

CHAPTER 7 TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Supply and Demand

Calculations by the Australian Council of Deans and others suggest there will be a significant shortage of teachers by early next century, although the extent of the shortage is a matter of dispute. This and related issues are discussed in Chapter 8.

One of the major factors contributing to the projected shortage is the decline in the number of young people joining the profession. The Australian Council of Deans of Education, in its report on teaching supply and demand, has estimated the gap between demand and supply as reaching 7,000 by the year 2003.¹

Declining Academic Qualifications of New Teachers

Equally disturbing is evidence of a general (but not universal) decline in the academic quality of young people attracted into the teaching profession, as measured by a lowering of the TER scores of teacher education applicants. The Australian Council of Deans drew attention to this in its report.

... the most academically able students generally have been under-represented in undergraduate initial teacher education programs. This is reflected in the low tertiary entrance scores of many teacher education students. In 1989, more than half the commencing students in the Education field of study were concentrated in the lowest quartile of tertiary entrance scores of all school leaver commencing students.²

An earlier study by the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET) also reported concern about declining TER scores,

1 Australian Council of Deans of Education. *Teacher supply and demand to 2003, projections, implications and issues*. Canberra, 1997

2 Ibid, p 14

although it concluded that the decline was not uniform between States and not evident in all education institutions.

There has been growing concern from many quarters that the standards of entrants to teacher training courses throughout Australia, especially as measured by tertiary entrance (TE) scores has been declining in recent years, and that this represents a reduction in potential teacher quality.³

Similar concerns were expressed by the majority of people providing evidence to the Committee. The following excerpts from the evidence indicate the nature of the problem.

Information from the Department of Education Services shows that the minimum tertiary entrance scores for students undertaking Teacher Education courses continues to decline. Tertiary entrance data obtained from the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC) shows that since 1990 the cutoff scores for entrance to Teacher Education courses have dropped by around twenty to twenty five points across all teaching areas and at all universities.⁴

There is evidence that students are being accepted into some teacher education courses with unacceptably low entry scores (eg some regional Queensland Universities accepted scores in 1996 of 19 on a scale of 1 to 25, where twenty-five is the lowest score attainable.⁵

Tertiary Entry Ranks (TER) into teacher education courses are lower despite the fact that there are far fewer places than there used to be - this has to be seen as a reflection of the falling status of teachers and how much they might be expected to earn on completion of their studies.⁶

Teachers considered that the low TER scores for entry to teacher education reflected the low status in which the profession is held. In turn, it reinforced the general perception of teaching as a low status

3 National Board of Employment, Education and Training. *Student Images of Teaching: Factors Affecting Recruitment*. Commissioned Report No 8, Canberra, 1991, p xi

4 Submission no 140, vol 6, p 12 (Department of Education Services, WA)

5 Submission no 269, vol 14, p 130 (National Catholic Education Commission, ACT)

6 Submission no 210, vol 10, pp 20-21 (Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers Inc)

occupation lacking intellectual rigour. Most serious of all, failure to recruit high calibre entrants threatened the quality of schooling in the longer term.

At present students who simply scrape by after gaining Year 12 by the merest margin are able to gain admission to teacher training courses. That these people, academically inferior, are to be the teachers of tomorrow, has horrendous implications for Australian education.⁷

It seems to me that, if we are going to raise the status of teachers, a central thing is that we should seek to draw those who are higher level applicants into the process... That is the most important single thing we can do to raise the quality of the work, which is one of the elements in the status of the profession.⁸

Through interaction with factors such as public perceptions about intellectual demands of the course and of practice in the profession, and perceived implications of selectivity or exclusiveness of entry, tertiary entry levels have a self-reinforcing effect on status of the profession: there is a 'vicious cycle' linking low entrance scores with low status.⁹

Some witnesses disputed the claim that TER scores were declining. Others considered the focus on TER scores was misleading.

There is a persistent belief that teaching attracts low quality applicants. This perception is faulty in two ways. Firstly, it is a conclusion drawn from focussing on the lowest Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) score for entry and ignores the range of students who enter teacher education including some with very high TER scores. Secondly, in recent years, the lowest TER score for entry to education courses has increased significantly and now compares favourably with entry scores for Science, Computer Studies, Arts etc... The persistent statements that education attracts low quality candidates is a myth and sets limits on the attractiveness of teaching for young people who may be considering this as a career option.¹⁰

7 Submission no 76, vol 3, p 67 (Mr Moore, SA)

8 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August 1997, p 131 (Professor Watson, University of New South Wales)

9 Submission no 160, vol 6, p 204 (Board of Teacher Registration, Qld)

10 Submission no 1, vol 1, pp 4-5 (Professor Northfield, Vic)

On the tertiary entrance levels of our students, yes we do go a long way down in terms of cut-off points for entrance, but we go no further than arts or commerce and economics or social work or many others; but again, the one that is spoken about is education. The important thing is not just what the cut-off point is, but the fact that about one-third of our students are in the top 10 per cent of students from high schools. It is that other side that tends not to get talked about. This focus on the cut-off point is a major problem.¹¹

Almost all of those who commented on this issue expressed the view that sole reliance upon TER scores was an unsatisfactory predictor of success as a teacher. This view is reinforced in the general literature with NBEET, for example, commenting in 1991:

It has been suggested... that the stress on academic record, as expressed in tertiary entrance scores, has served more as a public reassurance regarding teacher quality than as an adequate predictor of teacher performance and quality in the classroom.¹²

While not disputing the importance of high academic achievement witnesses considered it was not a sufficient precondition for success. Personal qualities, motivation, organisational ability and flexibility, while difficult to measure objectively, were critical to successful teaching. Witnesses therefore suggested that entry to teacher training should, at a minimum, be based on TER scores **plus** in depth interviews designed to ascertain the applicant's suitability.

Academic tertiary entrance scores should not be the sole, or even major, criterion for selection into pre-service teacher education programs; rather, entry should be based on a range of criteria and procedures (eg portfolios, interviews, references, as well as tertiary entrance scores) focusing on attributes required in the practice of the profession.¹³

It is, however, simplistic to assume that TE scores are a good predictor of success at university, let alone of success in a student's chosen profession. Research conducted at the University of Tasmania indicates, for example, that interview ratings by academic

11 *Transcript of evidence*, Townsville, 11 September 1997, p 282 (James Cook University)

12 *Op cit*, p 18

13 Submission no 160, vol 6, p 204 (Board of Teacher Registration, Qld)

staff are accurate predictors of future practice-teaching performance, whereas TE scores are not at all predictive.¹⁴

A significant proportion of people beginning teacher training do not embark on their teaching careers directly from school. Some enter after completing subject degrees and some come from other jobs. In Tasmania, for example, 40% of students beginning teacher training have a subject degree and 25% are mature aged entrants.¹⁵ In Queensland at least 30% of teaching graduates are mature age.¹⁶ In these cases TER scores are largely irrelevant. Yet there is no suggestion that these people are less successful than young people entering teacher training straight from school. Indeed, the reverse tends to be the case. This is a strong argument for focusing on the recruitment of mature age people to teaching, to complement rather than to replace people recruited straight from school).

Research for MACQT [Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of Teaching] on teacher educators and teacher education has indicated that in the debate over declining entry standards into teacher education, it is often forgotten that prospective entrants come from a variety of backgrounds, apart from school leavers.

The vast majority entering initial teacher education in the secondary area are already graduates, and in some universities are taking out their initial teaching qualification at Masters level. Universities also enrol other professionals into teacher education courses through recognition of prior learning (RPL) provisions.¹⁷

There is much anecdotal evidence that mature - age students who have not entered using a TER do particularly well in their courses and subsequent teaching.¹⁸

14 Submission no 222, vol 10, p 200 (School of Education, University of Tasmania)

15 See Submission no 222, vol 16, p 194 (School of Education, University of Tasmania)

16 *Transcript of evidence*, Brisbane, 10 September 1997, p 206 (Education Queensland)

17 Submission no 288, vol 17, p 24 (Department of Training and Education Coordination, NSW)

18 Submission no 262, vol 13, p 149 (NSW Federation of School Community Organisations)

Reasons for Decline in Number and Quality of New Entrants

The reasons for the decline in the number and academic quality of young people entering the teaching profession are many and varied. They relate to the factors undermining the status of the teaching profession and the morale of teachers. Most have been discussed elsewhere in the Report and will not be repeated here. However, a number of very specific factors also influence young people's decisions to opt for alternative careers. These are:

- a greater range of career options, especially for women
- fears of litigation, especially for men in connection with allegations of paedophilia
- the impact of university fees and charges
- uncertain job prospects.

More career options for women

In the past, when women's career options were relatively restricted, many talented women entered the teaching profession. Now that they have a much wider career choice some of our most able female school leavers are opting for other professions. While this is encouraging for women, it has damaging implications for recruitment into teaching.

Women used to use teaching and nursing as the means to professional life and, if you looked generally at those families in which the first generation was entering higher education, the profession they often entered was teaching. With much more access to higher education, other options are being pursued.¹⁹

Young women, at last freed from some of the deeply entrenched sexism of previous generations about women's roles and careers, are today able to choose to enrol in a much wider range of university courses. As a consequence the proportion of the most talented young women choosing teaching as their career has been reduced.²⁰

19 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 10 October 1997, p 688 (Professor McGaw, Australian College of Education, ACT)

20 Submission no 252, vol 13, p 18 (Australian Education Union, Tas Branch)

Men's fear of litigation

While a broad range of factors has contributed to young people's decisions to opt for careers outside teaching, the fear of litigation, especially in relation to paedophilia and child molestation, does appear to be a factor in deterring young men from entering the profession, especially at the primary level.

It is difficult to disentangle fear of litigation from more general attitudinal issues such as the community perception that primary school teaching is 'women's work', and impossible to obtain objective data on their impact on career decisions. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence suggests that it does influence such decisions.

The impact of university fees and charges

Recent changes to HECS funding are expected to have adverse consequences on teacher recruitment. Students may decide that the additional costs incurred in qualifying may not be adequately compensated by the salaries offered. The introduction of differential HECS fees for university courses will deter some university entrants from undertaking more expensive courses. Enrolments in science courses are expected to fall, for example, and there will be flow on effects into teaching, with fewer science graduates entering the profession. This is a real concern, because mathematics and science teachers are already in short supply. This was a concern raised in a number of submissions.

Present indications are that an acute shortage of teachers may develop by 2000. There is already a shortage of teachers in certain areas e.g. Science and Technics. The current HECS policy does not encourage young people to train in these areas.²¹

Currently a student contemplating a career in science is faced with a higher HECS fee compared to a career based on the arts or humanities. Furthermore, if a science and a humanities graduate both decided to enrol in the same teacher education program, although additional HECS fees would be required they would be of the same magnitude. However, since there is no salary differential based on subjects/methods taught the science teacher who is payed

21 Submission no 154, vol 6, p 170 (Australian Council for Educational Administration)

the same as the humanities teacher is required to pay a higher premium for this career choice.²²

In addition, the move to full fees for some post graduate courses is likely to have a serious impact on the number of qualified teachers upgrading their qualifications. This issue will be discussed later in this Chapter, in relation to teachers' professional development.

Uncertain job prospects

While overall demand for teachers is projected to exceed supply within the next five years the situation is not uniform across States, regions and subject areas. In some jurisdictions and systems there is an oversupply of teachers. In Victoria, which has witnessed large scale school closures and amalgamations, approximately 8,000 teachers lost their jobs between 1992 and 1997.²³ So newly qualified teachers have no guarantee of work. Their prospects of **permanent** appointment are slim. In the Northern Territory, for example, only 20 per cent of commencing staff in 1995 were permanent appointees.²⁴ In Victoria all new staff are now employed on fixed term contracts. This uncertainty is a powerful disincentive to young people's entry to the profession.

Expanding Teacher Recruitment

Any general measures directed to making teaching a more attractive career prospect will improve the status of the teaching profession and the morale of teachers. Such measures will have a direct impact, for example by improving salary and career structures, and an indirect impact, for example by encouraging existing teachers to paint a more positive picture of a teaching career to prospective candidates, rather than dissuading their brightest students from considering it, as is now often the case (See Chapter 4). Such general measures should also assist in reducing the number of teachers leaving the profession. Current separation rates reflect low morale within the profession.

22 Submission no 186, vol 8, p 57 (Science Teachers' Association of Victoria)

23 See submission no 267, vol 14, p 34 (Australian Education Union, Vic Branch)

24 Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs. *National Report on Schooling in Australia*, Canberra, 1995, p 27

In addition to the general measures proposed elsewhere in this Report, specific initiatives are needed to focus on the recruitment of teachers. A number of suggestions - some based on existing models, - was presented to the Committee in evidence.

Recruitment Campaigns

Queensland conducted a very successful teacher recruitment campaign in late 1996. Called 'Out in Front', it was directed at Year 12 school leavers and used a range of approaches, including television advertisements, to attract potential teachers. Videos were made available to schools in which teachers were shown undertaking a variety of tasks in widely different environments.

In 1997 there was a significant increase in applications for teacher education in Queensland (against the national trend) and TER scores increased. The campaign was therefore extended, in the hope that it would have a similar impact on enrolments in 1998.

A more limited campaign in Western Australia, also in late 1996 and conducted by the Deans of Education in conjunction with the Department of Education Services, appears to have been less successful. That campaign focussed on advertisements in the 'West Australian' newspaper. While recruitment was maintained in Western Australia in 1997 there were significant shortfalls in intakes into pre-service secondary education courses in mathematics and science and TER scores fell marginally for most education courses at Curtin University of Technology, Edith Cowan University and Murdoch University.²⁵

The Committee's attention was drawn to the success of a recent British recruitment campaign based on the theme "Nobody Forgets a Good Teacher." This may warrant further consideration for adaptation in the Australian context.

A number of witnesses pointed to the need for a national recruitment campaign. The feasibility of such a campaign is currently being investigated by the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

25 Submission no 140, vol 6, p 9 (Department of Education Services, WA)

The Committee RECOMMENDS a national recruitment campaign designed to attract high quality applicants to the teaching profession, with costs shared between the Commonwealth and all States and Territories.

Witnesses also drew attention to variations in predicted teacher shortages - between States, between primary and secondary schools, in particular subject areas and in rural and remote schools. (See Chapter 8).

Scholarships

A number of scholarships are offered by various State governments to encourage people into the teaching profession (usually, but not exclusively at Year 12 level). Examples brought to the Committee's attention included:

- Western Australia - from 1998 will offer 30 scholarships to high achieving entrants into teacher training, with 10 of these reserved for Aboriginal students
- Queensland - has offered scholarships since 1996 in areas of high need
- Tasmania - offered HECS scholarships and guaranteed employment for mathematics and science teacher education entrants in 1997.

The Committee commends the States on these initiatives. While acknowledging their benefits the Committee notes that, because of the relatively small numbers of scholarships offered, they will not make a major contribution to overcoming projected teacher shortages.

The Committee RECOMMENDS that the Commonwealth Government introduce scholarships for university graduates to undertake post graduate professional qualifications in teaching.

Changes to HECS fees

The Committee RECOMMENDS abolition of differential HECS fees. This will remove the particular disincentives now faced by science graduates planning a career in teaching.

Raising TER scores

Given the concerns in the general community and among teachers themselves about declining TER scores for prospective teachers the Committee acknowledges (despite the caveats mentioned earlier) that raising TER scores would, by sending the message that teaching is a valued career option, assist in enhancing the status of teachers. Acknowledgment of the value of teaching could, in turn, be expected to attract more high achieving students into the profession and thus raise TER scores.

TER scores are a matter for individual institutions. The Committee notes evidence it received that institutions which have raised TER scores have, at the same time, increased demand for the relevant courses. This was the case at the University of New South Wales' graduate level, two-year Master of Teaching program, introduced in 1996 to replace the one year Diploma in Education (and since closed by the University, along with the entire Department of Education). It is also the case for science courses at the universities of New South Wales and Sydney.

Raising the entry point to science-based courses at the Universities of New South Wales and Sydney has raised demand for such courses. **Raising entry standards for teaching is the single biggest factor, which in the short and long term, will improve the quality of Australian teachers.**²⁶

INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

The Current Position

Teacher training takes a variety of forms in Australia. The most common are either a four year teacher training course at university, leading to a Bachelor of Education degree (previously often three years, but now being replaced by four year courses) or a three year arts or science degree followed by a one year Diploma in Education. Some universities are now considering replacing the one year post graduate Diploma

26 Submission no 270, vol 14, pp 142-143 (Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science - New South Wales Division)

course with a two year Bachelor of Education course. In addition, universities accept into their teaching courses applicants from other professions, through recognition of prior learning and credit transfer.

Most evidence to the Committee favoured graduate entry to teacher training, with training following completion of an arts or science degree. For secondary school teachers in particular, this was considered essential in equipping teachers for their subject specialisations.

The presence of people with education degrees without majors in the subject area they are going to teach quite often means that some people are just barely able to manage senior classes. There is a bit of that. Those are part of the things that lower the status of teachers.²⁷

The universities have been encouraging the four-year B. Ed, which means a decision to enter teaching while you are still at school... We would argue... that the introduction of the B.Ed. as an alternative to a first degree plus education training, has led to secondary teachers particularly being embarrassed by the amount of subject content they have in their discipline areas, which is not turning out to be adequate for the task they are called on to perform back in the classroom.²⁸

Conflicting views were presented to the Committee on the costs and benefits of moving to a two year post graduate qualification for teachers holding a first degree. Supporters of a two year qualification pointed to the increasing demands upon teachers and the need for them to be better prepared.

At least a two year professional preparation is required to accommodate the diversity of skills now demanded of teachers. This can be achieved through a variety of models, including double undergraduate degrees and a graduate pre-service preparation of two years.²⁹

Opponents recognised the benefits accruing from an additional year of training but considered it was unrealistic to expect teachers to undergo

27 *Transcript of evidence*, Darwin, 14 October 1997, p 858 (Mr Shorter, NT)

28 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 10 October 1997, p 750 (Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia)

29 Submission no 62, vol 2, p 161 (Victorian Council of Deans of Education)

five years of training and incur substantial HECS debts for the very modest salaries they would earn upon completion of their training.

If you are going to ask these young people to undergo an additional year of training at very high cost, then you are going to have to increase substantially their level of remuneration, particularly in their first year, and from that point onwards.³⁰

We have not given serious consideration to five-year courses. We may have a reservation about that, in the sense that there are certainly costs now associated with HECS fees and so on, in having an extra year of study, which may be a disincentive for people to study for teaching if it is longer and more costly to come into that profession.³¹

At the moment, over 50 per cent of our students have honours degrees. That is four years, sometimes five. They come for a Dip. Ed. and that is six years. If you add another year, that is nearly seven years. The economic rewards and any other rewards - the intrinsic rewards - are not going to be there and you will, I think, drive some of these very able people away from secondary school teaching. So, while for some groups of students two years of education in a university might be appropriate, I would argue strongly that one more year after an honours degree is enough for the students, then it is about time they went out and did some serious teaching and did not keep coming back to the university.³²

Some intending teachers obviously are prepared to make this financial sacrifice. The two year, post graduate Bachelor of Teaching program which was introduced at the University of Tasmania in 1997, for example, was oversubscribed. A post graduate, two year Master of Teaching program introduced at the University of Sydney in 1996 has also attracted a large number of highly qualified applicants, as does the University of Melbourne's two year Bachelor of Teaching degree.

30 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 10 October 1997, p 645 (Australian Secondary Principals' Association)

31 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 10 October 1997, p 714 (Australian Education Union, Vic Branch)

32 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 902 (School of Education, University of Adelaide)

A wide range of views was presented to the Committee on the quality and appropriateness of teacher training now available in Australia and these will be considered in the following section. Some weaknesses of existing programs will be discussed at the start, followed by positive views, including examples of good practice and suggestions for improvement.

The Quality and Appropriateness of Teacher Training - Weaknesses

Many comments on teacher training referred to its poor quality, inappropriateness and inadequacy in preparing teachers for the profession.

... I believe there are fundamental problems with teacher training and state education departments, it is hard to escape the feeling that these organisations need purging. Teachers can be much better prepared for their jobs than they are. They are being let down by their departments and teacher training courses. If teacher training was more appropriate, teachers would be better equipped and therefore less stressed.³³

Similar views are evident in the general literature. A recent survey of New South Wales primary and secondary teachers by Dinham and Scott,³⁴ for example, found that only 38% of respondents thought their teacher training 'adequately prepared' them for teaching. Many considered teacher training courses too theoretical and lecturers 'out of touch' with the demands of modern teaching.

Few teacher education programs concentrate on the daily, practical expectations of teaching. A theoretical background is essential to providing a base. However, it is not sufficient to enable an inexperienced teacher to develop the essential skills that "make" a capable practitioner.³⁵

... I think that, to a certain degree, you are not prepared for what lies ahead in the first year when you come into the teaching profession. University is very theoretical and not as practical as it could be. It

33 Submission no 229, vol 11, pp 91-92 (Ms O'Connor, Vic)

34 Steve Dinham & Catherine Scott. *The Teacher 2000 Project: A Study of Teacher Satisfaction, Motivation and Health*, Sydney, 1996, p 47

35 Submission no 209, vol 10, p 16 (Sydney South West Primary Principals' Forum)

focuses on all of the theories and when you get out there, it is practical. You are not equipped with the skills that you need.³⁶

The most trenchant criticism of teacher training related to its practical component. Witnesses considered practicums were not given sufficient priority or time by universities. They were often (but not always) concentrated towards the end of a teacher training course. For four year education students this sometimes meant they received no practical experience until their third year. For post graduate diploma students it meant waiting until their third term.

The rationale for this was that teachers would then be better prepared. The effect however was that some students, confronted for the first time with the reality of classroom teaching, decided it was not for them and left the course. Had they been exposed to classroom teaching earlier they would have saved both themselves and universities significant time and effort. The training of those who remained could also have been enhanced by reference to greater practical experience.

... the practicum is an important part of a teacher's course and student teachers think it is very important. It is important along with lots of other things. One of the things that makes it important is that it offers a period of time for sustained supervised practice. Small amounts of time do not give that.³⁷

[At the University of Western Sydney]... the only major time spent by the four-year trained students in schools is a 10-week practice period that they are spending now in their third year of those four years. In the remaining three years, they are spending small numbers of isolated days and some where they observe, et cetera. Most of us would agree that what is needed is far more practically oriented experience in schools.³⁸

36 *Transcript of evidence*, Townsville, 11 September 1997, p 356 (Mrs Wright, Qld)

37 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 905 (School of Education, University of South Australia)

38 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August, 1997, p 6 (Sydney South West Primary Principals' Forum)

These concerns are not new. They have been articulated in a number of reports on teacher education over the last ten years.³⁹

Witnesses from university education faculties shared these concerns. They acknowledged that the proportion of teacher training time spent in practicums had declined. (A minimum requirement of 80 days is suggested in the National Standards and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education just released by the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.) The decline is a result of cost constraints within universities rather than a deliberate policy choice.

University education faculties pay school teachers for supervising trainee teachers during their practicums. Payment is made by universities out of their general operating funds. Although the actual costs per student are modest (\$21 per day per student for James Cook University and \$12.45 (secondary) and \$21.20 (primary) per day for students at Murdoch University, for example,) the cost to education departments is significant, at a time of declining resources. The Council of Deans of Education estimated⁴⁰ that payment to supervising teachers absorbed an average of 25% of the budgets of education faculties.

For a number of years now it has been the practice for schools to require payment for supervision of practice teaching students. This has led the teaching institutions themselves to cut back on practice teaching hours because the bill has now become a very significant part of their expenditure. As a result students no longer receive sufficient pre-service teaching experience and the teaching profession is suffering as a result.⁴¹

Even where teachers are paid, it is becoming increasingly difficult to enlist them as supervisors, because of the existing demands upon their time.

39 See, for example, Australian Education Council. *Teacher Education in Australia*, Canberra, 1990. National Board of Employment, Education and Training. *The Shape of Teacher Education: Some Proposals*, Canberra, 1990. Schools Council. *Australia's Teachers: An Agenda for the Next Decade*, Canberra, 1990

40 See *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 885

41 Submission no 259, vol 13, p 121 (Australian College of Physical Education, NSW)

One of the points that you may want to pick up on is the experience we have in trying to ask teachers to be supervisors for our students when they go on prac. We are having more and more difficulty with that. As teachers are finding a lot more paperwork and are working under a lot more pressure, we are finding it a lot more difficult to get people to take on that role.⁴²

I do not think the money is big enough for anybody to take the job on, given the time that it really takes to make [the] money. You do not make money doing it.⁴³

A further difficulty was brought to the Committee's attention in Queensland where recent changes to recruitment practices have placed supervising teachers in an invidious position with respect to the employment of new teachers.

... because the system has changed the teacher who supervises the student now virtually has the say as to whether that person is employed or not. A lot of teachers will not take on that responsibility and give that final mark and final estimate of that student.⁴⁴

A number of witnesses referred to the poor quality of teacher supervision of practicums and of beginning teachers. The following comments, from first year teachers in South Australia, are typical.

... in terms of practicum supervisors, the teachers that supervise you, who are supposedly modelling teaching for you, I have often questioned the criteria for those teachers to become supervising teachers, when I sit with my practicum supervisor who says to me, 'I hate kids. I hate teaching. Why do you want to be a teacher?' What I am thinking is: how did you get to be my supervisor for the next four weeks?⁴⁵

If you are not lucky enough to have a teacher that is going to put their marking to one side and give you half an hour of their time in a rich environment, you really are on your own or you are grabbing

42 *Transcript of evidence*, Townsville, 11 September 1997, p 281 (School of Education, James Cook University)

43 *Transcript of evidence*, Townsville, 11 September 1997, p 375 (School Experience Committee, James Cook University)

44 *Ibid*, p 373

45 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 917 (Mr Cook, SA)

these little bites where you can. That is often overlooked about how teachers interrelate.⁴⁶

Given teachers' reluctance to take on a supervisory role the universities do not have the luxury of choosing the most dedicated and enthusiastic teachers as supervisors. Where they are not, the quality of teaching practice suffers.

With no incentive and a huge amount of extra work for the jobs to be done properly, universities grab any teacher who can be coerced to put their name to a list. With this methodology, aspiring practitioners are often turned off by bad example before ever really experiencing the joys of successful teaching.⁴⁷

Some witnesses considered practicums did not adequately prepare teachers for the 'real' world because they took place in carefully selected schools or classes where behaviour and attitudes were atypical of the broad spectrum they could expect to encounter once appointed.

Often, trainee teachers are given manageable classes so that new problems are not created with difficult classes. Often, their first real experience of dealing with behaviour problems is in their first year of teaching. This creates the need for a very strong support network.⁴⁸

Other specific criticisms of teacher training related to its lack of intellectual rigour and its narrowly focussed content. The former criticism was levelled particularly at four year Bachelor of Education courses.

Particularly at the secondary level, we believe that greater depth in the academic and curricula studies is required. We have some scepticism about the current B. Ed. courses. They are great if you like smorgasbord, if you are looking for something that is more substantial, quite often they fail to deliver.

From my own experience, I have had science graduates of B.Ed. courses who have had to re-enrol at university to do further units in chemistry or physics or biology in order to teach science at the senior

46 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 920 (Mr McGuire, SA)

47 *Transcript of evidence*, Perth, 17 September 1997, p 403 (Mr West, WA)

48 Submission no 208, vol 9, p 155 (Kepnock State High School, Qld)

level. That reflects on the superficiality of the studies that teachers and others have engaged in at the B. Ed. level.⁴⁹

Particular omissions and inadequacies in content referred to by a number of witnesses included knowledge and skill in technology (described as a 'yawning gulf' by one witness⁵⁰), behaviour management, relationships with parents and the broader community and the teaching of literacy.

We believe that inadequate attention is given to the whole question of behaviour management within the pre-service education courses. It certainly is an area that new teachers, whether they be young or mature age, have quite a lot of difficulty with and need a lot of support with when they get into schools.⁵¹

Teacher Education programs consistently lack units on parent participation. ACSSO regards this as a serious omission because we believe that partnerships between parents, students and teachers are vital to the learning of students.⁵²

... there are a lot of very fine young people coming into teaching. Many of them are very well prepared. But the area of literacy, as we have said, is one in particular that we are very concerned about. Generally, from wherever they come, teachers are ill prepared in that area.⁵³

A number of witnesses commented on the failure of pre-service education courses adequately to prepare teachers for life in rural schools. Given that a large number of beginning teachers are sent to rural areas, this is a serious omission.

49 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 990 (Lutheran Church Schools, SA)

50 Mr Volk, Lutheran Church Schools, South Australia. See *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 987

51 *Transcript of evidence*, Darwin, 14 October 1997, p 781 (Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations, NT)

52 Submission no 195, vol 9, p 33 (Australian Council of State School Organisations Inc)

53 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August 1997, p 9 (Sydney South West Primary Principals' Forum)

It seems to me that we probably do not do very much in our courses to prepare people specifically for teaching in smaller country schools. We do have teaching pracs located in country areas, but there is nothing formalised at the university.⁵⁴

The failure to familiarise students with the particular issues facing Aboriginal students was also mentioned by some witnesses.

...our school has problems in the fact that there is a high percentage of Aboriginal students. That is something I was not taught at university. I was not taught anything to do with teaching Aboriginal students, which I think is a must because their learning lifestyles and learning methodologies are totally different to ours and we cannot try to change them because they are not going to change.⁵⁵

Every training institution should have compulsory indigenous studies. We have some teachers going out to communities first year out who have never seen a black face and they have to teach our kids. It is hard for them. It is hard for our kids. They do not get any of that training when they are in college.⁵⁶

One response to current perceived inadequacies in initial teacher education - and especially to its lack of attention to practical teaching and overemphasis on theoretical concepts (in the view of some) was to suggest that teacher education be moved out of universities altogether and conducted in schools in the form of an apprenticeship. This is a long standing debate. The renewed focus on school based training mirrors recent developments elsewhere. In Britain, for example, pre-service training of teachers has become more school-based in recent years, although there is no consensus on the advantages and disadvantages of this new focus and much opposition from higher education institutions.

One important aspect of identifying good teachers would seem to be getting them in front of a class early in their training in a form of apprenticeship. This would require existing teachers to be given time to train new teachers on the job and not in a tertiary institute well removed from real classroom practice. The existing dedicated and aging teachers are best equipped to implement this training, but they must be allowed to do so based on their experience and

54 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 923 (Dr Baker, SA)

55 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 624 (Mr Grigg, SA)

56 *Transcript of evidence*, Darwin, 14 October 1997, p 883 (Mrs Devow, NT)

expertise. These teachers do not want, or need, yet another round of professional development training courses teaching them how academics think teaching should occur.⁵⁷

Others argued that moving teacher education out of universities and into schools would diminish the quality and status of the training and, as a consequence, of the profession more generally.

To consider locating teacher education in anything other than a university or to provide a narrow form of school-based training or apprenticeship would lead to a lowering of status and, consequently, of demand and entry level.

... It is over-simplistic and short-sighted to see teacher preparation as the provision of a set of skills without a theoretical base. Location of teacher education in universities is a way of ensuring that the theoretical base is provided and the research context is maintained.⁵⁸

The AMSC is concerned at the possible shift of significant parts of pre-service teacher education to schools. This will institutionalise existing practice. There is some evidence from England that this can also decrease demand for teacher education courses.

... Accordingly, the AMSC supports teacher education being firmly based in universities for both discipline and educational components. Any move to increase the school-based component of educational studies must be accompanied by an appropriate allocation of resources and not at the expense of discipline studies.⁵⁹

This latter view tends to predominate in the general literature. Hargreaves is particularly critical of moves to base teacher training in schools.

The effect of this [move to school based teacher preparation] is not to enrich collaboration and collegiality but to return teaching to an amateur, deprofessionalised, almost pre-modern craft, where existing skills and knowledge are passed on practically from expert

57 Submission no 94, vol 3, p 172 (Mr Harding, Vic)

58 Submission no 80, vol 3, pp 91-92 (Faculty of Education, Newcastle University)

59 Submission no 149, vol 6, p 110 (Australian Mathematical Sciences Council)

to novice, but where practice can at best only be reproduced, rather than improved.⁶⁰

The Committee agrees with this view. It acknowledges the importance of ensuring that practical teaching skills are firmly embedded in a sound theoretical and research base.

One means of overcoming the current divide between practice and theory would be through adoption of different models of integration between the two. These could include internships for student teachers nearing the end of their training, during which they work almost full time in schools with gradually declining levels of supervision, and a model which combines two days a week at university with three days a week at a school (or variations of these arrangements) over a lengthy period. The latter approach would link theory and practice. It would provide teaching experience as well as the opportunity to inquire and reflect upon it.

Variations of these models are being conducted in many education departments and should help to overcome criticisms of previous approaches to initial teacher education.

Some witnesses were also critical of universities which, they claimed, accorded education departments low status within their institutions. As a result, education faculties were the first to be cut back and the last to receive additional resources.

The recent decision of the University of New South Wales to no longer offer Teacher Education courses is yet another significant factor in the decline in the status of teachers in our society. One of the Australian premier universities has decided that Education is not of sufficient academic standing to suit the profile of their offerings.⁶¹

A number of witnesses drew attention to the low priority placed by universities on teaching quality, as opposed to research output. This had an impact on the quality of university teaching generally and on the quality of teaching in some education faculties. Teachers in some

60 Andy Hargreaves. *The four ages of professionalism and professional learning*. Unicorn, vol 23, no 2, July 1997, p 106

61 Submission no 209, vol 10, p 15 (Sydney South West Primary Principals' Forum)

education faculties, it was claimed, had little contact with schools and no real understanding of what happened there. Thus they were singularly ill equipped to prepare students for life in the classroom. The following excerpts provide an indication of the views expressed.

At the moment, many lecturers have been out of classrooms for decades. There needs to be a requirement for all lecturers to work in a school doing normal teaching duties after an absence of five years.⁶²

Some external commentators have expressed similar concerns. The Schools Council, for example, noted in 1990:

While it is possible for academic staff to keep 'up to date' with the realities and requirements of school life, the Council remains to be convinced that this has occurred.⁶³

The Committee is concerned that where universities do not place sufficient emphasis on teaching within their own institutions, this too has the effect of devaluing teaching skills, with obvious implications for the status of teachers in schools. While some universities are taking steps to promote teaching others have made few efforts in this direction. However, a number of encouraging developments were brought to the Committee's attention and these are discussed in the next section.

University education staff, like school teachers, are an ageing profession. This is one explanation for their perceived remoteness from current classroom practices and conditions. In 1995 more than two thirds of academics in education faculties were over 45 and more than 42% were over 50.⁶⁴ Proportions in each of these categories will have increased in the intervening period. The age profile of university educators has implications also for the recruitment and training of the large number of new teachers who will be required to meet projected teacher shortages within the next few years.

62 Submission no 237, vol 11, p 183 (Dr Whan, NSW)

63 Schools Council. *Australia's Teachers: An Agenda for the Next Decade*, Canberra, 1990, p 88

64 Australian Council of Deans of Education and Australian Teaching Council. *Education Partnerships for Quality Teaching*. Report of the Chalk Circle Dialogue in Teacher Education, 1995, p 7

In the view of some witnesses there were inadequate links between universities and schools, with the result that teacher training courses provided by universities did not fully meet the needs of schools.

Much more consultation needs to take place between the training institution and the educational setting where the practical experiences take place in order for both stakeholders to be satisfied that the requirements of all parties are being met.⁶⁵

Teacher pre-service education does not serve schools well. The universities place insufficient emphasis on practicum components. The universities also place insufficient emphasis on content studies and fundamental pedagogics. Pre-service education has become too independent of school authorities.⁶⁶

Education is a divided profession. In schools teachers just teach, and university academics just research. And when there are inquiries in education, it's usually the academics whose voices are most heard. Certainly teachers voices are not much heard in teacher training courses.⁶⁷

The Quality and Appropriateness of Teacher Training - the Positive View, Including Some Examples of Good Practice

It would be misleading to suggest that the Committee received only negative views on the quality of teacher education. It also received positive feedback and was provided with many examples of good practice.

The following comments are typical of the positive views expressed about the quality and appropriateness of some existing pre-service courses.

... I have been in teacher education for over 30 years... I think inquiries like this tend to concentrate on the difficulties and the problems and do not actually highlight some of the positive features. I think there is a tendency for outsiders to look at the evidence and say, 'Gosh, these people have got real problems', and so on, whereas we would say we have actually been conscientiously trying to improve what we do all over that period. We have got better. The

65 Submission no 274, vol 14, p 191 (Catholic Education Office, TAS)

66 Submission no 272, vol 14, p 159 (Dr Hoffman, WA)

67 Submission no 292, vol 18, p 6 (School of Education, Murdoch University, WA)

students coming in are better. The quality of our graduates is better. The problems are going to be there because it is all part of being a teacher.⁶⁸

There has been a greater concerted approach by teacher educators around Australia to look at things, particularly the role of the practicum in teacher education. I would say that, as a consequence of improving the courses - which, from my view, were very theoretical in past years - the improved quality of the content and experiences that the trainees have now is part of the reason we are getting competent teachers in our schools.⁶⁹

The Committee also heard of examples of good practice focussed on the needs of student teachers in rural areas.

The Isolated Children's Parents Association in our south-west region, based in Roma, has been working to provide homestay, for example, for young teachers in training so they can get experience of living in a small community in the west.⁷⁰

Some university education department staff were at pains to inform the Committee that at their institutions, at least, education departments were not held in the low esteem which some evidence had suggested was the norm. Furthermore, they disputed the claim that universities valued research more highly than teaching.

Universities vary in these issues; but, in my institution we do not, as was noted earlier, value research above teaching. There are lots of positive ways in which one can use one's evaluation on teaching. In fact, teaching is one of the key areas looked at for promotion. You simply cannot get promotion or pass probationary reviews without having your teaching scrutinised very closely.⁷¹

I work at the University of Western Australia, not as an academic. We have made enormous changes in the last five to seven years to

68 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 926 (School of Education, Flinders University, SA)

69 *Transcript of evidence*, Hobart, 9 October 1997, p 509 (Tasmanian Secondary Principals' Association)

70 *Transcript of evidence*, Brisbane, 10 September 1997, p 196 (Education Queensland)

71 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August 1997, p 130 (School of Teacher Education, Charles Sturt University, NSW)

criteria for promotions, so that teaching is enormously important in getting promoted.⁷²

Nor did they agree that the quality of teaching within education departments was as unsatisfactory as some witnesses had indicated.

... people in faculties of education by and large are ex-teachers, and people in other faculties are not, so we would hope that the people working in our faculties were high standard teachers to begin with.⁷³

... our teacher educators coming into schools to supervise or assess the work of student teachers...are required under our act to be registered teachers and they cannot get registration unless they are appropriately qualified...We felt that was a very important provision to make. It was saying that we are all part of the profession and teachers in schools were able to relate more easily. They realised that these people were not only researchers; they had actually completed a teacher education course and knew what it was all about.⁷⁴

Some university witnesses disputed the claim that pre-service teacher training courses lack intellectual rigour. They believed the standard had generally risen.

We are a university formed out of existing CAEs exclusively. The university procedures have ensured a significant increase in the rigour of our programs.... We get very positive reports [from schools]. They are telling us that they have never had teachers as well prepared and they are really excited about what they are getting. So I suspect you are going to get variations across areas.⁷⁵

A number of university witnesses who acknowledged the declining TER scores of their students nevertheless considered that the quality of their graduates was better than ever before - which they saw as a reflection of the high standard of the teacher training courses they offered.

72 *Transcript of evidence*, Perth, 17 September 1997, p 423 (Hollywood Senior High School Council, WA)

73 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August 1997, p 129 (Faculty of Education, University of Western Sydney)

74 *Transcript of evidence*, Brisbane, 10 September 1997, p 258 (Board of Teacher Registration, Qld)

75 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August 1997, p 124 (School of Teacher Education, Charles Sturt University)

As noted, university witnesses acknowledged the validity of complaints about some teacher practicums - which they attributed to lack of adequate resources. They also drew to the Committee's attention many examples of good practice. The following excerpts are examples from a wide range discussed in submissions and at public hearings.

One of the things we have tried to do here, because we are thin on the ground and we have big areas to cover, is really to try to adequately train teachers to be basically the main professional provider of supervision in the school.... this university does conduct supervising teacher workshops, which are really well attended generally. People have found those to be very useful. So I think we are well supported. Our students get at least two visits on every prac as well.⁷⁶

We have had a trial going at the moment where a particular cohort of year 2 trainees went to the same school for a whole day every week for the whole year. So, they became very much a part of that staff, even though they were only there one day a week, but the staff took an interest in them and there was a liaison between the staff and the university lecturer who was responsible for that. We are looking at extending that. That is one initiative to give people more school understanding. Another purpose is that some of these students at the end of the year came to the decision that teaching was not for them.⁷⁷

One of the major concerns raised by critics of current teacher training arrangements was the lack of communication between university education departments and schools in the development and implementation of teacher training programs. As a consequence, it was suggested, such programs often failed to address the concerns of schools or to meet their needs. Many education departments have recognised the importance of close links with schools and are putting in place measures to strengthen existing links and to build new ones.

... it has become increasingly clear that pre-service teacher education is best founded on strong working relationships between university and school based teacher educators. Establishing such partnerships

76 *Transcript of evidence*, Townsville, 11 September 1997, p 378 (School of Education, James Cook University, Qld)

77 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August 1997, p 45 (Catholic Education Office, NSW)

is costly of time and resourcing, and is sometimes marked by tensions. Schools and universities have historically different cultures, and addressing differences in the interest of excellent graduates is a delicate task. It is essential that the differences between institutions are honestly articulated, so that mutually beneficial relationships can be established and maintained, resulting in universities and schools playing complementary roles in pre-service teacher education and in education reform. Effective communication between partners is crucial...⁷⁸

Closer links between tertiary providers and practitioners in the schools need to be further developed, and undergraduates need to spend more time in schools. There are some good initiatives. We are exploring some at the moment with the Australian Catholic University. They are wanting their undergraduates to spend a day a week in our schools and to have that kind of support and mentoring, on a voluntary basis, that I talked about before.⁷⁹

Again, many innovative approaches to improving links between universities and schools were threatened by budget cuts and staff reductions within the universities. Since the most successful projects were often those requiring commitment of significant university staff time, they were particularly vulnerable. At the University of Tasmania, for example, the education department seconded highly motivated teachers to undertake masters degrees in the faculty. They upgraded their qualifications and at the same time kept university staff well informed about what was happening in schools. A major inhibitor to expansion of the scheme was the university's inability to pay teachers' salaries for the period of their secondment.

A similar problem exists in some Victorian universities.

... we tend to recruit teachers mid-career, with experience; and because the route towards higher qualification tends to be through a mid-career teacher undertaking higher degrees, we are attempting to recruit people who have higher salary levels in schools than we can

78 Submission no 138, vol 5, p 168 (School of Education, James Cook University, Qld)

79 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August 1997, pp 44-45 (Catholic Education Office, NSW)

offer for the comparable qualifications in faculties of education. This is a serious recruiting problem for us.⁸⁰

At Macquarie University teacher education is based on a partnership between the student, the curriculum lecturer and the supervising teacher. The coordination of these arrangements (for 60 or 70 students), once the responsibility of six full time lecturers, is now being undertaken by part time lecturers. In these circumstances, it is becoming difficult to sustain.

In South Australia a successful internship program run by Flinders University was abandoned in 1997 through lack of funding.

We also had a program of internship in our school where we took final year students in the bachelor of education courses and actually had them as interns in our schools for six months. They were given credit for that in their courses and we had some commercial support from Apple Computers. Those four young people turned out to be very good teachers. They were all employed during the next year but unfortunately, the program could not go forward - not from our point of view - this year because of lack of funding, lack of supervision from Flinders.⁸¹

One of the most successful examples of close, supportive links between university education departments and schools was the Innovative Links Project, established as part of the National Schools Network with Commonwealth funding through the National Professional Development Program in 1994. This resulted in the establishment of approximately 20 'round tables' all over the country which brought school and university staff together in a supportive partnership and resulted in joint research projects with a schools focus.

The Committee heard many positive comments (and no negative ones) about the Innovative Links Project from schools and universities alike. The following excerpts are typical.

80 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 891 (Professor Bates, Australian Council of Deans of Education, Faculty of Education, Deakin University)

81 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, pp 992-993 (South Australian Independent Schools Board Inc)

The experience of the round tables has been one of an almost incredible improvement in self-esteem of the teachers that have been involved in them, because they have been able to be accepted as peers around the table with university colleagues. For a long time there has been a little bit of a step-ladder there, where we see the university almost guarding all of this abstract knowledge about how to train teachers. When the university colleagues worked with the teacher colleagues, what you had was equal partnerships. You had both sides having a very honest say about what could happen.⁸²

It is the partnership developed with VUT through the innovative links project which has allowed the teachers at the Grange Secondary College the avenue to reflect upon their teaching practice through case writing. This partnership with VUT has helped teachers at the college recognise how valuable their hard work is.... this partnership has been incredibly beneficial to the support and the further development of the school.⁸³

Because we are in a university and I am a teacher educator, I do need to point out to you how important the [Innovative Links] project and similar projects - like the National Schools Network and others that colleagues here this afternoon will be talking about - have been in changing the teacher education program at this university.⁸⁴

The impact on our teachers and our school of being part of the innovative links and also the National Schools Network has just made, over the last four years, the biggest difference we have ever seen in our school, because we have had support from other people, we have been linked to other people who could help us through the universities, through the systems even.⁸⁵

Other very successful collaborative exercises between practising teachers and university education departments have included:

82 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 10 October 1997, p 683 (Victorian Independent Education Union)

83 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 9 October 1997, p 613 (The Grange Secondary College, Vic)

84 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 9 October 1997, p 592 (Department of Education, Victorian University of Technology)

85 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 9 October 1997, p 593 (Ms Cesarec, Vic)

- the National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning (NPQTL), the primary role of which was to develop competency based standards for teachers
- publication of the *National Competency Framework for Beginning Teachers*, which provides a framework for collaboration in initial teacher education
- the development (by the Australian Council of Deans of Education, the Australian Teaching Council and others) of the *National Standards and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education*, the aim of which is to support high standards of teacher education, especially initial teacher education, and to foster partnerships between all those involved in it
- the establishment in 1995 of the Chalk Circle Dialogue to make recommendations on the future of initial teacher education.

The Committee was concerned to learn of the many innovative programs which have closed, or are threatened with closure, as a result of funding cuts. This is particularly the case for initiatives funded through the National Schools Network.

The Committee RECOMMENDS that the Commonwealth Government re-instate funding for the National Schools Network.

The Way Forward

The balance of the evidence provided to the Committee suggests that the quality of pre-service teacher training is very variable. In some cases teachers and students are obviously dissatisfied with the training provided. The Committee also received advice, as noted, about many innovative, high quality, teacher training programs established and run by dedicated and enthusiastic staff. Despite the difficulty of obtaining a comprehensive overview of all the high quality programs available, many of which are not widely publicised, the Committee is convinced that there is widespread support in university education departments for adopting and extending existing examples of good practice.

External reports confirm the variability in quality of initial teacher education. The views of teachers providing input to the Australian

Teaching Council publication *What do teachers think?*,⁸⁶ for example, ranged from 'irrelevant', 'out of touch' and 'not practical enough' to highly positive.

The Committee believes that education departments themselves are aware of deficiencies in some of their programs and are committed to rectifying them, but they are hampered in their efforts by a decrease in resources, the extent of which was brought to the Committee's attention by a number of university witnesses.

The relative funding model has been a disaster for teacher educators for a number of reasons which I will not go into now, but we have been seriously under-funded. Some of the statistics are, for instance, that in seven years our staff-student ratios have gone from 10.84 at Murdoch University to just under 20:1. Our teaching contact loads have gone from a maximum of 260 per year to a minimum of 370 per year.⁸⁷

Given that in the School of Education we are carrying the same teacher-student loads as the teachers are, I can tell you that it is very bad for morale, it is exhausting and it is very difficult to keep doing a high quality job.⁸⁸

If we are serious about enhancing the status of teachers we must ensure that new teachers are adequately prepared for the complex and demanding task ahead of them. High quality, appropriate pre-service training is essential. This is generally acknowledged, but to date nobody has been prepared to commit the necessary resources. Several witnesses claimed that the Commonwealth's relative funding model for higher education has had a disproportionately adverse effect on education departments within universities because of its failure to recognise the additional costs of educating teachers as opposed to, for example, arts graduates. Universities themselves have not been willing to make up the shortfall. Without increased funding it is unlikely that the quality of teacher training will improve. Indeed, it is likely to deteriorate. A

86 Australian Teaching Council. *What do teachers think?*, Sydney, 1995, p 14

87 *Transcript of evidence*, Perth, 17 September 1997, p 428 (School of Education, Murdoch University, WA)

88 *Transcript of evidence*, Townsville, 11 September 1997, p 294 (School of Education, James Cook University, Qld)

number of university witnesses indicated that they were having difficulty in maintaining existing standards in the face of reduced resources.

Given the variable quality in existing teacher training programs the Committee considers it essential that a national body of the type recommended (in Chapter 2) should have responsibility, in collaboration with universities, for accreditation of teacher training courses.

The Committee envisages the accreditation body, in collaboration with the universities, as setting standards for initial entry into teacher training as well as for the courses offered. Such a development would prevent universities from lowering entry standards to unacceptable levels simply to retain their per capita funding. Thus the public could be assured of the quality of trainee teachers, with a consequent enhancement in teacher status. However, if such entry standards were enforced without concomitant moves to improve the attractiveness of teaching as a profession, the result would probably be a further decrease in applications. To achieve the desired result - an increase in numbers of high quality entrants to the profession - both approaches need to be adopted simultaneously.

While the Committee is cognisant of the impact of such a measure on the viability of some small education faculties it considers the need to attract able students into teaching, and to discourage poor performers, should be the paramount consideration.

In order to address the concerns among teachers that some existing pre-service courses do not meet the needs of schools it is essential that classroom teachers are adequately represented on any accreditation board and that they are in a position to influence the content, presentation and organisation of pre-service training and research into teacher education. The role of the accreditation board should include ongoing monitoring and evaluation of courses.

The Committee has recommended, as part of the national body for professional standards, establishment of a national accreditation board to set and apply standards for entry to teacher training and for initial teacher education, with members from university education departments, teachers, employing authorities, unions and teachers'

professional organisations. Standards might be based on the National Standards and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education.

Although no formal accreditation arrangements are in place there are many examples of cooperative ventures between education departments and school teachers, as discussed. Some of these have lapsed because of withdrawal of Commonwealth funding. Given their widespread acceptance in schools and universities and the high quality of their work the Committee would like to see them reinstated on a permanent basis.

A number of witnesses referred to the lack of a research culture and tradition in teaching, as compared with some other professions. This may reflect the history of teacher education in Australia. Until recently it was conducted outside universities in institutions with no research culture and no research training for staff. Witnesses contended that, despite the fact that teacher training is now taking place within universities, old attitudes to research persist, to the detriment of the profession.

What we have is a professional practice that often does not honour research or expect that the practice can be much informed by theoretical research perspectives.⁸⁹

Other witnesses pointed to the inadequacy of funding for research into education. This was estimated by one witness⁹⁰ at 0.15 per cent of total industry expenditure. The Committee acknowledges the inadequacy of current funding for research in education. It supports the establishment of a national development fund for research. The Committee envisages that research funded by such a body would have a collaborative and practical focus and that it would not be conducted solely within universities.

The Committee RECOMMENDS the establishment of a National Teacher Education Network comprising a consortium of innovative teacher education faculties and schools to build upon the work of the National Schools Network and the Innovative Links Project in

89 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 10 October 1997, p 690 (Professor McGaw)

90 Professor Bates, Australian Council of Deans. See *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 886

modelling best practice in the development and delivery of initial and continuing teacher education.

The Committee RECOMMENDS the establishment of a national development fund for research in education.

The establishment of a national course accreditation body to administer guidelines and standards as suggested above would assure the public of the quality of teacher education. This would be a major step in enhancing teachers' status.

The Committee has formed the view, on the basis of evidence submitted during the Inquiry, that there is widespread support among all the major stakeholders for a national accreditation body and for implementation of the *National Standards and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education* developed by the Australian Council of Deans of Education.

The Queensland Board of Teacher Registration and its Professional Education Committee, which advises on acceptable standards for teacher education courses, provide a successful model, as do its Guidelines for Pre-service Teacher Education. The latter have apparently been substantially incorporated into the *National Guidelines*.

The Committee concludes, on the basis of the evidence presented, that there is room for improvement in initial teacher education programs and that this could best be encouraged through better communication between schools and university education faculties. To this end the Committee would like to see more widespread adoption of existing programs of exchange between university education faculty staff and school teaching staff.

In order to encourage experienced teachers to supervise student teachers the Committee considers that supervising teachers should have their supervisory role acknowledged by including it as a criterion for promotion.

TEACHER INDUCTION

Teacher induction covers the period of a beginning teacher's placement in school upon completion of pre-service training. It normally continues for a year, at the end of which the teacher is subject to some form of

assessment to establish his/her suitability for appointment or full registration. Induction arrangements may also be made for experienced teachers returning to teaching after an extended absence.

Arrangements for teacher induction are very diverse, varying according to State/Territory jurisdiction, school system and individual school. While everybody recognises the importance of induction in **theory**, its practical implementation is a different matter. The Committee heard widely different views on existing induction procedures. These ranged from appalling to excellent. In many schools no induction procedures are in place at all.

This section of the Report describes and analyses existing induction practices looking first at some unacceptable arrangements and then at some highly successful ones and concluding with some suggestions for future directions.

Existing Induction Arrangements - the Negatives

It is generally acknowledged by all those involved - university educators, practising teachers, education departments and beginning teachers themselves - that no pre-service training can fully prepare new teachers to perform at their full capacity from their first day at work. This is not a reflection on the quality of new teachers nor on the standard of pre-service training. It is a recognition of the complexity of teaching and of the large number of variables (such as type of school, socio-economic and cultural background of students, school 'ethos', extent of support from colleagues and principal etc) affecting a teacher's performance. This being the case, induction programs have a vital role in ensuring a smooth transition for beginning teachers from university trainees to competent practitioners.

The Schools Council ⁹¹has identified the following desirable elements of successful induction arrangements:

- beginning teachers should, as an *entitlement*, have fewer class responsibilities in their first year

91 The Schools Council. *Australia's Teachers: An Agenda for the Next Decade*, Canberra, 1990, p 89

- one or more experienced teachers should have designated responsibility for beginning teachers
- beginning teachers should receive ongoing training.

Evidence presented to the Committee suggests that many induction arrangements fail to meet these criteria. Indeed, in the case of reduced classroom workload the position appears to be deteriorating as financial pressures in schools increase.

Before the massive cuts to our education system, there was sufficient flexibility at times for first-year teachers to have a lighter teaching load and to have an experienced teacher 'keep an eye' on them. During this decade, the cuts in teacher numbers have seen an increase in class sizes and an increase in the teaching load of senior teachers.

These changes have made it almost impossible to have beginning teachers on less than a full teaching load and more difficult for new teachers to be mentored.⁹²

Induction programs have been adversely affected by the trend away from permanency to temporary or casual employment. Employing authorities and schools are not prepared to provide additional time and resources to assist staff who may then move to another school or out of the teaching force altogether.

Teachers, I am afraid, are really out on their own at a very early stage, often having to move up to the country to take up initial appointments just for one term. They bounce from one school to the next school to the next school. These are schools that unfortunately often simply do not find the time to provide proper support and induction to a teacher who is not likely to be there next term. That is a problem.⁹³

Nor are beginning teachers on short term contracts well placed to benefit from induction programs, where these are offered.

... the beginning teacher needs to feel there is a future for them at the school. Short-term (term by term) contract work is not conducive to

92 Submission no 252, vol 13, p 19 (Australian Education Union, Tas Branch)

93 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 1011 (Australian Education Union, SA Branch)

effective induction programs as the beginner often feels stress to perform immediately and not develop their skills, to take a path of professional least risk and not experiment with their practices.⁹⁴

Far from having their workloads reduced, beginning teachers are sometimes under so much pressure to obtain permanent employment that they often undertake **additional** tasks. This places further stress on new teachers at a time when they are most vulnerable.

At present, the people directly supervising beginning teachers in schools are also those who most benefit from any additional tasks the new teacher agrees to take on. I believe that beginning teachers are also owed a duty of care within our schools and that this spirit is being seriously breached. A beginning teacher is normally on probation for at least a year and passing through this probationary process is dependent on the judgement of the supervisory teacher and panel. The young teacher is not in a position to refuse any additional tasks assigned to him or her under these circumstances.⁹⁵

Most commentators on teacher education and induction stress the importance of a mentor to assist teachers during the induction period. The Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, for example, found that the professional support and sympathetic counselling of an experienced teacher not involved in the formal assessment of the beginning teacher was by far the single most valuable component of induction.⁹⁶

Teachers agreed, some going so far as to say that the success of the entire induction process hinged upon the quality of mentoring provided. Like other aspects of induction however, the role and quality of mentors appears to be very variable. The Committee heard of many examples of enthusiastic and empathetic mentors whose assistance had been critical to the success (and sometimes even to the survival) of beginning teachers. These will be discussed later. It also heard of a number of cases in which mentors were uninterested, unskilled, uncaring and lazy. The effect upon beginning teachers could be devastating.

94 Submission no 186, vol 8, p 61 (Science Teachers' Association of Victoria)

95 Submission no 26, vol 1, pp 117-118 (Ms Byrne, ACT)

96 Australian Teaching Council. *The Induction of Beginning Teachers and the Establishment of Professional Competence*, 1995, p 5

Far too many beginning teachers have no mentors and very little other support. Queensland witnesses suggested that up to 50 per cent of beginning teachers in Queensland were in this position. This is particularly disturbing given that Queensland has one of the better developed and structured induction arrangements.

The figures and the evidence that many graduates who are quite successful in their final year still falter and fail in their beginning year of teaching are fairly well documented. The other evidence that is probably critical here is that something like 50 per cent of those beginning teachers fail to get any formalised support in their schools in their first year.⁹⁷

Large quantitative and small scale qualitative research confirm that the chances of the beginning teacher receiving structured support during induction are about 50:50.⁹⁸

The situation elsewhere is even worse.

The main problem particularly in NSW, is that funded supervised induction does not exist.⁹⁹

Induction programs for newly-trained teachers, at least in **Western Australian** State schools, has **not been established as a practice**.¹⁰⁰

Successful induction becomes more difficult to sustain when - as is increasingly the case - new teachers are sent to the most difficult schools. In these circumstances their efforts are directed to survival rather than reflection upon their teaching practice, especially when they are expected to teach outside their subject areas. Furthermore, such schools tend to have fewer experienced staff in a position to act as mentors, with more demands upon their time than teachers in easy to staff schools.

97 *Transcript of evidence*, Townsville, 11 September 1997, p 370 (School of Education, James Cook University, Qld)

98 Submission no 138, vol 5, p 180 (School of Education, James Cook University, Qld)

99 Submission no 45, vol 2, p 57 (Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University, NSW)

100 Submission no 50, vol 2, p 87 (Classroom Teachers and Lecturers' Committee, SSTUWA, WA)

It is not unusual for 10-15 beginning teachers to be appointed to a school with a high rate of staff turnover (in excess of 30% in some cases). In these schools there are very few experienced teachers to give the induction/support needed for new staff. For the few experienced staff available the added workload is a major source of stress.

It is important to note that in the most difficult schools we have the least experienced teachers and the lowest level of professional support.¹⁰¹

On-school site considerations also leave much to be desired of neophyte teachers. Frequently, they are allocated to subject areas outside their specialist preparation in the secondary sector, and are often relegated to teach in the "left over" classes - the students that experienced teachers have chosen not to teach.¹⁰²

A further problem for many new teachers is that their own backgrounds, still predominantly middle class, Australian born and urban, are very different from those of the majority of students in difficult to staff schools. Dinham and Scott, among others, have commented on the impact of this 'culture shock' upon beginning teachers.

... those entering teaching were predominantly 'middle class' with English speaking backgrounds and were from fairly supportive and stable home backgrounds... Such people were unprepared for the 'culture' shock they experienced on appointment to schools as a result of the questionable practice whereby educational systems appoint their most inexperienced teachers to the most difficult schools, with the 'promise' of a transfer to a more favourable area if such teachers survive this 'baptism by fire'.¹⁰³

The Committee was advised that inadequate induction arrangements for beginning teachers in rural areas contributes to high drop out rates for this group.

101 Submission no 261, vol 13, p 140 (School of Education, Macquarie University, NSW)

102 Submission no 138, vol 5, p 179 (School of Education, James Cook University, Qld)

103 Dr Steve Dinham, Dr Catherine Scott. *The Teacher 2000 Project: A Study of Teacher Satisfaction, Motivation and Health*, Sydney, December 1996, p 47

I have a strong sense that we lose too many teachers through the cracks in those transition years. It is one area where I think we could, without too much effort, provide some substantial support to beginning teachers, for whom it is often their first time away from family and who are struggling with a whole range of emotional and social sorts of issues as well as the curriculum.¹⁰⁴

Drop out rates are a particular concern among new Aboriginal teachers.

Within Darwin and the greater area, we have 60 indigenous teachers. Only five of them are in classrooms, however.... It is hard for any person going out into the schools first year out. Our indigenous teachers do not last in the classroom because it is very difficult to teach an English constructed program to Aboriginal kids.¹⁰⁵

Existing induction procedures are ad hoc. They depend for their success on the support of school principals and staff and on the good will and skill of selected mentors. In general they receive no backing from education bureaucracies and no financial support. Devolution has tended to exacerbate the trend to declining support from a central department. This affects induction programs along with many other aspects of teachers' working lives. Because, in most systems, there is no formal structure for induction, there is no attempt to ensure that it is of adequate quality, or even that it takes place at all.

The Committee was advised that only the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory have centrally organised induction programs. The Northern Territory Government provides approximately \$970 per teacher per year for induction. In 1992, the ACT estimated that it was spending \$8000 per inductee per year,¹⁰⁶ with teachers in their first year spending four days a week in the classroom and one day a week allowed for preparation. During the fifth day they were replaced by relief teachers. Such an arrangement no longer applies, although a systematic induction program is still carried out.

104 *Transcript of evidence*, Townsville, 11 September 1997, p 371 (Dr McNally, James Cook University, Qld)

105 *Transcript of evidence*, Darwin, 14 October 1997, pp 832-833 (Mrs Devow, NT)

106 For details see Submission no 276, vol 15, p 57 (Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs)

From the point of view of the beginning teacher, induction is a lottery. Some new teachers who are lucky enough to be assigned good mentors and supportive principals benefit immensely from their induction experiences. For others the situation is quite different.

Schools often appear to have a deficit approach to induction. They see it as remedying deficiencies in pre-service teacher education. They therefore fail to capitalise on the enthusiasm, energy and new ideas of beginning teachers and so miss an opportunity to update their own skills and understanding.

A further criticism of many existing induction programs is that they are developed and implemented in isolation from university educators. The links developed by beginning teachers with university staff during pre-service are not continued through to the induction year. Established teachers, beginning teachers and university educators alike thus miss a valuable opportunity for integrating educational theory and practice. In particular, the potential for university educators to assist in the preparation of mentors seems rarely to have been realised. The opportunity to link pre-service, induction and continued professional development as part of a seamless process is also weakened.

Existing Induction Arrangements - the Positives

Many of the positive comments on induction in evidence to the Committee related to the high quality of the mentoring provided to some beginning teachers and its benefits.

Every time I go into a different teaching experience, I realise how ill-prepared I am. So the learning is continual. But what was essential for me was the mentor.¹⁰⁷

I would also like to say something about the mentor. I think that is what has helped me the most this year. I have had a lot of support from my principal. I have also had a buddy teacher at school, which I think is very important.¹⁰⁸

107 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 916 (Faculty of Education, University of South Australia)

108 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 916 (Miss Barons, SA)

Some mentoring arrangements succeeded simply because of the skill and experience of the supervising teacher and his/her preparedness to spend time and effort with the beginning teacher. In other cases however schools had well developed, structured induction programs and these tended to provide the most helpful induction experiences because the skills of the mentor were balanced by support from other staff members.

The following example, from South Australia, was one of a number provided to the Committee. These examples indicate that individual schools often have very successful induction arrangements in place but, without broader system support and back up, they are very dependent on the good will and initiative of individual school staff, especially the principal. More system support would facilitate the sharing of information between schools and the sharing of resources, thus reducing the burden on individual schools.

John Pirie Secondary School has a highly structured induction programme. It operates at a number of levels.

Deputy Principal has a responsibility of spending time with new staff to introduce them to the policies and practices of the school.

... All staff also belong to a middle ...school team. These teams of teachers work with a small number of classes. This is an ideal situation for inexperienced teachers as they have access to a number of staff who know the students with whom they are working.

... There is also a "buddy" system which provides informal support. New staff choose a buddy in the first few days; this is a peer and is able to offer day to day support.¹⁰⁹

A number of induction documents have been or are in the process of preparation to assist schools and beginning teachers. They include, for example, 'Welcoming New Teachers', prepared by the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, 'Teacher Induction', an Information Booklet for Principals and Teachers prepared by the Standards Council of the Teaching Profession, Victoria and an Induction Kit prepared by the Australian Teaching Council.

109 Submission no 167, vol 7, p 42 (John Pirie Secondary School, SA)

Structured induction programs are most developed in Queensland, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. In Queensland a provisionally registered teacher (that is, one who has completed pre-service training) is required by the Board of Teacher Registration to complete one year's teaching service before becoming eligible for full registration. At the end of the year the beginning teacher's competence is assessed before full registration is granted. The assessment is normally made by local school staff. However, the Board expects the beginning teacher and the school to adhere to a structured program of professional development and feedback according to guidelines which it has developed. These are not prescriptive but include the following elements:

- a planned and systematic process of professional development, monitoring and feedback including, for example, submission to the Board by the induction team of a professional development/induction plan against which progress is reported during the year
- the beginning teacher's competency is assessed according to the *National Competency Framework for Beginning Teachers*
- separation of the provision of advice (by a mentor) from assessment (by an appraiser) by appointment of two different staff members for these purposes
- assessment to be continuous throughout the year
- a team approach to be adopted, including teacher educators where possible
- a supportive school environment.¹¹⁰

The Board sets out the characteristics normally to be expected in mentors, appraisers and other induction team members. It supports the establishment of professional development networks to link beginning teachers and their mentors and encourages employing authorities to allow adequate time for the induction process.

110 For details see Queensland Board of Teacher Registration. *Towards Full Registration*, 1996

In practice, the Board's induction program often fails to fulfil expectations. In particular, few schools are able to allow the time necessary to implement induction programs in the way envisaged by the Board. Some experienced teachers are reluctant to act as assessors (as noted earlier in this Chapter). Regardless of the guidelines, the single most important factor in successful induction remains the quality of the mentors and this the Board is unable to guarantee.

Nevertheless, the Queensland model is an important development. It acknowledges the importance of teacher induction and sets out the basic elements of a successful program. While the Board is not in a position to enforce its guidelines it has provided a model of good practice to which its schools can aspire and a structured approach to replace the ad hoc one which characterises most induction programs. The model was trialed in three regions of Queensland during 1997 and is currently being evaluated. If successful it will be extended to other Queensland schools.

The Northern Territory Department of Education has developed one of the most comprehensive induction systems of any State or Territory, partly as a response to the very high rate of separation among Northern Territory teachers in their first two years of teaching. The Northern Territory approach includes:

- 4-5 days of in-service training for all beginning teachers, held in a central location
- 2 days in-service training held in an education department regional office
- a one day school based program
- a recall program involving 2 days in a central or regional centre approximately two months into the teaching year
- a peer support group in each individual school to provide both professional and personal support throughout the first year of teaching.

The Northern Territory Government's induction and peer probation program was identified in an APEC study¹¹¹ as 'exemplary' and 'one of the most comprehensive induction processes in Australia.'

The ACT induction program is the best funded in the country. It involves a structured assessment program and evaluation against set criteria. It provides both support and a range of professional development opportunities for beginning teachers.

The Committee also heard of induction programs which involved teacher educators. In the Northern Territory, for example, teachers trained at the University of the Northern Territory received guidance and support from university educators during their first year of teaching. This was valuable for all participants, not least the educators themselves, because of the feedback they received about the appropriateness and usefulness of their pre-service courses for beginning teachers.

The Committee was advised of a number of schemes designed to attract teachers to remote areas by offering them financial and other incentives. Although these were not designed specifically for beginning teachers such teachers were often major beneficiaries because large numbers of new teachers are sent to rural and remote schools. Schemes included the Remote Area Incentive Scheme (RAIS) in Queensland and the Remote Area Teaching Service in Western Australia.

The Committee heard little evidence of cases in which beginning teachers were allowed reduced workloads. Nor was it common for financial assistance to be provided for induction so that, for example, induction team members could be allowed time out from regular classes. Successful induction therefore involved a significant additional workload for experienced teachers. Many were happy to contribute as part of their professional responsibilities but, as their general workloads increase, there must be some doubt about their continued willingness or capacity to contribute in this way. This is particularly the case for the most committed and conscientious teachers - the very people one would hope to encourage into mentoring new teachers. At the very least

111 APEC. *From Students of Teaching to Teachers of Students: Teacher Induction Around the Pacific Rim*, 1997, Appendix 4

therefore the Committee considers that the criteria governing teacher promotion should include a component to recognise successful mentoring. It might also be factored into university credits for teachers upgrading their qualifications.

The Way Forward

On the basis of the evidence presented the Committee has formed the view that teacher induction programs are generally ad hoc and very variable in quality and effectiveness. It applauds the efforts of the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration and of the NT and ACT governments to provide some structure for induction and some guidelines to assist schools and systems in implementing them.

The Committee heard of many examples of good induction practice and would like to see information on these more widely disseminated. While it does not consider any one model of induction should be imposed upon schools it would like to see models developed which incorporate the following characteristics:

- clearer processes and guidelines at the system level
- adequate release time for beginning teachers and supporting teachers
- separation of mentoring and appraiser roles and personnel
- provision for periodic assessment, review and evaluation, with opportunity for feedback by, and to, the new teacher
- links to pre-service education and professional development as part of a continuing process
- national accreditation of induction programs (allowing sufficient flexibility to accommodate the wide variety of schools and circumstances likely to be encountered by beginning teachers)
- successful completion of accredited induction programs (possibly based on meeting the competencies set out in the *National Competency Frameworks for Beginning Teachers*) as a prerequisite for full teacher registration.

The Committee notes teachers' view that the greatest impediment to successful induction is lack of time - both for beginning teachers and for

supervising teachers. This is of course a difficult time in which to recommend reduced workloads for supervising and beginning teachers. There are resourcing implications. However, the costs are likely to be significantly less than the costs of losing qualified teachers to the profession. Given the role of successful induction in increasing beginning teachers' productivity and in retaining them in the teaching service such resourcing as is required should be viewed as an investment rather than a cost.

No figures are available on general retention rates for teachers in Australia (although 1991 figures for New South Wales Government schools showed total separations in the first two years of teaching were 7.4%).¹¹² American statistics suggest an attrition rate of approximately 50% for teachers in the first six years of teaching. The American figures also show retention is highest where structured support is offered to new teachers.

As noted earlier in the Report, casualisation of the teaching force has many detrimental effects on the professionalism of teachers and the quality of teaching. Not least is its impact upon induction of beginning teachers. New teachers denied formal induction on the grounds of their casual status (or on any other grounds) are in a very vulnerable position. They may never reach their full potential as teachers. At best, it will take longer for them to do so than teachers who receive induction assistance upon entry to the profession. At worst, they may fail to develop the skills necessary to enable them to survive in the profession and thus be lost to teaching.

The Committee RECOMMENDS that the proposed national professional teaching standards and registration body include among its responsibilities the development of a suggested structure for induction programs nationally and guidelines to assist schools and government and non-government systems in implementing them.

The Committee expects that, as in Queensland, successful completion of an induction program would be a necessary prerequisite for full teacher registration.

112 Australian Council of Deans of Education. *Teacher supply and demand to 2003: projections, implications and issues*, 1997, p 55

The Committee encourages all school systems to recognise the importance of induction in practical ways, by allowing adequate time for beginning and supervising teachers to participate effectively in structured induction programs. The Committee believes that all school systems should be required to offer beginning teachers access to structured induction programs during their first year of teaching.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The nature of teaching is constantly changing, as documented elsewhere in this Report. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers update their skills and subject knowledge throughout their careers. Failure to do so will undermine both their professionalism and their effectiveness in preparing students for a changing world. Successful professional development, undertaken periodically, will enhance teachers' skills and professionalism and, through shared experiences, assist in reducing the isolation inherent in teaching. Such isolation, if not addressed, can be a powerful contributor to stress and low morale. Successful professional development can, on the contrary, empower and invigorate participants.

The term professional development covers a very wide range of courses, seminars, workshops and other forms of education and training. They can range in length from a one off, one hour lecture to full post graduate courses. Some are accredited and some are not. Some are run from central locations and attended by teachers from many schools in the area. Others are school based and focussed on the staff of an individual school. Some are residential. They are run by university education departments, government education departments, subject and professional associations and, increasingly, by contracted private providers. This diversity has made it difficult to control either the content or the standard of professional development.

The type, quality and availability of professional development is very variable between systems, jurisdictions and schools. Again, professional development is recognised by all concerned as essential, at least in theory, but the reality is quite different.

This section of the Report looks first at the inadequacy of current professional development practices and coverage. The following section looks at the characteristics of high quality professional development, with reference to some examples of good practice brought to the Committee's attention during the Inquiry. The section concludes with a consideration of some general measures to improve the relevance and quality of professional development.

Professional Development - Inadequacies of Current Practice

One of the major criticisms of existing professional development courses and other in-service arrangements brought to the Committee's attention was the lack of input by serving teachers to their content, design or implementation. Consequently teachers often considered they were inappropriate to their needs.

Professional development is important to teachers, but it must be controlled and organised by teachers to make it relevant. Too much current professional development is theoretical and unrelated to the real and immediate needs of the teaching profession.¹¹³

Classroom-relevant content and easily adaptable teaching and instructional methods are infrequently presented in inservice courses.¹¹⁴

Much of the evidence critical of current professional development arrangements referred to their ad hoc and piecemeal nature, to their poor intellectual quality and their lack of a conceptual framework.

The professional development programs that we have provided for a long time in this country are very ad hoc, hit and miss, crammed into busy times of the year, not well thought through, with no official accreditation and no official recognition. They are very much seen as bandaid, stopgap measures and are not really planned to give ongoing development.¹¹⁵

113 Submission no 94, vol 3, p 172 (Mr Harding, Vic)

114 Submission no 233, vol 11, p 133 (Association of Professional Teachers, Vic)

115 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 10 October 1997, p 645 (Australian Secondary Principals' Association)

... the department here in Western Australia currently... offers short term, half-day or day courses at district offices and things of that nature - after school, weekends, in the holidays. But, to me, it is spasmodic and ad hoc ... - and I do not think they have that next level of access to academia, or the specialists in areas of school research and pedagogical research.... To me, that is what primary teachers, and a lot of secondary teachers as well, miss out on - that opportunity to have that high-level type of professional development.¹¹⁶

This situation is not unique to Australia. The following description of a teacher professional development program in America points to similar problems there.

It's everything that a learning environment shouldn't be: radically under-resourced, brief, not sustained, designed for 'one-size-fits-all,' imposed rather than owned, lacking in intellectual coherence, treated as a special add-on event rather than part of a natural process... In short, it's pedagogically naive, a demeaning exercise that often leaves its participants more cynical and no more knowledgeable, skilled, or committed than before.¹¹⁷

Professional development courses were often held outside school hours and were therefore sometimes difficult for teachers to attend. Nevertheless, most made an effort to do so (as discussed in the next section)

Almost three quarters of the teachers [in a 1994 survey] (74.1%) reported undertaking staff development outside work hours in 1996. While 33.6% undertook one day's staff development in their own time, 20.2% undertook between one and two days and 20.5% undertook more than two days.¹¹⁸

In-service training in school hours, for which teachers were allowed release time or replacement staff most commonly took the form of one-stop workshops. These were generally considered by teachers to be the least effective form of in-service training, especially where there was no

116 *Transcript of evidence*, Perth, 17 September 1997, pp 391-392 (State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia)

117 National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, New York, 1996, p 42

118 Submission no 282, vol 16, p 90 (Australian Education Union, Vic Branch)

follow up, evaluation, time to put in place some of the strategies discussed or to discuss or modify them with colleagues.

Very few resources were allocated by employers to professional development. This limited the opportunities for teacher release and, therefore, the type and duration of the courses which could be offered. (Commonwealth funding through the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) had overcome many of these problems for the duration of that Program, as discussed later in this Chapter). Government cuts to funding for professional development have meant that, where it continues, its costs are increasingly borne by participating schools and by teachers themselves.

The extent of the cuts to professional development funding, at least in one system, was apparent from the evidence of the Sydney South West Primary Principals' Forum.

From our own point of view as practising teachers we are concerned about the erosion of training and development funds. As an example of that, again drawing on my own school, in 1996 my school grant included an indicative allocation for training and development of the teachers of \$14,000. This year that was reduced to \$1,750. The school has subsequently spent \$18,000, so the shortfall of \$16,000 or \$17,000 has been found in the school budget at the expense of other areas of the curriculum.¹¹⁹

Professional development is yet another area adversely affected by devolution and the consequent diminution in levels of central department support. Professional development is becoming increasingly the responsibility of individual schools, which have neither the resources nor the flexibility to organise regular, well structured professional development, even if they have an interest in doing so. The rationale for devolving this responsibility to schools is said to be so that they can then have greater control over its content and organisation.

Some commentators support a school based approach. Hargreaves is one of them, although he also acknowledges that there is a role for course based professional development.

119 *Transcript of evidence, Sydney, 29 August 1997, p 5 (Sydney South West Primary Principals' Forum)*

Much of the best professional learning in teaching is embedded in what teachers do in their own schools and classrooms on a day-to-day basis. Professional learning resources are in this respect often best allocated not to courses, workshops and speakers away from where teachers do their teaching, but for teachers to learn from and work with their own colleagues, and sometimes from outside facilitators, in sharing ideas, planning together, being a mentor for a colleague, team teaching, undertaking action research and so on. Professional learning is least effective when it is reduced to paper chases for certificates of course completion.¹²⁰

Unfortunately in-service education divisions are disappearing from education departments, and with them many long term, coherent, structured programs for professional development. With each school increasingly responsible for its own professional development the trend to piecemeal, ad hoc approaches - which teachers have identified as the greatest weakness of existing provision - is intensified. Competition between schools has also undermined collaborative approaches to professional development between staff at neighbouring schools.

Where principals and staff place a high priority on teachers' professional development, other programs must be cut to fund them.

... the professional development budget for this year... is reduced by 90 per cent. If people actually adhere to that - most schools recognise that professional development is the lifeblood of schools and the lifeblood certainly of keeping staff going, moving and generating ideas - that budget has to come from somewhere else, but where does it come from? We take it away from some of our other learning programs.¹²¹

Because of the difficulties referred to above some teachers choose not to take up professional development opportunities, even where these are available. The Committee heard different views on whether teachers should be compelled to participate in professional development where this was offered, or whether such compulsion would in fact undermine

120 Andy Hargreaves. *The four ages of professionalism and professional learning*. Unicorn, vol 23, no 2, July 1997, pp 99-100

121 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August 1997, p 12 (Sydney South West Primary Principals' Forum)

teacher professionalism rather than enhancing it. The Tasmanian Primary Principals' Association held the latter view.

Once, teachers felt a professional responsibility to pursue self-education so that their professional competence could be maintained. This sense of personal responsibility was self-driven. A recent salary award decision in Tasmania carried with it a requirement that teachers attend school sites for an additional five days per year for compulsory professional development. ... The potential effect of this compulsion is to cause irretrievable damage to the professional attitudes of teachers, and to cause teachers to withdraw that element of good will which has been unstinting in its regard for the needs of students.¹²²

Those who favoured compulsory professional development suggested it should be a requirement for continued registration of practising teachers. This view is shared by the Committee. It is a recognition of the fact that professional status incurs responsibilities as well as rewards.

There are strong arguments for the concept of ongoing professional development as a compulsory aspect of continued accreditation. While such an approach has financial implications, it has been accepted by other professions and is of particular relevance to teaching because of the continually changing and increasing demands on teachers.¹²³

More usually, teachers have few opportunities to undertake professional development. This is particularly the case for teachers in rural schools.

The 1994 KTAV [Kindergarten Teachers' Association of Victoria] survey reported that 15% of teachers reported no access to professional development and 73% reported as little as one day per year not exceeding five days and often undertaken in teachers' own time.¹²⁴

Let us take the example of a teacher in the Victorian country. The same applies to the country areas of any state. Regrettably, most of the very short professional development programs that are run are run in capital cities. For the teachers at the school where I am

122 Submission no 114, vol 4, p 143 (Tasmanian Primary Principals' Association)

123 Submission no 80, vol 3, p 93 (Faculty of Education, University of Newcastle, NSW)

124 Submission no 282, vol 16, p 90 (Australian Education Union, Vic Branch)

principal, which is some 250 kilometres out, they have...to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning and... drive down to where they are going...participate in this particular program which runs for the day, and then spend another 3^{1/2} to 4 hours on the road to get back home that night.¹²⁵

Moves to full fee paying for graduate course work programs are expected to greatly reduce the number of teachers seeking to upgrade their skills. This was an issue referred to repeatedly by both serving teachers and university educators in submissions and at public hearings.

Recent reductions in the funding available for professional development has contributed to a lowering of teacher morale. The removal of funding for coursework MAs, for example, demonstrated to teachers that such individual efforts at professional development are no longer valued or desired by employing authorities.¹²⁶

As a result of 1996 Budget decisions, masters degrees by coursework will, from 1998, attract full fees. This will lead to a significant restriction of professional development opportunities for teachers. Since teaching is a relatively low-paid profession and the attainment of a higher degree does not routinely lead to an increase in salary, it is very likely that fees will act as a disincentive to teachers contemplating enrolment in post graduate coursework degrees.¹²⁷

Quality Professional Development

The Committee received some very positive views on professional development. It is quite clear from these that teachers recognise the importance of professional development and that most seize the opportunities available for participation, despite the sometimes significant financial costs and time commitments involved.

125 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 10 October 1997, p 647 (Australian Secondary Principals' Association, Vic)

126 Submission no 261, vol 13, p 143 (School of Education, Macquarie University, NSW)

127 Submission no 80, vol 3, p 93 (Faculty of Education, University of Newcastle, NSW)

At our summer school program that was funded by the previous government 16 professional development schools were oversubscribed by 500 per cent every time we advertised them.¹²⁸

Teachers have one of the highest rates of participation in courses to upgrade their qualifications, despite the fact that such qualifications are rarely recognised in teacher promotion procedures, attract no additional salary and are often undertaken without any employer support.

In... 1996 there were... about 20,000 teachers involved in graduate coursework programs around Australia in an industry that provides no incentive in terms of salaries for people pursuing higher qualifications. These same people now are going to have to pay the equivalent of \$10,000 a year to pursue a full-time... graduate coursework program. They will simply not do it.

And yet, that is the very platform of continuing professional development that is fundamental to a rigorous professional development context for Australia's teachers.¹²⁹

The Committee heard many examples of good practice in teachers' professional development. The examples referred to here are typical of many discussed in submissions and public hearings.

One of the most interesting examples was brought to the Committee's attention by the Country Education Project (Inc) in Victoria.¹³⁰ The Project used funds from the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) to develop and trial a model of high quality professional development for teachers in isolated rural schools. Trials were held in rural clusters of schools in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia in 1995 and 1996. Called the Rural Professional Education Program, the trials linked university education departments and schools and incorporated several novel features.

Pre-service teachers undertook their practicals in the cluster schools (which were government and non-government, primary and secondary)

128 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August 1997, p 33 (New South Wales Federation of School Community Organisations)

129 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 880 (Australian Council of Deans of Education)

130 See submission no 106, vol 4, pp 30-32 for details

under supervision. They lived in rural centres, sometimes in accommodation provided by parents. This gave the students an insight into life in rural schools and communities. They were provided with a range of opportunities including replacing a class teacher, operating as casual relief teachers and as members of teaching teams.

The teachers they replaced used their release from the classroom to participate in professional education courses held locally. This was an opportunity often denied to rural teachers because of the time and costs involved in travelling long distances, accommodation at regional centres etc. An important aspect of the professional development program was the involvement of parents and the broader community in a number of sessions. The Committee commends the CEP on this initiative, which it considers has the potential for wider adoption.

Some of the most innovative professional development work recently undertaken in Australia has been conducted as part of the National Schools Network (NSN) program. It has brought together university educators and teachers at in depth, week long work shops focussing on action research and case writing as agents of professional development, thus bringing together theory and practice in teaching. The NSN approach has recognised that much of teachers' professional learning occurs within the work place and has sought to enhance collegial, collaborative approaches to professional development. This is different from most traditional forms of professional development.

It seems that teachers learn best in collegial contexts and these findings challenge the type of traditional one-off 'in-service' programs delivered by 'experts' that are typically available to most Australian teachers.¹³¹

In Queensland the Board of Teacher Registration sponsors a professional development consortium in which all major stakeholders are represented. The consortium publicises professional development initiatives, seeks teachers' views on programs, undertakes research on professional development issues and is currently examining the options for accrediting professional development.

131 Submission no 280, vol 15, p 178 (National Schools Network)

In the Northern Territory the education department has recently granted release time for primary school teachers to participate in professional development. The Northern Territory Joint Council of Professional Teachers Associations has provided some funding for professional development for teachers from remote areas to discuss issues which they have identified as of concern. These are very small scale but valuable initiatives which could be expanded and replicated elsewhere.

Professional development of teachers has traditionally been a State government responsibility. However, in 1993 the Commonwealth established the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) in recognition of the need for greater resourcing of this area and of a more consistent approach to professional development across the country.

The NPDP allocated \$60 million over three years to enhance professional development for teaching staff in all Australian schools. Funds were used for a wide range of projects including some designed to promote partnerships between school teachers, university educators and education authorities and some to encourage teaching organisations to take a higher profile in promoting the professional development of teachers. An important focus of the NPDP was to encourage teachers to play a central role in determining their own professional development needs.

The Committee was impressed by the extent of the support for the NPDP as illustrated in evidence from a very wide range of organisations and individuals. It received no adverse comment on the Program from any witness or any submission. The following excerpts are typical of the views expressed.

There were some wonderful programs done by the NPDP, and I think that all the stakeholders who were involved in that would like to see it continue.¹³²

One of the major disappointments for teachers in Victoria was the ending of the national professional development program, which had actually done an awful lot to lift people's spirits in relation to the governments acknowledging that professional development, in a time of massive change, is a key element of their working lives. I

132 *Transcript of evidence*, Sydney, 29 August 1997, p 60 (New South Wales Federation of School Community Organisations)

think that the cutting of that - and virtually there is no replacement of it - has again sent that message to teachers: what is the value of professional development?¹³³

The NPDP was an extraordinarily successful program in South Australia. We were the only state to negotiate credit through the universities for teacher participation in the program... and about 6,000 teachers took that up.¹³⁴

The Way Forward

On the basis of the evidence presented the Committee has formed the view that the quality and appropriateness of professional development for teachers is very variable. Much of it appears to be ineffective. On the other hand, some very creative, even inspiring professional development initiatives were brought to the Committee's attention. In particular, those funded through the NPDP and the NSN were very highly regarded by all those involved in them.

The Committee RECOMMENDS that the Commonwealth Government reinstate the National Professional Development Program.

On the basis of the evidence it received the Committee believes that successful professional development programs are likely to incorporate a number of the following features:

- teachers have significant input to all aspects of the program
- each component is part of a well structured, long term, comprehensive program
- programs link university education departments, teachers and (where appropriate) other interested parties including parents, community members and non teaching school staff
- programs include evaluation, feedback, follow up and modification as appropriate

133 *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 10 October 1997, p 714 (Australian Education Union, Vic Branch)

134 *Transcript of evidence*, Adelaide, 16 October 1997, p 963 (Department of Education and Children's Services, SA)

- the costs of professional development are shared between governments (Commonwealth and State) schools and participants
- courses are accredited where feasible, and/or otherwise recognised in professional teaching career structures
- strong links are established between pre-service, induction and continuing professional development
- courses meet national standards.

The Committee would like to see professional development providers and courses accredited to ensure national minimum standards are established and adhered to. Teachers should play a major role in this process.

The Committee RECOMMENDS that the proposed national professional teaching standards and registration body include among its responsibilities the accreditation of professional development providers and courses.

The Committee believes that, because of the great changes facing schools and teachers, teachers should undertake professional development throughout their working lives and that they should be supported in this by employers and by individual schools through, for example, the employment of relief staff to replace them and the provision of paid sabbatical leave etc. The Committee recognises the extra burden which will be imposed on teachers through a requirement for them to participate in professional development but believes that, if it is relevant and of a high standard, teachers will be generally supportive of such a requirement. Teachers should be afforded flexibility and choice in the content, timing and organisation of the courses they attend.

The Committee RECOMMENDS that, in line with its acknowledgment that teaching is a profession, teachers' participation in professional development be a prerequisite for their continued registration, or for re-registration.