

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1
Output Group: 1.3

DEST Question No. E435_04

Question:

Figure 13 on page 37 of the *Background data and analysis report* shows that between 1997 and 2002:

- Initial primary teacher education increased from around 6,000 to 8,060
- Initial secondary teacher education *decreased* from 7,000 to 6,717.
- Overall increase (including other areas) from 18,000 to 20,880.

The Minister quotes these figures to claim that there is no problem. But the report makes it clear that the short-term shortages are in secondary education, including in particular maths and science (see pages 74-5).

Does the Department agree with the committee that there is a problem with regard to shortages of secondary teachers, especially in maths and science? How would the Department characterise the problem?

Answer:

Growth in initial teacher education

The issue is not so much in the number of people doing teacher education at university, although a steady source of new teachers is important, so much as the numbers going into (and remaining in) teaching.

For example, the MCEETYA Complementary Research Paper, *Career Paths of People with Teaching Qualifications*, used ABS Transition from Education to Work 2001 data to establish the number of people whose highest level of attainment was a teaching qualification. Of the 367,036 with teaching qualifications, 31.8 per cent were working in industries other than education.

The MCEETYA report found that recruitment difficulties were being experienced in the Secondary teaching specialisations of mathematics, science, technology, with some States and Territories having difficulty filling vacancies in LOTE and industrial arts.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) National Skills Shortage List – February 2003 – confirms these findings by indicating shortages in the Secondary teaching specialisations of Mathematics, Physics/Chemistry and General Science, with recruitment difficulties increasing in the specialisations of LOTE and Technology.