

Ms Janet Holmes
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee on Education and Vocation Training
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2000

Dear Ms Holmes

Thank you for the opportunity to present a submission to the Standing Committee on items of interest to the Western Australian College of Teaching. I apologise for the short delay. The new Western Australian College of Teaching came into being in September 2004 with a small Secretariat of 5. We are currently registering an estimated 40 000 current teachers in 1200 schools throughout Western Australia, so we are a bit short of staff but not willingness to contribute to the education discussion.

I would like to comment on items 7, 9 and 10.

7. Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates (i) – (viii)

The Western Australian College of Teaching (WACOT) is preparing a Standards Professional Practice and Values Statement and processes aligned to the National Standards Framework. The Statements are descriptors of teaching practice indicating that teachers are expected to draw upon a range of resources and strategies to achieve successful learning outcomes for students. The Framework does not specify requirements relating to i, ii, v, vi, vii.

WACOT has a role in:

- Working the higher education authorities in Western Australia to influence the program of study so that quality teaching is the outcome;
- Contributing comment about teacher preparation at the national level to ensure confidence in mutual recognition arrangements.

From its discussions with employer groups, WACOT is aware that the areas outlined in I-vii are priorities for school systems and significant programs and professional development is being undertaken.

WACOT represents teachers across the three employer groups – government, catholic and independent – and is well placed to collect and forward views from the teaching profession as to the preparation of graduates.

9. Investigate the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary training.

The Curriculum Framework underpins teaching practice in Western Australian schools. The Curriculum Framework acknowledges the different learning needs of students based on the phases of learning and teachers are required to implement the teaching and learning principles in order to achieve the overarching outcomes. The Curriculum Framework is enforced through legislation. The Framework recognizes the increasing complexity of content, understanding, skills and knowledge that is included in teaching programs as students enter each phases of learning.

WACOT is aware the schools systems have responded by developing targeted programs e.g. Aboriginal literacy Strategy, ICT in school or focus on particular areas of development e.g. early childhood years. The secondary years of schooling has been net with new structures such as middle schooling and with the introduction of Vocational Education and Training in Schools. Progress has been made in developing inclusive schooling g structures to cater for students with special needs, education support students and students alienated from learning.

10. Examine the construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the workforce.

One of the functions and powers of the new WACOT is to enhance the status of the teaching professional by facilitating the professional growth and development of teachers throughout their careers. Other agencies, such as the school systems, the Curriculum Council and the higher education authorities, are providing programs that not only encourage by require teachers to participate in continuous professional development and improvement.

WACOT regulations relating to the renewal of teacher registration require teachers to demonstrate attendance and/or involvement in professional development of the purposes of professional growth. The regulations outline 15 activities that constitute professional development.

Teachers access many opportunities for ongoing professional development, which could include:

- School systems provide a range of professional development activities related to their strategic plans. For example, the WA Department of Education and Training has for several years provided scholarships for teachers to undertake tertiary qualifications and has recently established the Professional Learning Institute which will map, coordinate and provide advice on professional development offered across all DET schools and agencies.

- Schools regularly provide in-house professional development based on the school development plan deeply connected to the learning needs of their student population. A range of providers, including local teacher expertise, is used.
- Professional associations provide professional development e.g. conferences and workshops for their members. Some school systems provide financial support for these activities or subsidise attendance by teachers.
- Teachers regularly access professional development activities that they identify as relevant to their work. Many times, these courses are paid for by the individual teacher and are offered both in and out of school times.
- The Curriculum Council provides workshops to support administrators and teachers with issues relating to new courses, moderation and assessment requirements.

Funding from Commonwealth government sources has been used to progress initiatives relating to improving teaching and learning e.g., literacy, data collection and curriculum improvement.

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