

CORRECTED

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES

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

FORUM WITH PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS' COUNCIL

At Leichhardt on Wednesday 27 April 2005

The Committee met at 5.30 p.m.

PRESENT

The Hon. J. C. Burnswoods (Chair)

The Hon. K. F. Griffin

The Hon. R. M. Parker

CHAIR: On behalf of the Committee I thank you all for attending this forum, particularly as today is the first school day following the holidays. I am sure it has been a very long day. I thank the Professional Teachers Council, who suggested we hold this forum. We thought it was a great idea. We are pleased that so many associations have been able to attend today. Hansard staff are here to report the forum and provide us with a transcript, which assists us when we draft our report. The first time you speak I ask that you say your name and the association you represent. If some of you do not want your name in the transcript you should let us know and you can be referred to as witness A and so on. Obviously it is better for us to be able to use names. I apologise for the remaining members of the Committee who are not present. We are a Committee of six members. Today we have three members present. My name is Jan Burnswoods and I am the Chair. Kayee Griffin is a Government member of the committee and Robyn Parker, our Deputy Chair, is a representative of the Opposition. So there is a bipartisan presence here.

The Committee has provided you with a list of discussion points and our terms of reference. We do not have to follow the list. We are anxious to hear your views and you may not want to talk about the discussion points we have circulated. That is fine. Our terms of reference relate only to schools and teacher training sites. We take the view that our brief is broad enough to consider issues relating to TAFE, particularly the crossover between TAFE and schools, that are relevant to recruitment and training in schools. Some of you may want to refer to the increasing relationships between school and TAFE and any problems in the crossover. We need to be conscious of the fact that our terms of reference are strictly focused on schools, but we can refer to issues relating to TAFE so long as we do not deal with them at great length.

We want to hear from the various associations represented at this forum. As far as we can, we will divide discussions into recruitment and training, although they will overlap. As to the first suggested discussion point—attracting graduates to New South Wales public schools—we know an amount of poaching goes on. The first point relates to the actual intake into training, then making sure that good people come to government schools after training. Other points for discussion are retention of new teachers, the department's role and whether the resignation rate in the first five years is high and, if so, why. Another point relates to overseas trained teachers, particularly in areas of science, maths and technology, which has been raised with us by many witnesses. We have grouped those discussion points under recruitment. We are here to listen to you.

Ms SUE GAZIS: I am the President of the Professional Teachers Council [PTC] Board and a representative of the English Teachers Association of New South Wales Inc. On behalf of the PTC I thank you for the opportunity to talk to you. It is good to see that recruitment, training support and looking at all stages of teacher development is on the list for discussion. We see that as an important thing. We see the relationships with organisations as being quite important. We find the relationship around higher education in terms of teacher training organisations at the pre-service level is an important relationship and one that student teachers actually need to see because teaching is a lifestyle. For it to be valued they need to see all the players work as one, rather than a balkanised profession.

The PTC is very much about ensuring those relationships actually operate. It is within that context that we open up a whole range of these things. The relationship with the Department of Education and Training, which a lot of the recruitment seems to focus on, is not just the role of the department, it is the role of the profession and it is what we actually do as teachers, beginning with our students in the classroom, promoting the profession, and within universities and the relationship beyond that. I think there is a view that universities cease to be involved once the students leave. We feel that is not true. If you look around the teaching associations, they are very heavily involved with the teaching associations because we see that as a powerful thing. So we will start with that and take it from there.

CHAIR: We have heard differing evidence about the role of universities. Someone from the University of Western Sydney made the point that they try to have an ongoing relationship with the schools their students go to. No-one has made the point before about the role of the university and the various associations.

Ms GAZIS: They do a huge amount of volunteer work. Around here you can see them working part-time. Some of them are part-time as university lecturers and they operate that way. So it

is a volume of work they would not get normally get involved with, such as the beginning teacher workshops that the different associations run. So there is a nice relationship that operates. For those that do not get involved with professional development sometimes it is easy to cry out and damn them.

CHAIR: Would anyone like to add to that? As I said, it does not matter which area we go to next. It is better to have a proper compensation than to stick to one point.

Mr JOHN ROE: I am from the Association for Studies of Religion Inc. and previously the University of Sydney. There is a lot of emphasis on getting people into teaching. Maybe the retention has a lot to do with what happens often in the first five years, but certainly in those very first years. I note that a lot of private educational institutions, non-State ones, do give differential staffing to first year and second year teachers. So that they are brought into the profession in a way that is nurturing rather than thrown in the deep end, you might say. I think that is one of the particular problems. Then picking up what we have just been saying is the notion of where the profession goes to. If you start life as a lawyer you will be paid about the same as a beginning teacher. Five years later that is different. The pay scales have something to do with keeping people in the business.

Also in relation to that, I refer to the culture of teaching in terms of appropriate professional development. This links a little bit with the ongoing and future work of the Institute of Teachers, but for the moment there is no real clear path of proper support from the State for ongoing professional development in terms of sabbaticals, or whatever it might happen to be for teachers. I know a lot of teachers in private schools get their six months off every five or so years. This does not happen within the department. I think that is something to be addressed.

CHAIR: Has professional development improved over the last few years, the provision and the funding of it?

Mr ROE: I think the money has dropped away. That is the problem.

Mr MICHAEL HORSLEY: It is hard to answer a question like that. That is a very complex area where there have been new government policies, where schools have sought to respond to the new government policies. I am from the Economics and Business Educators. I am also from the University of Sydney. We have a division of professional learning and I am the partnerships person with schools in that division. It is a simplistic thing to say that professional development money has dropped away. It is a much more complex area anyway. A lot more energy has gone into thinking about professional development. The universities are in the field of professional development as an adjunct to their income. There have been changes in the way the government funds professional development. There are new policies; there is a change supposedly in school culture. It is a very complex area that would require a large discussion.

The head of our professional development division at our university is here as well and may want to say something about this. It is very complex. In relation to new teachers and beginning teachers and retaining them as career teachers, perhaps we can say something about that a little later. That area is incredibly complex and it is very difficult to untangle all the strands. For most of us here our bread and butter is professional development. We have a lot to say about that.

Mr MARK HOWIE: I am from the English Teachers Association of New South Wales Inc. As to the idea of professional status, one of the things this inquiry might profitably look at is that it ties into other things that are going on in broader contextual issues, such as the Vinson inquiry, and try to have a look at what that has to say about working conditions that we are offering people coming into the profession. In some cases it is totally deplorable. If I take my own faculty, for example, we have 11 people competing to get on 2½ computers, the half being so old and so slow that you are just wasting your time trying to use it. Queuing up for that, it is inefficient, it is frustrating. You then do your work at home because that is the quickest, easiest way to do it, and that has an impact on your home life. These sorts of things are not incredibly attractive to people looking ahead while they are at university to what they might get in a more professional workplace. Buildings are falling down around you, things are leaking. It does not inspire a confidence in your own professionalism.

Another thing to think about is some of the solutions to the issue of shortages that are being mooted around different States and whether in the long run they are going to be profitable, in

particular, the idea of non-subject specialists as a way of dealing with shortages. You create a sort of a class of generalist teacher and organise your school or your curriculum around the idea that it is no longer a subject specialisation. That goes against a good deal of Australian and international research about the subject specialist teacher in the classroom who makes the difference. Unfortunately, the situation at the moment in many New South Wales schools is that we are not guaranteeing a subject specialist in front of the kids.

CHAIR: Is that mostly related to science and maths?

Mr HOWIE: I am an English teacher and I have people around me reporting that they cannot guarantee English teachers; they are farming out English lessons to PE teachers and whoever else might be short within the curriculum.

CHAIR: Is that in some so-called too-hard-to-staff schools?

Mr HOWIE: In particular, yes and out of Sydney.

CHAIR: It happens broadly?

Mr HOWIE: Yes. All members of our association report that it is a very common experience for them as head teachers to try to skill-up someone who is not trained in the subject. In the long run that is doing students a disservice.

CHAIR: Could they have previously been a primary teacher?

Mr HOWIE: No, typically the deputy is looking at the timetable as saying, "Okay, I have got this person six periods short, and they are a science teacher so they can have that year 7 English class". It is a pragmatic decision based on convenience. In the time of rapid syllabus change it increases the workload of the teachers around that teacher in having to support them. Teachers are on a full teaching load and not getting any sort of allowance or whatever to be able to put time into that person, so the support becomes ad hoc. It is a self-defeating situation. And it is a common one. Our association looks for any solution to this; we cannot be looking at the idea of creating generalist teachers in the secondary setting who can work across different subject areas.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: The Committee has heard many people talk about teacher retentions and graduates being cherry-picked by the private schools. Earlier today the Committee heard about overseas shortages—so you have lost out in two areas—and about graduates are going into a school environment. You are talking about the facilities and infrastructure more than the nurturing environment as such. What do teachers say when graduates come into the environment? Is it that suddenly they are thrust into an environment where they do not have a computer that works, no air conditioning, and there is a lack of nurturing?

Mr HOWIE: Yes. From talking with younger teachers and hearing them talk in public forums such as the DET Futures project, they report that they talk to their friends in private industry and hear about their working conditions and compare them to their own. They ask: What the hell am I doing here when I could have an easier life? Another complicating factor might be that they had no control over where they started work. So they may have to cross Sydney, spending 1½ hours in getting to work only to find that they do not have access to a computer, air conditioning, or their own classroom and all those sorts of things. Other workers have a car, a laptop and nice working conditions; so they bail out, particularly if there are complicating factors around them and the level of support they may be getting within the school. Schools are not structured to offer that support. You are asked to do it in your own time.

One thing to look at might be reducing the workload of beginning teachers and the person mentoring them so that they have a decent amount of time to spend together and do things that we know are good practice. For instance, setting up action research projects around their own work where they are investigating issues of concern to them and setting about improving their own practice and involving them in that process in a thoughtful, professional way rather than some piecemeal way such as getting an hour of this at district office on behaviour management, or an hour of this at the school on OH and S or whatever, and then off you go.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: If you had been provided adequate professional development and mentoring at the beginning would that cover for the fact that there are other disadvantages?

Mr HOWIE: I think that for the bulk of graduates they come very well disposed towards working. They are committed to the kids and to public education. They are much more willing to overlook difficulties in their working conditions if they feel other things are there to support them and that they are making the maximum development that they can in a reasonable amount of time.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: You think that after a couple of years they would not be cherry picked once again by private schools or the ministry?

Mr HOWIE: The great bulk of people who go into the public system would not be. Probably the problem is when they are wavering at the start, as you mentioned. I have a year teaching at the university and I saw so many students go for their department interview but not get an offer until they had already got three offers from private schools. Those people are wavering between, but economic necessity may be forcing them to take the private school job. They will go, but others may have the luxury of being able to wait a bit longer and they will hang on. I think it is something to do with the efficiency of that process that might be looked at. Moving the interviews to earlier in the year has not solved it.

CHAIR: I gather the department has done that.

Mr HOWIE: It has done that, but that has not solved the problem if the offers are not coming out earlier, because that is what they are waiting for.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: The Committee heard evidence that the increase interviews were done earlier than in the non-government sector. You are saying that even if that interview process might be brought forward, offers are still not coming out to counter what is happening?

Mr HOWIE: That is right.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: What is the time lag?

Mr HOWIE: From my experience of teaching at university was that come November students who wanted a job were getting them in the private schools. The DET is not necessarily in a position to offer students a job at that time. Vacancies might come up in January. Something has to be done to get people into the system in a different way.

CHAIR: Is that a matter of guaranteeing a job or a particular school?

Mr HOWIE: Either/or, I would say. But some sort of guarantee that the teacher will be getting a pay packet from 28 January.

CHAIR: Even if the department cannot tell the teacher which school he or she would be at, but can guarantee a job?

Mr HOWIE: Yes.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: How does that relate to your other comment about the department not knowing about vacancies until January?

Mr HOWIE: I guess what I am saying is that if you are going to hang around waiting until January to appoint people they will go. The department has to decide whether they want the people into systems and find some way to get them into the system is that is not dependent on being able to move a chess piece onto a blank square; having a look at broader resourcing of staffing and schools.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: In your opinion what timeframe would be needed for people to be told that there was a job, not necessarily which school?

Mr HOWIE: As close to finishing the university course as possible. Late October or November would be good.

CHAIR: What about people who are more targeted, with scholarships or indigenous teachers? There are groups of people who have a much better idea of where they are going.

Mr HOWIE: That has been one solution in the past. In a way that cuts the same way as well, because someone could be told that they are targeted but they are hanging on until the week before school starts to be told where they are going. That was the position with my partner and some people are not willing to do that. We live in the Blue Mountains and she ended up teaching at Picton. Some people are not willing to take that risk when there is a private school down the road, which will give them a job. Again, there is a level of uncertainty even within the guarantee that is enough to make some people opt out of the public system.

CHAIR: I hear muttering of agreement from other attendees.

Ms NERINA PRETLOVE: I am Vice-President of the Professional Teachers Council and of the Technology Educators Association of New South Wales. I have just come from my school site where one of my teachers has resigned. He was employed for three periods. After his third period today, it was all too much. He is a scholarship person, he is willing to pay back \$16,000 to the Government because he has discovered that teaching in three periods was not for him. To me that reflects what is happening at his university site which did his accelerated program. That means, he has not had enough time to reflect on his teaching practice, to establish that teaching was not the profession for him. As a consequence, he ends up with a \$16,000 or \$17,000 debt and I end up without a teacher, again.

I am really concerned about placing new graduates into hard-to-staff schools and then putting them on full teaching loads. It is hard work at the best of times, but when you are straight out of university it is a punishing task. In my school site we have 16 overseas-trained teachers in what used to be a DSP school. Everyone loses out in this situation. Some teachers came in with two weeks orientation to our culture of teaching, our culture of education and culture of our students. Everyone loses out: the students lose out, the teachers lose out. There are days when I do not know how they come back to school. I find that the head teachers, particularly across all KLAs, are making up for the shortcomings in accelerated teaching programs. Time is not developed for reflection: over a four-year degree, you have plenty of time to reflect, this is not available when you are doing it in 12 or 18 months.

That is starting to show up, and cracks have appeared across our teaching practice for our newly appointed teachers. I am in a TAS faculty, so a lot of my staff come from trades and they come to teaching with what I call a trade mentality; in other words, you arrive at work at a set time and you go home at a set time. They do not understand the vocational surrounds of teaching and they find it very difficult to engage in teaching as a career. They see it as a job. That also leads to problems for them in their take up of their career path, it is quite difficult for them to make that mental shift.

In a hard-to-staff school, the number of new teachers coming in is significantly high. That means that there is constant training and professional development of teachers, which once again falls back on executive staff at the school. In a faculty like mine with three new teachers, that means my entire non-teaching load is taken up with their supervision, which is required of one period per week. Given that you have three periods off per week, that is my supervision for my new staff and it does not leave me with any time for my own professional practice during my school time. Consequently that goes into the other part of my life.

Basically, there have been a lot of short cuts to get bums on seats, without much thought to the consequences for the staff in schools and how much professional development is now having to be done by head teachers, by professional organisations such as those represented here tonight, to make up for those shortcomings. Economic expediency is not the answer. It is costing both students in their learning and teachers in their professional practice.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: You mentioned overseas-trained teachers. What would be appropriate in the culture of schools and students for an overseas-trained teacher to be able to move comfortable into the school system?

Ms PRETLOVE: Anything less than 12 months practice in school is not adequate. It is not fair for them and is seriously not fair. If they come from a culture where all the students sit down in straight lines, or even stand up when the teacher enters the classroom, and they come with equipment and they go into a school where students come without equipment and who exhibit challenging behaviour, the teacher needs to have practice and needs to experience that practice, almost like an internship. That would be a much better practice than giving two or three weeks orientation. I understand that lately the DET has changed some procedures, but it still needs a much deeper focus and much more experience for them. Basically, they need hands-on experience.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: For overseas-trained teachers, the problem is more to do with the culture of students rather than their ability to teach?

Ms PRETLOVE: That is all bound up together. Knowledge of the curriculum is important: there is no way you can learn a new syllabus and a new curriculum within a couple of weeks. Or, if you are in a TAS faculty you might have six or seven different syllabuses to have to refer to. I think it is a multifaceted issue.

CHAIR: I think you said you have 16 overseas-trained teachers.

Ms PRETLOVE: Yes.

CHAIR: Are they from particular countries of original training? Are there more problems with some countries and cultures than others? Have they, on the whole, been in Australia for quite a while or are they relatively new migrants? I know you cannot be very precise about some of it, but it would be of assistance to the Committee. You are not the first person to have made those comments and we are not quite sure how to characterise the typical overseas-trained teacher.

Ms PRETLOVE: I can speak only for my site. Of the 16 overseas-trained teachers, 14 are from Fiji, India or South Africa and they all come from an Indian culture. One has to be careful here. It is about the way you look at things. I am talking about a cultural orientation. It is not necessarily an individual thing; it is a cultural thing. It takes a long time to absorb another culture. The other two people are Yugoslavian.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: So far as the mix in the school is concerned—the different cultural backgrounds of the students—is it similar to or broader than the mix in the countries where these teachers were trained?

Ms PRETLOVE: The mix is 54 per cent Pacific Islander—

CHAIR: Does it include many from Fiji?

Ms PRETLOVE: No, none. Sorry, there may be half a dozen or so. Then a bit of a melting pot and probably 10 per cent Aboriginal and maybe 20 per cent Anglo-English students.

CHAIR: Is it the case that your school, with its more challenging needs, is more likely to get a higher percentage of overseas-trained teachers?

Ms PRETLOVE: That appears to be so. I think most schools in the western suburbs or the south-western suburbs are in that situation. Judging by what comes through from my professional organisation, that seems to be a common experience.

CHAIR: The gaps are being filled with overseas-trained teachers or, perhaps, the generalists that Mark was talking about. So that certain schools tend to get teachers who bring their own problems with them to some extent through lack of training or as a result of their own cultural background?

Ms PRETLOVE: That is my belief, yes.

CHAIR: Some schools in Sydney, for instance, would not be facing these kinds of issues?

Ms PRETLOVE: I understand that is correct.

Ms GILLIAN LOVELL: I represent the English Teachers' Association of New South Wales. I am also teaching English Method at two universities at the moment—the University of Technology Sydney [UTS], which has just re-established its secondary English training course, and the University of New South Wales. Before that I spent two years full-time at Macquarie University, so this is my fifth year of teaching method. I want to reiterate what Mark said a little bit earlier about cherry picking to the private system. I have known too many idealistic teachers who were targeted by the Department and simply not appointed who finally joined the private system. As recently as February this year a teacher rang me and said, "I have three offers from different private schools. What will I do?" I had to say, "Go. You need a job." That is really sad and it happens all the time. It has happened to many of my students.

Another thing that concerns me is the quality of teachers who are supervising our "prac" students in schools. There are some wonderful people that the universities used to supervise students, but there is a goodly amount of teachers who should not be supervising students, because of their attitude to that training system. They sometimes use students to simply run their classes so that they have a little break for two or three weeks. They are not good models of teaching. This is partly because they are paid peanuts. I think that if that system were honoured by reasonable pay for those particular teachers, and it was treated seriously by the school—rather than: "Hands up. Who wants to have a student. We have to take six," or something, it may work a little better. I am really concerned when I visit my students in schools and see them watching really mediocre models.

CHAIR: Who decides that "we have to take six"?

Ms LOVELL: I suppose universities are always desperate to get teachers to supervise their students and a certain amount of ringing up schools goes on, saying, "Please, please, please. We really need to place two or three teachers with you. We are desperate." Finally, the deputy, or whoever it is, will go to the English Department and say, "Look, you have just got to take three students. This University's desperate." So, grudgingly, someone says, "Oh, all right. I'll have a student." Or the people that know that this could be a little bit of a holiday say they will have a student. Occasionally it has a really bad effect and is obviously detrimental to the students and probably detrimental to the school as well.

I have noticed another interesting thing. I have taught in three different universities and the number of hours spent in the method varies amazingly from university to university. I cannot speak for any other subject but, for instance, in a typical semester our students who are doing their teacher training year at Macquarie University get 39 hours of instruction in English Method. The University of New South Wales is similar, but at UTS they get 63 hours of training. So, that is a big discrepancy. After semester one any of those students could be appointed to teach English by the time they finish their full year of study, but they may in semester two be doing another subject—history or ESL, or whatever. Some of them may return and do some more English, but they can all be appointed in theory after semester one. My concern is that the universities seem to be very uneven in the training they offer.

CHAIR: Do you think the new Institute of Teachers is likely to look into some of these discrepancies?

Ms LOVELL: I would hope so, but I do not yet know the details of that from the Institute and how wide its framework is going to be. I have heard that the teacher-training institutions will probably have to provide some answers on those sorts of things.

CHAIR: With regard to the variance, I suppose different universities might come up with all kinds of excellent arguments as to why they may vary. One may say that it has fewer hours of English Method but that is also offering something that is more general, something that does not have that title but is just as useful or even more useful. There are those kinds of issues that may make it difficult to

measure. Should we conclude, perhaps, that the quality of teacher training in some universities is actually much better than the quality of teacher training in some others?

Ms LOVELL: Well, I teach at UTS and at the University of New South Wales. I know which set of students knows more about teaching English in the classroom at the end of the year. I do not think it is necessarily a case of them picking up what they do not know somewhere else—although there are Sociology of Education and Psychology of Education courses going on elsewhere, which gives them a broader background. I do not think you can replace easily a good grounding in teaching your subject in the classroom, particularly in light of the enormous changes to the English syllabus over the last few years, which has broadened the scope of the subject.

CHAIR: Someone might argue that that is perhaps a rather narrow way of looking at teacher education; that, given are the changes in the 30 or 40 years that that graduates have been in the public education system, perhaps the University community should focus on different things?

Ms LOVELL: That is probably very true, but I think also that if we are going to have a compulsory subject such as English, and eventually two units of it are accounted for in the Higher School Certificate—and I think all subjects would probably make this claim—that the practitioners in that subject need to be really expert in it. I do not think you necessarily gain on the general when you give away the particular.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: I was interested in your comments about the practicum component. A number of witnesses before the Committee have suggested that the block approach does not result in the best outcome because there are supervising teachers who are not up to scratch. The Committee has heard suggestions about how the practicum component could be improved. I would be interested to hear your suggestions for seeking better supervisory teachers, what practicum model you believe would result in a better outcome, and how best to achieve that?

Ms LOVELL: As far as the practicum model goes, I have now operated in three different models. At Macquarie University the students are attached to a school for the entire year and they visit one day each week. That is a little difficult to get used to sometimes because of the continuity aspect. But for most of my students there, and for the teachers who become involved in that particular model, it actually works very well because the students are there for the entire year they do get accepted eventually as the teacher who comes on Thursday or whatever day it is, and they see a lot of development in the students and in the school system.

Also, the teachers who are involved in that program have much better ongoing relationship with the University, which goes from year to year. I like that model a lot. UTS has two blocks of three to four weeks, one in semester one and the other in semester two, which is sort of the sudden "drop them in and let them sink or swim" model—which is my least favourite, particularly as some students, for instance, have just started their "prac" this week and if they are the students who do not do English in semester two, that is the only "prac" they will get in English. They are doing it quite early in the semester, so they do not even have a full load of theoretical training behind them. The University of New South Wales simply sends them into the school for the whole of term three, which is just a longer block.

CHAIR: Teaching one subject or possibly more than one?

Ms LOVELL: At the University of New South Wales is usually just one, but can be two. They sometimes find themselves teaching some history classes because there are not enough English classes, for instance, but they really should be doing just the one subject. As far as which model works best is concerned, I suppose I would probably prefer the Macquarie University model, if anything. There are pros and cons. As far as getting better teachers to supervise them while they are in schools, I think that is really a matter of making that role really important and honoured. That is why I think it works better at Macquarie because Macquarie has developed an ongoing relationship with many of the teachers that work in the system. They are called the master teacher system. I think they should change the "master", but that is the system they have been using for a long time. At least most of those teachers feel they are used from year to year and they get better and better at their jobs. The other systems seem to be a bit hit and miss. I never seem to see the same supervising teacher two years

running in the other systems. That system needs to be built up, better paid and to be regarded as a career advancement to be able to have students to train. A different attitude needs to be taken to it.

Mr MICHAEL HORSLEY, I am the President of the Economics and Business Teachers Association. The association has a lot of people who come from other professions, from the money market. Four of the members of our directorate board have been professional economists, for example. So, I will give this group of community a practice spin on these things here. Firstly, from the point of view of attraction, it would seem that the private school system is much more nimble in conducting programs to attract graduates. For example, in the past two years the Catholic system has employed recruiters to make a personal contact with students at universities whereas the DET system is very much a mass-oriented system. This makes a big difference in how the students respond. There is a recruiter on our board, so I am speaking about one of our people. We think that is making it much more difficult to attract high-quality graduates into New South Wales public schools.

We also have a fair degree of problem with internships. Most of the universities have developed teacher education programs with an internship at the end. The Newcastle internship is quite a long period of time. At Sydney it is quite a long period of time and other universities have developed these internships. Interns are qualified and they could be teaching but they undertake the internship, normally without being paid, to increase their skills and learn more. They have more responsibility because they are qualified—we might call them associate teachers or whatever.

The private schools are using the internship arrangements to identify high-quality teachers and they will make offers to the interns, in many cases a loyalty bonus for staying at the school. For people who undertake internships in government schools, though, all they do is go back into the main part of the system so it is not possible for the schools to make a relationship with them. They can identify them for casual teaching. This means many of the highest-quality graduates. We had three of those on our board of directors who were interning at government schools but were offered, as a result of discussions, positions at private schools, which they took and which we think is relatively sad.

Retention: Again, our members have worked in other professions. Obviously salary is not the thing that is important in our thinking about retention. I guess we would follow the expectancy value model. One model of why teachers join the profession is that they see themselves as teachers. People tell them they are going to be good teachers, they have positive experiences, and this grows into a lifestyle. However, this expectancy value can break down if there is a lack of professionalism, especially in a school that is a difficult-to-staff area and where there is not enough management and energy to support them. So, we have a number of members who have left as a result of this. We would follow the Helen Watt and Paul Richardson view about why people join teaching and we think that has implications for the retention process.

Just a few things on other aspects of training and support: We would think that accelerated teacher training programs would be a terrible mistake. Many of our members have come from a hothouse environment and we do not think that would be very appropriate. Reflection is all. Reflection leads to collaboration and working together to solve problems in teaching. So we cannot see how accelerated teacher training would be the answer to developing a high-quality teaching force. Our members feel pretty strongly about that. We have had a meeting about this.

On pre-service training, we would support one of the other speakers that more time needs to be allocated to the pre-service training component, which is related to the pedagogical model of teaching your subject area. We would view the Institute of Teachers as making it more difficult to attract graduates in New South Wales public schools. The reason for this would be—this is what our members are discussing—the current process of the New South Wales DET is sticking to their one-year probation. It is obvious that people are not going to meet those standards, if they are taken seriously, in one year, which gives people teaching in private schools an advantage in meeting the standards. Also, we would see the support and induction provided would be critical for the teachers to meet the standards—the beginning, early career teachers, graduate teachers.

CHAIR: Can you explain for us why private schools would have an advantage? DET is sticking to one-year induction and it issues certificates.

Mr HORSLEY: The current process, which is still under negotiation, is that the DET already has—people know more about this than me—a one-year teacher certificate and a probation period. During this time there is supposed to be induction, mentoring and support to reach this. However, the institute Act specifies two to three years for this process. So, already you can look at it and say that DET teachers are going to reach the standard quicker, but the reality is in a difficult-to-staff school meeting those standards is going to be very difficult. In fact, the question would be could you meet those standards in a school that has very difficult children?

CHAIR: When you say it will advantage private schools or teachers in private schools, it will not advantage all of them? It will depend very much on the kind of school the teacher is in?

Mr HORSLEY: The Institute is developing processes to make sure this is not happening, but it will be hard. We would see many people who would be in teaching will be turned away, so that is a problem. Another problem we see is that already almost all of our board take student teachers. It is not going to be easy to increase the output of teachers, because we have a problem in training them within the profession at the moment. All universities pretty much cannot find any more places for teacher education and training, so it is not possible to increase the amount coming out in a time when there will be a big shortage.

CHAIR: What would encourage economics teachers to do more practical? Money? Is it increasing career progression?

Mr HORSLEY: Most things, up until the institute, about beginning teachers were very much on the backburner. It was not a key priority. It has become a key priority because people can see the shortage in the future. I do not think it is money, I definitely do not think it is money. I think it is to do with the nature of collaboration in mentoring and induction. Other professions do mentoring and induction much better. Most of our members would say we really lag behind. It is going to take us a really long time to build up.

CHAIR: What would we change? Would it be time off? Give us some suggestions of what might make the change?

Mr HORSLEY: One of the critical issues of retention is acceptance in the first term, the graduate teacher is accepted as a professional. Anything that gets in the way of that we think will increase the career decision to leave teaching. There have been studies done on that.

CHAIR: We have been told by a couple of teachers that schools can be a closed shop for new persons coming in.

Mr HORSLEY: Our association is running much more beginning teaching stuff, and we think that is very positive, to join other members of the profession in a similar boat outside the school. We see that as more critical now, especially since the institute model is a supervision model. We are developing mentoring in New South Wales but now we have a supervision layer where people will decide whether you are meeting the standards. So, coming out of your school and being with others, with other experienced teachers and colleagues from other schools—we see professional associations playing a bigger role now than in the past. We think this is probably a much more important area of our work. We have five beginning teacher things on this year. Last year we had four, the year before we had two.

CHAIR: What sort of things are they?

Mr HORSLEY: One would be a meeting at the end of the first six weeks where beginning teachers would have the opportunity to talk about certainly curriculum issues. We have heard that there is a short period of time at university to study your curriculum area and how to teach it. So, coming out of the school, working with others, more experienced teacher leaders, and others in the same boat as you, we are doing a lot more of that than we used to. There have been big changes in assessments in schools and it has been very difficult for the system of training and education to catch up with the assessment changes. So, we are doing a lot more beginning teacher, graduate teacher stuff on assessment and how to assess the kids, and having teacher leaders bring in a lot of assessment tasks

and sharing. I think that is probably the way to go to support teachers. Mostly beginning teachers are very positive about that. If they do not get that, it will make it more difficult for them.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: You said the Institute of Teachers process would be a detraction for retention of teachers. Can you explain that, and perhaps also comment on whether, if there were incentives built into the Institute of Teachers accreditation process, perhaps based on higher remuneration or other conditions, that that would make a difference?

Mr HORSLEY: I am not sure what your question is. The first part seems to be—

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: I thought you said that going through the process of the Institute of Teachers would be a detraction for some? Maybe I misunderstood you?

Mr HORSLEY: The institute is overlaying a set of standards that you must reach. The process of reaching that is a supervision model. People will watch you teach and will talk about what you did and you will be judged. There is a problem with that in the first term of teaching because if you do not feel accepted as a professional it is highly likely that you will leave. So, the institute is very sensibly moving things into term two and term three when people can rise up from the difficulties they are facing. Probably we are going to have to hone that process up a lot more. Why? The struggle at the start of your teaching career is so great, to add a new layer of expectations and to make it more difficult is going to convince people to leave and there will be less retention.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: You do not think that incentives based on participating in that process would alleviate that as well?

Mr HORSLEY: It is hard for me to think of incentives that would work for beginning teachers at this stage. We have been pretty positive about the institute. We are saying it is going to raise the status of the profession and beginning teachers are saying that is a really good thing. To get there is the hard thing. Retention is a real problem. People are making career decisions differently than they did before. There is a lot more movement out and around. In our association there is a lot of movement between the private and government school systems at the moment. Most of it is out of the government school system in our particular professional group.

Ms MEG PICKUP: I am the Vice-President of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, also known as ACHPER. I also am from the University of Sydney, although that is not a plot on our behalf to dictate the meeting in any way, shape or form. In response to your last comment about the Institute of Teachers and why it might be detrimental in the eyes of students, the first thing from the students that I work with, and they are physical education and health education teachers, is that \$80 for a poor student is a real impost. They do not see beyond that of getting a career and so on. The fact that they have to belong to the institute to teach in any school in New South Wales and the fact that they have to pay that every year becomes a concern to them initially.

Every other teacher who started teaching prior to 2003 does not have to be a member of the Institute. They see in a sense that they have been isolated and made to feel different. I think through time that will disappear. For example, five years down the track I don't think that will be an issue. But for them to be the first group to join this year it has been a real issue. In terms of outcomes, the students see it basically as death by outcomes. They have got 46 criteria they have to meet at the end of their second year of teaching to be deemed to be a professional teacher, a competent teacher. That is fairly daunting for people at the pre-service level and about to enter the service. That may be something that needs to be looked at as well.

I have a couple of other points I would like to raise. The first one is in relation to targeting graduates. A number of students from the University of Sydney have said to me, "We intend going overseas in our first year out from university." That is automatically criteria that makes them not able to be targeted. What happens is they go and get some teaching experience overseas, they come back, they want to join the public education system in New South Wales and they have to go to the bottom of the list basically. If there was a possibility that those students could maintain their targeted stages—go overseas, get their experience, come back and still be considered to be targeted—maybe that is some way that we are going to retain teachers in government schools.

CHAIR: What about starting salaries?

Ms PICKUP: Certainly that would be very helpful and when you compare starting salaries for government school teachers versus non-government school teachers that needs to be considered as well.

CHAIR: I was thinking of the group that goes overseas and comes back. Does that have a salary impact?

Ms PICKUP: I guess it will, I am not sure. I am not familiar with how they are involved or put on the scale. I guess there may be some recognition of their previous service overseas. I do not know if there is a significant difference in relation to that. I am not sure as far as that is concerned. My association just this month held an extremely successful beginning teachers' conference as a result of a grant that we received through the Australian Government Quality Teaching program. We were able to have 52 beginning teachers either in their first year or second year of teaching attend that conference, which was held here in Sydney. We had people attend from a vast number of places in New South Wales but mostly out of suburban parts of Sydney. We did have somebody come from Broken Hill and somebody come from Condobolin to attend that conference. It was called "From Surviving to Thriving".

The whole purpose of it was to check how these people had fared in their first year or their first term of teaching, depending on whether they were first year or second year teachers. Also there is a follow-up where they were able to nominate whether they wanted to be mentored or not. Of those I think the vast majority did. So we put them in groups of three with an experienced teacher with from 6 to 10 years experience who is interested in moving to the next phase of their career, that is, to become a head teacher and the like. The mentoring program will be conducted at the University of Wollongong on the thirteenth of next month. It will be done online, if need be. If it is closer it can be done one on one. It looks to me to be an extremely exciting program to be involved in. Certainly the young teachers who attended that conference found it to be an extremely positive experience for them.

CHAIR: Is the University of Wollongong being funded?

Ms PICKUP: It was funded through ACHPER. ACHPER conducted it. I guess through the Professional Teachers Council [PTC] as well, but also the PDHPE Teachers Association supported it. It was across institutions. We had government sector representation and the Association of Independent Schools representation and the CEC represented on the organising committee. There was strong support from Rosemary Davis from the Department of Education and Training who not only spent time at the conference and spoke about quality teaching pedagogy, she also made sure that she met every member who attended who was from a government school. She identified that there were three teachers in particular who needed specific support and she has subsequently followed up with that. One of those was the person who was from Condobolin, who was the only PDHPE teacher in the school and feeling particularly isolated and in desperate need of help. It was very beneficial to that teacher in particular.

In relation to attracting graduates to New South Wales public schools one of the big issues is that non-government schools are prepared to take graduates on before they have actually graduated, so that they can teach in non-government schools from the beginning of the fourth year of their degree as casual teachers and already become acculturated into those systems or school structures. In government schools, particular schools have to make a case to the Department of Education and Training to have a non-qualified teacher, somebody in their fourth year of undergraduate training, to act as a casual teacher in a school. They have to be able to show that there is no other qualified teacher in their area that they could draw upon. I have had students come back who have had an extremely successful third year practicum in a government school. They have come to me at the beginning of their fourth year of their training and said, "Meg, my school has contacted me. They want me to come in and do casual teaching. Can I do it?" I said, "It is my understanding the school has to prove to the department that it cannot fill that role in any other way than by using you. Then it can apply for you for a casual number."

CHAIR: Will the institute's rules about people having to be fully qualified change that practice?

Ms PICKUP: I am not sure. I do not know whether that affects it or not.

CHAIR: That is a matter we can take up.

Ms PICKUP: I do not know the answer to that, I am sorry. It is something that is beyond my understanding of the function of the Institute of Teachers. I think that is a real issue that we can look towards. The other area in getting graduates—and I will not take up much more of your time—in my area I get a number of contacts each year from people who have graduated with say a Bachelor of Science degree in Sports Science or a Bachelor of Exercise in Sports Science and they want to do a Diploma of Education and become a teacher because they are not going to become the physiotherapist of the Australian cricket team. They want these high-profile jobs, then they realise they do not exist. There is only one Errol Alcott. To be offered a place in a Dip. Ed. or to apply to get into a Dip. Ed. they first must have their qualifications assessed by that Department of Education and Training.

A number of them are found to be wanting in some areas. They will contact me and say, "The Department of Education and Training says I need to do two units in health education and I need to do at least some gymnastics, some dance and at least one sport or athletics or aquatics. What can you do for me?" We can do it but at a price and it is expensive. We offer non-award units of study at \$340 per credit point. There are four credit point units of study this year and they are going to become six credit point units of study from next year. So two units of health automatically says you are looking at \$1,800 before you can get into a Dip. Ed., and that is upfront fees. That is something else that needs to be looked at. It is stopping people coming into teaching because they have an undergraduate degree that does not meet the requirements to start off with.

Ms FIONA MCLOUGHLIN: I am from the Technology Educators Association. I am coming from two points of view. We had a conference in April of this year where we asked a lot of the teachers questions about graduates and retention of teachers. One of the things that came up was that only four out of the 57 respondents said that money was an issue, which seems to be very different from what some of the other people have said. Some of the other major issues that came up for them was the level of support they received in schools and their working conditions. Walking in fresh out of university into a full teaching load is one of the issues they said was a major problem for the graduates and for teacher retention. Referring to a few of the other comments, in my experience some of the uni lecturers—and I am not picking on the uni lecturers—have not necessarily taught in schools for some time, for ten or more years. Students have changed a lot. Children have changed a lot, the curriculum has changed. A lot of the behaviour and the methodology that is out there is so different from what they have necessarily experienced. I am not saying that is good or bad; it is just an observation (before I upset too many people).

To give a little bit of my background, I was a targeted graduate. I originally trained in Physical Development, Health and Physical Education and I am also a retrained teacher where I have retrained in TAS. It was a medical reason why I retrained (but that is beside the point). I was a targeted graduate and I was sent to a hard-to-staff school where 27 out of the 75 teachers were first year teachers. I was one of the teachers who lasted the longest. I lasted 18 months before I resigned due to the appalling conditions in the school. I was actually assaulted by a student and nothing was done. That went through the Federation and through a lot of different sections but, bottom line, I resigned because nothing was done. It was a matter of principle.

I retrained into TAS hospitality because I have always worked in the hospitality industry. Being part of the retraining program, there is a lot of negative feedback that goes back to the retrainees. Regardless of your experience and what you are capable of, you are immediately labelled as a retrainee. You could not get a job somewhere else, so you had to retrain because you were not appointed somewhere. There is a lot of negativity towards some of the retrainees. I had personal experience of that. Regardless of my experience I was immediately labelled as a retrainee, therefore my contribution was not valued by the four year or five year trained teachers. Commenting on levels of support and professional development, they have already been brought up by other people.

I have also been one of the targeted graduates or one of the people who has been poached in the last six months by the private system. The main reason I have gone is because of the facilities and conditions. I have walked out of the school I was in up until the end of last year, which had a 25-year-old kitchen with peeling paint, cracked surfaces, facilities in dire need of an overhaul, and I have walked into a school that has two full commercial kitchens. So you cannot compare the level of the facilities and the resources that I have been offered in my new school. This is what some of the DET schools are competing with and why teachers are jumping ship. I thought it would be helpful for the Committee to hear from someone who has been in many situations.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: You said you lasted the longest, 18 months, and gave the reasons why you left. What were the reasons for the other 24 teachers?

Ms McLOUGHLIN: Some of them lasted less than a day, and some lasted a few weeks. It was because of conditions, and not being trained at university to handle discipline problems was one of the major issues. All their experiences in their practicums had not been in hard-to-staff schools, so when they were thrown in the deep end they sank. They could not support the requirements of coping in a difficult situation. Some teachers lasted a little longer to that of the group I went through with in my first year of teaching probably only 10 are still in the State system.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: How long has that been the case?

Ms McLOUGHLIN: I have been teaching for 13 years.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: How many went through in your group?

Ms McLOUGHLIN: Of the 24?

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: No, of the group you went through with?

Ms McLOUGHLIN: Half of them, so probably only about 50 went into teaching. Of the 50 who originally started teaching probably only 20 are there now. Obviously some have families and other personal situations. A lot of them have moved into private enterprise or out of teaching altogether.

Mrs ANNETTE GUTERRES: I am from the Professional Association for Learning Support. Between myself and my husband we represent a little over 60 years of teaching experience. We have often reflected on the state of teacher training and teachers' lives and whether we would encourage our children to go into that profession. For a while our daughter contemplated a teaching career, she is a physics-maths graduate and has become an engineer. She has just started as a professional engineer and I know she is treated more as a professional than I am after 30 years of teaching. She has more support, more administrative support, and more facilities at the beginning of her career than I have at the end of mine.

In that respect my daughter has made a wise decision in becoming an engineer. However, I sometimes think she may go back to being a teacher. With respect to the mentoring program and helping beginning teachers, there is a huge waste of resources in our system. We do not have many options for mature, experienced teachers to help beginning teachers. There is no incentive for a senior teacher to help a beginning teacher. When a beginning teacher is appointed, say to a science faculty, there is no incentive for another science teacher within that faculty to help. There is no opportunity, no time off, no monetary reward for helping that young teacher. The only person who has responsibility for helping them is the head teacher. As you have heard, the head teacher can be flat out trying to do that.

We are wasting a resource. A senior teacher could help a beginning teacher. For example, my husband is a senior science teacher and his career path has moved into an administrative side. He is doing administrative work but the skills he has acquired over 30 years of teaching as a science teacher in setting up practicals and all sorts of things, he is not able to share with beginning teachers.

CHAIR: What would it take to do that?

Mrs GUTERRES: Money and a reduced teaching load, provided the opportunity and incentive for those two people to get together is there. Obviously in a casual conversation in the staffroom, if there is time, and at staff faculty meetings the senior teachers will help beginning teachers. But I believe it should be more structured and they should be given more incentive to do it. We have a mentoring program and in the school I work in we have a head teacher mentor. But that head teacher mentor has a background in creative arts so their ability to help a science teacher or an English teacher is limited. They are appointed to a school only when there are a certain number of beginning teachers and consequently schools with only a few beginning teachers do not get that support. That is not fair.

Another thing that is not fair is that I work in a school that is particularly tough. We have six beginning teachers who have been appointed to this very difficult school, it is even difficult for senior teachers to operate in. It is silly to expect someone from a creative arts background to give the kind of support that a science teacher would need to start out in their career. That is another waste of resources. In my school I see the shock on the faces of beginning teachers when they face the reality of the students. In our year 8 cohort, when they were in year 7 last year, 78 per cent of them scored in the low and elementary levels on the ELLA. They are a particularly weak group of students.

Consequently, when a beginning teacher comes into the school they often do not have the training, their pre-training, to help them with students with learning difficulties or with literacy and numeracy problems. That is another area that has to be addressed in teacher training: How to help students with particular special learning needs, or poor literacy skills. It is for a number of reasons they have low numeracy and literacy skills and teachers come in expecting that students will have a certain standard, but they do not.

For most of my career I have worked as a support teacher learning difficulties, now called support teacher learning assistance [STLA]. The staffing of that program is weird; it is based on the ELLA results. If schools with low ELLA results improve they lose the support of the STLA. In some schools that support can be reduced to 0.1 or 0.2 of a load. So what is happening? I have seen a number of my colleagues, who were really well-trained in their particular area of expertise, have to take a reduced load of doing the STLA, but still do special provisions and all the other things associated with that role, and often have to take other subjects that they are not trained in, in order to stay at that particular school.

On the other hand lots of schools appoint people as STLAs who have no training whatsoever. The program has a big potential for helping other student teachers, because most support teacher learning assistance in a high school situation work in a team-teaching situation. They should be well trained and are in a position to help beginning and inexperienced teachers, if they were regarded as master teachers.

Ms JUDY ANDERSON: I am President of the Mathematical Association of NSW Inc. and I teach at the University of Sydney. I co-ordinate professional development through the university. Rather than repeat a lot of things that have been said I will pick up on a couple of points. A lot of people have commented on teacher training and the inability of universities to meet the needs of early teachers. I could not agree with them more: we just do not! Since I have been working in the tertiary sector the hours have been continually cut. They are cut because of lack of Federal Government funding. We do not have a choice. I would like to have double the number of hours with my maths trainee teachers and I know I would be able to do a much better job. That is a critical issue.

The shortage of mathematics teachers is absolutely critical. It is a world-wide shortage because there are no people in Fiji, India or the United Kingdom to fill the places. We do not have enough trained people to bring to Australia even if we could help them prepare for our culture, et cetera. I do not know what the solution is. Where do we suddenly find a whole lot of qualified and competent mathematics teachers? The situation is absolutely critical. We have been talking to the DET about this for years and they have constantly denied it. They have constantly told us that teachers have been available, but they refused to take up the appointments that they are given. As far as I am concerned, that is still a shortage.

In New South Wales there are secondary school classes that are not being taught by qualified mathematics teachers. That is dreadful. We have to do something about it sooner rather than later. I

am not very keen on the accelerated teacher-training programs. I have had a little bit to do with them and I am not really happy with the outcome of some of them. However, it is better than nothing. I do not have the solution, I wish I did.

CHAIR: Can you give any ideas of ways in which they might be improved, particularly where people are being recruited from the industry?

Ms ANDERSON: My main concern would be the amount of time that they spend in training. A lot of them need more time than they are allocated in both learning a new subject area, not necessarily learning about pedagogy because some of the retrained teachers have been teaching for quite a long while and their pedagogy is quite reasonable. But the subject matter knowledge definitely needs more time. Associated with that, they need more support when they start teaching and that is not always there. Some teachers end up in country schools where indeed they might be the only qualified mathematics teacher, the rest are trained in other areas. They are not getting the support when they start teaching to help them with their mathematics and to help them with teaching mathematics.

CHAIR: How would you give them that support?

Ms ANDERSON: I know that the mentoring programs exist and I acknowledge that the DET has endeavoured to find mentors for teachers. I believe that is working okay but recently we spent some time in the country talking to some retraining teachers and they do feel very isolated. They feel that in some country towns they are the only maths teacher. They might have a mentor but, again, they are not necessarily maths trained. I believe that they need mentoring in their subject matter knowledge in particular.

CHAIR: Do any systems have online contact on a regional basis, or face-to-face meetings on a regional basis?

Ms ANDERSON: Through the Mathematical Association I will propose to the DET that we work with them in setting up some mentoring programs. Some of our executive members have been working with some teachers. There are some ways forward that we can work with the department in supporting this. Online is certainly one way that we could do that, for sure. In rural and regional New South Wales a lot of teachers feel very isolated and are moving away from retraining. People who have been trained in mathematics still feel isolated in the sense that they are not getting the professional development support that they feel that they need. We have tried to run programs in country areas through the Mathematical Association but have not been able to service it because of the lack of numbers.

It is a concern that a lot of our rural teachers are feeling isolated and feel they do not get the support they need. Again, online learning is certainly one way that we could move forward. We have to be careful when talking about retaining new teachers. A lot of teachers in the system would leave if they could. In a lot of schools there is low morale and that has to be addressed. A whole culture of teaching as a valued profession, valued by the whole of society, is something that really worries me. I trained as a teacher 30 years ago, when it was a valued profession and we were reasonably well paid. A lot of people that I did my Higher School Certificate with, who were very bright, went into teaching as a viable career. A lot of them have left, but there are others who are still teaching and they are not happy in the profession. I think that is very sad, because I think teaching is one of the best professions people can take on.

Ms SUZANNE ZIEMS: I am President of the Early Childhood Education Council of New South Wales. I would like to talk about attracting graduates with early childhood training. One issue that comes up is that many young people go into teacher training and choose to train for early childhood teaching, not necessarily preschool but kindergarten, year one and year two. What seems to happen with them when they come up for the interviews for the targeted graduates, is that they have had all their experience in kindergarten or years one or two, or even a preschool and, of course, our primary schools supposedly are kindergarten to year six. Many of the principals who sit on these graduate panels just wipe them off because they have not had primary experience, yet the experience they have had is really valued.

I have retired but in all the schools in which I taught in my 36-year career nearly every new teacher who was appointed to the school was assigned to kindergarten, whether or not they had kindergarten training. That is the area that we really want specialist teachers in. If we can get children to learn to read and start with their numbers in kindergarten and year one, then we have won them and we are not going to spend so much time later on. I think that is a real disadvantage for those students. I know that members of our Council who have sat on those panels in the past have encouraged those students to do at least one primary practice in year three or year four so that they can at least say they have had some experience. It is a real disadvantage and we are losing a lot of those young teachers, who would come into the profession and stay in that area.

CHAIR: I would have thought that attitude might have changed in recent years.

Ms ZIEMS: It has got worse.

CHAIR: Has it?

Ms ZIEMS: Yes.

CHAIR: There has been so much talk of about early intervention.

Ms ZIEMS: Yes. What is happening is that they become part of the casual pool and they are just in the big pot. At the moment I am working part-time at Ryde, at the Department of Education and Training. We have a young graduate who was early childhood trained, who has not had an appointment but is waiting for her casual appointment. She has been doing clerical work for us for most of the term. She has a block of three weeks, starting on Monday, but she will come back to us if she does not get any more work after that. Once she gets into the schools is to be hoped they will recognise her talents and she will get work in other schools as well.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Where to the others go? Do they go to preschools and private schools?

Ms ZIEMS: Often that is where they will go. A lot of independent schools will pick them up, because a lot will have their pseudo hot-housing kindergarten, their preschool class that is doing the primary curriculum in early-stage one, but doing it in what we would call the private school experience.

Ms AILSA HOLMES-WALKER: I am from the Australian School Library Association and I am a Director on the Professional Teachers Council [PTC]. My question is regarding the role of the New South Wales Institute of Teachers and its accreditation and endorsement requirements. My concern is that there is a significant number of teachers in the profession at the moment who are going to be excluded from the Institute of Teachers and not accredited as teachers because of the very narrow definition of teachers that the Institute has. The group that I'm talking about includes: school teacher librarians, careers teachers, ESL teachers, support teachers and teachers for remote areas. None of those people, at the moment, are going to be accredited as teachers under the regulations of the Institute.

The Professional Teachers Council has addressed its concerns about this matter to the Institute and to the Minister as well, but has received no answer in respect of this issue. It is effectively placing restrictive practices on certain areas of trained teachers. We study for our Bachelor of Education degree and we have a Diploma of Education, but none of the new teacher-librarians or teachers that I have mentioned will be accredited by the Institute under its present regulations. We need these teachers in our schools, we cannot manage without them, but they are not going to be accredited as teachers. They have no career structure for promotion under the Institute. There is a significant group of trained and qualified professionals, needed by our schools, who, under current regulations, will not be accredited as teachers.

CHAIR: That is something we can take up with the Institute.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: When did you talk to the Minister or ask the Minister those questions?

Ms HOLMES-WALKER: It has been addressed. The Professional Teachers Council has had several meetings with the Institute—here, actually—and we have asked these questions. I think the PTC has questions on notice to the Minister about this matter. A meeting is to be arranged. We have not received a date or a time for discussion.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: When were you informed?

Ms HOLMES-WALKER: The matter was first raised with the Institute last year—my recollection would be about August last year—and we had subsequent meetings with the Institute about the matter. To my recollection it was taken on board and discussed extensively, but we have not received any information about what has been decided.

CHAIR: As I said, we can check that. The Committee has heard evidence from the Institute but has also made it clear that it will be necessary to raise other matters with the Institute as we continue to take evidence.

Ms PAM SMITH: I represent the Professional Teachers' Council [PTC]. Part of the difficulty arose with the Act and the changes that were made to the draft Act. The PTC made strong representations and sought amendments. We raised these issues before the Act was passed, but unfortunately our recommendations were not taken on board, which has resulted in this being an ongoing situation.

CHAIR: It comes back to the definition.

Ms SMITH: It comes back to the definition. We have continued to hang in there and try to have the issue resolved.

Ms CELINE ELKS: I am on the Early Childhood Education Council of New South Wales. I have been listening to what other speakers have had to say, and am taking it all in. It has been great that really valid issues have been raised, a lot of them concerned with high school, but I want to briefly talk about my primary school, and our involvement in getting "prac" students. I want to make it known that, as teachers, we really value getting students from the different universities. We offer them to the teachers. We do not ask them who has nothing to do or who wants to take one on board. I am sure that does not happen. We have a lot of students from first year out to year four and we really feel that we are offering them professional help. I see lots of teachers in our school meeting with them during recess or after school, making sure that they are comfortable and confident in what they are doing.

CHAIR: Approximately come many would you have in your school in a year?

Ms ELKS: Across the year we might have six to 10, I would say. We have just got one and I think he is coming once a week for a few weeks.

CHAIR: Are they from different universities or from the one university?

Ms ELKS: We have them from a couple of different universities. We have also had the opportunity where people have come on quite a long "prac". They are probably in their fourth-year and probably do not need classroom teacher supervision, the teachers themselves get involved with another professional development activity while the student teacher takes the class. One of the big issues in our school, apart from that, is having casual teachers.

CHAIR: Do you mean your inability to get them?

Ms ELKS: Well, there are none! We have a few that come to our school on a regular basis. There are certain groups of casuals that are available and we just have to make sure we are recruiting the right people. If they are high school trained they are fine; primary school, a little bit difficult to manage. We sometimes do not find out until they actually turn up at the school.

CHAIR: So that the shortage of teachers can be defined in a number of different ways.

Ms ELKS: Yes, but I am really pleased to say my son has gone along the same path as me. He is at university now, training to be a teacher. He has done his first "prac" already. I think that is really important for him. A lot of the students are getting into the school straight away. I think it is really important for them to see how the classroom is run, how to manage children and to be involved with the different committees and activities that are happening in schools.

CHAIR: Is your son in first year?

Ms ELKS: He is in first year.

CHAIR: And he has done his first "prac"?

Ms ELKS: He is on his first "prac". He got in as a mature age student. This was one of the issues. He is very capable but was doing other things in year 12 and not good enough to get in—refereeing, basketball. He thought it would be as easy as pie. However, it was a good period of time for him to really make up his mind that this is what he wanted. He said, "I really want to teach." One day he will be out there, hopefully not on the casual list but with a position in primary education.

Ms KIM DUNN: I am a member of the Early Childhood Education Council. We all know that teaching is a really complex profession. I know that when I first started teaching probably the biggest challenge for possibly the first five years was classroom management and managing classroom behaviour. In the last five or six years I have had many student teachers, including an intern. I believe that one of the biggest problems they face is the challenging behaviour they have to deal with in the classroom. We have emotionally disturbed children, we have children on the autism spectrum, children who have been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and a whole host of other children, whether they be extremely bright or needing lots of additional support.

Our high-support learning children need lots and lots of very specialised education, and young teachers are graduating without those skills. Some experienced teachers do not have the necessary skills and we are desperate for that support. It is almost impossible to cater for every ability you have in your class. I remember, even after I had been teaching 10 years, waking up in the middle of the night and thinking I have not done anything with that bright group in ages. It is a constant pressure. You are constantly running to try to cater for every child and all their needs in the classroom. I just recently spoke to a teacher, saying you do not talk about them as a class anymore, you talk about them as a group of children with their individual, different needs. They are no longer homogenous groups. We do group them for teaching but it is really hard to meet all their needs. It is a huge task.

I had an intern a few years ago. She is the same age as I am. She had been very successful in her previous career. She came into teaching and was often in tears because she was expecting herself to be as competent in her new chosen career as she was in her previous career. She expected, and of herself, to have the same skills I had, and I had been teaching 27 years. There is a very high expectation of those new people on themselves. I did some mentoring work at Sydney University and they were suggesting to us to prep these people, give them as much information so they can enjoy success. It is very hard. We can talk for weeks and weeks to give the students the information that they might need but it gets to the point of overload. You give them enough to start and you keep feeding it in as you feel they can take it on board, but they are expecting to have it all to start with. After 27 years I know what I was like as a beginning teacher, and my expectations now of myself are very different. They have to be realistic about their expectations.

Once they get to the schools they meet with lots of frustrations—with resources, whether they are working or not, the children with difficult behaviour and with challenging behaviour. I know if we want any additional support for our children who are experiencing reading difficulties, behavioural difficulties or additional STLA support, everything is a paper chase. You have to apply and it is pages and pages of assessments, submissions, meeting deadlines, and you find out no, sorry, even though they are qualified there are limited places and there are limited facilities, so those children, once again, miss out. It becomes very distressing because the children are not getting the resources they need and basically teaching is an absolutely exhausting career.

What I was going to say about supervising teachers, whether it is for a beginning teacher or a student teacher, supporting teachers are often heavily involved with lots of things that are going on at their own school. A student teacher said to me a while ago that he wanted to talk to me about a few things but he saw I had a whole lot of people who wanted me for other things and he hung back to wait his turn. Some of those student teachers are waiting until 4.30 or a quarter to five or five o'clock of an afternoon to see me at school. Time is a huge issue, to be able to supervise beginning teachers or student teachers, and give them the time that they are entitled to and they deserve. A friend's daughter started at a local private high school. This private school gives their new graduates one day a fortnight off in term one. I asked whether they go in to school and prepare and she said no, they can stay home and sleep if that is what they need to do. I thought that was very civilised because sometimes that is what you need.

Ms GAZIS: What we have been about is valuing our teachers from the point where they decide this is the profession they want to go into. Our associations are large and small. The association I come from, the English Teachers Association, is a large association. It has 20 branches across New South Wales. It offers a whole range of beginning teacher workshops, together with online support, but that is highly expensive and at times it has close to crippled us and we have had to look at ways of raising funds. We also have smaller associations who have looked at innovative ways of accessing teachers across New South Wales. That is a really big issue, because online support often falls apart for that reason. A teacher who is not getting that support does not feel valued. So, how we build that up becomes important.

Recently the PTC ran a day on the Institute of Teachers and what that might mean to teachers. It was interesting to see the participants on that day. There were many beginning teachers and some schools came as teams. I thought it was wonderful that the teams operated together because that was about being valued and the experience was shared. The beginning teachers on their own were quite scared, because did it translate to the same thing at their school? That is the question, for that team development becomes important.

I have been to things where principals have come with groups and that becomes an issue for those beginning teachers, are they being valued? You should not have to wait for some crummy award that is given by someone later in your career. It should happen straightaway. The teaching associations are pretty much about that. All of us are here voluntarily. We come from a range of places—from schools, from the Board of Studies, from universities, the Institute of Teachers—and we have the lovely pleasure of working with colleagues in Catholic schools and independent schools, so we get to see what wonderful things they get. So that becomes important.

We can be big, we can be small but we value all parts. We feel that working together is the way to go. We feel for beginning teachers who feel isolated, but the technology God can be crippling for us as well. Thank you for tonight and coming to Leichhardt to the PTC.

CHAIR: It may be that you think of something that you would like to let us know, and we would really like you to contact the secretariat. We might want to ask you some further questions. We are a little uncertain about the funding arrangements for the professional development that the teaching associations carry out. So, perhaps we will want to follow up on that.

(The forum concluded at 7.38 p.m.)