

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

**Outcome:** 1

**Output Group:** 1.3 – Assistance for quality teaching and learning

#### **DEST Question No. E438\_04**

Senator Carr asked on 6 November 2003

#### **Question:**

The committee reports that:

*In terms of school achievement...students in initial teacher education were less likely than their peers in other courses to come from the highest achievement group..and more likely to have been from the low or lowest groups. (Background data and analysis, page 40).*

Invite the officers to comment on this. Is it a problem? What should be done?

If no real comment: why was this raised by the review?

#### **Answer:**

##### *Quality of teacher education students*

The table referred to presents data on achievement levels in reading and mathematics in Year 9 for those students who entered initial teacher training in 1999, 2000 and 2001. It indicates that 14.8% came from the highest achievement group (compared with 27.2% for other university courses), 49.4% came from the high achievement group (compared to 47.2% for other university courses), 26.7% came from the low achievement group (compared with 19.2% for other university courses), and 9.1% came from the lowest achievement group (compared with 6.4% for other university courses).

While ideally we would like to draw all teachers from the “highest” and “high” achievement groups, the reality is that this is not always possible and, in addition, there is a range of factors other than achievement in reading and mathematics in Year 9 that determine teacher quality. These include other academic, personal and experiential criteria relevant to the practice of teaching.

Recent evidence suggests that entrance scores for teacher education courses have risen appreciably over recent years.

The Government recognised the need to attract students into teaching from high achievement groups and initiated the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education to identify strategies which will increase the numbers of talented people who are attracted to teaching as a career, especially in the fields of science, technology and mathematics education, and build a culture of continuous innovation at all levels of schooling in Australia.

The Review Committee, in its final Report, recommended a range of initiatives aimed at attracting and retaining world-class teachers. The 54 Actions suggested by the Committee to achieve this will require a co-operative approach between the Australian and State/Territory governments and other key players with responsibility for teaching and teacher education.