

Janet Holmes  
Inquiry Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training.

We strongly support the Commonwealth government initiative in making teacher education a national priority area for university recruitment. In our view this initiative has had considerable success in encouraging the recruitment of high quality entrants into teacher education. Some of the most able students entering university today are in fact choosing education as their career of choice and in our own Faculties the great majority of students are high achievers in terms of entrance scores. However, one unintended consequence of the incentive policy around student recruitment to teacher education is that because we cannot charge a HECS premium we are adversely affected in our efforts to provide the highest quality programs. In particular, we have difficulty in offering the competitive salaries that would attract and retain the very best teacher educators in the country. It is our view that desirable as student recruitment incentive scheme is in shortage areas it is ultimately self-defeating if it negatively impacts upon the quality of teacher education because of the financial impacts on teacher education faculties. In effect each of our faculties has a shortfall of approximately \$2m per annum because we are unable to charge top-up HECs. We would welcome the committee reviewing this aspect of the funding of teacher education with a view to recommending consideration of alternative mechanisms for ensuring appropriate funding for the provision of teacher education of the highest quality, commensurate with the high quality of student that we are now attracting into the profession.

Our second concern relating to the funding of teacher education concerns the allowance for the teaching practicum. In both our faculties there is a significant shortfall in the practicum grant of around \$1m. This represents a significant additional funding problem which is currently made up internally, in part from alternative sources of income generated by our faculties and in part by subsidy from our universities.

We therefore do believe it would be important to include a recommendation which reviews resourcing of the education cluster.

We wish you well in you deliberations

With best wishes

Field Rickards and Derrick Armstrong

*Professor Field W Rickards  
Dean, Faculty of Education  
The University of Melbourne 3010*

*ph: +613.83448331  
fax: +613 83448696  
mob: +61 427354717*

**Professor Derrick Armstrong  
Dean  
Faculty of Education and Social Work  
University of Sydney  
NSW 2006  
Australia**

**Telephone: +61 2 9351 2422  
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 6217**