

**Submission  
No 56**

## **INQUIRY INTO INQUIRY INTO THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS**

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**Theme:**

**Summary**



**Professional Teachers' Council, NSW**  
**Response to**  
**Parliament of NSW, Legislative Council**  
**Standing Committee on Social Issues**

*Inquiry into the Recruitment and Training of Teachers*

**The Professional Teachers' Council, NSW (PTC)** is the peak body for professional teachers' associations in NSW. Established in 1973 as a voluntary, non-profit making organisation PTC is a coalition of individual professional teachers' associations and represents teachers at all levels of the education system, early childhood to tertiary, in both government and non-government sectors and in all Key Learning Areas. It provides an independent and non-partisan forum for the discussion of education policy and has a commitment to the professional development of teachers and to enhancing the professionalism of teachers and the quality of education in New South Wales.

*Vision*

The Professional Teachers' Council enhances the professionalism of teachers and the quality of education in New South Wales by linking and supporting member associations, giving and gaining strength through involvement, co-operative effort and diversity of their individual contributions.

*Mission Statement*

The Professional Teachers' Council, NSW exists to serve the needs of and to represent its members by providing:

- a united voice on educational issues
- a forum for discussion of educational ideas with access to and influence on the processes of educational decision-making at all levels
- leadership and professional learning opportunities
- networks for member associations
- liaison with relevant groups on educational issues
- effective administrative services and support in a recognisable location

while affirming the importance of the professional expertise and the unique role of professional teachers' associations in education

The Inquiry into the Recruitment and Training of Teachers is timely and occurs at the same time as that of the Commonwealth Government, National Inquiry into Teacher Education and the establishment of the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership. It also follows several restructures of the NSW Department of Education and Training, the NSW Review of Aboriginal Education, the Ramsey Review, the Teacher Education Review Taskforce and the Institute of Teachers Bill 2004. Other states and territories have undertaken similar reviews such as the recently released Victorian Report into the Suitability of Pre-Service Training in Victoria.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

That the Social Issues Committee undertake an inquiry into the recruitment and training of teachers, with specific regard to the following terms of reference:

### 1. the best means of attracting quality teachers to NSW Public Schools and meeting the needs of school communities

From feedback at PTC forums and conferences, from associations and association meetings and conferences it is evident that ways need to be found to address the factors impacting on teacher recruitment and retention that are multiple and complex. Following are some issues that have been identified:-

#### Attracting quality teachers to NSW Public Schools

- a. There is a need for a whole of profession approach to attracting and maintaining quality teachers in NSW Public Schools. Teachers, schools, systems and sectors, universities, professional associations, governments and unions need to operate in a collaborative manner to attract teachers to the profession. All players need to work together to encourage teachers to stay in the profession.  
Coupled with this is need to change public perception so that education is *not seen as a solution of society's ills* and so that teaching is regarded and respected as a profession with teachers perceived as professionals
- b. There is need *for teachers to encourage a love of the subject in their students and encourage them to see teaching as a viable career path – straight from school, and not after they have trained to be something else*. Suggestions received include "Be a Teacher" campaign aimed at year 10-12 students – with scholarships
- c. the cost of obtaining a four year university degree and the HECS debt incurred becomes a significant factor in the decision for younger people not to enter teaching when they compare teacher salaries to those of the private school sector and the commercial/business sector.
- d. The inability to provide mentoring for new teachers until fairly recently and to monitor and provide selection criteria and incentives for mentors and those supervising teacher practicum has at times negatively influenced new and teacher trainees decisions to remain in teaching or seek employment in government schools. Quality mentoring needs to be extended beyond the first year of teaching and be recognised as integral to the role of the 'accomplished' professional. This recognition should extend to allocation of 'within school' time to provide mentoring by subject/area specialists as well as the designated mentor who may not be in a position to provide the subject/area specific support required.
- e. The failure in many instances by the Department of Education and Training (the "system") to thank and/or recognise the contribution of teachers providing a 'professional role model' and quality teaching. Quality Teachers are offered incentives at other worksites in recognition of their talent. The DET is losing talented teachers at leadership levels as well as teachers commencing their career as teachers. Talented teachers need meaningful recognition and incentives to stay with the Public Schools.
- f. Support and incentives should be provided for teachers appointed to country schools, especially in hard to staff schools and where the teacher is isolated from other

professionals in their subject or teaching area or is the only teacher in their subject area in the school.

- g. The provision of quality professional development incentives for teachers in country schools is essential.
- h. Leadership needs to be of a high quality to attract teachers to a NSW Public School. The impact the quality and style of school leadership has on both school and teacher morale and teacher retention cannot be underestimated. Leadership needs to be firmly connected to the profession and the community which the school serves
- i. The impact the quality and style of school leadership has on establishing open, meaningful discussions with the school community not only to meet their needs but in promoting the importance of quality education
- j. Teachers feel they have little control over their professional lives. Educational policy is often disconnected from the real world of the classroom. When this disconnection occurs teachers have little faith in policies that are created and when teachers do not trust the policies that they must implement, the experience for teachers and students becomes negative. There is need for personnel working in the areas of policy and research to have taught in a wide range of schools. Teachers need to believe in the value of what it is that they do when teaching. For policy and support services to be credible, policy and support personnel within the DET, Board of Studies, the NSW Institute of Teachers and government should be able to demonstrate that they are quality teachers, have taught students in schools for a significant period of time (possibly over 8 years) and have the respect of their professional community of practice. The type of experience and expertise referred to above would assist in creating policies that make the best use of valuable state resources and avoid creating lack of support within the teaching profession.
- k. The failure to anticipate and provide advice in a timely manner regarding employment, transfers and temporary permanent positions impacts on teachers lives.
- l. impact on students, teaching staff and principals of inflexible system policies.
- m. the appointment practice that *allows appointment en mass of 'new' teachers to difficult to staff/challenging schools.*
- n. lack of incentive for teachers to remain in challenging schools
- o. The lack of recognition and use of teacher expertise gained outside the classroom when teachers return to school based positions i.e. Board of Studies, DET consultants, Institute of Teachers. These teachers often seek employment outside the Public System where their newly acquired skills are valued, recognised and gladly utilised.
- p. The apparent lack of understanding and failure to consider the impact that industrial negotiations have on educational practice and priorities i.e. The impact of the trade off of professional development funding in an award case to cover salary increases is still being felt. The 'hidden' message sent to teachers and schools in the interim period was that teacher professional development 'did not matter'.
- q. The lack of adequate funding for professional development and lack of recognition that professional development needs to be available through a wide range of flexible opportunities, including time for reflection on teaching practice

- r. The demands of system priorities on available professional development funds and the resulting 'lack' of professional development opportunities for teachers in non-priority areas.
- s. Conflicting messages regarding the value of professional development i.e.
  - a) that the majority of Professional Development should be undertaken outside school hours, but
  - b) if Commonwealth funded then teacher relief during school time is available
- t. The inadequate Government funding for teacher professional development and direction of funding to Governments and DET priorities, results in teachers in the non-priority areas 'missing out' on professional development opportunities and these subjects being regarded as second rate at school and community level. This results in the 'skills and talents' of students who best achieve in these subjects being seen as less worthwhile and in turn the morale of teachers of these subjects is affected. These are the very subjects that the community is told students should be encouraged to study to meet the long term and overall needs of the wider community!
- u. The conditions within which many government school teachers are required to work and the lack of resources has had a negative impact on recruitment. Students who experience such conditions are likely to consider other careers
- v. The loss of opportunity for teachers and school leaders to comment freely and/or enter into discussions on educational issues in the media has resulted in a huge reduction in sound professional engagement in discussions and loss of visibility for government schools, teachers and school leaders. Whilst understanding the need for 'accountability', orchestration of comments and centralised control often denies them the opportunity, in many cases, to promote sound educational practice and quality teaching in government schools

The PTC believes that the Standing Committee should take particular note of the recommendations made in the *Review of Aboriginal Education, Chapter 4, Junaaygam* in relation to this term of reference.

In its response to this Review PTC stated:-

*In welcoming the Aboriginal Education Review of 2004 the PTC Board believes that its role is to be supportive of the processes of the Review by Aboriginal communities and NSWAECEG.*

*..... the Board of Professional Teachers Council supports the whole-of government approach which sees improved outcomes in education being connected to better health outcomes and the provision of community services. Additionally, the Board believes that the restoration of cultural practices is a priority for Aboriginal communities (Yarn Up, 2000). Consequently, the Professional Teachers Council can offer to undertake several useful tasks which will have implications for the Review and for the interaction of Aboriginal communities with wider Australian society.*

*The Professional Teachers Council can:*

- channel information about the engagement of schools with their communities in PTC newsletters and reports and through professional development activities.*
- promote 'good leadership' being about empowerment, community partnership and genuine collaboration and involvement in the school.*

“We go to meetings to sort out troubles. We listen. We give them ideas. Then they do what they want. Mostly we don’t hear any more about it. What’s the point?”

This statement made in the Aboriginal Education Review by an Aboriginal parent may all too often reflect what is felt by teachers and professional associations when the outcomes of so many reviews, reports and enacted legislation appear to achieve very little and often ignore the professional concerns of its members. i.e. Institute of Teachers Bill 2004

One member association, in its response, indicated that the current system in human resource management and employment relations of NSW public schools needs urgent reform and renewal. This same association drew attention to the fact that the current arrangements where Teacher Education is funded by the Commonwealth but the output is employed by the State has prevented establishing system wide response to the looming shortage of teachers.

Another association, in its response, flagged the urgent need for increased Commonwealth funding for teacher training courses and practicum in order to meet the existing and looming shortage of teachers and provide not just the quantity of teachers required but quality teachers.

This association in its response indicated that *increased financial reward* was only mentioned by a small minority of respondents as their number one choice as the best means of attracting quality teachers to NSW Public schools and meeting the needs of school communities.

This same association raised the issues, particularly for male teachers, of the Child Protection Act, and *teachers guilty until proven innocent* approach, whilst at the same time understanding the intentions of the Act.

## **2. the effectiveness and efficiency of current means of recruiting teachers to NSW Public Schools, including**

### **(a) recent graduates**

### **(b) career change teachers**

From discussions at forums and feedback from associations it would appear that the both the effectiveness and efficiency of both these recruiting processes could be improved.

The lack of certainty of appointment and place of appointment with the Department of Education and Training, sometimes almost up until schools commence each year, can be sufficient cause for recent graduates to apply for and accept appointment to schools within the non-government sector.

Career change teachers often find themselves in a similar position to recent graduates and if entering teaching from other employment find themselves without adequate knowledge of school and community culture. Even though they may have good syllabus content knowledge, the system expectations of them and their lack of experience in classroom practice presents challenges for the ‘career change’ teachers.

In responses collected at a recent conference from attendees, who were mainly Head and senior teachers, the Technology Educators Association found the following points:

- a. prior screening of undergraduate applicants for suitability
- b. concern about – i) the *lack of equity in TAS (Technology and Applied Science) courses. 4 years – 18 months – 6 months –*  
ii) the lack of time (perhaps 10 years) since a TAS teacher was 4 year trained and the major issues this presents for the KLA
- c. great concern about the adequacy of TAS retraining courses in providing suitably qualified teachers. They *do not have classroom management skills, breadth in curriculum, minimalist training and an expectation that it be made up on site.*

- d. *lack of professional application of retrainees- no value placed on teaching as a career – seen as a job and application follows.*
- e. *should be attracting quality teachers not quantity of teachers and*
- f. *the concept that because a person has a trade they can teach is false.*

PTC would hasten to add that at many forums and feedback sessions it has conducted, teachers are the first to acknowledge that there are exceptions to the above statement and that there have been some outstanding teachers who, with quality training and support, have come out of a trade into teaching.

One association in its response drew attention to a fact often raised at PTC meetings and conferences that *overseas trained teachers face significant issues including very little Training and Development in NSW curriculum, cultural practice, pedagogy – they need to be placed in an internship with quality master teachers for a significant amount of time to develop an understanding of student culture in NSW.*

This same association stated *placing overseas trained teachers in hard to staff schools is reprehensible – this is a lose/lose situation: students, teachers, Head Teachers all lose – to place a large number in one school is discriminative to say the least.*

Current teachers wishing to retrain in other teaching areas are often not willing to accept the DET requirements to teach in an area or school dictated by the DET and therefore do not take up the offer of support for retraining.

The now high cost of university 2<sup>nd</sup> degrees also impacts on the decision of teachers not to take on further degree training.

It has also been reported to PTC that the experience of casual and temporary staff in relation to salary payments can effect the decision of teachers to seek permanent employment with the DET. There would appear to be within the payroll section of DET a lack of forward planning and/or provision of the necessary level of trained permanent and casual staff to meet ‘peak demand periods’ to ensure it meets ‘on time pay obligations’ of the system at the commencement of each school year. Teachers, like other members of the community, have rental/mortgage obligations to meet and at the commencement of careers have not had the opportunity to acquire savings to live on until these payments come through.

PTC believes a review in a positive manner, that includes representatives of all major stakeholders, should occur of these DET processes in order to provide some certainty for new employees, casual and temporary staff and to enhance the image of this part of DET staffing. PTC is prepared to be part of such a review and to engage with its members in seeking ideas for solutions.

The Economics and Business Educators Association *has noticed a drift of the more committed qualified and high quality teachers from NSW Public Schools to that of the Private sector. The association encourages teachers to contribute to professional development, professional accomplishment and professional leadership and so attracts teachers committed to these causes. Over time there has been a significant shift in both members and contributors to professional development to the private sector. The reasons are complex and include human resource management practices, strategies that private sector employs in attracting and maintaining quality human resources. In particular, in recent years the NSW DET has been unable to match employment and recruitment practices of the private school system. In the NSW DET efficiency means putting application forms on the web whereas for the private sector efficiency means providing case managers to individuals seeking employment. As a result it is possible to identify some residualisation at work in quality teaching recruitment.*

The English Teachers Association of NSW *members who are teacher educators, student teachers, Head Teachers and Senior Executive continue to express alarm at the inefficiency and inflexibility of the staff recruitment processes of the DET relating to the employment of new graduates.*

*It is a sadly all too familiar tale now that the most able graduate teachers, many of who begin with an express desire to teach in government schools, take up positions in private schools because of the DET's failure to provide them with a firm and timely offer of employment. With a sizeable HECs debt and rent to be paid, many new teachers have no choice but to take up an early and guaranteed offer of employment in the non-government sector, as their only alternative would be to wait for an offer of employment from the DET that they have no guarantee of receiving by any given date.*

*The 'targeted graduate' scheme has not been wholly successful in addressing this issue, as graduates have reported in recent years that they have still been waiting uncertainly for notification of a position in the days before schools return for the new year. The DET's tardiness is, in effect, giving very able and enthusiastic teachers the idea that they are not particularly valued by, and wanted, in the public system.*

### **3. differences and similarities between primary and secondary school recruitment needs**

One resounding similarity is that all teachers should have more practicum time and wider experience and exposure to the real world of schools. Ways must be found to ensure that practical experience is achieved in the first and ongoing years of teacher training and in career change courses. Achieving a degree in education with very little exposure to school processes and structures results in teacher disillusionment and often failure to retain these teachers.

One association perceives *there is considerable over investment in primary teacher education compared to the needs of secondary education*. Whilst this statement may be true at the moment, PTC believes that the looming shortage will also require significant investment in primary teacher education.

Responses collected by the Technology Educators Association indicated:

- a. *appears to be a focus on addressing the gender balance in primary schools with male teachers being placed and more likely to be promoted than female – does not seem to be such an issue in secondary schools.*
- b. *different levels of support for beginning teachers across districts and primary and secondary*
- c. *student cohort needs are significantly different and therefore require different understandings*
- d. *question if the same short circuiting of degrees seen in TAS occur in primary undergraduate training.*
- e. *teachers have no incentive to complete further education – strange for a business in the business of educating! Self funding of education is not the answer*
- f. *a high level of accountability or pressure on secondary teachers to produce results at HSC level but no such pressure on primary teachers if students reach high school with poor numeracy and literacy*

PTC's observation is that the above responses may well reflect the lack of opportunity, at school level, for professional exchange of information about the different assessment and reporting policies and processes required and undertaken within primary and secondary schools and/or the implications for all teachers of the K-12 learning continuum.

The Early Childhood Education Council supports the need for specialist training of primary teachers in 'early childhood education'. It expressed need for recognition of the importance of this specialist training and the careful placement, in schools, of these specialist trained teachers to better address the learning needs of students and maximise their potential for learning in the 'early years of schooling'. This in turn should place less demands on teachers and resources/finances in terms of student support learning in the student's later years of schooling.



*The recruitment and retention of 'quality' teachers is a complex and fraught issue. It is the English Teachers' Association (ETA) firm position that, in considering the secondary school context, the use of teacher in this term of reference needs to be accepted as being synonymous with 'subject specialist'.*

*The association believes that every NSW student studying English has a right to be taught by a quality teacher who has been trained in the content and pedagogy of the subject and who, moreover, has a deep understanding of NSW English syllabuses and their theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings.*

The fact that secondary schools teachers must be discipline or subject specialists has been stated by associations at PTC forums and meetings over many years. This position is illustrated by the feedback provided to PTC by The English Teachers' Association (ETA).

*It is the position of ETA members that secondary school teachers are first and foremost subject specialists.*

*The Association would condemn any move towards 'generalist' teachers as a solution to teacher shortages in secondary English classrooms. This is a 'band aid' solution that is not in the best interests of students, particularly given the demanding nature of Stage 5 and HSC English. Teachers of English must have sound knowledge and understanding of the K-12 continuum of learning in the subject, and the implications this has for how they teach and program English.*

This position is supported by other secondary focussed member associations who hold strongly to the need for teachers to be trained in the content and pedagogy of the secondary subject/s they teach. There is a need for teachers to have a thorough understanding of the syllabuses they teach and of the theory and pedagogy that underpins the syllabus.

Feedback, over several years from associations, indicates that in government schools in areas known to be 'difficult to staff' the recruitment and retention of 'experienced' quality teachers continues to present a significant challenge. In 1997 PTC tried unsuccessfully to raise the awareness of the NSW Department of Education and Training to the need to address the issue of the predicated teacher shortages. At this time it was particularly true in the areas of Science and Mathematics. It was disappointing to be advised by the person representing the Department that there was no shortage. The opportunity to take proactive rather than reactive action to encourage people into the profession and to minimise the current and future shortage situation was unfortunately lost.

In discussion at PTC forums many members of associations have indicated the difficulties they face in trying to ensure that students have access to quality trained teachers, competent in the NSW subject/syllabus they teach. It is not uncommon for teachers to be expected, indeed directed to teach outside their area/s of teaching expertise. In the case of casual teachers a teacher qualified in the subject area is the exception rather than the norm.

Concern has been expressed by member associations that there is often inadequate financial support to implement new syllabuses and the many recent restructures within the DET have impacted on the ongoing professional support available to teachers. Insufficient consultants to support teachers in implementation of new syllabuses is of major concern. The increase in teacher work load to implement new syllabuses in turn impacts on the time teachers have to available to be involved in other professional activities.

The lack of ongoing specialist support for syllabus implementation be it from the Board of Studies and/or the DET remains of great concern to professional associations. A one off injection of funds by governments to implement syllabus change is totally inadequate. The 'phoenix' mentality that appears to apply at both Board of Studies and DET level in relation to employment of consultants leaves gaps in ongoing teacher support. This situation needs to be monitored at the NSW Institute of Teachers as it recruits its staff.

Adequate and ongoing Government funding for teacher training in new syllabuses and teaching support packages for all syllabuses and for all teachers by the Board of Studies and the DET must

be found if quality education is to be available to all students. The LIG (Local Interest Group) model of professional support used by the DET has been criticised as being inadequate.

The impact of inadequate teacher support is in turn felt on the work of professional teacher associations (PTAs) who have traditionally provided and continue to provide professional support and development for teachers. The removal, in the restructure of the DET, of specific financial support for professional development activities offered by PTAs has added to the voluntary time required by associations to offer courses and develop resources to support teachers. This, coupled with the reported 'direction for schools to spend their professional development allocation on DET offered courses', reflects poorly on the attitude of the DET to true professional practice.

Associations have provided professional networks for teachers and are alarmed to now find that the DET, in its recent restructures, has decided to duplicate these 'professional networks' rather than work cooperatively with associations to ensure the professional needs of teachers are met. It is often the same PTAs people who are expected and do contribute to both association and the DET professional networks. It is not acknowledged that the expertise these people bring to the DET has been supported and often developed through their involvement in the work of PTAs.

The benefit of DET teachers engaging in what are true 'professional networks' rather than solely in internal department networks should not be ignored. There are cases where associations have been asked to 'rescue' unsound teaching and learning situations arising because teachers have relied on internal networks and not had the opportunity to be exposed to open discussion and criticism in a non judgemental professional network situation.

The English Teachers' Association states:

*In recent years secondary teachers have been faced with great curriculum change and the introduction of new syllabuses. At the same time, successive restructures within the DET and inadequate government funding of professional support have stripped teachers of adequate and ongoing support.*

*It is a sad reality that the generally deplorable working conditions of government school teachers, and the lack of adequate professional support and resourcing during a time of extensive curriculum change, have done little to promote teacher morale. Student and early career teachers have suggested that they often find themselves in staffrooms that are less than happy places to be. Reflecting on her recent experiences as a student teacher, one ETA member put it in the following terms: "It is very difficult for beginning teachers to have to enter an environment in which their enthusiasm is seen as a type of dangerous naïveté!"*

#### **4. existing initiatives and programs of the Department of Education and Training, including**

- (a) Teach NSW**
- (b) scholarships for undergraduates.**
- (c) accelerated training courses**

Teach NSW, whilst a major improvement in interaction with prospective teachers still lacks the 'personal' touch, sharing of experience and encouragement achieved by face to face discussion. The passion for teaching and the difference it makes is best conveyed by practicing quality teachers.

Scholarships for undergraduates need to be offered in such a way that these new teachers do not find themselves in a professionally isolated situation. It is PTC understanding that this can currently occur and this does little to encourage 'new teachers' to remain within the government school system.

In its Final Report, *Step Up, Step In, Step Out: Report on the Inquiry into the Suitability of Pre-Service Teacher Training in Victoria* the Education & Training Committee of the Parliament of

Victoria recommended *that the Victorian Institute of Teaching, in conjunction with teacher education providers and employing authorities, design, implement and promote flexible and accelerated programs and pathways into teacher education.*

In responses collected by the Technology Educators Association the following issues were raised:

- a. *retraining has filled the holes but has it provided quality teachers for our students?*
- b. *must include a significant amount of pedagogy in courses, many teachers from these programs don't have sufficient skills to put them in front of a junior class let alone seniors*
- c. *accelerated courses do not allow for the synthesis of learning – no true reflection time*
- d. *some teachers find that they are discriminated against by the 'other programs' as those beginning teachers receive preferential treatment including automatic full time placement.*

While appreciating the reasons for the Victorian recommendations and urgency behind them, PTC believes that in any accelerated training course the following priorities must be included and outcomes clearly achieved if the 'accelerated' teacher is to be an effective and quality teacher and a positive contributor to the future of the profession

- the link between classroom practice and pedagogy
- subject content and underpinning philosophy
- classroom management & student behaviour
- ability to develop and implement teaching programs that meet needs of individual students within the school contexts
- competent in both oral and written english language
- aware and capable of dealing with current cultural and society differences and expectations that impact on schools

One association indicated that it *has first hand knowledge of all three of these initiatives and programs, as well as teacher education initiatives such as 'beyond the line'. We believe that there has not been enough involvement of principals, professional associations and accomplished teachers in the development of these initiatives. Often employment relations and human resource management issues reflect the context of the school. Although, two of the programs above are somewhat successful further fine tuning could improve them. Crash and accelerated training courses have severe long term negative consequences for the teaching profession.*

Reports have been received by PTC that accelerated training courses are not and may not be able to provide teachers with the necessary subject and pedagogical knowledge necessary to provide quality teaching to students across the curriculum.

Associations report that *increasing numbers of overseas trained teachers, whose undergraduate studies and teacher training have not adequately prepared them for NSW syllabuses and who have been given only the most cursory orientation program by the NSW Department of Education and Training, are filling vacancies in difficult to staff areas of the state.*

Some association members, who have responsibility for supporting 'new' and 'beginning teachers', have expressed concerns regarding:

- the inadequate level of resourcing by governments of government schools, particularly those unable to raise additional funds for resources, due to location and the socio economic status of their communities
- the lack of adequate professional working conditions that match those in the private sector
- poor teacher morale

All too often early career teachers begin their careers in schools that are 'hard to staff', poorly maintained, lack access to functioning and adequately supported computer networks and are located in school buildings and classrooms that are generally not equipped for the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that require flexible learning and teaching spaces.

*Professional Teachers' Council, NSW Response to the Parliament of NSW, Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues - Inquiry into the Recruitment and Training of Teachers*

New and beginning teachers have expressed concern that the lack of access to ICT within the standard classroom limits a teacher's ability to utilize technology to meet the needs of students. The need to 'access and book' a single dedicated ICT room places unwarranted constraints on the teaching program in a manner that means the whole program is required to be designed around the availability of the 'specialist classroom' rather than ICT being an integrated educational tool to support day to day learning and teaching.

One association in the TAS area reports that *Since the 10 week teacher training programs which started in 1984/5 there has been a dilution in the teacher knowledge base. Various courses were introduced to retrain teachers from other disciplines who did not have a job. This still continues today.*

This diminution of opportunities for training in the TAS area has directly impacted on teacher morale and as such has not been encouraging of students to train in these areas. *The salary does not seem to be commensurate with the pressure, risks and hazards that teachers risk every day.*

Concern has been expressed to PTC that there appears to now be no direct path into teacher training for a year 12 student wanting to acquire skills and knowledge in the area of Industrial Arts necessary to teach in the TAS area. It has also been pointed out to PTC that we may be running the risk, as they found in the UK, of diminishing the skills and knowledge base within the practical subject areas to such an extent that these are lost and the length of period to regain these skills in the teaching profession will in turn impact on the number of students interested in and willing to take up trainee/apprenticeships.

On the whole, given their first hand experience in mentoring teachers from accelerated training courses, associations do not support the concept that accelerated training courses are any sort of solution to existing problems in the training and recruitment of teachers.

## **5. the role of the NSW Institute of Teachers and its accreditation and endorsement requirements**

The PTC is supportive of initiatives that support quality teaching across the careers of teachers. The PTC values any initiatives that support the development of teachers, particularly when they commence their careers as teachers. The induction into the profession is seen as important in maintaining teachers. The PTC believes that this is a whole of profession responsibility and this belief is demonstrated by the number of professional teaching associations (PTAs) offer beginning teacher professional development activities each year.

To meet this whole of professional responsibility, it is vital that the NSW Institute of Teachers provides adequate time for consultation in the development of its policies and processes. This has been variable across the policies to date.

The lack of consultation around the Institute of Teachers Bill has led to the possibility that some teachers will not be recognized through the Institute's accreditation processes. The Institute has been asked to provide clarification regarding the situation for the groups of teachers who will not be recognised. This clarification is still being sought by the PTC.

The Economics and Business Educators Association believes that *the operation of the NSW Institute of Teachers will exacerbate the looming teacher shortage in the NSW public schools. The Institute will be de accrediting teachers, has made teaching more expensive to join and encourage a flight out of schools where the teaching standards can not be met due to the context of the school. We note that the Institutes legislation, operations and procedures have been prepared to also accommodate and incorporate para professional teaching positions such as emergency licensure as in many overseas responses to teaching shortages.*

The English Teachers Association (ETA) members on the other hand have *welcomed the formation of the Institute as a crucial step in raising the professional standing of teachers in the general community.*

In doing so the English Teachers' Association, however, points out *that different responses by employers to the Institute has the potential to establish inequalities in employment conditions and to mitigate against efforts to attract quality teachers to the public system. The apparent move to have DET 'new scheme' teachers undertake accreditation within their probationary year does not allow these teachers the same time to demonstrate 'competence' against a demanding set of standards as their colleagues in the non-government sector, who are likely to be given the full three years allowed by the Institute. Such a difference creates an unnecessary difference in the working conditions of teachers in different sectors.*

The PTC supports the ETA view and would like to know how the Institute of Teachers is responding to the DET as an accreditation authority that has radically reduced the accreditation period for many beginning teachers. This reduction in the accreditation period creates different rights to development as a new teacher.

The attrition rate amongst early career teachers demands that the difficulties experienced by these teachers be acknowledged and addressed. The accreditation process underpinned by ongoing professional learning is valued by PTC members. Members would like to see employers invest in new teachers by reducing the teaching loads of new scheme teachers until they are accredited as competent.

The employment of 'mentor' teachers in certain government schools around the state has been a welcome initiative that must be continued and expanded. Proper training and ongoing professional support for all mentors of new scheme teachers is a pressing demand. A reduction in the teaching load of Mentors would allow them to spend quality professional time with 'new' scheme teachers.

**The PTC recommends that the recruitment of quality teachers to NSW public schools be enhanced by:**

- a). the implementation of the accreditation process for new scheme teachers in DET schools across the full 3 year period allowed by the Institute
- b). the Institute of Teachers negotiating an extension of time for the accreditation of new scheme teachers in DET schools as part of its responsibilities under the NSW Institute of Teachers Act
- c). the provision of increased staffing to government schools to allow reduced teaching loads for new scheme teachers and their mentors
- d). the extension of the existing mentor teacher program in government schools, and the resourcing of training and professional support for all mentors of new scheme teachers in schools where the current program does not operate.
- e). consultation, negotiation and development of selection criteria for mentors and supervisors in schools of student teacher practicums and new scheme teachers. That this be undertaken by DET in consultation with the PTC and other major education stakeholders.
- f). development and/or review of meaningful ways of recognising talented teachers and leaders in consultation with PTC and other major education stakeholders
- g). review, in consultation with PTC and all major education stakeholders and in a positive manner, of the educational leadership skills and knowledge, interpersonal and management skills and characteristics that are required and will be required in the future by school leaders in order to attract and retain quality teachers and leaders into NSW public schools
- h). the review of staffing policy and immediate changes to avoid appointment en masse of 'new' teachers to difficult to staff/challenging schools

- i) incentives being extended to encourage quality experienced teachers to remain in challenging schools and to become master teachers
- j) incentives being extended recognising and utilising teacher expertise at school level as master teachers and that the recognition include the time for them, as master teachers in their fields, to support professional colleagues in the classroom
- k) consideration of the impact of industrial negotiations on educational practice and priorities and any 'hidden' messages that these may have for quality teaching
- l) undertaking, in partnership with the Professional Teachers' Council, an urgent review of the impact and discrimination that DET and Government policies have on equitable provision of teacher professional development and learning and the affect this has on attracting and retaining quality teachers across all Key Learning Areas. (KLAs)
- m) the Standing Committee taking particular note of the recommendations made in the *Review of Aboriginal Education, Chapter 4, Junaaygam* in relation the best means of attracting quality teachers to NSW Public Schools and meeting the needs of students and school communities.
- n) a review undertaken in a positive manner, that includes PTC and representatives of all major education stakeholders, of DET staffing policies and processes to ensure forward planning, staffing, resources and funding is adequate to meet the peak periods of demand placed on DET staffing to allow it to meet 'on time pay obligations' and to provide some certainty for targeted graduates, new employees and other teachers employed on long term temporary or casual basis.
- o) adequate funding for teacher training in new syllabuses and teaching support packages and review of the LIG model of professional support used by DET.
- p) review in consultation with PTC, ways that DET and professional associations can cooperate to ensure the purpose, role and functions of the range of DET 'professional networks', established under recent restructures, are understood and do not detract from professional networks, similar to other professions, that reflect 'a profession' in the true meaning of the word.. This should be done in such a way that the standing of teaching as a profession is enhanced in the eyes of the community, an outcome that will not be achieved through internal networks.
- q) consideration and review of models for offering DET scholarships for teacher training in light of the identified professional difficulties faced by new teachers and that this be done in consultation with all major education stakeholders
- r) full review, in consultation with PTC and member associations, of all accelerated training courses, including consideration of the serious impact of these courses on student learning and quality teaching. As part of the revue consideration of ways of ensuring long term quality of teaching in NSW and that the current discrimination is discontinued and does not occur in the future.
- s) review of employment policies for personnel working in the areas of policy, research and support within DET, Board of Studies, Institute of Teachers and Governments to ensure they are able to demonstrate that they are quality teachers, have taught students in schools for a significant period of time across a wide range of schools and have the respect of the 'professional community of practice' that is expected to implement the policies and processes developed by these personnel. That this review be undertaken in consultation with the PTC and other major education stakeholders.

## **6. the role, distribution and effectiveness of university pre-service teacher education**

Whilst not in a position to comment at present on the distribution of pre-service teacher education courses the constant feedback at forums and meetings, currently and over many years, from member associations is that:

- a) Teacher Education courses could be made more relevant by involvement of practising teachers from professional teaching associations in the development and implementation of courses
- b) the practicum needs to be introduced into the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the course
- c) practicum quality needs to be improved
- d) the practicum time student teachers spend in schools needs to be increased without necessarily increasing the cost to universities
- e) a wide range of practicum placements is required so that student teachers have greater experience during pre-service training
- f) schools need to be encouraged to accept practicum students and to develop a master teacher program where the skills of the supervising teacher are built upon each year
- g) ways need to be found to introduce a selection criteria and improve the quality of 'student supervisors' at school level
- h) ways need to be found to recognise the role of 'student supervisors'
- i) mentoring for new teachers needs to be further refined, a selection criteria for the role of Mentor needs to be negotiated and established in consultation with all stakeholders i.e. professional associations the, union and DET
- j) recognition of the importance of mentoring as part of the role of accomplished teachers and a reduction in face to face teaching time to for both new teachers and their subject/area mentors to allow for reflection and support. The Institute should ensure this is addressed in the standards for accomplished teachers.
- k) some outstanding student and 'new' teachers have been developed by some existing pre-service teacher training programs.

One association has indicated that *its members who are student teachers have generally reported satisfaction with the method components of their courses. However, they feel under prepared in the area of classroom discipline. Members have reported receiving no training in classroom discipline in their secondary teaching courses. Student teacher members report that while there is a commendable emphasis on reflection in many teacher training courses, it's impossible to "reflect in action" when one lacks the necessary "survival skills". This sentiment has been reinforced by feedback from members who have supervised student teachers, and have found them sorely wanting in practical knowledge of classroom management strategies.*

Evidently, new teachers to the state's secondary schools are not always adequately prepared for the realities of classroom teaching and the management of student behaviour. Further, this association's members have reported that they are appalled by the lack of ongoing support and supervision provided by some universities for student teachers. Members suggest this failing can be substantiated by the incredibly high attrition rate within the first three years of teaching.

It has been the experience of the English Teachers Association members *that often the university supervisors inadequately support student teachers during their school placements. Often student teachers are supervised by non-specialists in their subject (e.g. a Science trained supervisor for English teaching). The availability of university supervisors to student teachers and their school supervisors is also problematic. The university supervisor may make only one or two visits to a school, and these will be generally at a time of their own choosing, when a school supervisor may not be free.*

The length of the practicum and their number can be an issue. These seem to vary from university to university. A common model appears to be a 4 week practicum for prospective secondary

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teachers of a particular subject. Such limited practical experience is all a student teacher will have in a subject area before possibly being appointed, to a difficult school with a high staff turnover or in an isolated, hard to staff regional school. This is hardly adequate preparation for a prospective professional practitioner. Student teachers need extended periods of time in a number of different schools.

### **Supervision in schools of the Student Teacher Practicum.**

It has been suggested to PTC that the model used for supervisors of work placement students from TAFE be considered for use in supervision in schools of Student Teacher Practicum.

In the TAFE model Supervisors are given a Workplace Supervisor Handbook which outlines the purpose of the placement, role of supervisor, appraisal, training hints, learner and learner diary, learning outcomes and evaluation of those outcomes.

PTC is not aware that such detailed information is currently available, in a handbook, to teachers who are supervising Student Teachers in schools and therefore recommends that such a resource be written in conjunction with PTC, Universities and schools and become a standard measure across all student teacher practicums regardless of which university or school is attended.

### **The PTC recommends that role, distribution and effectiveness of university pre-service teacher education and the recruitment of quality teachers to NSW public schools will be enhanced by:**

- a. increased funding in pre-service teaching courses to ensure that teachers are effectively prepared to work in schools
- b. the support and resourcing of links between schools and universities during this pre-service training, that assists schools in providing appropriate support to teachers who are undergoing the practicum in schools as well as those commencing as new scheme teachers
- c. the provision of appropriately trained and recognised mentors (within and external to the school) for beginning teachers during their first three years of service
- d. a reduction in teaching loads for beginning teachers
- e. mandatory pre-service training in behaviour management
- f. more uniform practices across universities with regard to the number of practicums undertaken by students and their duration
- g. linking of student teachers during their pre-service training, and 'new' scheme teachers to professional teaching associations for professional support
- h. development in conjunction with PTC, universities and schools of a handbook for Supervisors of Student Teacher practicums in schools.

### **7. Other matters**

PTC provided suggested amendments to the Institute of Teachers Bill 2004 and has in its ongoing discussions with the Institute and previous Minister stressed the concerns of its member associations about the apparent exclusion of a range of teachers from the processes and the resulting discrimination.

To date the Act and the Institute by having tied the accreditation of teachers to Board of Studies syllabuses have failed to recognise the significant roles and responsibilities of groups of teachers such as:-

- Teacher Librarians
- Career Advisers
- ESL teachers
- Itinerant Teachers



- Learning support teachers
- School Counsellors

This excludes these teachers from achieving the mandatory 'level of competence' required under the Act and in the future will restrict their capacity to apply for recognition at the accomplished and leadership levels. PTC has recently been advised that this may be regarded as a restriction of trade.

The inquiry should also consider the broader issue of career paths for teachers who wish to remain in the classroom. Presently, quality teachers who wish to remain in the classroom and not seek promotion into management roles do not receive official professional acknowledgment, status and remuneration.

The pressing teacher shortage makes it imperative that new solutions be found to evident inequalities in the staffing of government schools. Beginning teachers and teachers new to the NSW system are most likely to begin their careers in schools whose students have the most demanding learning needs and the poorest outcomes as determined by standardised tests. This is a less than desirable state of affairs on both sides, and is exacerbated by the instability that is created by high staff turnovers. A significant finding of research into successful HSC teaching was the common factor of many years of service and a lengthy tenure in the one school. All stake holders need to enter into an open and ongoing dialogue that will allow a way to be found to attract and retain experienced teachers to hard to staff schools.

### **Leadership**

The Professional Teachers Council understands the importance of leadership in professional teaching associations and schools and the significance of leadership for school culture and programs. The PTC was funded under the Australian Government Quality Teaching Program for a 'Collaborative Leadership Development Project'. The design of the project was collaborative, as was the identification and assessment of beliefs that underpin leadership. Collaborative identification was undertaken of people who would be prepared to tell their stories that demonstrated leadership at all levels of teaching careers and within associations. These beliefs and stories are publicly available on the PTC AGQTP Leadership website. The website <http://ptc.nsw.edu.au/leadership> provides the opportunity for teachers and leaders to reflect on their own leadership and/or mentor others to develop leadership skills. Another website, <http://ptc.nsw.edu.au> developed and supported by PTC, provides the opportunity for teachers to develop and share on-line teaching resources.

In its supplementary submission to the Review of Teacher Education in 2000 PTC made the following points that are still relevant to this Committee's terms of reference.

### **3. Role of Professional Teachers' Associations in the Training of Teachers**

*Professional Teachers' Associations have a vital role in professional learning at all stages of a teacher's career.*

*The role of Professional Teachers' Associations:*

- *Maintain and foster further partnerships with business, industry, colleges and universities to ensure flexibility and variety in training and research*
- *Maintain partnerships at regional, state, national and international levels with other professional teachers' associations*
- *Provision of Training and Development that increases knowledge and skill. Courses should allow teachers to connect current theory with relevant practice*
- *Engage in research that leads the teaching profession (e.g. ethics, learning communities, teaching practice)*

- *Work collaboratively with other stakeholders (e.g. systems, universities and national bodies) to assist in further developing the art, craft and science of teaching and learning*
- *Apply the research if appropriate to learning opportunities and to further enhance the quality and status of teachers*
- *Develop accredited courses for ongoing training of teachers*
- *Develop support courses and materials that explore the integration of curriculum and pedagogy*
- *Develop varied learning opportunities for teachers to meet the variety of needs*
- *Highlight a range of strategies to improve practice and enhance student learning*
- *Provide forums for the profession to engage in debates to facilitate understanding and communication of professional issues*
- *Assist teachers in developing and maintaining Learning Portfolios to encourage the identification, synthesis and reflection of the learning and celebrating their achievements*
- *Provision of courses at a range of stages in a person's career e.g. Leadership Courses, Mentoring courses, Curriculum initiatives, new approaches to learning*
- *Allow teachers to participate in Councils and Boards of their associations allowing them access to a wider network of professionals*
- *Partner with business, industry, colleges and universities*
- *Through exposure to national and international research deepen the capacity to use appropriate methodologies in the classroom.*

The Professional Teachers Council has provided samples of flyers and information about the role, functions and core business of PTC and member associations to the Standing Committee as separate background to this submission. These reflect the professional educational perspective on which this submission is based.

Should the committee require further information or clarification of any issues raised or recommendations made within this submission please do not hesitate to contact the PTC Executive Officer.

The Professional Teachers' Council NSW wishes the Standing Committee well in undertaking this important inquiry. PTC looks forward to seeing the outcomes of the inquiry made public and hopes to see the Committee's recommendations funded and implemented, without delay, in the interest of enhancing the recruitment, retention and ongoing professional development of quality teachers in NSW Public Schools.

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