



Anna Bligh MP



Queensland  
Government

Minister for Education and  
Minister for the Arts

15 APR 2005

Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Education and  
Vocational Training  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Hartsuyker

Thank you for your letter received on 21 February 2005 concerning the national inquiry into the quality and adequacy of teacher training courses in Australia to be conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training. I sincerely apologise for the delay in replying to you.

I am pleased to present the enclosed submission and related documents from the Queensland Government and to indicate our ongoing interest in participating with the Australian Government in the future phases of the inquiry, particularly the public hearings foreshadowed.

For further information, I invite you to contact Mr Gary Barnes, Assistant Director-General, Office of Strategic Human Resources and Learning, Queensland Department of Education and the Arts by email at [gary.barnes@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:gary.barnes@qed.qld.gov.au) or on telephone (07) 3237 0604.

Yours sincerely

**Anna Bligh MP**  
Minister for Education and  
Minister for the Arts

Ref: 05/29204

Encs

*Queensland State Education – 2010*  
*Education and Training Reforms for the Future – a White Paper*  
*The Review of the Powers and Functions of the Board of Teacher Registration*

Floor 22 Education House  
30 Mary Street Brisbane 4000  
PO Box 15033 City East  
Queensland 4002 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3237 1000  
Facsimile +61 7 3229 5335  
Email [educationandarts@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:educationandarts@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

**House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training**

**National Inquiry into Teacher Education  
Response to Terms of Reference**

**Submission from Queensland Government**

**April 2005**

## INTRODUCTION

The Queensland Government welcomes the opportunity to respond to the terms of reference issued by the Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training. In general terms, the Queensland Government views the inquiry as an opportunity for collaboration between the Australian Government and jurisdictions to ensure that policy and funding of faculties and schools of education and their practices around recruitment and course offerings align with the requirements of education employers and take account of workforce patterns in the education sector.

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Education and the Arts, has responded to previous reviews examining pre-service teacher education conducted by the Australian Government. There is a level of concern at the lack of progress in implementing actions already identified in previous reviews, such as the fifty-four actions articulated in *Agenda for Action: Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future* (October, 2003). Accordingly there is further concern at the commitment of additional resources to re-examine areas previously reviewed rather than progressing action plans already endorsed.

The supply of quality teachers is an area of high interest to the Queensland Government. While the supply/demand equation is broadly in balance, Queensland, along with most other states and territories, experiences some challenges in recruiting to fill vacancies in some specialist areas and some geographic locations. Two factors that need to be taken into account when addressing issues related to the teaching workforce for Queensland are:

- the highly decentralised nature of the Queensland population and its spread in a large number of rural and remote communities; and
- the demographic trends indicating continued net population growth for the state and the resultant demand for school infrastructure.

The Queensland Government would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and refer the Committee to the recent, significant and related work<sup>1</sup> commissioned by the Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).<sup>1</sup> Through the Taskforce, States and Territories have collaborated to identify and examine issues related to the current and future needs of students and implications for the teaching workforce and the preparation of teachers.

The Taskforce has developed the *National Framework for the Professional Standards for Teaching* (endorsed by MCEETYA in 2003) and has gained the agreement of jurisdictions to progress national consistency by using the framework to:

- align teacher registration requirements and procedures;
- communicate pre-service education requirements to teacher education providers; and
- align employment practices.

This body of work is highly relevant to the issues being examined in this Inquiry.

It is our hope that the outcomes of this inquiry will complement the education and training reforms contained within the Queensland Government's Smart State policy framework, and strengthen the quality of teacher education programs and practices

---

<sup>1</sup>There is a significant amount of relevant work commissioned by the Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce of MCEETYA. These reports are indicated by \* in the list of references at the end of this submission.

for Queensland and indeed, the whole country. The Queensland Government looks forward to participating fully with the Commonwealth and teacher education providers again in a rigorous and transparent examination of these critical matters.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Queensland Government has a significant program of reform to transform Queensland into a 'Smart State'. Education is a key element in the Smart State agenda. Thus, Queensland is currently implementing the most significant program of education and training reform in the State's history. This program comprises the following essential elements:

- the introduction of a full-time preparatory year from 2007;
- the raising of the school leaving age from 15 years to 16 or 17 years such that all young people in Queensland will complete 12 years of schooling or equivalent;
- a significant investment in information and communications technologies in schools;
- pedagogy to transform teaching, enhance student learning outcomes, and help prepare young people for the world-of-work and successful participation in society more broadly;
- the development of pathways through post-compulsory years to further education, training and work; and,
- a commitment to the provision of lifelong education and training opportunities for all.

In addition, in 2004 the Queensland Government commissioned a review of teacher registration requirements within its legislated area of responsibility to examine and strengthen professional standards in the teaching workforce and enhance the status of the teaching profession. The *Review of the Powers and Functions of the Board of Teacher Registration* (October, 2004) detailed recommendations including:

- new teacher registration requirements based on a two-tier articulation of professional standards for provisional and full registration;
- new provisions for renewal of registration centred on requirements for continued professional learning;
- the introduction of a *Returning to teach* program; and
- the reconstitution of the registration authority as the *Queensland College of Teachers*.

The Queensland Government is currently implementing a range of strategies arising from the review to improve the quality of graduate teachers for the Queensland teaching workforce, and is supportive of working with the Australian Government on improvements to teacher education to support its reform agenda.

## **GENERAL COMMENT**

As previously stated, the Queensland Government views the inquiry as an opportunity for collaboration between the Australian Government and jurisdictions to ensure that policy and funding of faculties and schools of education and their practices around recruitment and course offerings align with the requirements of education employers and take account of workforce patterns in the education sector.

The term 'pre-service teacher education' is preferred over the term 'teacher training' to more accurately reflect the complexities of contemporary teaching and its relevance to success in an information economy and knowledge society.

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS

### Terms of Reference 1 – 3:

- **Criteria for selecting students for teacher education courses**
- **Attraction of high quality students, including those from diverse backgrounds and experience**
- **Attrition rates from courses**

The inquiry would benefit from the analysis of the relationship between teacher education places and their allocation to specific courses and supply and demand trends and realities. The current system relies on tertiary entrance scores to fill quotas in courses determined chiefly by student preferences. The Australian Government publication, *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future* (2003), commented on the desirability of taking labour market needs into consideration in determining university places. The inquiry would benefit from further analysis of this work and following up on reported action:

'... the Committee welcomes the decision of State and Territory Ministers to work with the Australian Government in developing the proposed Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS), under which universities will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Australian Government specifying both the number of places and the discipline mix, in part based on labour market needs'.<sup>2</sup>

Further exploration of the following would also assist in determining appropriate processes for teacher selection and retaining undergraduate teachers:

- additional criteria for selecting students for courses to improve suitability matching and decrease attrition rates;
- more flexible pathways to attract a broader range of applicants bringing diverse backgrounds and experiences to the profession; and
- agreement on minimum levels of academic ability for acceptance into courses across universities rather than simply filling quotas.

These matters were identified as being relevant in the *Review of the Powers and Functions of the Board of Teacher Registration* and are also discussed in some detail in the AESOC endorsed *Pre-service Teacher Education in Australia*.

### **Term of Reference 5: Educational philosophy underpinning teacher training courses (including teaching methods used, course structure and materials, and methods for assessment and evaluation) and assess the extent to which it is informed by research**

The Queensland Government contends that a central issue for examination is the quality of learning experiences within programs – both the theoretical and professional experience components of courses. This demands more purposeful integration between these elements underpinned by more vigorous partnerships that highly value:

- the place of theory and its research base in the development of reflective practitioners and their capacity to deal with ongoing change; and
- a realistic and positive view of teachers' work in schools.

---

<sup>2</sup> Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Technology, *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future – Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics, Main Report*, (2003), p. 95

This integration and connectedness needs to underpin the structuring of courses and their components, such as units of study and their sequencing and the shape and support of the professional experience and/or internship.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Term of Reference 6: Interactions and relationships between teacher training courses and other university faculty disciplines**

The Queensland Government supports the position that updated knowledge of content as well as pedagogy in teacher education programs is critical to quality learning in schools.

To achieve the best convergence of current content expertise along with expertise in pedagogy, it is essential that strong and ongoing collaboration occur between Schools and Faculties of Education and other university faculties. An example of such effective collaboration was facilitated by Education Queensland in bringing Deans of Education and Deans of Science together to develop short courses under the banner of the state's Spotlight on Science initiative. This collaboration needs to be an integral part of designing and delivering pre-service programs.

The recent review of Queensland teacher registration requirements also endorses this theme:

Teacher registrants need to have command of both teaching expertise per se and of particular subject areas. This needs to be incorporated in both pre-service teacher education programs and in in-service professional learning when new curriculum is introduced or when a subject undergoes significant revision.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Term of Reference 7: Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to ...**

The list of outcomes statements outlined under this Term of Reference provides for both generic and specialist skills without an overarching framework. The list of outcomes would benefit from a more coherent framework that recognises both content and pedagogy-related attributes.

The Queensland Government has supported the articulation of explicit and robust professional standards to underpin registration processes in Queensland for admission to and continuing practice in the teaching profession<sup>5</sup> – both state and non-state. Further, these standards will articulate closely with the *National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching* developed by the Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce of MCEETYA.

The Queensland Government recommends that issues i) – viii) in this Term of Reference be considered in this broader context. However, there is support for a particular focus on attributes iv) and vi).

iv      Successfully use Information Technology

---

<sup>3</sup> McMeniman, M. Prof. *Review of the Powers and Functions of the Board of Teacher Registration*, The State of Queensland (Department of Education and the Arts), Brisbane, 2004, pp. 44-46

<sup>4</sup> McMeniman, p. 61

<sup>5</sup> McMeniman, p. 51

Through its ETRF Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Learning initiative, Queensland is placing considerable emphasis on strengthening teachers' skills in integrating ICTs into teaching and learning. This acknowledges both the need to equip students with skills to transact business and to work in the future along with the role that ICTs play as a tool for thinking, learning and communicating. The Queensland Government commends consideration of the ICT skills and knowledge required by teachers for inclusion in a coherent framework of professional standards.

vi Deal with Students with Special Needs and/or Disabilities

A specific recommendation from the *Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Inclusive Education (students with disabilities)* that 'by January 2006, all Queensland pre-service teacher education programs be required to ensure that inclusive education is a pervasive theme in their courses of study and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the courses'.<sup>6</sup>

**Term of Reference 8: Role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation of pre-service teachers**

The Queensland Government acknowledges the critical role of teachers in regenerating the profession and particularly in supporting the development of pre-service teachers and early career teachers. This is highlighted in the recommendation of the Review of the Powers and Functions of the Board of Teacher Registration that Continued Professional Learning (CPL) for purposes of re-registration be defined as including mentoring of student teacher and interns.

The professional experience component of a teacher education program is frequently viewed by pre-service teachers as the vital and most relevant part of their program. Queensland teachers have long been involved in developing new models for supporting professional experience through practicum and internship arrangements that require and respect stronger partnerships between schools and pre-service providers. The current pressures in meeting the demand for the placements for professional experience require close examination and formation of real partnerships between schools and teacher educators.

The Queensland Government supports the notion of re-examining the current restrictions relating to internships and proposes that internships be explored as contributing to the minimum professional experience component of a pre-service program.

The review report also comments on the positive benefits of pre-service teachers undertaking 'professional experiences in a diverse range of educational settings'.<sup>7</sup> This is particularly relevant to this review given the national and international concern with strengthening and finding new forms of partnerships in teacher preparation between university teachers and practising professionals in schools and allied contexts.

---

<sup>6</sup> McMeniman, p. 49

<sup>7</sup> McMeniman, p. 46

### **Term of Reference 9: Appropriateness of the split between primary and secondary education training**

The Queensland Government agrees that it is timely and topical to closely examine the split between primary and secondary education that has pervaded traditional programs of teacher preparation. Queensland has long valued continuous and connected curriculum, as evidenced by the development of Years 1 – 10 syllabi across the range of key learning areas as well as a commitment to exploring new models of curriculum through such initiatives as New Basics.

The focus on the Middle Phase of Learning, afforded through the Education and Training Reforms for the Future, acknowledges the need to pay special attention to the intellectual, social and emotional needs of students at a time when many students lose their enthusiasm for learning, disengage from classroom activities and make the least progress in learning. Effective transitions from the early years and to the senior phases of learning require broader understandings that may be better supported by new models of pre-service programs.

A Professional Standards Committee within a reconstituted statutory authority, viz. the Queensland College of Teachers, will be charged with the responsibility for 'recommending approval or non-approval of pre-service teacher education courses'.<sup>8</sup> The approval processes will use the yet to be developed Professional Standards for Graduate Teachers as the reference point to examine and approve new models.

### **Term of Reference 10: Construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the workforce**

The Queensland Government endorses the critical role of continued professional learning in ensuring capability of the teaching workforce and as a key feature in raising the professionalism and status of teaching. As the major employer of teachers in this state, the Queensland Government has made significant and long-term investment in strategies to strengthen teacher quality and contends that detailed matters relating to the construction, delivery and resourcing of continued professional learning are predominantly the province of education authorities.

While it is acknowledged that the Australian Government has made financial contributions to support teacher quality, jurisdictions are best placed to determine and meet workforce capability needs for their employees. A key principle underpinning professional learning is the need to engage teachers in setting and driving their own professional learning within a framework that respects local context and provides opportunity and flexibility to prioritise and undertake individual, team and network learning that aligns to systemic priorities.

The Review of the Powers and Functions of the Board of Teacher Registration also recommended that continued professional learning be used along with recency of practice provisions as pre-requisites for renewal of registration as a teacher in Queensland.<sup>9</sup>

### **Terms of Reference 4, 11:**

The state government has no jurisdiction over these matters and has no comment at this stage.

---

<sup>8</sup> McMeniman, p. 51

<sup>9</sup> McMeniman, p. 63



## CONCLUDING COMMENT

The Queensland Government appreciates the opportunity to make this initial comment and we look forward to being a part of the public consultation as the inquiry process proceeds.

## REFERENCES

Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Technology, 2003, *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future – Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics*, Author, Canberra  
URL: <http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/teachingreview/default.htm>

McMeniman, M. Prof., 2004, *Review of the Powers and Functions of the Board of Teacher Registration*, The State of Queensland (Department of Education and the Arts), Brisbane.  
URL: <http://education.qld.gov.au/publication/production/reports/btrreview.html>

\*Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2003, *A National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching*, Author.

\*Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2004, *Nationally Aligning Graduate Level Teaching Standards*, Author, yet to be released.

\*Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2004, *Teachers for the Future: The Changing Nature of Society and Related Issues for the Teaching Workforce*, Author, yet to be released.

\*Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2004, *Preservice Teacher Education in Australia*, Author, yet to be released.

\*Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce, 2005, *Demand and Supply of Primary and Secondary School Teachers in Australia*, Author, yet to be released.

The State of Queensland (Department of Education), 1999, *Queensland State Education – 2010*, Brisbane.  
URL: <http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/qse2010/>

The State of Queensland, 2002, *Queensland the Smart State - Education and Training Reforms for the Future*, Brisbane.  
URL <http://education.qld.gov.au/etrf/index.html>

---