

2 August 2000

Mr John Carter
Secretary, Senate Committee
Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Carter

Submission from the ACE to the Inquiry into States Grants Bill 2000

Thank you for your invitation to lodge a submission to this important inquiry. An overview of the outcomes of recent research conducted by the Australian College of Education (ACE) on the resourcing of schools, together with two major publications are enclosed for consideration by the Senate Committee.

The College is a national peak body whose mission is to become the arbiter of quality in Australian education. One of our greatest strengths is our diverse membership, which encompasses encompasses educators from all sectors, levels and settings in education. We pride ourselves on the extent to which our 'honest broker' role of canvassing, balancing and 'value-adding' professional expertise is accepted in the educational and wider community. For example, we are currently engaged in research on four issues of national significance, namely, *school resourcing*, *professional teaching standards*, *Indigenous education* and *quality teaching*.

The resourcing of schools is the focus of our inaugural College Year Book, published in May 2000 (see copy enclosed). Edited by Professor Peter Karmel, this resource contains 12 papers by 19 acknowledged experts in the field. The main purpose of this publication entitled *School Resourcing: Models and practices in changing times* is to generate informed debate and collective action.

On 16 June 2000, the College organised a national symposium designed to identify formal responses to the issues raised in the Year Book on school resourcing. A range of experts was invited to participate — not only educational administrators, researchers and school principals, but also economists, health professionals and community representatives. A major outcome of that symposium is a collection of 12 papers entitled *School Resourcing: Towards purposes, analysis and effective strategies*, published in our journal *Unicorn* Vol 26, No 2, July 2000 (see copy enclosed).

In order to summarise some of the key outcomes to emerge from the College's research on the issue of school resourcing, the following dot-point summary has been prepared for consideration by Senate Committee members:

- education is regarded generally by the profession as an individual right and a public good;
- over time, a broad range of purposes for school education has been defined (e.g. personal, social, vocational etc);
- while a broad range of national goals for schooling has been defined (e.g. the Adelaide Declaration contains 18 goals) there has been little or no attempt to prioritise these;
- access, equity, social justice and equality of opportunity remain key issues for school education;
- there is a need to look beyond the total of resources available for school education to the ways in which the resources are organised and managed to produce school outcomes;
- there is increasing recognition of the value in developing rigorous 'specific-purpose' proposals and/or garnering support to build on projects that have been shown to improve student outcomes;
- there is also the question of the ways in which resources are used within schools in relation to the goals of schooling; and
- a number of groups within education have advocated the need for a collaborative approach by the States and the Commonwealth, with input from other interests, to review models and practices for school resourcing (e.g. to avoid policy changes on funding that tend to occur with changes in government).

As you will no doubt be aware, the College has extensive professional expertise at its disposal on the issue of school resourcing through members of Council, Executive, Medal Recipients and Fellows. Should you wish to access this expertise with a view to gaining further information and advice, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Jim Cumming
Executive Director

Enc

1. *School Resourcing: Models and practices in changing times*, College Year Book, May 2000
2. *School Resourcing: Towards purposes, analysis and effective strategies*, College Journal, July 2000.