involved in school based research, which does not always get counted in quite the same way as the kinds of research that DEST recognises. Those people are quite actively involved in some of the work that Steve does in working closely with schools around case study and research with the DET.

I think most of the people who are involved in research in our faculty bring it into their teaching. Barry spoke about the large research group in IT, which is headed by Brian. All of that research is either development research or research on learning environments in teaching—everything from simulations to whiteboards and things, which can often only be done in conjunction with schools. So there is a very close relationship there.

The Australian Centre for Educational Leadership is another good example. Most of the work that they do are with principals. The researchers are often the principals, research students or people who are doing professional development through the degrees. That kind of relationship goes two ways, because it means research is done in schools and with schools both in action research and other forms of research.

Prof. Dinham—I think the postgraduate area, in particular, is where there is major input. We tend to think about the undergraduate, but we have principals, deputy principals and people who are leaders in their schools who are taking the time and the expense to engage in further study. Those people had direct access to our research, and I know that they take it back and use it and work in their schools to engage in the process of school improvement and educational change.

Prof. Harper—But there is also a significant cycle of research and redevelopment of our programs. The Knowledge Building Community project is a great example of that. That is quite revolutionary. It is a combined mentoring, problem-solving type program with small cohorts of students. What we have learnt from the research from that project we have brought back into our main program and implemented a variety of changes. Our new redesigned four-year degree for primary and early childhood is based on a lot of that research.

Plus, there is an enormous amount of input from our staff in terms of new ideas through textbooks. Probably 15 to 20 of my 57 staff are textbook authors with current textbooks in faculties of education across the country—taken up in enormous numbers. Some of them are internationally well recognised and selling significant numbers internationally. We do pride ourselves on that constant refreshing and then integrating that research back into our programs, as Steve says, at the graduate level and also significantly at the undergraduate level.

Prof. Dinham—There is another aspect, too, which is more recent, and that is action learning as a means of research. This is a different model. What actually happens is that university staff often act as academic partners or advisers to people doing research in schools. So you are actually working with teachers doing the research. We just did an evaluation for the New South Wales education department of 82 schools involved with 50 projects. These were projects that the schools had identified as being important to them. They had Australian Government Quality Teaching Program—AGQTP—money to finance that. That evaluation is still with the department. It is still, I suppose, confidential but, from what we have seen so far, it has been an overwhelming success as a model. A key element in that model has been university staff acting as advisers to help teachers in schools do the research that is important to them.

Ms BIRD—I think Edith Cowan does quite a bit of that too. One of the things that was said to us was that the current research funding models, which feed on your literature basis of who has already written in this area and so forth, is quite unfriendly towards that sort of research and getting funding for it. Has that been the experience that you have had?

Prof. Dinham—It is.

Ms BIRD—How do you get around that?

Prof. Dinham—We are generally seen as doing applied research, which has lower status than experimental research or whatever. Particularly if it involves working with practitioners, it probably has not got the status that other research has.

Prof. Wright—I might say something about that in terms of the RQF. One of the things that is quite difficult to do in that kind of research is to set up metrics around it. My understanding is that the RQF is moving more towards a notion of impact and socioeconomic benefit, but it is still going to be quite difficult, without being able to tell a story, to represent that kind of work. So, on the one hand, the notion of impact will be quite useful to us but, the more it gets metricised, it will be an issue. The other measures of quality and the ways in which universities and within universities get funding are around those sorts of DEST performance indicators, which are publications, journals et cetera. Reports may or may not get published in those kinds of ways. It is a constant issue for education about how to represent our research, particularly research that is done with systems in the ways that have outcomes that get funded.

Mr SAWFORD—I have a question on the differential remuneration between faculty staff—some having more of a teaching or a research background seems to come to us all the time. Do you have any original ideas on how you overcome the issue where people come from schools into faculties and have to take a significant salary drop because the universities simply cannot afford it? Is there a way around that?

Prof. Harper—We approach that in a number of ways. One way is that we have a secondment program. We second master teachers out of schools in areas—

Mr SAWFORD—So they are still paid for by the department?

Prof. Harper—They are still paid for by the department and the department bills us. That is a significant cost. If I recruited somebody in the university with that academic level of achievement I would be paying them maybe half the salary but I would not be getting that expertise and knowledge that is necessary.

CHAIR—Are you paying full cost recovery on those secondments?

Prof. Harper—Yes. We used to have much better models, working with our state partners, Catholic Education and the New South Wales Department of Education and Training, but both of those bodies have changed the way in which we work with them. The New South Wales Teacher Education Council has been working with the New South Wales department of education for some time to try to find better ways to do it, but their answer is: 'You have the person; you pay.' That is one way in which we get expertise, and we pay them appropriately.

You have hit a very crucial issue. Academics in faculties of education are at a disadvantage in terms our academic structure and system. If somebody has, say, eight years teaching and has a doctorate and we want to employ them in our faculty—and they would be an outstanding academic in terms of our needs because of their expertise and their experience but they also have

a doctorate so they fit at least some way in the university's academic culture—the salary that they would come in with might be at the top of the senior lecturer scale but, if I measure them in terms of the academic expectations, they are at the bottom of the lecturer scale or even lecturer A.

Our issue is our academics need to have the experience, they need to be professional teachers, and then they need an academic life. So we are a little like any professional preparation program in a university—we are at a disadvantage. But the good news for us is that that does not necessarily last because of the selection processes we use and, in some ways, the luck we have had. I think I have an outstanding faculty. The research output from this faculty and the professional expertise are quite remarkable. In fact we as a faculty supply significant numbers of people to the senior executive of this university once we train them well.

So there is a disadvantage. There is what is almost like a time warp between any other faculty and us because an academic in our faculty is going to be eight to 10 years older than the equivalent academic in another faculty, and that is just because we need that expertise. We do not have a solution to that; we do not have a way of arguing around the academic myths and legends and the expectations of what an academic at a different level is. And yet we have been able to adapt to that as a faculty, and we are being very successful—but we need to work more on better solutions than the ones we have. I do not know of any university that has been able to solve that problem.

Mr SAWFORD—The employers of teachers, the state education departments—and I want to put the Catholic education system aside for a moment—do they not have a responsibility too, in terms of the profession? They seem, in what has happened is in the last 20 years, to have escaped the trinity. There seem to be increasingly very strong relationships—even though they can be very varied—between the universities and the schools, but I do not get a feeling of a strong relationship with the third part of the trinity, with the partner, the employer. Is that an unfair statement for me to make?

Prof. Dinham—It depends which level you are looking at. One of the things that is distinctive about this university is we have very good relationships locally, with the DET in the region and with the Catholic diocese. At the higher level there has been a shifting apart and that was partly because of the history of moving away from teachers colleges to CAEs to universities and so forth. In terms of the funding issue and attracting those people, it would be nice if they could be supported. One of the things where we are at a disadvantage and our people are at a disadvantage is that they are forced to do their qualifications—their postgraduate work—part time, so it could take years and years and years. On the other hand if they come and work with us full time they might pick up a scholarship worth $5,000, $10,000 or $15,000 if they are lucky. It would be great if the employers would provide scholarships to enable people to study full time on projects that are important to them so that they get the benefit of a PhD in whatever it happened to be, and then we could come to some sort of arrangement where there was joint employment or something.

Mr SAWFORD—With some of those master teachers that come into education faculties and contribute so much, why couldn't they be funded and their salaries paid for by the department? Maybe there might have to be a bit of a bond—you get the five years and you cannot get another

five; I do not know. It just seems to me that the departments get off a bit scot-free out of all of this.

Prof. Harper—That could be a wonderful recommendation for your inquiry to make.

Ms BIRD—It would be completely pointless for a federal body.

Mr SAWFORD—I do not think it is a pointless exercise because I think in the past—and I am not necessarily suggesting you go back there—in South Australia there were Masters of Methods. They were demonstration teachers and they were paid salary differentiations, so there was a recognition of that concept that the department—the employer—was responsible for part of that liaison between the three groups.

Prof. Brown—Certainly the teachers that we second that may come in here for one year or two years take so much with them when they go back into the system.

Mr SAWFORD—It is an excellent experience for them too.

Prof. Dinham—One of the things that employers are worried about is that often when people come in and work with us for a year or two they do not want to go back. That is the reality.

CHAIR—We are running a little late so we might have a break and then continue with our student forum.

Proceedings suspended from 10.29 am to 10.52 am

CLINCH, Ms Pippa, Student, Primary Education, University of Wollongong

FRAZER, Miss Ricki, Student, Primary - Diploma of Education, University of Wollongong

HAWKINS, Mr Stephen, Student, Science, University of Wollongong

NEVILLE, Miss Lee-Ann, Student, Early Childhood, University of Wollongong

O'DONOGHUE, Miss Karen, Student, Early Childhood, University of Wollongong

PREECE, Mr Tor, Student, Secondary Education, University of Wollongong

STEVENS, Miss Rebecca, Student, Physical Education, University of Wollongong

WALTON, Mr Russell, Honours Student, University of Wollongong

CHAIR—Good morning and welcome to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training. We have had quite an extensive series of visits around the country and have spoken to a wide range of people involved in education: academics, community groups and also students. One of the things that are common to all of the student groups around the country that we have had the opportunity to have forums with is their enthusiasm and their passion for teaching. Certainly the various employer bodies that we have spoken to have been impressed by the quality of students that our universities are turning out.

Thank you for making time in your busy schedules to come and speak with the committee today. We really value your input because as consumers of teacher training services, if you like, your views are very important as to the ways in which we can make teacher training more effective for you as beginning teachers and make you better prepared for the challenges that you will face in the classroom.

The information you give here today is being recorded by Hansard, so your lecturers will know what you say. You might bear that in mind in your comments. I invite you to make some comments on your training, and you can start by responding to a very general question. What things do you like about the teacher training you have received at Wollongong university and what things do you think could be a little bit better? Would anyone like to answer that question?

Ms BIRD—Could I ask that you indicate which course you are doing.

Mr SAWFORD—Could you say which course you are doing and also where you have come from: school leaver, another profession, another occupation.

Ms Clinch—I am in primary education and I have come from another profession. I am a physio by training, so I have come from a health background into education. What was really noticeable to me, coming from a different profession, was that in physio we had far more practical experience out in the field before we finished our course and graduated compared with in primary teaching. I think most people would agree that the thing that we really need most—

and I know it is related to funding—is hands-on practical experience so that we can use the wonderful theory that we are taught at university and apply it in the classroom.

CHAIR—Would you say your practical is nowhere near enough or well on the way but just needs to be a little bit more? How would you rank that?

Ms Clinch—I have not done my third-year prac yet, so I cannot say until after that, because that is a five-week block so it probably consolidates a lot of it.

Mr SAWFORD—What sort of teaching prac have you done thus far?

Ms Clinch—I have done my second-year prac, which is a three-week block. Practical experience varies a lot from student to student, and it depends on the teacher and the school that you go to. I was fortunate to have a teacher who was ready to basically hand the class over to me and allow me to teach the class everything. That was a good experience for me, but not every teacher will do that. I guess the same thing will happen in my final year prac. But it is just too short; it is only tiny. A whole term would be great. That way you would feel like you had completion of a unit and would feel more comfortable with it.

CHAIR—When the teacher handed over to you, did the teacher guide you in what to do or just say: 'Go to it.'

Ms Clinch—He said, 'Go to it,' because he had seen my program and was happy with it, I guess. He did not step in much at all, which was good for me.

CHAIR—One of the issues about prac is that when someone is working part time or needs to find employment, a very large block of prac may cause some problems with their employment and they need to support themselves. Does anyone have a comment on that?

Miss Stevens—I am in third-year PE.

Mr SAWFORD—Did you come from school?

Miss Stevens—Yes, I came from school. A lot of people do find the problem that they have to balance prac with working. They still have to pay the bills and everything like that. A lot of people cannot commit themselves to really long pracs because they have jobs that fit in with uni. We are not at uni five days a week from nine to five—or nine to three at school—so people can work around when they have to go to class and things like that. If they had prac for a longer period then they would not be able to do that.

Mr Hawkins—I represent Loftus Education Centre, which is a division of Wollongong uni. I do science education. I am in my third year; I have not quite done my third-year block. I started straight from school. It is difficult. Everything is difficult, especially in a degree such as mine. My Dip. Ed. is integrated into my normal degree. It is hard to coordinate assignments for physics and geology and on top of that your prac. If you are away for a two-week block it does get quite strenuous. You still have bills to pay and things like that. It does get hectic. But, at the end of the day, I think that is what teaching is all about—being a good time manager. If you can nail that

sort of skill within two weeks then that sets a good standard for the rest of your teaching degree. That is all I have to say on that.

Miss Frazer—I am in the grad Dip. Ed, doing primary. I came from a creative arts undergraduate degree. With our course, we have one intensive year to learn all we have to learn before we go out and be teachers. Coming into the course we were told that there would be high demands in practical and in theory and that we had to put university first, so we were aware of that and I took that into consideration when thinking about doing this course. For my degree it is only one year but, although it is hard, I had to put my financial situation aside for this year. I know this year will be a really big year. I had to prepare myself for this year last year. There are a lot of students in the course who have children and who are finding that hard. I feel that our practical is really even. We have a fair bit of practical, so we will get a basic overview of what is like to be a teacher; but we are also getting that time off as well and there is a good break in between, so it is spaced out throughout the year. I think the Dip. Ed. practical is fairly well organised.

Ms BIRD—What exactly is the practical timetable?

Miss Frazer—We have four weeks prac, which we are in the middle of at the moment. Then we have six weeks off and then we have another three weeks prac. Then at the end of the year we have another four-week prac. So they are big blocks, but there is also space in between where we have time to prepare for those lengthy pracs. I think it is good that they are spaced out.

Mr Preece—My name is Tor Preece. I am also doing my graduate diploma in secondary science. I have just finished my science degree and took a couple of years off to work full time. I can only emphasise exactly what Ricki just said. She said that we were given fair warning that there is going to be a hefty workload this year. Everyone knew that. It is a financial concern for everyone as far as paying the bills and all that sort of thing, but people manage and, if they are prepared, they do get by. I agree with what she said about prac—that is, that we have only had a limited time to get used to this. It is only six weeks into it so far. We had three weeks at university and then three weeks on prac, which we are currently doing at the moment. Everyone I have spoken to pretty much loves it. I have learnt more in the last three weeks than I ever could have imagined and to know that there is another three-week block coming up and then another four-week block after that is pretty reassuring.

Mr SAWFORD—What are some of the strong things you learnt in that prac? What was the highlight, what stood out for you?

Mr Preece—Absolutely everything. With regard to classroom management, I do not think you can get your head around that concept until you actually turn up to a classroom and have to control them. You can learn the theory in the university lecture theatre or whatever, but you cannot get your head around it and apply it until you are actually in the classroom doing it yourself. On top of everything, I have also learnt that content is very important if you want to keep your class under control. You have to know your content really well to keep them under control.

CHAIR—Tor, when you said you learnt a lot, was that your mentor teacher saying, 'Tor, that was really good, but you could have done this or a little more of that'? What was your learning process in front of the class?

Mr Preece—To be honest, I was in the situation where they say: 'This is the class. Go and teach them.' Because I have only had three weeks at university, I was fishing for a bit more help and guidance, but the teacher seemed a bit busy and did not have a lot of time to help me out in that area. I have two supervising teachers. One of them is really good with regard to feedback. He says: 'This was really good. This was something you could work on. You have a good rapport, but you may be a bit stricter in this aspect.' The other one says absolutely nothing. He sits up the back. I ask, 'How was that?' and he says 'Good.' Then you want to know what was good. You do not really have anything to work on. It is funny in that aspect. I have the two opposite ends of the scale, but it is fun and I love it.

CHAIR—Great.

Mr Hawkins—I think the feedback sheets are good as well. I am not sure if it is the same across the board. When I go on pracs, we get feedback sheets on each lesson. There are two halves. One is your own personal feedback on how you thought the class went. The second one is how the teacher thought the class went. They might make comments like, 'Non-verbal skills were good.' Like when a kid is playing up, you just point at him. They might praise you on that. But it all comes back down to how much that teacher wants to make an input. If they are marking books while you are in the middle of a class, it is not so helpful. I look at those feedback sheets and see them as a good source of direct information on what you can improve on and what worked well. Every class has its own style too. You might scream and yell at one class and they will be quiet. Another class might just run with it and scream and yell back. It is different for every class. I am in a similar situation as Tor on my first prac where the teacher was very relaxed, cool, calm and collected, which suited me but I had to rely on my own knowledge of the subjects that I have already done and draw upon those skills I have learnt to throw them in. There was not so much feedback given like, 'You could try this to tackle that.' You just had to wing it, but I guess that is getting the feel for what is right, what is wrong and what works.

CHAIR—How did your feedback sheet compare with your mentor teacher's? Were you close or miles apart?

Mr Hawkins—As the prac went on, I became a lot more self critical. With the first one, I wrote that I thought that I had done pretty well.

Ms BIRD—You survived!

Mr Hawkins—Yes, I did not have a chair thrown at me. That is always a positive thing. As it went on, it was more like: 'The class could have been better planned. The kids were tough to keep under control, especially the people in the back,' and a note for the next lesson to maybe separate them or change the classroom layout a bit. There were even just notes on what that class liked: if they really liked prac, maybe we could integrate that a bit more; if they liked writing off the board and they seemed to do well at that then I could start doing that as well. There was a lot of similarity between what I thought was right and what the teachers praised me on. But there

were also a lot of things that I did not pick up that they made constructive criticism on, which was very helpful for me.

Miss O'Donoghue—I am a third year early childhood student. I come from a child-care background as well as the superannuation industry, so I have had a few different changes. I am really enjoying my course but, even though I have had that extensive child-care background, I do not feel sufficiently skilled. I feel confident in theory—I should not say I am great at theory—but when it comes to the practical, I really think it is lacking. I would like to see something along the lines of the knowledge building community program, which is a teacher mentor program where they have more practical. They integrate the theory and practical along the way.

I work at the faculty of education, so I work casually and juggle my uni. But I would be prepared to sacrifice the work to have more practical experience. I feel confident to go out to preschools and child-care centres, but not when it comes to teaching from K to year 2. Also, because I have done my diploma in child care, instead of doing the full three-year degree I am doing two years, so it is a condensed version of the course. I only had three weeks last year in a kindergarten and it will be five weeks this year.

CHAIR—You do not feel ready?

Miss O'Donoghue—No, I do not feel ready. But I know that when I am out there and I do have that practical experience, I will gain the confidence.

CHAIR—Do you think quality rather than quantity is the biggest issue? Do you think that with a better quality prac you could nail it in the time that you have available?

Miss O'Donoghue—It is a combination of both. In my last prac I had sufficient feedback but something was lacking—I do not know what. I was with another student and we were doing kindergarten practical teaching, and it took us a while to get into the school environment. Unfortunately, we were not included in staff meetings or general discussion, but that changed after a week. I think quantity is lacking at the uni. Whilst I do love my course, I would like to see more practical.

Mr Walton—I am doing fourth year honours in the primary program. My background is in the publishing industry: copy editing, proofreading, freelance author—that sort of thing. I agree with the majority of comments made that practicum, for most of us, needs to be increased. Having said that, there is a great deal of variation within students' practicum experiences. Depending on which teacher you get, you can have an appalling experience or a wonderful one. I know students who have had a three-week prac and have just been told to sit in the back of the room for three weeks. They learn nothing from that, so there does need to be some recognition of those sorts of issues.

Certainly, more prac would be desirable in every form because it is only when you actually go out on prac that the things that you have learnt in the tutorials and the lectures crystallise for you and you can put them into practice. You think, 'That is where that fits,' and work on it from there. So you know where your strengths and weaknesses lie because of those early experiences. I have done my five-week prac, at the end of last year. It is only when you actually get control of that classroom for that whole five weeks that all of those other previous experiences step in.

There is the financial issue of missing out on income. We have four kids. Missing out on income totally for that sort of time is tough. But you know what you are signing up for when you start and if you look at your goal of getting out there as a teacher then that is where it all condenses for you. So you just have to cope with that.

Ms BIRD—I agree.

Mr SAWFORD—Karen, it just seems fairly logical to me that, if you are doing early childhood, you have a greater demand for management skills and pedagogy in terms of being with children first hand. I would say the same thing with regard to primary schools. They are a different set of skills, but you get them from seeing outstanding teachers practice it. That is not always the case, as Russell pointed out. I get the impression here that the quantity of pracs are all the same no matter what the course is. Is that correct, or have I got that wrong?

Miss O'Donoghue—My understanding is that they are similar.

Mr SAWFORD—Yes. They are similar.

Ms BIRD—There is a difference between those doing a degree and those doing the graduate diploma. The Dip. Ed. is four, three, four in one year.

Miss Frazer—It is more intense.

Ms BIRD—Whereas the degree courses are?

Mr Hawkins—Every second semester.

Miss O'Donoghue—Except for PE. In second year, we had a one-week block in the first semester and then a two-week bloc in the second semester but, in third year, we only have a three-week block in the second semester.

Ms BIRD—Generally, it sounds like it is three weeks in year one, three weeks in year two and five weeks in year three. Is that how it works?

Mr Walton—The primary system moves a little bit differently. In the first year, we did two weeks, three weeks in second year and five weeks in third year. The gap between second and third year was the real issue. We did second-year prac in the first session but, in third year, it was not until the end of second session.

Ms BIRD—So it was almost 18 months since you had been in the classroom.

Mr Walton—I gather the structure of that has been changed for this year. I am not up-to-date with what the current situation is.

Miss Frazer—I am also doing the Dip. Ed, in primary, which would be different for Tor. We also get one day a week in a primary school where we can do observations and we get rotated around the school, so we are seeing different types of classes.

Ms BIRD—Is that a whole semester program?

Miss Frazer—Yes, the whole semester, except for when we are on full-time prac.

Ms BIRD—How do you find that?

Miss Frazer—I found that really interesting. I have only been in the one classroom, which was a language development classroom. It gives you a broader variety rather than just being in the one classroom for that four-week prac. I have seen two different types of classrooms and had an idea of what a classroom is before I went on my prac. That will continue. I think I am going to an IO class next semester.

Mr SAWFORD—In your pracs, have you had exposure to what you would call outstanding teachers? These are the five per cent of teachers who are just superb. Have you had exposure to those people? If so, what were some of the things you picked up?

Ms Clinch—That is going to vary so much. If it is only five per cent of teachers, only five per cent of students are going to get to see outstanding teachers. I am lucky. I work in a school as a teacher's aide, so that broadens my whole practical experience, but most students do not have that opportunity. It seems to me that different teachers in the schools have different motivations for taking students. Some of them—probably most of them—are motivated by wanting to share their knowledge and have students in their classroom. They feel they are contributing. Other teachers get students because they think they can sit there and do their marking and preparation while the students take over the class. Others again are just motivated by the fact that they are paid $20 a day. That is $100 a week more than they get in their coffers at the end of the week. I do not know how those decisions are made as to who takes students in their classroom or how that can be controlled.

Mr Hawkins—Another thing I wanted to ask is: exactly what defines a really good teacher? If you were a teacher, you could comment about someone else and say: 'They are a really good teacher. They teach the class really well. I think they are an outstanding teacher.' We do not really get much reference to what you guys talked about as an outstanding teacher, so we cannot really say, 'That person is a really outstanding teacher.' I know personally that every time I go to prac I learn something new. It might just be something as simple as trying to get your class work organised a couple of days in advance in case something goes wrong. Those sorts of things, I think, are steering me towards where I want to be as a good and successful teacher. To be under the influence of an outstanding teacher is very hard to identify, because you might be underneath them and you might be learning from them but you have nothing to cross-reference against to show that they are an outstanding teacher.

Miss O'Donoghue—To form a benchmark of what a great teacher is, it all comes back to having that variation in practicum experiences.

Mr SAWFORD—What sorts of relationships have you had with the principals of the schools that you have visited? What sort of input have they had, if any, and has it had any significance for you? In my view, they are the people who point out who outstanding teachers are.

Mr Walton—What do you mean by input?

Mr SAWFORD—Do they take you aside during your prac as a group or as an individual and try and explain what the school's ethos is, some of the things that the principal is trying to encourage in the staff, what the purpose of the staff meetings are or why there is focus on one issue and not another?

Mr Walton—On two of my pracs the headmasters have done that. They have made a point of getting the practicum students together at the start of the very first day that you were there and running through all of those things: where the school is coming from, what they expect and laying down the ground rules, just as they would expect to do for their own students and for the teachers, recognising that it is a whole community. Having said that, it does not always happen and it is not necessarily a prerequisite.

CHAIR—Did that tend to be, in your opinion, a better school and a better experience when the principal had done that?

Mr Walton—Of the three pracs that I did, the one that did not do it was not any different a sort of school. It did not make any difference. The way that particular school worked was as a community, where the principal and the teachers worked as a community. The fact that it was the teacher imparting those things did not make any difference.

Ms Clinch—In the schools I have been to the principals had no input whatsoever instigated by them, but I have sought the information from the principals. They have been willing to share it.

Ms CORCORAN—On a different matter altogether, over the course of this inquiry we have heard from a number of different people about their perception of the teaching profession as not holding great regard in the community and perhaps not a lot of status. In fact, some people have made the comment that the worst people to criticise the teaching profession are teachers themselves. I am interested in a quick run through of why you have chosen to go into teaching, if you are prepared to share that with us.

Mr Walton—I actually wanted to do teaching 20 years ago. I went surfing instead for a while. Other things got in the way. Having brought up my own kids, we were living in the UK and I was running my own business over there. When we were coming back to Australia four years ago I decided that, as it takes three or four years to start up a new business anyway, I would actually do what I wanted to do and get the degree so I could get out and teach. Having my own kids and being associated with them and their friends—and I have also been chairman of a junior football club and working with children a lot—I recognised that that was where I wanted to be. You can make a difference to the whole future life of a child by educating them well in primary school and approaching it in the right direction.

Ms Clinch—Having come from a different profession, I felt like I needed a career change. It must be a midlife crisis and arthritic fingers! I have taught in physio as well, so I knew that I enjoyed teaching. I have primary school age children of my own and felt that that could be where I could make a contribution. I could see what they were doing and thought, 'Gee, I reckon I could do that.' Of course, when you get there it is a lot more difficult than you think it is going to be, but that was my motivation.

Miss Frazer—I was really inspired by one of my primary school teachers and since I was at primary school I have always wanted to grow up and be like my fifth class primary school teacher. I went off that path for a little while when I was inspired by my high school art teacher and then wanted to be a high school art teacher, but then I worked in a preschool. I was mainly working with the older kids—around four years old—and I realised that primary school was where I really want to be. I have a passion for working with kids and get a lot from it.

Miss Stevens—At first I was not going to go into teaching; I was going to go into health. But when I thought about it, I thought, 'I could not do that,' and I decided to change and do PE. I would not change it. I love my course and I am looking forward to going out there and actually teaching and sharing with the kids things that you have learnt, even through the high school experiences, and giving them the knowledge to be able to make choices in their lives that could affect them in the future.

Miss O'Donoghue—Coming back to my experience in child care, I really feel as though I have something to contribute. I feel passionate about early childhood because it is a really important time during children's lives.

Mr Hawkins—I love to teach. Ever since I was about 10 or 15, somewhere between those ages, I developed the ability to be able to teach my younger brother a lot of things. I feel that he gained a lot out of it and I guess it was that satisfaction that started throwing me down that track. When it came time to do the HSC and make decisions on my career path, it was either engineering or education for me. What inspired me was my high school physics teacher. He was a really great model of where I see myself being in, say, 10 years or so. He was sitting back, just cruising along. He knew how to manage the kids. I thought, 'That is what I want to do.' I want to make a difference. I want to help kids make decisions on where they want to go in life.

Not every kid wants to be in a science room and not every kid wants to be in a maths room. Maybe that is part of teaching: being able to show the kids what is available and that it is there for them to choose whether or not they decide to pursue a career or even further schooling in it. If you are in a year 10 class, depending on your year 10 teacher, you could totally change your choices of what you do in years 11 and 12. A lot of people drop out of maths in years 11 and 12. That may be because they had a really bad maths teacher. There are a lot of students out there who will admit that. They had a bad teacher somewhere along the line and that influenced them. I feel that if I can be a good teacher then maybe that will help throw more investment into my field, which is science, or even maths, as one of the electives that I could teach. I just like to teach kids.

Mr Preece—I coach a lot of sporting teams and I have found that I love passing on things that I am good at to other people, particularly young people; they seem to be a lot more ready to learn. One of the main things I have found through coaching soccer is that you get the opportunity to teach not only soccer skills but also social skills and how to interact with people. I think that through teaching in a school you can have a really great effect on lifelong learning, mentally and socially; you get to incorporate the whole thing. That is something I really enjoy through coaching sport and I would like to continue doing that.

Ms BIRD—We talked about the practicum. I would like a quick response from everybody—because we hear all the time that you cannot cram more and more into the course—about if there

is anything in the course in terms of subject that could be dropped and nobody would miss it. The unis always tell us there is not and the students can always name stuff, so I am interested.

Mr Walton—I would not say there is much I would like to see dropped. It is unfortunate in that there is so much that teachers are expected to do, which impacts on our courses because that dictates how much we can have in them. Most of the subjects could be twice the length and still not be able to adequately cover it. That is not the university's fault; they have X number of years to cover everything. I do not really see how they could do that.

Ms BIRD—Do you ever think anything has wasted your time?

Mr Walton—Individual tutes or individual lectures.

Ms BIRD—But not the subject?

Mr Walton—I have found value in every single subject I have done.

Ms Clinch—If they were to drop one, probably the only one would be a subject about the sociology of education. They probably should put behavioural management in as a compulsory subject, because it is not; it is an elective.

Miss Frazer—With the grad Dip. Ed. we have to do everything in one year so we have not had much content to date. I have found, on going on practical experience, that what we have learnt in classes which I thought was not really relevant in the first three weeks has become so much more relevant throughout the practical. So I think it is really important to link these theories with the practical experience.

Miss Stevens—With PE there is a little bit that is overlapped and we go through a lot repeatedly. There are a couple of subjects where the content is pretty much the same as we then do in the next semester in another subject, so there is a lot of overlap with a couple of our subjects in the course.

Miss O'Donoghue—I agree with Pippa that behaviour management as a compulsory subject would be an advantage, and I would not want to see anything dropped. I think it is a great program.

Mr Hawkins—I am with pretty much everyone else. I think that everything today has been a good source of information and it has helped me a lot in my practicum. In my degree particularly I would like to see a little bit more practicum but maybe outside of uni time instead of placing the practicum into the second semester right smack in the middle when you probably have mid-terms. Everyone sort of spaces out their assignments and for some reason we seem to have practicum and the two assessments from most departments due in that same week. So I would like to see more practicum but maybe after uni times.

Mr Preece—I do not really have much to contribute. Basically we have only been at uni for three weeks. Some of the things have been a little bit confusing but I am going to give it time to try and fall into place as we go on a bit.

Ms BIRD—I would have dropped philosophy of education from my course. I would have gone back and done it after three years of teaching.

Mr SAWFORD—I would have actually added that because if you do not know what you believe and you do not know what you are doing then no matter what you are trained in it does not make sense. Primary or secondary teachers—it is a big difference.

Ms BIRD—It is when you do it.

CHAIR—Thanks, everyone, for joining us. Your coming along is really important so that we can hear from the students themselves. You are actually contributing to the processes of the parliament and our view of trying to make some recommendations that are actually going to improve teacher training in this country. Your enthusiasm is very much on a par with a range of beginning teachers right around the country. It is great to see and I thank you. The secretariat will provide you with a proof copy of your evidence so that you can have a read through that. We really appreciate your time.

Mr SAWFORD—Have a successful career. Good luck.

[11.31 pm]

HARPER, Professor Barry, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

KIGGINS, Dr Julie, Lecturer, Knowledge Building Community, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

MCKEEN, Ms Kim, Deputy Director GDE, University of Wollongong

TURBILL, Dr Jan, Director, Field Experience Program, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

CHAIR—I welcome the next witnesses. Would you like to make some opening remarks?

Prof. Harper—We are happy with what is in our submission. We are happy to answer whatever questions you feel are appropriate.

Mr SAWFORD—Can we please have a brief exposition and a brief set of insights from the three new witnesses?

Dr Kiggins—What would you like to know?

Mr SAWFORD—Can you please give us a run-down on the knowledge building program and perhaps some insights for the committee about what you have discovered and what you think are highlights.

Dr Kiggins—Sure. The knowledge building community program was started in 1999 with a small cohort of students and four local schools. We set it up to try to give students an alternative approach to their education at the university. We made a shift from that traditional lecture/tutorial practicum model to a problem based learning within a school site model. We were paying particular attention to the link between theory and practice and putting students into the schools very early on a two-days-a-week program with one day back on campus in the homeroom. The homeroom is an integral part of the knowledge building community program, because that is where we do all our workshops, our problem based learning and our knowledge building and sharing. It is a very collaborative environment and it is very much underpinned by four philosophical beliefs in that we promote that students should take responsibility for their own learning, collaborate, problem solve and reflect. These are all attributes that we believe beginning teachers need for their future careers.

We have had a lot of interesting successes along the way, because our students very quickly learn about the culture of the school and the environment that they are going to be going into as graduate teachers. By insisting that our students, on their two-day school experiences, spend more time learning about the culture of the school rather than just watching one teacher work, we like to think that our students get to see a variety of teachers teaching strategies in classrooms. That shows them very early in their first year experience exactly what the culture is

that they are going to be entering. I could talk a long time about KBC, so you better stop me when you need to.

Ms BIRD—Just give us a pragmatic structure. What are we talking about? Is it a degree course? How many days per week?

Dr Kiggins—It is an alternative approach to the bachelor of teaching. If you think of a bachelor of teaching as six sessions over three years, the KBC mode operates in three of those sessions. For 50 per cent of their degree, they are in what we call KBC mode and then, for the other 50 per cent, they transfer back into what we call the mainstream mode where they attend the lecture/tutorial model. They get what I believe is the best of both worlds, because they get to see and experience both sides of the university.

Mr SAWFORD—Do the students self-select?

Dr Kiggins—Yes. Once the students are accepted into the bachelor of teaching program, they then have the option of applying for selection into the KBC program.

Mr SAWFORD—How many students are we talking about?

Dr Kiggins—Twenty four first year students come on board each year. They can then opt at the end of first year, after they have experienced one session of KBC and one session of mainstream, to return to KBC mode next year or to stay in mainstream mode because that is their preferred learning style. They might decide not to continue with teaching as well. That is also an option, because they see a lot very quickly.

Prof. Harper—Do you want to mention some of the outcomes?

Dr Kiggins—Our students that we have seen have a very strong knowledge of what it is to be a teacher. They certainly adapt very quickly as graduate beginning teachers. They understand the culture that they are walking into. They know what they need insofar as they need a mentor teacher, and they will very quickly go looking for a mentor when they start their graduate career. We have had a lot of successful students go on to do honours programs, masters and PhDs. They really do get very interested in their profession.

Prof. Harper—It is hard to quantify this. The anecdotal evidence is that the targeted rate for these students that come out of that program in New South Wales to be targeted teachers is significantly higher for those students than our mainstream students. That is anecdotal. The faculty invested in a research project last year to try to get some more solid evidence about what is different about these students when they finish compared with our mainstream students. In education, it is very difficult to get competitive grant funding. We are doing pretty well in this faculty compared with many faculties of education, but it is very difficult. For a program like this, we have to try to find other sources of funds to do the research. In this case, we could not, because it is so unique to Wollongong, so we decided to invest in that ourselves. We will have some more solid evidence by the end of this year about what those outcomes really are.

Ms CORCORAN—I did not quite catch the very beginning. Did you say the targeted rate of these students is different?

Prof. Harper—Yes. The targeted rate of these students is much higher.

Ms CORCORAN—What is a targeted rate?

Prof. Harper—We cannot give you the actual information.

Ms BIRD—Targeted for employment by the DET.

Prof. Harper—Yes, sorry.

CHAIR—What prompts the student to choose that strand as opposed to the mainstream?

Dr Kiggins—That is something I always try and ask; why are you interested in doing this? Some of the students will way that they like the idea of working collaboratively. They have had experience—

CHAIR—I stop you there and expand that question a bit further. How do they know about that option, how is it presented to them and is it something that they come across to this university specifically to do?

Dr Kiggins—All of the above. It is in their student information they get sent out. In the faculty booklet, there is a part that talks about the degree and then there is a little part at the end that says that there is also an alternative way of doing the bachelor of teaching. The students will follow that up and contact me personally. Word of mouth is very strong. Our program now stretches to 12 schools locally, so that network is very strong. I have had children of teachers who have heard about the program and want their children to seek this one out. It is that kind of momentum.

Ms BIRD—It is only primary, isn't it?

Dr Kiggins—Yes, it is.

Ms BIRD—Have you looked at it for your secondary courses?

Dr Turbill—We do have the program on our Shoalhaven campus.

Dr Kiggins—But that is a primary degree as well. At the moment, it is only primary.

Prof. Harper—We have not looked at it for our secondary programs, mainly because of the cost. It is a high-cost program, because we pay for the mentors in schools. That is a significant and essential part of that to have a school mentor for each of these people while they are in that school environment for the extended length of time that they are.

Ms BIRD—When we hear a lot about the challenges of a modern classroom, it is often about the secondary classroom. Often, some of the most innovative stuff seems to need to happen more at secondary level, yet people are always doing models at primary level. Maybe that is around the different structure of the schools—it is more manageable in primary or whatever.

Prof. Harper—We do have an integrated program in the Graduate Diploma in Education but it is a different model to the one Julie is describing. It does not involve the mentoring process. It is more of an integrated program where the students are thinking about their classroom issues across the whole spectrum of subjects that they study.

Mr SAWFORD—Does it attract more mature age students or more school leaver students? Are there any different sorts of cohorts other than those I have indicated?

Dr Kiggins—Yes. I look at that every year. Some years I will have a balance of mature age students who have heard about it. I have usually found that it balances quite evenly. As an example, last year, the first year group that I took had probably the highest ratio of school leavers to mature age students that I had had in a long time. Normally it is quite balanced.

Dr Turbill—The university runs information evenings and career development. I have been involved in a lot of those and I have found a lot of people come and ask questions about the alternate programs. It is on our website and the careers teachers seem to know about it, so they talk about it. We get asked those questions at those information nights when they are in high school. That is becoming more and more obvious.

CHAIR—At a more general level, Jan, with regard to the practical component, are you happy with the way it is currently or would you like to see, if resources were no limitation, more time out in the field? Do you think that the experience that is offered through the schools could be improved?

Dr Turbill—There are lots of questions there. Yes, I would like to see them in the schools more often. We are working towards that. We started with our first years this year, putting them in schools for 10 Wednesdays. We call them in-school visits, not practicum visits, because it is much more of a school partnership program. The schools involved know that they are not being paid for those days. With our first year program, we have learnt a lot from KBC. We would love to do the sorts of things that KBC is doing for many more of our students. But there are 230 primary and early childhood students who come into first year. Then there are the Dip. Ed. students. There are another 200 of those.

I actually did some numbers. There are something like 720 students across the field whom we have to place in schools this session. Obviously, to do that KBC with all of them would be a very, very big task. But we are trying to learn as much as we can from what KBC is doing. One of those things has been getting them into schools as early as possible and frequently. So, with the first year project this year, that is what we have tried to do. They are in schools in the third week of our program, the sixth week of school. They have been going in every Wednesday.

As Julie identified, they are not allocated to one classroom. We have asked the schools to rotate them around as much as possible so that they can understand what goes on in schools and get a sense of what schools are about. They are doing that. The other thing that we learned from KBC is that we need to try and get our students to match theory and practice. It is really difficult. We can give them theory, but it is very difficult for them to see the links between theory and practice. While they are in the schools, they are observing and we are hoping they pick things up.

In order for the uni work to be more meaningful to those visits, we cannot quite do what Julie has been doing with the KBC. But we have asked the four subject coordinators who run the subjects that these students are in this session to try and allocate or think about how they bring their assessment pieces, at least, to link back into what the students are seeing in the schools. So it is a forced way of making them think: 'What am I seeing here and how does this relate back to what I am hearing about at the university level?'

We are only halfway through the school visit component, but that school visit component will move into a two-week block practicum, so they will do their two-week block in June at the school that they are now visiting one day a week. By the time that happens, they will feel comfortable in the school. They will know the teacher that they are going to be working with and the children, so they will start their two-week block prac teaching whereas, in the past, they would probably have spent the first week observing. We have learnt a lot from the KBC model, and we are trying to embed that into our mainstream as much as we can. Would we like more? Yes. I think the issue of the actual placement is difficult because we have very little say about which teachers are identified to work with our students. Hopefully, with the first year model that we are using, the students and the teachers will work out as well who they can and cannot get on with. Sometimes it really is just a mismatch of personalities. We are hoping that, by the time they make those decisions, which will be around about our 10th week—which gives the student three weeks to sit in the class that they are going to be teaching in—the relationship between them and the person that they are going to be working with is much stronger.

Ms BIRD—With regard to that issue, some of the students did give us feedback that there is a wide variety of experience, depending on the supervising teacher that you end up with and the motivation that they have for doing it. Some of the models we have heard from other places relate to the university offering professional development opportunities and qualifications for people who then become the supervising teachers in the schools. Have you looked at some of those options?

Ms McKeen—I have been director of practicum as well and I am currently the deputy director of the Dip. Ed. program, so I have been heavily involved in prac for many years. The issue of supervision has always been there. It is the quality of the experience that is the big answer. We have no control over who takes them. The schools will offer places. We do not know what teachers are offering those places. Because we do have so many students across our primary and our secondary programs, essentially, we cannot be selective. Even though you will hear of students who have very bad experiences, we do not know whether that teacher is even offering to be a supervising teacher. Again, the schools control who they will give students to. That is one part of the issue.

I know from when I was director—and one of my colleagues feels this way too—that our desire would be that, if teachers are going to take on a mentor student during practice teaching, ideally, we would love to put all those teachers through a mentoring program on what it means to be a good supervising teacher and bring in those teachers who we know provide outstanding supervision for our students to talk through the sorts of things they do with their students when they do have a prac student for two or three weeks and what they are doing to mentor them and what they are doing to give them a program where the students do come back and say, 'I had a fantastic experience.' It is the quality of the supervision that is the issue; it is not the students, it is not the behavioural issues and it is not the school they go to. One of our colleagues has been

doing research on that and it is the teacher and the relationship. As Jan said, sometimes students do get put with someone where the relationship just does not work. There is conflict of personalities and a whole range of things that can happen. We often have to move students for those reasons. It would be great if we could say, 'The only teachers that will take students are those who have gone through some sort of mentoring program to know what it means to be a mentor.' They are doing it all the time with their colleagues anyway with their beginning teachers, but I am not sure if they have even been through mentoring processes for that. But, if we did that, we would probably not have places for students. We probably would not get enough people through because there is not the incentive for teachers out there to do professional development or get some qualifications. They are not being recognised. Even if they are an exemplar teacher in a school or they are an outstanding supervising teacher, they get their rewards from their colleagues but there is no incentive there. We have often talked about having a subject that may be in a masters program that teachers could do that gives them the qualifications, skills and attributes to be a great supervising teacher.

Ms BIRD—How do you manage the communication? Do you guarantee a supervisor does a visit during a student's placement?

Dr Turbill—Yes. Kim and I have been working closely this session in allocating academic staff to different clusters of schools. By the time June comes, for instance, when we have all our students out, our staff could have anything up to four or five different schools with approximately anything up to 20 students to be working with. Our academic staff work as liaisons with the schools, so they are the contact people both for students and for the prac coordinator in the school. We only get asked to come into a classroom at the request of the teacher or of the student. The student may say: 'I'm getting feedback sheets here that are not very helpful. Can you come and watch me?' We can go in then. We do not go in and supervise ourselves. We just could not. There is not the time. It is difficult enough getting around all the schools.

One of the things that we are trying to do with this first year project is offer professional development that is very current, if you like, and that we cannot do on our own anyway. For instance, this afternoon, I am running one with the Sydney south clusters up in the Sutherland Shire. We are focusing on the New South Wales Institute of Teachers standards and how we can use those for prac reporting. We need the teachers to help us identify that. I think there are about 25 to 30 prac coordinators and class teachers coming together to talk with us about that and help us try to work something out like that. It is really important right now, because they need to get some understanding of the institute's standards. That is a way of getting people together.

Prof. Harper—Kim alluded to it. Jan is heading up this first year funded project. The vice-chancellor has given us a challenge grant to implement this new model to try it out and find out how it is going to work. Part of that is what you were suggesting; we just have not got to that yet. We already have a lot of relationships with the department of education and Catholic education for them to do specific things in their schools and then we give them some credit towards graduate subjects. With the model that Jan is working on, we are just trying to get their school experience going first and then the collaborative clusters of schools layer is coming next. We are planning that at present. We are trying to pool together all the things we currently do with a variety of schools and package it as something that we are offering schools and saying, 'Here's what we will give you in return as part of your wonderful contribution to the way in which you

work with students.' At the same time, we have that constraint of the quality of teachers that are supervising our students. As part of the project, we will try to move them towards some sort of process that is related to the Institute of Teachers but is also related to that quality of the practicum experience.

Ms BIRD—It just seems that the quality of the debrief and follow-up is often as important. Having done the Dip. Ed. and two pracs, the first one I had was appalling, but I learnt as much from that as I learnt from the really good one I had. It seemed to me that the capacity to have someone to reflect with to follow up on your experiences can be as important as that experience, which is why I asked about the connections with the—

Ms McKeen—Within each of the programs, during the final prac for third years, they have one day when all the students come back in. It is a day of reflection to look at what has been happening. Jan would be more heavily involved with that one than me. We also do that with our secondary PE and health program, where they come back midway through their final prac. It is part of that reflecting. You also get a sense of which students need more support in their final few weeks, because they may not be getting the feedback from the teachers that you would expect them to get. There are those things along the way.

Ms CORCORAN—In your submission you talk about moving away from a supervisory role to a mentoring role, and we have skirted around it a bit today. Kim, I think you actually used the words interchangeably a little while ago.

Ms McKeen—I probably did, yes.

Ms CORCORAN—I am interested in the difference between those two models. As we have talked about, different teachers are better or perhaps not so good at having students in the classroom. Do you want to comment very briefly on whether or not there is some room here for the registering of teachers who are going to do this sort of work?

Ms McKeen—I guess the terms 'supervision' and 'mentoring' are sometimes used interchangeably but historically it has always been, from the school's perspective, a case of supervising student teachers. The term 'mentoring', either of the beginning teachers or of our pre-service teachers, is a term that has only been used in fairly recent years in teaching. I think that is probably all part of the education process that we need to have so that schools can start to recognise the role that they do play in the pre-service education. Quite often I think there is that role—but is that our responsibility here at the university or is it the schools' responsibility? Those schools that do it very well recognise that they have a significant role to play in mentoring pre-service teachers over their whole degree, as opposed to saying, 'I get them in and I supervise them for a couple of weeks'. The depth of the connection that they make with the student is seen to be different. I think it is a case of educating schools to start to see what we mean by 'mentoring'.

Ms CORCORAN—Is mentoring a long-term relationship?

Ms McKeen—Yes, and forming a relationship where they see that they have a role in where this student is going as far as their attributes as a teacher, as opposed to: 'I get a student for a couple of weeks, I watch them in class and that is it.' It is getting the schools to value the role

they play in mentoring pre-service teachers because, although we certainly value the role they play, there is sometimes that line where they are not sure what we think of them and what they think of us.

Our students have lots of other opportunities to go into schools across their program, not just during practicum. We see—and the students certainly see—the experience that they get in schools, and teachers need to see it as an ongoing role. I think that is where the two terms differ and many teachers will still just say, 'I am supervising a student for a couple of weeks.' But those who perhaps have had a bit more to do with leadership in their schools and who are mentoring beginner teachers are probably starting to say, 'My role is more of a mentor and I can play significant role in the education of my future colleagues.'

Dr Kiggins—We tried really hard in the beginning of the Knowledge Building Community program because we actually said right out front that we wanted to change the culture of that whole clinical supervision. That was a huge statement to make but we worked really hard and in our handbooks we took out the term 'clinical supervisor' and we put in the term 'mentor-teacher'. We changed the title of 'prac student' to 'associate teacher'. We wanted our colleague teachers in our schools to recognise that the people coming to them as pre-service teachers were in fact their future colleagues, so we worked hard on that little name change. We made it quite explicit in our handbooks, and we actually put down on paper, the differences between a clinical supervisor and a mentor.

We have brought our schools' people in. The DET used to fund us to have what we would call 'release days' where we could bring in our mentor-teachers, with ourselves as facilitators from the university here, and perhaps bring some DET people down from Sydney and we would run professional development days about what mentoring is. Then the different school personnel could also get together and talk about how they mentored and what the differences were. They actually found it quite challenging, and even trying to get the terminology changing in the school from 'prac student' to 'associate teacher' was a real challenge. It has only really happened in one or perhaps two of the schools where I have been working for the last seven years.

It is a real cultural shift. It is really hard to get the mentoring idea across. We also encouraged our mentor teachers, if they were mentoring, to take on board the opportunity to write about their experiences and research the role of mentoring as a literature review. They could apply for eight credit points to put towards a masters degree. Only two teachers have taken that up in seven years. So it is a hard one. It is a real cultural change to get themselves to think of themselves as mentors and the differences in that role.

Ms BIRD—Are we hearing from you that this is the model that you would like basically to run everybody on but because of the funding and realistically with the numbers you have got going through that is not the reality—is that what I am hearing?

Prof. Harper—No, I do not think you are hearing that. I think you are hearing that this is a very good model. It seems to work very well. But we have not done enough research on it to understand what it would be like if it were scaled up. It could be that that might be the best model that we can think of.

Ms BIRD—But it is too pre-emptive?

Prof. Harper—Yes.

Ms BIRD—You might even identify aspects of it that are manageable in the other—

Prof. Harper—That is what we are already doing.

Ms BIRD—So we should wait for that.

Dr Turbill—That is certainly what we are trying to do now with the primary program. The secondary program is more difficult, I think, because of the nature of high schools and the way they are structured and with communication across faculties and so on. It is a much more difficult thing for us to do.

Ms McKeen—Although we are currently doing a new model in our PE health degree. We have been talking around how we might put the knowledge based community into some subjects so that we can use certainly the experience of the KBC model and gain from it. But it must be within subjects because, again, in a secondary school it is a bit problematic. You may be placed with a teacher who has only four periods that day or there may not be much happening in that faculty, whereas with primary schools you can essentially be watching something happening all of the time. We are looking at it.

CHAIR—Thank you.

[12.04 pm]

BHINDI, Associate Professor Narottam, Director, Australian Centre for Educational Leadership, University of Wollongong

BRICKELL, Dr Gwyn, Lecturer, IT Education/Science Education, Director, Loftus Program, University of Wollongong

CARROLL, Mr Chris, External support, University of Wollongong

DINHAM, Professor Stephen, Professor of Educational Leadership and Pedagogy, University of Wollongong

FERRY, Associate Professor Brian, Associate Dean (Graduate), University of Wollongong

HARPER, Professor Barry, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

McCANN, Mr Paul, External Support, University of Wollongong

OKELY, Dr Tony, Senior Lecturer, Physical and Health Education, CORe Coordinator, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong

SCHMICH, Ms Kate, External Support, University of Wollongong

WHELAN, Professor Rob, Dean, Faculty of Science, University of Wollongong

CHAIR—Welcome. Thank you for appearing before the committee. One of the things that has differentiated some of the quality education programs around the country is the issue of strong partnerships with schools, so during this session we wish to explore that. With regard to the final session, which we are rolling into one, a comment was made that it takes a whole university to train a teacher. It commented on the importance of dealing cross-faculty, if you like, and the way in which the faculties work together to produce quality teachers. Professor Harper, would you like to make some opening remarks in relation to partnerships?

Prof. Harper—Yes. They will be fairly brief because we have described them in our submission. We have very close relationships with our region, with all denominations. We have seconded members of the teaching profession in our local area from both Catholic and public schools. Kate, for example, has worked with us for six months on our knowledge building community within our program. Paul has worked with us within our Centre for Educational Leadership as an academic for six months as well. Our Centre for Educational Leadership is one of our driving forces in terms of professional development of teachers. They work mainly with principals but they are working through the whole range of leadership issues with teachers. They are doing a fantastic job in getting out in schools, advertising what sorts of things a leader should be thinking about and working with breakfast seminars—special units of work that then roll into graduate subjects where principals and teachers get credit. We believe we have a very strong

relationship with all the systems that we are working within. We have asked the people here today to represent that.

CHAIR—The things that define a good partnership are not only the university receiving training from the supervising teachers or the mentor teachers but also the ways in which the university can give back to the school. Kate, you might want to talk on the relationship that you have with the university and how it benefits the school in your capacity as principal.

Ms Schmich—I want to reiterate what Barry said about the close relationships in terms of the school and the university working together. If you look at what the university can give to schools, you see that one of the things that we did last year was to suggest to third year students that we would look at programming in a different way because that was how it was in schools. That was taken on board with a really open mind by the lecturers over here. They have started that in all of the schools that have third year students. That brings them a little more on to the cutting edge, so that they are programming around the quality teaching framework, which is the DET framework that we work within. That is one way that we have been able to work really closely, and they have come on board with that sort of thinking as well. Our new program, which you have probably heard about from Jan, with the first year students being out in schools in that same sort of framework seems to be working really well. The students are in a community in schools, so that works quite well.

Ms BIRD—Just to explore that issue a bit further, one of my frustrations is that we always hear about primary. That does frustrate me to some extent. One of the issues that came up in the last session is that it seems to be far more difficult to structure these sorts of programs in high schools because you have a much more fragmented leadership situation; it is often not quite as collegiate between the faculty offices and so forth. It is easier, we hear from students, to get a bit lost as a placement student in the high school setting. Have the department and the Catholic Education Office, with their high schools, looked at ways in which the schools can better support some of this? There does seem to be quite a difference in experience between those doing primary placements and those doing secondary placements.

Mr Carroll—It probably goes back to the way secondary teachers are originally trained. My background is secondary teaching. It was my observation on coming down here and first meeting up with the four-year Bachelor of Education primary students that they were of a much better calibre in terms of their quality and knowledge of teaching. Originally my training was at the University of Sydney. It was always the fact that you were trained in a particular subject area rather than in education. I walked into a secondary school with around six weeks of Diploma of Education training. Others in the room probably would have had that experience. My learning in terms of secondary education took place in the first three years of teaching and probably through Higher School Certificate marking subsequently. I think that the faculty structure in secondary schools has impeded that knowledge or opportunity of learning the business and mentoring aspect—that is, until you get to executive teacher, leadership and principal level, where I think with executive teams there have been closer links with leadership training.

Mr SAWFORD—Whilst we are talking about partnerships, from this inquiry it is very clear that the relationships between schools and universities around Australia, although they might vary, are pretty strong. It is very hard to identify the role of education departments in each of the states. I always would have thought that, in teacher education and the profession itself, there

would be a strong trinity of state departments, universities and schools. Am I being fair? Can you give us some examples of how in New South Wales the Department of Education and Training actually gets in at a practical level with universities, schools and teacher education programs—and I suppose also postgraduate programs in terms of what happens to teachers in their first five years or maybe even first 10 years?

Mr Carroll—I moved into this area in 1988. The department here has had stronger and stronger links with the university over a period of time. The setting-up of the Australian Centre for Educational Leadership here was spearheaded by this university. It seconded Dr Terry Burke, who had been a former deputy director-general, into professorial status here as a fellow. That was the beginning of the Centre for Educational Leadership, which has always had close links with its partners. Its partners have been the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Office, the primary and secondary principals groups, the Australian College of Educators and the Australian Council for Educational Leaders. That has been at a local level.

The input to those leadership courses and the rejigging of educational leadership training has been fairly high on the agenda here. In response, though, to your observation, I was part of the state literacy strategy and the evaluation of where we were going with literacy a number of years ago. It certainly was dependent on the flavour of the university as to how literacy was being taught. I think it is a fair thing to say that the departmental voice and how the department believed literacy should be taught was not strong. It was dependent on the various areas and the strengths in those areas. I think that has changed. I think it is probably fair enough to say that it could change even further.

Mr SAWFORD—Brian Ferry at an earlier session put in the very realistic claim that we judge people where the money is. You have to put your money where your mouth is. Is there an argument that, at both Commonwealth and state levels, we are not putting in enough in terms of teacher education courses? Should we have a radical relook at the way in which teacher education is funded in this country?

Mr Carroll—I would agree with that strongly. Teacher education and in fact public education in general—I will not speak for my colleagues from the Catholic Education Office—since I would say 1978 or 1980 has presided over an organisation and system that is constantly trying to do more with less.

Mr SAWFORD—Does anyone else want to comment on that?

Ms Schmich—Yes. You have probably heard from the students that their best learning is done in schools. That is what I hear from the Dip Ed students and also from the bachelor students.

Mr SAWFORD—We heard that today.

Ms Schmich—Yes. So the KBC type program, where they spend even more time in school and even less time in tutorials or lectures, is a much better way to go in training teachers to actually get out there and know what the job entails before they are actually in the class. Some of the research has shown that the younger teachers cannot manage a classroom situation in terms of the behaviour of the kids these days. That is where they are leaving in droves. They do not get the support out in schools either. That is another issue that we need not go into today. But the

sort of training that they really need to be great teachers is back in the schools, supported by the lecturers here at the university working with the schools so that they are covering the same sort of information.

Mr McCann—I would support all of the things that have been said in terms of the positive nature of the relationship between the university and the Catholic Education Office in Wollongong. It has been very strong. We have worked together to build that strength. All of the other positive things that have been said by other members I would fully endorse. But we have also had a relationship with the university in terms of specific courses to meet some of the needs of teachers in classrooms—for example, special education, dealing with the integration of children with special needs into the normal stream and also particularly students who may be somewhere on what we might call the autism spectrum. We have had particular courses which we have linked up with the department of education here. That has been very successful. It has supported our teachers in dealing with issues they are facing in the classrooms now that they may not have faced before. So they have been very positive.

Ms BIRD—Does the Catholic Education Office pay for or purchase courses?

Mr McCann—I am not sure of the arrangement there.

Prof. Harper—They are purchased courses but they are tailored for Paul's needs.

Mr McCann—We have worked together to build those courses up. As well as that, in the Australian Centre for Educational Leadership we have surveyed the schools for particular needs that leaders might have. I know that when I was here working in that faculty and in the centre for six months we looked at a whole range of what we call modular courses that we can run in various ways within the schools. We have looked at mentoring, for example, for new teachers coming into the system. We have looked at leading learning for this day and age, particularly for the digital age, and also getting principals and leaders to deal with change. They are three of the modules that we put together which have been out there in the schools. They have been very well accepted.

We have quite a unique new school that we have built here—the Corpus Christi Catholic High School, which is an open plan, digital age type school. We are in discussions with the university now on doing research there and bringing that sort of learning and teaching to students. So, to answer the question, our relationship is very strong. We need more money, although I think we all need more money. We could do much more if we had that. But we have those links and we are very happy to continue those links. We do all we can to build up that relationship because we know that many of the teachers that are going to come to our schools in this region are going to come from this institution.

CHAIR—I want to take up the issue that Kate raised about more time in schools. We have basically had evidence with regard to the practicum issue that has followed two themes. One theme comes basically from practising principals and people very involved at the coalface and it is that more practicum is a great thing. You learn a lot in the schools and that is where you learn to do it. A separate theme comes from the more academic side. It claims to be based on research. It is that research findings say that a beginning teacher with a very thorough subject knowledge, when given an adequate amount of practicum tied to the theory of pedagogy, is a better teacher

than one who is just doing more practicum as such. I am just interested in the thoughts of the panel on those two arguments.

Prof. Ferry—As Barry said before, quality is very important. Just having more of the same is not necessarily the answer. There are a number of practical issues. If you said, for example, you would double the number of practicum days for students in schools, that is all very well and good but who is going to supervise them? Where are the teachers and the schools that are going to do it? So there is that issue just from the practical point of view. But quality is important. The quality of the teachers who supervise the students and the knowledge and examples they provide are really important. So there needs to be a very strong partnership with the university, and a mutual understanding of what each has to offer the students is a really important part of that. It needs to be so close that it is not a separate issue, it overlaps; it is a synergetic part of it.

Mr SAWFORD—In the break before you came Sharon and I were talking about the situation prior to the amalgamation of CAEs and universities and what some of the pluses of the amalgamations were. There also seem to have been some losses. Maybe some people can think about that. Another issue that has been put to us is that the former CAEs—and your group, Barry, affirms this today—had a much more multilayered approach or a more complex view of teacher education that is much easier to follow than you get from, say, some of the stone/brick universities. This raises a couple of questions. Should all universities have a teacher education faculty? Would we be better off in Australia being more strategic and doing it better? And that assumes a whole range of funding. You are in a regional area and the regional inputs we get into teacher education are very much a balance between scholarship, research and teaching whereas in some of the other universities there is a very big focus on research and the teaching, it seems to us, just comes along for the ride.

So my questions are: should all universities have an education faculty? Should we be more strategic in teacher education? And in terms of the multilayers or complexities of teacher education, are we sometimes at fault in that we do not specify what they are in trying to convince governments, at both state and federal level, and even the profession itself that the needs are far greater than what are acknowledged?

Prof. Harper—I think not every university should have a faculty of education. Where a faculty of education is valued and the university recognises that value, that is an appropriate situation to have a faculty of education. But I also think there is a lot of room for different ways to think about how we train teachers. You can see that we are experimenting with a variety of ways here, and I imagine you have had a lot of very good input from other institutions that are using different models. I am not wedded to one model or to a very narrow band of models. I think there are multiple ways for you to prepare teachers.

I am probably the only person here who was in the teachers college when it was here. Many people look back and say they were the high-quality heydays of teacher education. In my judgment they were not. I think we were using in those times very dated pedagogies and because of the lack of link with research and new ideas about where learning was going we were pretty much stuck in a catch-22 situation. I think this faculty now is streets and streets ahead of where it would be if it were taken out and made into an individual institution, unless we could have significant research funding as part of that. I think there is a natural evolution there.

I certainly think that some programs in this country have not got the strong emphasis on the relationship with schools and the importance of the teaching process that we have at this institution and that many of the institutions you have talked to have. I think that is probably an issue of the accrediting bodies in those states, of what they are going to accept as appropriate models. It might also be an issue that Teaching Australia have to take up as part of their view of what a good teacher is nationally, because they are starting to make noises about having another layer of accreditation. Does that answer your questions, Rod?

Mr SAWFORD—It gives us a direction.

Prof. Whelan—I am appearing at Barry's invitation to answer questions and make comments about within university collaborations and interactions with the education faculty here. I had not imagined it was going to be a discussion about whether every university should have an education faculty when I arrived. I thought you might like my perspective, which is from outside the education faculty but from within the university, on that question. One of the things that concern us, and most universities, in science is the issue of science education right through the spectrum, from primary school right through to university.

All universities have a responsibility for community engagement within science. One aspect of community engagement that we see here is our interaction with high schools in providing a resource for supporting the teaching of science, right through from primary to secondary school. My view is that that is best done by interaction with a faculty, a department or a school of education. It is really important to focus on the teachers and to support the teachers. As I have observed high school education over the last decade or so, there has been a marked shift—which I think is a good one—to engaging students in open-ended learning, in focusing on questions that are at the forefront in an area and where there is not a single textbook answer.

It is clear that in the sciences a lot of teachers lack the facility, the training or the ability to really get into that in a confident way. One of the things that we have been able to do because we are co-located with the faculty of education within the university is devise some programs that will deliver that sort of professional development support to teachers to enable them to be better at teaching science. I think that partly fills in one of the answers. In this particular university, it is essential from our point of view to have a close connection with the faculty of education within the university sector.

Ms BIRD—You might be interested to know that one of the students who is doing the science teaching degree commented to us that he made a decision based on having a fantastic physics teacher at high school. He had to then decide—and this may not make you so happy—between engineering and education and actually decided to go with education. I thought that was a profoundly interesting statement because it was so uncommon to what we are hearing. But you are absolutely right: the students themselves said to us that the big dropout of maths is because of the quality of teaching in high schools of maths. That is the sort of feedback we got.

Prof. Whelan—There are a lot of demands being made on teachers in current curricula, which are good moves in the curriculum but make big demands on the teacher to have the confidence to run for a whole class a set of open-ended projects where they do not know the answer. If they are the biology teacher being seconded to teach physics or vice versa then that is pretty challenging.

Mr SAWFORD—There is a big problem in Australia from a national interest point of view. Twenty years ago, we had almost 100,000 tertiary students doing pure mathematics or a form of it. Now we have fewer than 14,000. That is a tragedy as far as the future of this nation is concerned and that needs to be remedied—quickly.

CHAIR—I note for those who came in later that one of the comments that was made by an earlier witness was that it takes a whole university to train a teacher. I think that is an important point.

Prof. Ferry—Could I comment on that? I think it takes the expertise of the university to provide the quality input into making a good teacher. Having an education faculty within a university allows you to link out to the expertise, as Rob alluded to, in the science, the engineering and the mathematics faculties to provide that high level of expertise that adds to the knowledge base of the students that you are trying to produce.

Ms CORCORAN—I have two questions and they are both quite different. The first one I think you have possibly already answered, Rob. I am interested in interaction between the faculties. Brian, I heard you just say that it is useful for an education faculty to be able to use the expertise from other faculties. Is it a two-way street? I think you have probably already half answered that.

Prof. Whelan—From the point of view of structures within the university, we have a governing committee structure within each of our faculties, which includes a faculty education committee, in which we deal with issues to do with the training of our own students. There is cross-faculty representation. For example, Brian sits on the science faculty education committee and the science faculty provides a member on the education faculty committee. So there is cross-fertilisation when we are dealing with our own issues of getting an outside perspective. Secondly, within this university, because of the science and mathematics education degree programs both at masters and undergraduate levels, there are cooperative interactions involved both in the design and in the running of those two degree programs.

Ms CORCORAN—It sounds like it takes a university to train a teacher and it also takes a university to train a scientist, if I understand you correctly.

Prof. Whelan—Absolutely. If you think about it—and this is my view but it is shared by other deans of science around the country—if you are training students to go into a research career, communication at all levels of their research is fundamental, and a really good way to get them involved in that is to get them involved in the teaching program. One way we are doing that at the moment is through an ASISTM funded grant from the Australian government, which is allowing us to use science research students to go out into the high schools and act as sort of teaching assistants for the particular grant. That gives these students a layer of training which they would not otherwise get but which is fundamental to being a good scientist, because it is to do with communication as well as science.

Dr Okely—To answer that from a research perspective, we are the only faculty of education that has a National Health and Medical Research Council project grant. Within the network, I am involved with the child and adolescent obesity research network in Australia. Having that grant has given us great credibility and has certainly raised the profile of educational research and of

educators as researchers, particularly amongst my health and medical peers. It has given us a seat at the table. People are now coming to us asking: 'Can you advise us how to run activity programs for children and how to work with children if we are trying to intervene in child obesity?' People are recognising that, as Rob said, our teachers, particularly if they have come to a research program, have skills that other health and medical professionals do not have and that these skills are very helpful when it comes to working with families and children.

Ms CORCORAN—You said that you are based in the education faculty. Is that correct?

Dr Okely—Yes.

Prof. Harper—There are members of this research group out of other faculties. It is a cross-faculty research group.

Ms CORCORAN—It sounds awfully cooperative to me. My other question is about ongoing professional development of teachers. In your submission you made the point that you cannot possibly teach a student everything they are ever going to know in their lives. Who is responsible for the next step? Is it up to individuals themselves to seek further development? Is it the responsibility of the school, the professional bodies, the department, the CEO or the universities? How do you manage that ongoing professional development?

Prof. Bhindi—One of the things which is very obvious from the presentations here is that the success of any institution such as ours depends on the extent to which we can create a community of engagement. The engagement is with our key stakeholders as well as important partners in the field, the reason being that that is the source of our credibility.

In answer to your question, in the area of leadership we engage with schools from the Catholic education sector as well as from the Department of Education and Training and the independent schools in the provision of ongoing workshops and professional development programs. Secondly, from time to time both my colleague, Professor Dinham, and people like myself get invited to contribute to the leadership strategies and professional development programs of the various sectors themselves—so that is the second layer.

The third layer is that, because of the community of engagement we are deliberately creating, we also offer professional degree programs: masters and doctorates as well as a PhD in educational leadership. The interesting feature there is we draw students, practising teachers, aspiring school leaders as well as incumbents from different sectors and we provide, on the basis of our observation and experience, a very powerful forum within the university for the exchange of ideas from teachers and professionals from a variety of sectors who otherwise would have been working in their own distinctive silos, if you will.

The basis of professional development and learning gets further credibility because we also second, from time to time, senior staff from the Department of Education and Training as well as from the Catholic education sector to be lecturers or senior lecturers for a semester or so. In addition to that, in our professional development workshops and within our regular programs we invite guest lecturers from the various sectors, including visiting professionals, because credibility, effectiveness and relevance are important.

Apart from the things that my colleagues have discussed in terms of our engagement regionally, the Centre for Educational Leadership also engages on a proactive basis with other state agencies, for example, the Institute of Teaching in the New South Wales government where Professor Steve Dinham has been involved from its very inception. Recently we also, on a proactive basis, had discussions with the institute to see how our centre can assist them in the professional development and learning of practising teachers as well as incumbent school leaders. In addition to that we would like to continue to engage with Teaching Australia which is a federal government establishment and which also aspires to do a number of things along the lines of our interest. We would like to see a closer nexus between Teaching Australia, the Institute of Teachers in the New South Wales government and the various providers of professional development and learning programs in the state and elsewhere.

If you will allow me, I would like to say that we recognise that despite the fact that we enjoy a fairly good reputation as a centre for educational leadership we have also gone a step further in establishing a consortium of leadership with the Australian Catholic University—the idea being that the area of education leadership is so vast and complex no entity on its own is able to engage with all of the complexities and therefore it is our hope that, like we are finetuning our relationship with the ACU, other partners might join us too. The idea being, once again, that the professional development and learning of teachers in the workforce, as well as aspiring and incumbent leaders, can be best done through the cooperation of our key partners.

The final point I will make is that at the Centre for Educational Leadership we derive a lot of credibility from having representatives from the two important sectors here on the advisory committee that we have deliberately established. Members of the advisory committee come from key stakeholders such as the Catholic Education Office, the Department of Education and Training, the New South Wales Primary Principals Association as well as the New South Wales Secondary Principals Council and well-known professional development and leadership experts such as those from the University of Western Sydney, the Australian Catholic University and so on.

The most important aspect of the work we do in the promotion and propagation of the quality of school leaders is our annual International Conference on Educational Leadership. Next year will be the sixth in the series. We draw as key noters as well as workshoppers people from the field as well as from other universities from Australia and sometimes overseas. For example, to the conference which finished recently, in February this year, we drew from the University of Tasmania Professor Bill Mulford and from the Australian Catholic University Professor Patrick Duignan. Of course, our own Professor Steve Dinham was a part of it. To give a slice of experience from the world which surrounds us, we also got representatives and presenters from sectors other than education. For example, this time we got Christine Nixon, the Chief Commissioner of the Victoria Police, to share her own ideas about how shared leadership can be developed, what some of the challenges are along the line and what we as educators from the university as well as in the field can divine as lessons for the future. That is in response to your question.

Ms BIRD—You are obviously very busy. Is there any measurement or feel for how many teachers actually take advantage of this sort of thing? Kate, maybe you have a perspective on this in your role as principal. Do most teachers take advantage of something like this at some point in time or are there some that do and some that do not? What is the picture?

Prof. Harper—I can give you an initial answer. In our graduate coursework program, which is really professional development but in specialised areas, we have something like 315 teachers studying. In our doctoral program, again, most of those people are teachers. Last year I think I signed off on somewhere near 140 doctoral students. We have a very large number of people working at that level that are coming to do professional development of their own accord and not financially supported by any system necessarily. We have a few scholarships but not very many. As to Narottam's and Steve's work—and Paul's work as well, because he is involved in the centre—significant numbers of teachers do short programs with them. But maybe we will let Paul say something about that. I think he was keen to.

Mr McCann—That part of our leadership framework that we have developed for all of our future leaders in our schools actually includes the courses that are devised here at the university, at both the masters level and the lead-up to the masters level. They are what I talked about a moment ago—the modular courses. Apart from that, to go back to one of your other questions, when we see a need in our schools that teachers are being faced with—for example, children on the autism spectrum which I spoke about a moment ago—we then look to our universities and build up some relationship with them to see how we can structure a course.

Often those courses are presented by not only the university but also people from our own systems to help to prepare teachers to deal with those things in the classroom. So, for example, in our relationship with the university here, if we see a need we would talk to the faculty of education about developing some course to support them in professional learning. I would like to say one other thing also, if I may, about the faculties of education within the universities. I think the future of learning in the secondary schools is the subject of a lot of debate at the moment. The idea of individual subjects is going to break down more and more.

Ms BIRD—Like the industrial model.

Mr McCann—Yes, the days of the industrial and mechanical model I think are past. The integration of teaching of units across a whole range of subject areas, and particularly integrating information, communication and learning technology within that, is going to come more and more to the fore. Some emphasis on learning theory and how children and students learn is going to be a key component in that. I see the faculties of education within universities having a particular role in that development.

Ms BIRD—It was an issue I raised with a number of universities—the fact that when we do ITC type stuff we tend to say, 'How can you use this in your classroom?' There has been very little done on how this world has changed the learner in that it appears to me, having had teenage children, that the way they experience learning is so vastly different to a classroom that the classroom resembles very little else in their lives these days. So my comment is: do not leave before I get an opportunity to arrange to come and have a look at what you are doing at the new school.

Chris, I hear Catholic education asking whether there is capacity for regional bodies of debt. Do you have a capacity to buy courses from universities? Is there much capacity for the public system to access those sorts of opportunities?

Mr Carroll—I would agree with what Paul said, that at the moment it would be true that the Catholic Education Office have moved further down into tailoring particular courses for some executive staff and for some schools, but towards the end of last year the Illawarra and South Coast region entered into a memorandum of understanding with the faculty of education here and in part that was to set up a committee of cooperation that would look at greater links and greater relevance in what we were delivering across the region.

One example of that is that we currently have 685 people—principals, executive teachers, aspiring principals and relieving principals—who have put up their hands and become involved in a leadership strategy and that is also, in part, being delivered with the centre here and the faculty. Narottam was involved, Steve Dinham has been involved and Associate Professor Brian Campbell has been involved in delivering keynote speeches through that strategy, which is ongoing.

Prof. Dinham—I want to pick up on the issue of professional learning—just a very quick thumbnail sketch of where it has been. As far as teachers are concerned the options are in-service, formal study and, I suppose, what they do on their own. In-service has waxed and waned depending on funding over the last little while. It has generally been found to be deficient in some areas—it is a one-off, short type course—and what the employers have been moving to is modules and stuff with more depth, and often they have worked with us to provide subjects that articulate into our degrees and so forth.

The second thing is, as far as masters degree study is concerned, it had its heyday in the eighties to nineties to some degree and then fell away. It fell away for two reasons: one was the ageing demographic of teachers and secondly the introduction of fees and charges for postgraduate study for teachers. We saw that drop away considerably. It is very much on the way back, as Barry has mentioned, with the numbers.

Ms BIRD—I suspect as teachers have a HECS debt for their original degree they will not be so negative about the post grad because those who never paid for our original degree resent paying for post grad much more.

Prof. Dinham—That is true. What we are seeing is a different demographic. They tend to be younger, they are quite keen, they are quite focused about where they want to go and it is a different group of people. The other thing that is going to drive professional learning to a large degree in New South Wales is the Institute of Teachers because it has four levels of accreditation: it has the basic graduate and beginning teacher levels, but there is a professional accomplishment and professional leadership level, and those levels for ongoing accreditation are going to require documentation of professional learning. And, as part of that, there will be the approval of higher degree courses by the Institute of Teachers so they can actually do approved courses.

What this all is leading to is a much greater coalition in the provision of teachers' professional learning. It will not just be department in-service or university formal courses. What we will see is courses put together by providers such as employers, professional associations and universities to meet the needs of these people, which will be driven by accreditation. But it also be driven by other things—people are actually wanting to learn and it will be a new generation with a different attitude.

Mr McCann—I think it will be a scaffold which teachers and leaders will tap into according to their needs in the particular situation.

CHAIR—We have not heard from Gwyn. Do you want to make some comment on the proceedings?

Dr Brickell—I think pretty much everything has been covered from my perspective. Certainly the degree structures and the sharing between faculties have been addressed by other people around the table.

CHAIR—Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We really appreciate the opportunity that the university and the participants have afforded us and for giving us a further insight into teacher education. We will contact you if we need any further information and the secretariat will provide you with a proof copy of your evidence which will appear in the parliamentary *Hansard*. Thank you very much.

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

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

Committee adjourned at 12.49 pm