REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES

INQUIRY INTO THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS

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At Sydney on Tuesday 14 June 2005

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The Committee met at 9.30 a.m.

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PRESENT

The Hon. J. C. Burnswoods (Chair)

The Hon. Dr A. Chesterfield-Evans
The Hon. K. F. Griffin
The Hon. C. Lynn
The Hon. R. M. Parker
The Hon. I. W. West

ANDREW CAPPIE-WOODS, Director-General, Department of Education and Training,

MARTIN BOWLES, Deputy Director-General, Department of Education and Training,

PAUL BROCK, Director of Learning and Development Research, Department of Education and Training, and

TRISH KELLY, General Manager – Human Resources, Department of Education and Training, on former oath:

CHAIR: I declare this hearing open and thank the representatives from the department for coming back before us.

Motion by the Hon. Ian West agreed to:

That the witnesses' answers to questions be made public.

I have just been talking to the witnesses about how we structure the hearing this morning is slightly awkward, partly because the department has been so good at getting back to us with answers to questions on notice, comments on the transcript, some other factual material and other arguments raised by other witnesses, and also because there is a bit of overlap regarding the most recent set of questions.

We thought it would be the easiest way if we start off by leaving the department people to go reasonably uninterrupted through the answers to the latest set of questions—and my apologies to the witnesses that you only got them on Friday—and then once we have done that, because some of those are new areas, we can then throw open the different sets of written material for questions because I am sure Committee members will want to raise some questions about some of the material you have provided us.

There are a couple of areas in these new questions where the department has provided us with quite a lot. Question 2, about the percentage of new teachers placed in hard to staff schools, we have expanded on that a little and the department has given us quite a lot of material in relation to the ATT graduates. Those questions I hereby a lot of that material, if not all of it, is included in the written material about we already had. Over to you, Mr Cappie-Wood.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: I will be attending to some of these questions myself and also share with some of my colleagues the answering of those. Question 1, how many indigenous teachers are currently employed in the department: There are currently 336 teachers in the department who have identified themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. However, there are likely to be others who have not necessarily chosen to identify at this point in time. In terms of existing teachers identifying, this is drawn from the EEO survey and the department has been looking at strategies for improving the response to the EEO survey. In May 2005, 39,000 people in the State office and schools completed the survey, which has gone up several thousand from the previous year's efforts in that regard. It is now an online survey which is producing responses. So we are getting better accuracy in terms of the numbers of teachers who are identifying themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

Part A of that question: How does the department appoint indigenous graduates to schools? Under section 47 of the Teaching Services Act 2004, if an eligible Aboriginal teacher and an eligible non-Aboriginal teacher are seeking appointment to the same position, preference is therefore given to the Aboriginal teacher. Aboriginal teacher applicants are asked to identify their aboriginality on the employment application—it is not mandatory but they are asked to do so, which will help with the allocation and dealing with that particular issue of preference. An identifier is placed against the teacher's application data on the computerised staffing system.

The department intentionally seeks opportunities to appoint Aboriginal people to vacancies that match their preferred geographical area and their qualifications. So they have got geographical preferences and their qualifications. Offers of employment are subject to suitable vacancies arising in the areas of schools for which the teachers are seeking appointment. In the staffing operations, running from 2002-03 to 2004-05, in 2002-03 we saw 21 ATSI appointments; this year we saw 63. So

we are substantially increasing that and in fact we are going to the extent of breaking some of our own internal rules to make sure we can give greater preference to Aboriginal appointments to the extent that those who are already on the list who have identified as Aboriginal, we are seeing if we can do a match with them ahead of some of those who might have already been on the list for a while, because we are looking to specifically lift the number of Aboriginal teachers in our schools.

In terms of the number of ATSI scholarships offered—again this is looking at, if you like, the supply through the universities of Aboriginal teachers—in 2003 we offered 30 ATSI scholarships; this year we offered 41, and almost all of those scholarships have been accepted. In terms of targeting retention strategies, which is clearly part of the process of appointment—it is not only appointments, but also retention, which is critical for us in this regard—we have implemented support programs to annually ensure that the retention of newly appointed Aboriginal teachers is improved. The program involves a two-day workshop that provides teachers with networking opportunities, which we see is critical to their success and feeling included in a large system, and that workshop also provides information and support, staffing processes, and that is on top of completing the local induction programs.

In 2005 an additional strategy was included for the teachers' principal to be part of that workshop on the second day as a support person to participate in the mentoring and Aboriginal cultural awareness sessions, which we also see as a critical process not only in the attraction but the retention of Aboriginal staff. The department also provides local mentoring by experienced teachers. We will hear a bit more about that later.

CHAIR: Just while you are on that and stressing that work, are you doing that because the resignation rate for those who identify as Aboriginal teachers is higher than for non-Aboriginal teachers?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: We are not seeing any exceptional difference in that separation rate, and we will come to talk about that separation rate because I think it is very critical we see that in the context more generally of other professions as well as what it looks like in hard to staff schools. The department also provides a telephone personalised support service for Aboriginal teachers—again, the retention, for us, is critical here—and a dedicated website for Aboriginal teachers, including an online chat facility, and the opportunity to network with other Aboriginal staff. We see that as some very good support networks for new and existing Aboriginal teachers in our system.

I will go on to B and then I will go to Trish Kelly for C. B says, "Will the extras also provide the Aboriginal education review for Aboriginal education in 2005-06 budget impact on teacher numbers". The department and the New South Wales Government, as you are aware, undertook with the AECG a major review of Aboriginal education in New South Wales in 2004. Recommendations for the review provided clear directions for improving Aboriginal educational outcomes, and there is a lot to be done there too with the intent that we will bring Aboriginal educational outcomes in line with other non-Aboriginal educational outcomes within 10 years.

One of those strategies is clearly there to improve the attraction and retention of experienced staff who are able to provide continuous learning experience, improving the learning experience for Aboriginal students. It also proposes that the strategic plan for Aboriginal students be developed, and this is much more personalised learning, making sure that we are tailoring educational offerings to the needs of those students, which includes strategies to increase the attraction and retention of Aboriginal staff. We are looking at exactly how that can be done because there are programs in other States which we are looking at—James Cook University runs a very good program that we are currently assessing to see whether we can introduce that there which looks to provide, by distance learning effectively, Aboriginal staff with training so they can become teachers; that if they start out as other staff in the school, they can take on the teaching capacity as well. There are a number of other areas we are looking at to improve that particular outcome.

The review also identified the need to ensure that all teachers are involved in training and development to enhance their understanding of Aboriginal culture. That is fairly fundamental for us, that we have to have an awareness from a cultural perspective, and that is something that is constantly reinforced to us. Whether we are out at Cobar talking at the trial or whether we are talking to AECG members, that cultural awareness issue is one that always comes to the fore. In the budget speech the

Treasurer announced an additional $53 million has been allocated over the next four years to support a range of initiatives designed to improve learning outcomes for Aboriginal students. One of the aspects that the Government is looking at, which we are finetuning at the moment, is the introduction of community schools where there is a high proportion of Aboriginal students and to see what we could do that would provide increased flexibility to be able to respond to local needs in those particular areas, be that staff recruitment, resource management of teaching methods, so that we can see that we demonstrably want to do things differently to improve Aboriginal education outcomes.

If that means they want to have more teachers with the resources available, and many of these schools would be getting additional resources anyway through the Priority Schools Funding Program [PSFP] or other programs, then we are looking at some flexibility if they wish to apply those, and many of them do, to additional staff or teaching positions. That is a local decision that meets local needs. We are happy to make sure that this is not a one-size-fits-all response. It has to be able to be tailored to local communities. Every one of them is a different community with different requirements. The department is currently developing proposals for the implementation of the Aboriginal review in discussions with the AECG and other Aboriginal stakeholders. When it is complete, which will be shortly, we will be happy to provide the Standing Committee with a completed set of implementation proposals. I will now hand over to Ms Kelly.

Ms KELLY: If I could just pick up on some of the mentoring aspects that Mr Cappie-Wood mentioned, the mentoring program for Aboriginal teachers was first piloted in 2002 as part of the Beginning Aboriginal Teacher Support Program. When we piloted the program we actually ran it in October of that year and we got a very positive feedback about the program, but one of the aspects the Aboriginal teachers indicated would be more beneficial to them was to have the program earlier in the year so that they had not spent as much time during that first year without having a support program developing their work and having their mentors identified and working with their mentors.

As a result of that first pilot program we have continued to run the Beginning Aboriginal Teachers Support Program and this year we ran the program in March. It started with a two-day workshop where people have the opportunity to network, to learn about issues, to raise concerns and one of the really powerful aspects of that program is that we have worked very closely with our Aboriginal Programs Unit, our own Aboriginal staff and also with the Aboriginal advisory group of the Teachers Federation so that Aboriginal teachers can see that there are a range of networks and people working together to support them.

The local mentoring component of the program continues after the workshop, and some of the retention strategies that Mr Cappie-Wood talked about also kick in at that time, such as we have two dedicated and regional employment officers in our human resources area who continue to make contact with Aboriginal teachers, their mentors and their principals to see how they are working, to see what other targeted support programs they might have. We will continue to monitor and evaluate that program and look at enhancing it on the basis of feedback from our Aboriginal teachers, their mentors and their principals.

Mr BOWLES: The second question talks about two particular sides of the new teacher issue. One is about hard-to-staff schools and the other is about drop-off rates in the first five years. First, the percentage of new teachers in hard-to-staff schools and what we have tried to have a look at is some averages over the last little while, and the south-west Sydney region, on average, has 23.1 per cent of new beginning teacher appointments, western New South Wales 10.6 per cent and western Sydney has 15.7 per cent. We can see that it varies quite markedly. It is probably not surprising that south-western Sydney with the largest proportion probably has the largest number of students of all our regions within the State.

CHAIR: To clarify, that it 23 per cent of all new teachers are going to south-west Sydney?

Mr BOWLES: That is great. How we support those teachers is through a whole range of ways, through school-based induction programs, through the introduction of our professional learning policy induction guidelines for newly appointed teachers and out of the professional learning policy all schools have funding to support the induction programs and support getting teachers as a priority within that money. You will recall from the last time we presented that professional development funding, which is $144 million over four years or $36 million annually, is provided directly to schools

because the feedback we have had from schools is that the most appropriate way for them to target the needs of their teachers is to have access at the local level to funding for professional development. That is the pathway that we have chosen. The other major issue is around mentoring that we have dealt with, and we talked a fair bit about that the last time. I will not go over a lot of that because that comes up quite regularly through mentoring and what that means.

I will move on to the issue of the drop-off rates in the first five years of new teachers, particularly the hard-to-staff areas. Last year we presented I mentioned that approximately 17 per cent of New South Wales government teachers resign in their first five years, so that is 17 per cent over that five years. With specific reference to the hard-to-staff regions, which are again south-west Sydney, western New South Wales and west of Sydney, in fact they are actually under the average in south-west Sydney at 15.1 percent, western New South Wales 15.9 per cent and western Sydney are right on the average at 17 per cent. We have averaged these over the last three years so we are not picking up one year as being better than the other, so we have taken the last three years and averaged them and dealt with teachers who have got to their five years of work. The whole issue of how people come into the work force nowadays is an important one for us to understand. People come in and out of employment in all organisations, not just teaching, so there has been quite a significant social shift over that last number of years in particular.

We also talked a little bit last time about some of the international experience, and we talked about the UK and the US having rates quite significantly higher than the 17 per cent that we talk about, and in some cases 25 per cent to 40 per cent. In particularly hard-to-staff schools it was somewhat higher in some cases. Some of the other research that has come through and has influenced some of the ways we do things, and we touch on that in the next question, is the concept of mentoring, and again it comes out from the research that one of the biggest things we need to do to keep teachers in schools is to provide them with support. The particular emphasis that we have taken is on mentoring.

There are all sorts of other issues as well, I suppose. There is orientation to the school, orientation to the system, induction to the school and the different programs that we have talked about. There is the induction of beginning teachers resource kit and a web site for new teachers. We have tried to tackle those issues in a range of different ways to make sure that we can get them support. The drop-out rates of our teachers in the first five years is reasonable in the international context that we have seen. Over the last number of years the particular emphasis we have had on mentoring, reviewing our mentoring process and trying to refine that to get to more beginning teachers is helping us somewhat in that challenge.

CHAIR: Do you know for a fact, or do you believe anecdotally that the drop-off rate amongst teachers is higher in the hard-to-staff areas before those programs were put in place?

Mr BOWLES: I do not. What we have tried to do is look at the averaging over the last three years, which has been probably a major focus of late and to go with what is the average over that period to give us a reasonable indication and we are still within the bounds of what is reasonable in research that we have done.

CHAIR: To turn it around, it is interesting that you are losing more teachers from the less hard-to-staff schools than you are from the hard-to-staff schools.

Mr BOWLES: That also reflects the changing social norms. Kids today will have multiple careers. They will do the university study or whatever career they choose to embark on and they will probably change five or six times. I know from my own experience I have changed industries a number of times. I think that is going to become more and more of an issue that we all have to address. I think that again comes back to the different approaches that we have taken; that it is not one size fits all. There is mentoring, there is induction, there is the different training methodologies that we have used and things like that that make a difference.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Have I missed something? Why does the fact that people will change careers mean that fewer people drop out from easy to staff schools than from hard to staff schools?

Mr BOWLES: I do not think I made a direct reference to that. I think the overarching issue is around the social norm today and it affects all, obviously. I suppose what we are seeing is that maybe it is impacting more in those areas. I might throw to Dr Brock who can give us more understanding from the research background.

Dr BROCK: I just thought I might give you a little bit more about some of things I said about the international studies because they are really quite interesting. It does not necessarily mean that they are replicated in Australia. I think the last time I was talking about the United Kingdom and the United States of America where, in some places, between 25 and 40 per cent of early career teachers are leaving within the first five years. Again, in those areas it is the sort of schools in tough areas—you know, disadvantaged socioeconomic areas—which are closer to 50 per cent in some of the small parts of that research.

The last time I mentioned a Department of Education and Science study that was commissioned in the United Kingdom in 2003 that made the extraordinary assertion that had estimated around 52 per cent of graduating teachers would not be in the profession in the United Kingdom within the first year or in those early years. I have gone back and unpacked that stuff. Unpacking those bald statistics, I can say that it shows that of this percentage, a proportion would never teach at all after graduating, choosing to take on other employment activities. I think I said last time that increasingly in a funny kind of way a teaching degree is starting to become like the old BA used to be. It is becoming a much more flexible kind of entree into a whole wide range of professions. I constantly meet some of my former graduates who are in all sorts of professions, not necessarily teaching, although some of them started there.

Some will ever teach, some will take on other employment, so a proportion will leave for a whole range of reasons and may intend returning. A proportion will drop in and drop out of teaching over a period of time through relief or part-time work, and a proportion will resign from teaching for good. They were the four or five kinds of suggestions that that research, Smithers and Robinson I think it was, indicated as to why they were estimating that as high as 52 per cent in the first few years may in fact be coming out of teaching and education institutions and might not be going in. The other thing I think I said last week was the changing demographic going into the teaching profession may also have all sorts of interesting implications in the future.

We are getting significantly increased numbers of people coming into teaching as second, third and fourth careers, second and third mainly. I think I mentioned last time we are going to undertake quite a major piece of research actually tracking through the experience of beginning teachers in the first five years, looking at those who are staying and why they are staying, and those who are thinking of going and why they might be thinking of going, to help us to be better informed about the ways in which we might sustain and support those who intend to stay. But the idea of going in and out of the profession, it is a shift from certainly what used to be occurring 20 years ago.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: Lastly, I would have to say that when we look at the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] figures, they indicate that up to 49 per cent of people leave their job within the first five years, so we have a remarkably small percentage comparative to the rest of the work force. The statistics we have provided only relate to the last three years, which is an indication of a current policy settings about the effectiveness of that. On your suggestion we might actually go back and look at a sample from some time ago to see if there is greater variance in the number.

Mr BOWLES: I will move on to the next question, question 3. I think we will move around a little bit on this one. I will just kick off basically to say that we need to recognise that all teachers in New South Wales public schools are qualified teachers and we also recognise that there are teachers who are teaching outside their area of accreditation. We have to put that up front. I might hand over to Trish Kelly who will talk on some of the more technical side of that.

Ms KELLY: What I thought I would just go over is what happens when a teacher presents himself or herself to be department seeking to teach with us. Aside from the probity checks that I think I mentioned last time and the personal suitability interviews and English language assessment of their qualifications if they are from a country where their language is not English, we also assess their academic qualifications. We assess those against criteria that we have in terms of determining whether

or not a teacher is able, on the basis of their studies and their degree, to teach a particular curriculum area in the secondary subject areas.

In many subjects, particularly some of those that have a number of subjects within what we call the key learning area, we may accredit teachers for one or more subjects. So, for example, in our human society and its environment area, we may accredit them to teach history and geography or history and something else. So we actually look at the depth of the curriculum studies that they have as well as their education studies. Just recently we actually made some changes to how we will accredit maths and English teachers where we will look at accreditation on the basis of the depth of the curriculum study to prepare a teacher to either teach English or maths 7-10 or English or maths 7-12. That has again been a change so that we can really look at the rigour of people being able to teach their senior syllabuses.

When principals have a vacancy, they advise us of the subjects that are required and we look at the method that will fill the position. If we are filling from the employment list or if we are filling from graduates or if we are filling through a transfer, we will actually look to see that the teacher matches those curriculum requirements that the principal has requested and that the teacher is prepared to go to the geographic location. Once we have provided a teacher to the school, then the principal is responsible for allocating the duties of that teacher in the overall staff of the school. They would look at the accreditation of the teacher, their skills and experience, the needs of the students and also the mix of the other teachers in the school. That is basically the process that we go through.

Mr BOWLES: I might just follow on from there. We talked about the shortage issues at our last appearance as well. We spoke about a whole range of strategies that we looked at around these scholarships. I do not propose to go through all of those—the accelerated teacher training and a whole range of issues there. I might throw to Andrew Cappie-Woods to talk about some of the technical ways we are starting to deal with some of these issues.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: I suppose as a bit of an anecdote, I was out at the Yeoval Central School last week and I saw the issue of not having the size of school that would necessarily attract the full suite of specialist teachers and how to deal with that. It is not just a question of getting the right sort of qualification, if you like; it is also the fact that many smaller high schools, in this case a central school which has kindergarten to year 12, and how they deal with very small numbers. This is about making sure that in the universality which is the public education system can provide quality, no matter where. Certainly in the rural areas of New South Wales this is a critical issue for us.

To see how Yeoval Central School, with two year 12 students there, how we can provide quality education to them—because you do not necessarily have all of the curriculum specialists on site and you clearly could not with that offering—this is where the department's strength in terms of its information technology [IT] network is coming to the fore. Previously the videoconferencing network, with its capacity to be able to link schools together—and this was certainly what was running when I was there—enables students to participate in a year 12 maths class between four schools and collectively there were over 10 kids there who were participating in that. It was the capacity to be able to see the teacher, question the teacher, and have the teacher going over exercises, work and expectations. Literally the outcomes required were of a very high quality, from what I saw there.

We are adding to that capability with web conferencing as the network rolls out. The cable that will provide optic fibre rolled into the Yeoval Central School the day before and they are looking to see how they can use that to upgrade their capacity because that is where the ability to share video, voice and data—that is, PowerPoint, web browsing and smart boards—all, if you like, shared between schools, and that means that there is a rich environment between schools. We are overcoming not only the tyranny of distance and size but also specialty at the same time. There are many other examples that we spoke about, such as making sure that physics classes and some of the other specialty classes in the high school curriculum can be met using information communication technology [ICT]. That means that where you have a specialty teacher there, they can link up with the schools as necessary.

We are seeing ICT as a fundamental platform to be able to assist us where we see there might be difficulties in getting the exact specialty in the right place, but also it means that we are supporting those rural communities because otherwise those students would have been forced effectively to be

boarded into larger towns somewhere where there would have been a larger school. But by using ICT, it means they can be part of the community and certainly remain with their families. There are many other areas in terms of distance education and ICT where we are now looking to improve the quality of that so that the specialty questions that we sometimes see are now beginning to be overcome. I was really heartened to see not only the quality but also the engagement of the students in this particular form of teaching.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Can I harden up those last couple of answers?

Dr BROCK: Yes.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: The previous question was what percentage of new teachers are placed in hard to staff schools. We were talking about the dropout rate but that is not the same as the placement rate. What is the placement rate? What percentage of schools are hard to staff? What percentage of new graduates actually end up with that being their first posting?

Mr BOWLES: That was the first part of my answer. I focused on the three most difficult staff regions, that being south-western Sydney, western New South Wales and western Sydney. We looked at the three-year average of appointing new teachers. South-western Sydney was 23.1 per cent of the new teachers going there, 10.6 per cent go to Western New South Wales, and 15.7 per cent go to western Sydney.

CHAIR: Martin Bowles gave us those percentages.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Of the 100 percent of teachers—

Mr BOWLES: No, that is the percentage of the new teachers who are placed.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Is that cumulative then?

Mr BOWLES: No. That is the average percentage placed. If there were 100 new teachers placed, 23 of them would be placed in south-western Sydney.

Dr BROCK: So what you are seeing is a degree of cumulative impacts, but also you would see from that that for those who are relatively new teachers, there is also a movement out of those schools as well. So you would see as at any one period of time that the average teaching years for the experience with those schools is in the order of about 10-plus years, so it still averages out that there is quite a solid base of teaching experience in those schools.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: But why I say it is cumulative is: Do you mean that of the 100 per cent of graduates, 23 per cent go to south-western Sydney, 10 per cent go to the country and 15 per cent go to somewhere else? That means that if you leave university, you have a 16 per cent chance of going to a hard to staff school. I have not added it up, but is that what you were talking about?

Mr BOWLES: It comes to 48 or 49 per cent—just under a 50 per cent chance—of going to one of those three regions.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: So you have a pretty good chance of going to a hard to staff school?

Mr BOWLES: That is correct.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: And what percentage of schools are hard to staff schools?

Mr BOWLES: I do not have the details. Perhaps Trish can assist.

Ms KELLY: Within those regions some schools may be difficult to staff and others are not. Typically we looked at the regional pattern. In the regions where we target many programs, including the teacher-mentor program, we have put in targeted support to those areas. And those three regions have a scholarship program.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: You have answered in regions, not in hard-to-staff schools?

Ms KELLY: Yes.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Presumably there may be hard-to-staff schools in good areas as well. Generally northern Sydney may be a generally good area that may have some hard-to-staff schools.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: That could be true.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: The figures you have given do not really relate to hard-to-staff schools; they relate somehow to the sense that there are more hard-to-staff schools statistically in south-western Sydney?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: We would be happy to provide a further breakdown. If we look at the whole of south-west Sydney, Western Sydney, and western New South Wales, there would be over 50 per cent of the total schools in our system within that total. In those areas there is a range of very small schools as well. The total number of schools is quite high, but you want to know the differentiation within those regions. It is rightly said that some of those areas, Bathurst and Orange et cetera, are not difficult to staff. Some of the more outlying areas such as Wellington are a bit more difficult. We will try to get that degree of differentiation to you.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I would have thought that the question would be how hard it is in a certain school. The area is not as important as whether a school in the same area is rough or easy. Basically I want to know how much the new graduates were copping it statistically, compared to what they would be copping if it were randomly distributed.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: We can provide additional information.

CHAIR: You can take that question on notice.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: When asked how many teachers teach outside their area of qualification, Trish Kelly answered, more or less, that some have secondary areas of qualification.

CHAIR: The word "qualification" should be "accreditation".

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Mr Cappie-Wood said that the department has wonderful IT. But the question was: how many teachers are teaching outside their area of expertise? Is it 20 per cent or 50 per cent? Is it in terms of how many kids are getting it? You can look at it by schools or teachers or kids.

Mr BOWLES: You could look at it in any arrangement. A lot of decision-making does not happen at the central level, therefore we do not have access necessarily to some of the data you have referred to. The decision about how the classrooms are staffed is made by the principal, particularly with reference to secondary schools it is the makeup of the different types of teaching: you need maths, English, science or whatever. Depending on the size of the school you might have a point of a teacher, if you like, who comes in part-time. That plays into the mix as well.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: The answer is that you do not really know.

Mr BOWLES: I could not give you a definitive answer of 5 per cent or 10 per cent or whatever. The times we have gone into looking at these, there have been very small numbers.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Of kids?

Mr BOWLES: No, of teachers teaching outside their area of accreditation.

CHAIR: Do you have any evidence on smaller samples. The question was phrased statewide. Have any studies been done on individual areas or regions?

Mr BOWLES: We did some work a little while ago, a snapshot, on maths teachers. We could dig it up and provide it. Maths is one of the difficult areas. That is probably the clearest indicator. From memory, it was less than 2 per cent of teachers who were teaching outside their area of accreditation.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: You do not have hard data on that. If I asked you how good is the education system, what chance does my kid have of being taught by a teacher who is teaching outside his or her area of expertise, that would be a reasonable question. Presumably the school has a record of who is teaching what subject and what number of students there are in each class. It would require some cross-correlation but in these days of high-tech surely it would be possible to get that figure?

Mr BOWLES: You will find that for a long time principals have appointed teachers who may not have the primary qualification in maths to teach mathematics. They are very good maths teachers because of their level of experience and expertise that has been built up over a number of years. That is a common theme we have seen coming through. They did not have a primary occupation, if you like, in maths but their expertise had been built up over time and they were the most appropriate teacher in that school.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Should they not be reaccredited for that as part of your ongoing career development? If they are so good a teaching maths surely they should gain that accreditation. Is that what this new teacher institute will do?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: We certainly look a ensuring we give them the accreditation, or assist them in acquiring those accreditations for their area of specialty. I was not in the organisation at the time but I have been told that when principals were asked whether they had a different teacher who was accredited rather than, in some instances, teachers who had been teaching for while outside their area of accreditation, they said, "No we want the teacher who we have, thank you very much."

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: They ought be recognised, if that expertise exists. Superficially, one would like to think that a maths teacher had maths accreditation rather than English.

Mr BOWLES: We would encourage teachers on a regular basis to upgrade their skills, so we do that as well. We can look at that example of maths, and provide some information.

CHAIR: You can take that on notice. We turn now to the mentoring program.

Ms KELLY: On incentives to encourage experienced teachers to mentor beginning teachers, I will look at our expectations of all teachers and then perhaps focus a little on the teacher-mentor program. We consider it a professional responsibility of all teachers to mentor colleagues. In fact, that view is supported very much by the framework of professional teaching standards recently developed by the Institute of Teachers. Experienced teachers would say there are both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards in mentoring new teachers. It provides opportunities for reflection upon their own practice and it provides opportunities to be able to assist new teachers to learn to manage classroom discipline, look at how to vary teaching methods.

It provides also opportunities for experienced teachers to gain recognition for their skills and qualities. Many teachers have reported that that is quite a reward. Obviously we need to provide people with tool kits to assist them to do that, because you cannot suddenly become an expert mentor. We have a range of support and conferences and networks across regions. That is facilitated at the State level and supports people in their mentoring of new teachers. The teacher-mentor program has

more tangible rewards for people to become teacher-mentors. They include the positions being promotion positions, so a teacher-mentor in a primary school is part of the school executive and is an equivalent to an assistant principal. A teacher-mentor in a high school is equivalent to a head teacher.

Going back to your earlier question, those positions are concentrated in Western Sydney, south-western Sydney and western New South Wales to support our beginning teachers. We have appointed teacher-mentors either 100 per cent above the establishment of a particular school, or 100 per cent above establishment across a small group of schools. In some schools that have fewer beginning teachers, we have appointed them 50 per cent above establishment. They have the time and capacity to be able to work with the beginning teachers. Part of their role is to do temporary teaching, provide role models for be ginning teachers, provide dialogue for them and assist them with teaching practices and methods.

Last time I mentioned that we have enhanced the reach of the program from the 2003-04 pilot, and approximately 1,000 beginning teachers are supported by the program now. The question asked was many graduate teachers; I am not able to say how many, but we would look at that as part of the evaluation. Beginning teachers can come through a number of pathways. They could be brand-new graduates, they could be teachers returning to teaching, they could be teachers who had taught casually and/or in a temporary capacity.

CHAIR: I think you probably mean new teachers of about 1,000.

Ms KELLY: There is a whole mix there. Obviously, depending on the background of the beginning teacher, the teacher-mentor will change the strategies and methods by which they support them. How do we choose teacher mentors? They are merit-based positions, so we have a set of criteria that people who are applying for teacher-mentor positions are assessed against. They include the capacity to mentor and support new teachers, they improve their capacity to demonstrate that they have effective teaching practice in the classroom and that will be seen as someone who is highly valued as a teacher. In schools that are 100 per cent above establishment, we advertise those positions on a departmental when the site, and all teachers within the system can apply.

As they are temporary positions for two years we have not advertise those externally. We have provided them as career development opportunities and opportunities for recognition of our own outstanding practitioners. Where they are appointed to a school with a 50 per cent reduced load, we advertise the position within the school so that the teacher-mentor who is successful can still continue to provide 50 per cent of the teaching load that they already have in that school. They are selected by a selection panel that includes the principal of the school and they are appointed for two years.

We talked last time about the evaluation of the program, of the 2003-04 program and indicated that it had been valued and seen as highly productive in supporting beginning teachers in the classroom to develop the teaching methods, to be able to vary them to meet the needs of students and to be able to manage some difficult classroom discipline issues. We will evaluate the 2005-06 program and some aspects we are particularly interested in evaluating will be how successful the change to model has been, because previously we had teacher-mentors only in schools that are 100 per cent above establishment. We did not have that broader reach.

We now have been working across schools and working with half the reduced loads. We will be very keen to see whether those models have been as effective as the previous model. Other aspects we will look at include whether there have been differences in retention and patterns of leave taken, numbers of teachers who may have experienced difficulties with their performance. We will look at those teachers and another sample group to see how successful the program has been. Another aspect we will look at, it will be an ongoing evaluation, is to look longitudinally at what happens to teachers during their career. This is the third year of the program. We want to track some of these teachers to see where they end up. Are they going to be our executives and principals of the future? Those are some of the other aspects of the program that we would be looking at.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: You did not answer question No. 5, which relates to numbers or percentages. How many graduate teachers did the mentor program cover? If there are 100 graduates coming out, let us say that 50 per cent go to hard-to-staff areas, not necessarily hard-to-staff schools. What percentage of those graduates receives help from a mentor?

Ms KELLY: About 60 per cent.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: So 60 per cent of graduate teachers get mentors?

Ms KELLY: They get support from the teacher mentor program. All new teachers will get support through our induction strategies. We talked last time about the fact that over a period of four years we have allocated $144 million to the school. Part of the school's priorities in using its professional development moneys is to support beginning teachers. So through the professional learning policy—the induction of new teachers being one of those priorities—all teachers will be supported in their beginning years. Where there is a higher concentration of beginning teachers in a school we have placed the teacher mentors.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: In response to this question and the previous question Mr Bowles said he would conduct a survey of mathematics teachers to establish how many were teaching in a specific area. These problems could have been solved if there were a web-based relational database from which you could have obtained statistics. Does the department intend to get such a database to see what is going on?

Mr BOWLES: We are trying to embark on quite a significant system replacement project that will go right across our finance, human resource, payroll and student information systems. So we are well down that pathway so far as our thinking goes. We are proposing to go into the marketplace to obtain support for us, through independent assurance and strategic adviser type roles, to help us develop the system capacity to do these sorts of things. There are a lot of issues that we deal with, for instance, our office automation school information system [OASIS], which is loved by everybody. Unfortunately, it is installed 2,200 times out there. So it is a monumental task to deal with those things. How do we come up with a broader strategy around student information, schooling information, human resource information, and so on?

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Are you looking at an open source for this?

Mr BOWLES: We are going to market for the strategic adviser role, an assurance role, to help us make the right decisions as to how we might do that. But obviously open sources are part of that equation.

CHAIR: Perhaps the Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans should ask these questions in the estimates committees to establish what progress has been made.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: For about a decade the Department of Community Services went on about how its database was going. It still does not seem able to deliver. We hope you can do better than it did.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: I bet there were many lessons to be learned.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: The wheel seems to be invented awfully frequently.

CHAIR: Trish, you started to talk about question No. 8, which relates to professional learning policy. Could give us a figure or an indication of how much of that $44 million is allocated to induction strategies?

Mr BOWLES: As we said, $36 million annually, or $144 million over four years, is the figure we use often around this issue. The department has seven broad categories, one of which is about beginning teachers. That does not mean that one-seventh of the money goes there. As Trish mentioned, the school is the one right at the centre of this issue. There is a whole range of inputs into the schools, such as the mentoring programs. So they will make assessments based on that and on what other support is provided by the school education directors, the regions and by the centre, being the department through the mentor program. Then they make the decision about how much they

should spend. As you would know, the last calendar year was the first year that this new money has gone in there. Clearly, we have a professional development policy. We also have, as I said, the seven broad categories, one of which is about beginning teachers. So there is a major focus there. But I do not have a specific number, if you like, out of that $36 million.

CHAIR: Has the department considered reducing the teaching load of beginning teachers?

Ms KELLY: Yes. Over time we have made those sorts of considerations. However, we have determined to put our focus into teacher mentoring and the induction of beginning teachers. The last time we were here I think we talked quite a lot about the fact, and we alluded to it today, that all beginning teachers are provided with induction and support. The teacher mentor program provides for more targeted support in those schools where there is a fairly large proportion of beginning teachers. One other thing that I might just mention is the need to enable schools to respond locally. Therefore the department, in providing funds for professional development to schools, has picked up on themes that were talked about in both the Ramsey report in 2000 and the Vinson report in 2002.

Schools and teachers were saying that they wanted to have the capacity to look at what those learning needs would best be. I refer next to beginning teachers. We provide other system support that schools and regions can hook into. At the regional level often there are conferences for the induction of beginning teachers. At the State level there are web sites where schools can have a look at the strategies they can use. There are also web sites for beginning teachers where they can have a type of a chat environment and where they can talk to different colleagues. Networking is particularly important. In those regions where there are is large proportion of beginning teachers you usually also find some strong networks of beginning teachers that are very much fostered by school education directors, regional directors and consultancy support across the regions.

CHAIR: You said that the department had considered this issue. You then went on to deal with other things. Can Dr Brock tell us whether this is a research-based decision or a budget-based decision? In other words, has someone decided that it is much better to go down the path of mentors, professional development, networks, induction and all the rest of it? Is that better than a reduced teaching load, or are the economic effects of a reduced teaching load such that you have decided it is out of the question?

Ms KELLY: In relation to the research base, I think the whole aspect of the importance of induction and mentoring was first picked up by Gregor Ramsey in his report. We used a lot of the evidence and the recommendations in that report in framing the teacher mentor program. In relation to providing resources to support the induction of beginning teachers, I think that theme also came from the Vinson report in which it was clearly recommended that we should provide greater funds to schools, which I think roughly equates to about $700 per teacher. When we looked at the teacher reduction load previously we saw that it certainly would have also required significant additional resources to be able to achieve that.

CHAIR: As I said earlier, Dr Brock might have more information on this issue. It has been put to us by a number of people that a reduced teaching load for beginning teachers would be an excellent idea. We would like to know whether it is generally thought to be an excellent idea, or whether the verdict is that other ideas are more excellent?

Dr BROCK: Like a lot of other things in life, if you had more time to do what you would like to do when you were starting off, it would easier. That is a general principle of life. I think it is always a matter of priorities and balancing acts. The way the department has gone is very sensible, that is, putting resources in to make sure the quality of mentoring and the quality of induction are strong enough to support those beginning teachers. Furthermore, in some of our schools—again anecdotally, as I have not done the research on this—we get feedback from a number of schools where principals are using the capacities within their own staff and resources. At times they will cut back on the teaching load of a particular beginning teacher. There is a lot of variety.

Let me use an analogy. Some years ago in California it was all hot to trot that the big answer to the solving of the problems of teaching was reducing class sizes in primary back to fewer than 20. So a massive injection of funds went into that. Three or four years down the track they found that the learning outcomes of kids from this new revolution had declined, or diminished. Why? In pouring all

their resources into reducing class sizes massively across the area they had to employ unqualified and underqualified teachers. So they achieved their goal of a significant reduction in primary school class sizes at the expense of the quality of teachers going into those schools. We have not done that in our reduction of classroom sizes in our program in earlier years. We retained them and we retained the strength and quality of our teaching.

So I think it is a question of resources, as Trish Kelly said. There is research to support the fact that the quality of induction and mentoring that goes on is probably the really important issue. A terrific teacher could handle probably 35 to 40 kids. A rotten teacher—not that we have rotten teachers, but imagine a world in which there were poor teachers—might not be able to handle 10 kids. So it is a matter of balance, or swings and roundabouts. I think the department is right in putting resources into extending the quality of mentoring and teaching. We must extend that as broadly as we can. To broaden the statement of the director-general, there are tremendous advances in web technology that I see happening as well in remote schools.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: I might just add that it is about the quality of teachers that are coming out of universities as well. How prepared are they for the professional life that they are about to enter? There is a variety of quality coming down at the moment. That is why the Institute of Teachers becomes a critical element in ensuring as much as possible that teachers are prepared to do their professional best and that they are aware of the circumstances, what it means to be a teacher and how to teach. That is not always the result that we are getting.

The Hon. IAN WEST: I refer to the tyranny of distance and to broadband in regional and remote schools. Obviously that is a hard area in relation to mentoring. How advanced are you with broadband or the information technology rollout?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: It is literally rolling out. Last week I visited Wellington Public School, Wellington High School and Yeoval Central School. They were either receiving it the day before or they were literally out the front of Wellington Public School digging up the footpath to put it in.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Was that why you went there?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: No, it was not; it was serendipitous. It is literally rolling out to the extent that it is getting to the more remote and rural locations. I will ask Martin whether he has a date for the completion of the fibre optic rollout.

Mr BOWLES: It will roll out progressively. We have had broadband access at our schools for quite a while now. We have about 2,600 sites that we get to. By the end of this year we hope to have 92 per cent of schools at two megabytes, or better. In today's terms some schools will never need that sort of capacity. This is the importance of some of the changes around fibre optics. We have had some on satellite links and the like. We are trying to set a scaleable solution, something on which we can easily turn up the dial from, say, two to 10 or 10 to 100, whatever it happens to be. Years ago people would never have thought that we would need two megabytes to get anywhere.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Is that two megabytes a second?

Mr BOWLES: Yes, or however they measure that today. It is the capacity of the pipe, if you, like going into the school. The majority of our schools today have two meg or better, and we are trying to improve the delivery by rolling out some of the optic fibre cabling. We have been able to get to a lot of our business schools only by satellite. Our last major contract was around Telstra.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Thanks. I am happy with that. What involvement has there been with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs—I think that is what it is still called—in the involvement of your programs in relation to the 336 Aboriginal teachers, and is that number an increase or decrease?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: My understanding is that it is an increasing number. As I said before, we have to do much more to improve that. We have done a little bit of late but we have to look to new strategies as well. Jody Broome is the director general of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. She is now on the newly reconstituted director general's advisory group on Aboriginal education, so she will

be party to all the strategies and initiatives that we look to roll out in this regard. We have been working very closely with Jody Broun in terms of the COAG Murdi Paaki trial. Many community working parties are raising educational issues as a priority for those communities, so they have been closely involved in that as well.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Can we come back to the professional teaching bodies referred to in questions 10 and 11?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: In terms of whether professional teaching bodies are effective in providing mentoring and support for teachers, yes to a variety of degrees. Certainly in their professional makeup there is a wide variety of them, either subject specialists or groupings et cetera. They are there to provide professional support. That is the raison d'etre. Some provide mentoring to a more or a lesser degree but with the development that we are seeing in terms of how the Institute of Teachers now interfaces with these groups and the educational sphere generally I think we will have a major impact there, because the institute is responsible for endorsing the professional development programs of providers, be they professional bodies, the department or private groups. They have to endorse those particular programs and make sure that those programs fit with teaching standards for new scheme teachers that they have developed. There is also a draft policy out on professional development requirements for new scheme teachers which will therefore link in with professional bodies and other bodies such as ourselves where we will be looking to and are already developing, if you like, professional learning and support materials that will be mapped against the standards which the institute has put together for new scheme teachers. So we see the institute as a mechanism of bringing it together with a degree of focus around the capabilities and capacities of new scheme teachers and eventually working through into more experienced levels in the teachers institute.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Some of the teaching colleges seem to say that having somebody to supervise or mentor their teachers was a problem because they could not afford them and then they were having difficulty: they had to cut their time to fit their budget. So when you said that it is their responsibility I thought that there is a problem here.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: There are two things. I was talking about the professional bodies. It might be the secondary principals and primary principals council, the English teachers or geography teachers, German, maths—

CHAIR: All the ones that we met with that our forum in Leichhardt.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: That is correct. I was making those comments in reference to those groups. What you are now referring to is the universities that are producing these teachers.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Yes.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: When they talk about mentoring they are talking about it in the practical sense: how they can afford to provide practical experience to teachers when the nature of the university reforms being brought to bear is seeing quite difficult times for those teaching areas. The number of staff they can now support from the money that they had given and distributed within the universities is raising a question in our mind about the quality capacity of teachers coming out in the future. That is why the teachers institute is so fundamental to hold those universities up to a certain standard in terms of production of new teachers. This is critical. Yes, they have to have practical experience. I was just talking to the dean of education from Sydney university last week and he was concerned about this area, as many of the deans of education are. What we now have to do is sit down with the deans of education and ask what we can do in a thoughtful and practical way. But we have to make sure that we are not just going to be filling the void of money that would otherwise have been there had not there been other changes in how universities are funded.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: It would seem in a sense to be two groups with begging bowls meeting. You have basically got a hole in the money. They have a hole in their money and they are asking you to fix it with your money.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: We have to ask whether there are other creative ways that we can do that.

Dr BROCK: Madam Chair, may I correct the public record? In my exuberance I indulged in hyperbole. Can I replace "rotten" with "poor"? "Rotten" has a moral tone to it that I did not intend. There is a real problem within the culture of universities, and with the funding issue, as Andrew said. It is not just the fact that funds now are far less available for faculties of education to engage in the quality of the supervision of their students that they once had; they also have fewer staff relative to what they used to have in running teacher education programs. The other issue is the culture of the university. Despite what some universities will say on the record, "publish or perish" is still pretty important. So there is a certain amount of attention within a faculty where some members go out and do what sometimes is perceived as the lower status job of spending their teacher free time supervising students in schools while some of their colleagues are churning out more research publications in more and more reputable, or often remote, journals. So there is a tension in the culture of universities. It seems to me that too often that side of their work is not sufficiently recognised by the university authorities. That also is in addition to the funding issue with the Commonwealth Government. That cultural issue also needs to be supported. The faculties of education and others need to be able to demonstrate that that work is valuable work and will score in merit-based promotion systems within the universities. That is just a caveat that I add to support what Andrew said.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Maybe I have derailed the discussion—

CHAIR: If you are going to derail it further, Ms Parker has been waiting—

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: No, I am trying to put it back on the track, because I thought professional teaching bodies meant things like universities but we are obviously talking about—

CHAIR: It definitely means the people we talked to at Leichhardt.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: I suppose we should then ask whether you think those groups are important? I mean, do the history teachers support other history teachers?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: Yes, they are. They provide a heck of a lot of professional support and they provide focus for those groups that want to go deep into their profession and particular elements of professional learning, which we are happy to support in a range of ways. I would have to say that we rely upon them because it is literally by their own grouping and their own self-efforts to their professional development that we can see that they are enhancing knowledge and understanding. And at the end of the day that produces better outcomes for our students, and that is great.

CHAIR: What kind of funding are we talking about?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: There is no certain amount. By submission, we would consider some degree of support but generally we see them as professional bodies which draw from their own membership rather than necessarily from the department.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Concerns were raised with us, specifically by school counsellors and teacher librarians, about not being included in the accreditation process through the teachers institute. Do you share those concerns and, if so, what does the department plan to do about that?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: To the extent that many of those are currently deemed to be teachers per se and the nature of the standards that have been developed for new scheme teachers initially—those entering the profession is where the teachers institute is at present. So the standards are there for the new scheme teachers but will then move on to higher levels of professional recognition and as such will develop standards for higher levels of professional standing in the institute. That means that has to apply to any teacher, be that teacher in a primary, secondary or any of the ancillary teaching positions, which would include librarians or others. It is currently a debate internally within the advisory groups that support the institute, and I am sure that over time we will get greater clarity. At this point in time they are going through their establishment phase and getting new scheme teachers

and trying to get the higher level sorted out. If there is further differentiation it may well happen down the track. But it is after we have the base in place.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Have you made representations to that body?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: Not specifically on this subject. However, at this point in time we are trying to say that the standards will apply to whomever a teaching qualification applies to. At this time it applies to those people who are teacher librarians as well as the teacher councillor areas.

CHAIR: Question 12 refers to whether you are doing anything specifically to attract former teachers back to the profession as part of the recruitment strategies. Is it a particular target group?

Ms KELLY: Yes, it is, Madam Chair. I think we mentioned last time, through our teach.NSW campaign that we launched in September 2002. Since that time our number of inquiries has quadrupled, and last year we had more than 36,000 inquiries, of which around 43 per cent were from teachers seeking to re-enter the profession or come back from interstate or overseas. Through our promotional materials in teach.NSW we certainly target people who may have left teaching to pursue another career or to travel or to work in other systems. One of the initiatives supporting that even further this year is the revision to the Teaching Service Act. We have opened up our promotion systems and people are able to apply for promotion positions who are not already members of the education teaching service. We hope that will encourage people who may have left our system to do other things to apply for some of our promotion positions. This should again make it more attractive for some people to come back because they do not have to start as a classroom teacher: they have their experience recognised.

Teachers returning to our work force will continue to be a priority. Another thing we have done relates to some of the later questions. We have changed our policy for recognition of prior service in terms of salary increments at time of employment. Previously we disadvantaged previous teachers who had not taught for some time by saying that for every three years they had not taught we would reduce where they came back on the incremental scale. That was quite a disincentive for teachers to return. As part of the process of reviewing our salary reviews at time of employment we now recognise previous teaching. We have removed those deductions for periods out of teaching. We have also recognised parts of a year of temporary teaching that we did not previously. That is another strategy that came into play in 2005.

CHAIR: The final group of questions relates to the recognition of work experience outside teaching—which you just got onto. It seems from what Associate Professor Francis said—and we have based this partly on the answers you gave us—that the change in criteria led to a disadvantage for a group of students.

Ms KELLY: I think it was a group of students who misinterpreted the change in criteria. As part of the change in criteria for our salary reviews we have stopped recognising industry experience that is not relevant to teaching apart from those targeted programs that include the Accelerated Teacher Training Program. The students at Charles Sturt University have had that clarified. Indeed, we contacted Professor Francis after we read his evidence and clarified it with him as well.

CHAIR: What you have submitted in writing and that explanation probably covers those three questions.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: I have some quick questions. I have concerns—which have been borne out by witnesses who have presented to our inquiry—about the targeting of talented graduates early by the private sector. How can the public system compete with that? Do you have a strategy in mind to deal with that?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: Before I hand over to Trish, we are very well aware of that issue. In fact, I was speaking to a couple of deans of education about that, seeking their advice about how we can change our practices. They want to make sure that some of the best students go into the public education system. There is no doubting the capacity of individual private, non-government schools to target talented students. It occurs almost before they go into university at some stages—so quite far down the track of being able to do early identification. The capacity for them to be flattered and

offered quite lucrative early starting salaries and targeted professional development even before they have finished university is no doubt a significant advantage that the non-government school sector has.

We can offer some degree of certainty and some degree of locational preference et cetera, but that does not always mean that you can say, "This school, this teacher" and do those linkages that the non-government sector can. But we are innovating and we recognise that we must change our practices to make sure that we can secure the best teachers coming out of those universities.

Ms KELLY: I will highlight three things that we have done in the past 12 months to try to make sure we secure those graduates for our public system. Last year at the beginning of term four or when graduating students completed their final professional experience placements, provided they had completed all other components of their course satisfactorily at that point, we issued them with an interim casual approval. We had close to 1,800 graduates working as casual teachers in our schools during term four last year. That gave schools and students the opportunity to get to know each other, and some of those students have subsequently probably got casual and temporary work. So it was a way of getting them to bond with our system and getting them to know our schools.

This year we have brought our timetable forward and we commenced interviews for the Graduate Recruitment Program in March—a number of weeks earlier than we have previously. We have also conducted interviews for mid-year graduates and fast-tracked their approval. So they now have approvals and can be appointed to schools as vacancies come up. We will be starting our appointment process of graduates for next year around August subject to vacancy availability, which again brings the timetable forward.

The other thing we have done is more of an administrative backdrop. We have improved our online services for graduates and facilitated their booking their interviews for the Graduate Recruitment Program online. That has been a big winner with the students themselves, because they have been able to go in and have a look, see that they would like to have their interview at a particular time, lock in that time and have it organised and know that it will happen. Behind the scenes we are also looking at how we can streamline our processes to make them more friendly for the graduating students. The final thing I will mention is the work that we are continuing to do with the deans of education. We had one meeting with them earlier this year and have another meeting scheduled for late June with some heads of department. We will be talking about a number of things, including supply and demand issues, but also working with them to see how we can continue to get into universities at the earlier stages to continue to promote public teaching in New South Wales schools.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: We have sat through hours of hearings during this inquiry, which was referred by the then Minister for Education and Training, Andrew Refshauge. We have listened to your presentations, which have all been positive. I am sitting here wondering, first, why did the Minister give us this inquiry if everything is so rosy; and, secondly, if it is not so rosy what are the problems with teacher recruitment and training and what answers should the Committee present in our final summary?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: You may well have to ask the first question of Andrew Refshauge. As to your second question, there is no doubt that the quality of teachers and the supply and retention of teachers in our system is absolutely crucial to the educational outcomes that we are seeking. If this does not work we do not have an education system that will meet the needs now, let alone into the future. It is in an increasingly dynamic environment—that is, fighting off recruiters from overseas seeking our teachers, making sure that we are seen as an attractive employer and not only a fair employer regarding terms and conditions but intellectually challenging as well. We know we are in for a fight in the future in terms of talent—that is a global estimate. We know that fight is on and are we ready for it—I suppose that might be the question that the Minister may have had in his mind at the time.

The issue we face is the ageing work force and the fact that the demographics more generally mean that we and all government and non-government areas will be fighting for a pool of talent, first, to go into teaching; and, secondly, to go into public education after they have got their degree and hopefully retain them there in a professionally challenging and dynamic environment. They are three areas that we must have come together to ensure that public education, which is the backbone of the

economic, personal and societal outcomes of this State, will be right. If we get this is wrong I do not want to even contemplate that future. That is why we are literally innovating our socks off trying to think what we can do to attract and retain the very best we can get.

There is always more we can do, and partly this process is designed to challenge us and say: What areas have we not seen or are not prepared for? You have put those challenges to us and, as a result of this process, we are going back and innovating. We are looking at areas that you and others around this table have raised and are putting them into our strategic HR plan, which is under development at the moment, to say that we have to be able to address these issues.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: In essence, when you say that we are in a dynamic environment you mean that it is as competitive as hell. Is that what you mean?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: It is a dynamic environment in terms of demographic shifts. That is locational as well as age; it is dynamic in terms of a market-driven process for education that has never been there in the same way as it is now. Education is now a positional good, not just an individual societal outcome issue. It is now dynamic in terms of intellectual as well as community expectations.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: When you say, "if we fail", you are obviously thinking about current teacher demographics and the competitive international market with increasing mobility of people.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: Indeed.

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: When you say, "if we fail", you are really saying that we have a huge problem. Huge numbers of teachers will retire shortly and if we do not replace them more successfully than has happened, or has needed to happen, in past decades, we will be in big strife and we will have no-one to teach our kids. Is that what you are saying?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: Not no-one to teach our kids—

The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS: Fewer teachers in a suboptimal situation.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: According to current projections we think we will be all right, but you do not just rest on those assumptions: you make sure you are doing everything within your power to meet those future challenges. There will be challenges right across the public service and in the private market. I have spoken with HR firms in the private sector and they can already see the future demand for skills—we have a skills formation factory, if you like. They are asking not only what we are doing in our schools now but how the schooling system is getting ready for that future as well. That is exactly why we have got our thinking caps on absolutely to meet that challenge.

CHAIR: We will finish with that warning and on that hopeful note. You have taken a couple of questions on notice. Can you give us a rough idea of when you might be able to provide answers to them?

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: I think we will be able to do that by the end of this week.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Questions ordered to be taken on notice.

CHAIR: Thank you and the department in general for your help with this inquiry.

Mr CAPPIE-WOOD: Thank you.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(The Committee adjourned at 11.11 a.m.)