

**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES**

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

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**At Sydney on Thursday 17 March 2005**

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**The Committee met at 10.00 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. J. S. Lynn

The Hon. R. M. Parker

The Hon. I. W. West

Corrected

**DAVID JOHN HOPE**, care of Parents and Citizens Federation, Bourke Street, Surry Hills, affirmed and examined:

**CHAIR:** You have made a submission and you are appearing on behalf of the Parents and Citizens [P and C] Federation?

**Mr HOPE:** I am, yes.

**CHAIR:** Do you want to make an opening statement, or shall we go into the questions that we have sent you to guide our deliberations?

**Mr HOPE:** I will not take too long with an opening statement. I will give you just a brief run-down. As parents our basic focus is on outcomes for our children. We see that the quality and performance of teachers is the key and central role to maximising things for our children. One of our beliefs is that every child should have the same rights and should have the same opportunities across the State throughout the whole system. We see that as the strength of the public system. Probably that is obvious from the P and C's long history, but I just thought I would get that off my chest.

**CHAIR:** I usually say to witnesses that we have prepared questions to try to cover the ground. A lot of them are questions that we have asked other witnesses at different times that are usually usefully and discussion goes off on a different tack and Committee members wish to ask quite different questions. Although there are a lot of them it probably would help a bit if we try to stick to the recruitment and schools area and do that in separate bits. We realise there is a huge overlap.

**Mr HOPE:** I am happy for you to go whichever way you go because we put in a submission and, really, it is better if you ask what you really want to know about and I can tell you.

**CHAIR:** Our first couple of questions ask whether the department's current means of recruiting graduates is effective, and what could be done to improve graduate recruitment?

**Mr HOPE:** We, as a parent body, are not experts in this but we get a lot of feedback from our affiliated P and Cs. At the moment the department does not seem to have the problem it had a few years ago of actually filling all positions, at least in a substantive way. But some positions are filled by temporary people, and sometimes that is particularly satisfactory. But if you look at the figures for people who leave the profession the biggest group is the older people, the greys, the retiring people like me, and the second biggest group is the new teachers who leave. The fact that they leave is not necessarily a concern because sometimes that is a self-culling process and people leave for a range of reasons.

But one of the concerns we seem to be getting is that areas like maths and science, which need who are passionate about this subject to be able to teach it effectively or get the children enthusiastic about it, seem to be falling away. We also have difficulties in the country where fairly young teachers seem to be sent and often they are left to their own devices. There is a system where they are sent for three years and then they leave, so there is not necessarily continuity. There seems to be a record number of people wanting to teach, because the UAI has gone up, so maybe the department does not have to do too much, but it is what happens after they come in that is probably the biggest concern at the moment. It may not be in the future when there is a loss of experienced teachers. Over the next five to 10 years it will become a big issue.

**CHAIR:** Yesterday the department gave us some figures broadly along the same lines that the shortage is in science, maths and technology.

**Mr HOPE:** Yes, particularly technology. One of the good things about graduates is that often they bring technology skills that are not already in the school. An issue for teachers overall is that the children have a lot better computer skills than the teachers have.

**CHAIR:** Probably all of us around this table know that.

**Mr HOPE:** That is not necessarily a bad thing in itself. However, teachers used to teaching in the old control model probably find that quite difficult, whereas new teachers may not find that as challenging. Who knows?

**CHAIR:** There may not be a shortage of teachers overall, but finding teachers for country schools and then getting them to stay, and a specific shortages in subject areas are a concern.

**Mr HOPE:** Yes. And the other thing is not so much to do with the recruitment but the actual mix of the work force, which is very lopsided. There are a lot of older people, all of the same age—there is a reasonable group in the middle. If you are a student in a school and you look at the teacher group that you put in front of the student, in some areas every teacher is over 40. Why would that be a place that a graduate would want to work? Other areas might have a lot of young teachers, but the young teachers do not have the experience so overall the school has discipline problems or whatever it has. Why would you want to go to work there? The place where children decide on teaching as a profession is in their own school because they see the modelling of the job. They see teachers every day. They know it very well. It is very important in the recruitment of graduates to think about what is happening in the school because that is the biggest marketing opportunity for the department.

**CHAIR:** We have not asked specifically, but are you suggesting that there needs to be a more centralised or interventionist system of appointment and transfer to achieve an appropriate mix? Yesterday the Hon. Robyn Parker raised the mix of male and female teachers with a number of witnesses.

**Mr HOPE:** Yes, the mix concerns us, too—I did not mention that—particularly in areas where there may not be a male and female parent. In that way the school is a bit surrogate. If you are in a workplace it is better to have a mix of people of ages and sexes. It is a much healthier environment.

**CHAIR:** Does the P and C Federation have any great ideas on how to address these things? Do they require a more compelled appointment and transfer system, or are there other ways of improving the mix?

**Mr HOPE:** We do not have a particular policy on compelling or not compelling, but we get a lot of feedback from parents about the departments HR policies, which are largely rooted in the 1960s and 1970s. Compelling people to move is not necessarily a P and C policy. But our people say, "Why are these policies in place?" We observe schools that are in low socioeconomic areas, which one would think would be hard to staff. "Hard to staff" is a terrible term because it is quite negative. But one would think they would be hard to staff. Sometimes you have a school where the staff cannot wait to get in. Why is that? The answer to that is that the leadership of the school is outstanding, not only the principal but also the senior teachers who take an interest in mentoring their staff. They manage staff in a way that is supportive. Perhaps some of them manage in the no blame culture in the vernacular that some of the new people in the department are using now. But that is the sort of stuff that works in industry.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** What is the "no blame culture"?

**Mr HOPE:** No blame culture is not a no responsibility culture, but it is where people are able to work in their environment and not be blamed for every single little bureaucratic mistake they make. It is a supportive culture where you are not looking for blame, you are looking for performance and the good things that people do. Certainly, a major hazard to manage is things that go wrong, but the focus is not on that. In schools where people report to us that there are problems, usually you have a leader who is more concerned about managing the bureaucratic side of things, and the department has a lot of bureaucratic rules. You have head teachers who do not involve themselves much in the management processes, the decision making and the life of the school.

You have teachers who are left to their own devices in their own classrooms, and if they are not skilled in classroom technique then they have problems with discipline so the whole day is spent with discipline and not with a great interaction between themselves and the kids. In a school that is run differently you have a whole different culture and a whole different result, and that school becomes one where people want to go. Although we, as a P and C, do not have a particular policy on

that matter, we get feedback from our affiliates such as, "Yes, we like those sorts of schools where there is a different culture", an impressive culture that works in companies.

**CHAIR:** Would they be schools in which parents were more involved than schools in which parents are less involved?

**Mr HOPE:** Almost by definition because the leader of the school is a person who will draw in the parents and use the parents as a resource, not only in terms of raising funds and things like that—which P and Cs do because P and Cs in New South Wales raise about \$40 million a year—but in some of the decision-making practices and processes in the subject choices and other things to do with teaching their children. Sometimes parents have particular skills. They are professional people or tradespeople who can provide input to either the courses or the welfare of the school in some way. Those people who are good leaders do that. It is par for the course. It is amazing how the views of parents can inform the teaching staff about what the real world is about. It breaks down some of the fears. Some teachers are quite scared to talk to parents or they do not want to because it is another task they have to do in amongst the litany of bureaucratic tasks they have to do, which are not about teaching. It is how the boss runs the show and how the rest of the staff respond to it. That really is the key to it.

**CHAIR:** Would your comments apply equally to primary and secondary schools, and to large and perhaps very small schools?

**Mr HOPE:** The general comments apply fairly equally, but, obviously, it is quite different in primary schools because parents tend to be more involved in primary schools just by the nature of the age of their children. In high schools most kids do not want to see their parents anywhere near it. Funnily enough, despite all that, I think my kids were quite happy that I was involved in our local high school.

**CHAIR:** So long as they did not see you do anything.

**Mr HOPE:** They did not mind that either. Obviously, the kids at primary school are younger and they need more care. They need to be walked to the gate. Those welfare issues are probably different. As they get older bullying issues tend to come more into play. Sometimes parents are pretty tough on schools and the more they are involved with the life of the school the less likely you are to have this us and them situation. The bad leaders have that sort of situation. The worst cases that we have, where we have to go into schools to help P and Cs, sometimes the P and C president is a difficult person, sometimes it is the principal and sometimes it is both.

But where we see real success is where the departmental person is a good leader and that is reflected in how the staff behave, the job satisfaction that people in the school have, the satisfaction parents have and the satisfaction the children have because the children are not as likely to be in a class whether teaching is more about just coping rather than exciting. I am not involved in education. I do not work for the department. I am not a teacher and I never have been. The sorts of things that work in other organisations are when people volunteer to do things because they like what they are doing, they get positive feedback and they enjoy it. Nobody is nitpicking them because they did not sign the book when they came in, punch the Bundy or whatever it was.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** You mentioned before the P and C and the role of the P and C, which I guess changes over time, but a key role you mentioned is fundraising. Is that a significant role of the P and C, in your view?

**Mr HOPE:** The P and C is structured—it has got various levels—and one level is the school level. The traditional role in the school has been helping the school with a range of things, and fundraising is the most tangible thing; a lot of money is made through canteens, through fetes and through running performing arts things, and the advantage of that is that it gets people into the school, parents into the school, it gets them to know the teachers, and that is one of the main roles. The other roles that can happen when there is a good principal is that parents can become involved in more of the decision-making. Usually P and Cs or the school councils get involved in things like uniforms, which is usually one of the most important things to discuss. At Mosman, for example, there are no uniforms, so there are different approaches, but it is a local school-based decision.

One of the biggest areas we have with P and Cs often is that the principal does not want to discuss things like teaching practices, teacher performance and school funding—what happens within the school's global budget. A lot of P and Cs want to know about those things; not so much about the performance of teachers but what the principal is doing to actually raise the general standard of delivery within the school, because one of the sad facts of life is that there is a group of teachers at the top end of the scale that everybody would think, "I want my kid to be in that class"; there is a middle group of teachers where people are ho-hum; and then there is a lower group of teachers—this is given anecdotally, we have got no proof of this—where people say, "My kid was in that class for the whole year and did not move forward".

So that interest that the parents have in that performance is, I suppose, fairly natural. In the past there has been a natural reluctance in the department to actually share even aggregated information. It is getting better. We understand that for privacy reasons we do not want to hear what the principal said to teacher A, B or C, but we do want to see that they have got a management system in place which monitors that and uses the information that they get from that performance information to actually improve things.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** So what sorts of things are school P and Cs raising funds for?

**CHAIR:** I have to say occasionally, unfortunately, that this is an inquiry into recruitment and training of teachers. I think fundraising is getting a long way away from it. A lot of what you said though about the induction, the mentoring and training of leaders I have to say is fascinating but this is an inquiry into the recruitment of teachers.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** I will rephrase the question. I am passionately interested in the role of P and Cs and particularly their fundraising. I am also interested in the morale of teachers and I would like your comments about the morale of teachers in relation to the poor maintenance and environment—

**CHAIR:** I will have to rule that question out of order. We have very specific terms of reference. Politics, I know, rears its head occasionally but fundraising by a P and C—

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Surely the retention of teachers, if their physical environment is an uncomfortable environment certainly it is a factor—

**CHAIR:** I am sorry, I have ruled the question out of order. Mr West, you have a question, and we can come back to you, Robyn.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** Thank you very much, Mr Hope, for coming in. Your input is extremely important to us. The role of P and Cs is vital to the harmony within a school. I was interested in the comments you were making about the ability to work with teachers in terms of all those various areas of age, gender mix, regions, the surrogacy issues and the IT and all those difficulties of ensuring that there are no HR problems. Has there been any discussion or any thoughts with the P and C about how you better interact with the education department at a level may assist in distancing yourself from the actual school itself to enable the principal to be able to better mentor and show leadership, give leadership, in that whole cost centre global budgeting concept that we have gone down the path of?

**Mr HOPE:** I am not quite sure if I understand the question but I will answer it and then you can tell me if I have answered what you have asked. The P and C has got three sorts of levels: it has got the school level, it has got the regional level where we tend to talk policy, and we have got the State level—which I am the regional president for northern Sydney as well and I am a vice president in the State system—

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** At Mosman?

**Mr HOPE:** No, I come from Davidson. It just happens to be where I live. So we have got those three levels and at the State level, for example, last Monday we met the Minister and we met the regional directors as a group of office bearers for the State level. So we talk policy at that level and we

encourage both the department and the Ministry to do things in a positive way for public education, including things like accommodation. At the school level though we do not see the P and C as running the school; there is no thought of that. We see the principal as running the school and we see a good leader as a person who can manage stakeholders. The stakeholders tend to be their own staff, the children, the parents and other parts of the community. We do not want to go in there and actually tell them how to run their job; we do not want to tell them how to manage their teachers. More we are looking for the results of what they do, and some accountability.

Our policy talks about a well-supported teaching workforce, who are happy in their job and who are looked after, as a way to get them to be more enthusiastic and perform better. So we are not trying to manage the school, we are trying to act as stakeholders. If you are in private business and you are selling telephones or something like that and your telephone is like mine, which was handed down from my daughter—it has still got an aerial on it—and you are trying to sell that to kids, no one would buy it. So Telecom or Telstra, those sorts of people you talk to, have got to look at the needs of stakeholders otherwise they are not successful. Big companies try to do that; they make it part of their business to do it. It is not something which they find is a thing that is a burden, it is part of their business.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** I suppose a crude way of putting the question is, when you have a difficulty between either the leadership of the school and the P and C, or a difficulty on either side, are there processes in place where you can go to assist in a positive outcome in helping the retention of the teachers as opposed to the teachers losing their enthusiasm and leaving? Because if I was to say to you that there may be occasions when the parents at the school may be the initiators of teachers leaving.

**Mr HOPE:** I am sure there are. If it is a parent issue and teachers are unhappy with both parents, again it gets down to good leadership with the boss. However, we do lots of things. For example, last week I spoke to the regional director about the school in my area where the principal and the P and C president are at loggerheads about certain issues, and they are probably both in the wrong. So whilst we are there to help P and Cs, we are there to help them. There is a school out in the west where the P and C—I will not use colourful language—there is an issue there, and the P and C at that school is probably completely in the wrong.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** How do you address that?

**CHAIR:** You are getting a fair way away from the terms of reference too. It is obviously relevant to things like why new teachers leave the profession if it is an unhappy school.

**Mr HOPE:** I do not think parents in a general sense drive teachers out of the school. It may happen occasionally where there is a particular instance, but it is not a systematic thing that happens. Parents do not go along to the school looking for the blood of teachers; it is not what happens.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** That was not what I was suggesting.

**CHAIR:** We must come back to you later, Ian.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Does the P and C monitor what the department does in terms of staff and their recruitment and placement of them? Does it affect the decisions at all?

**Mr HOPE:** The department does not actually report to us a set of performance measures in most cases.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Do you think it should?

**Mr HOPE:** I think it should, yes.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** So do you think that the parents as consumers should be involved in issues of the staffing of schools? Obviously disadvantaged areas

where it is hard to staff and recruit, the P and C would have some comment about that, would they not, or some thoughts?

**Mr HOPE:** There are two different questions there: there is one about the department reporting performance. What they do now is they give us ad hoc information about what they are doing and through that we get some indication of what is happening, but we have not got a lot of figures on the internal management of that sort of thing. The second one, was that to do with choosing teachers at particular schools?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Recruitment, yes, and choice, I suppose. If there is recruitment there is unrecruitment, and you are saying that there are obviously good teachers and bad teachers, when a spade is called a spade.

**Mr HOPE:** Our policy is that the P and C should be represented on selection committees. These days all principals are selected—not all, but most are—through selection committees, and that is what we would like to see, that principals are selected through that process. That usually means that there is one person from the department on a committee, one person from the local school community through the P and C and one person from the teachers federation. That seems to us to be a reasonable sort of situation. But most teaching positions in New South Wales are filled by what the department quaintly calls "merit selection"; they are mostly done through another process which is a transfer or it is a process of people coming up on lists being transferred around.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** "Merit" is a very quaint word.

**Mr HOPE:** It is just that nobody else uses the words "merit selection", they just use "selection". I can understand why they use it in the departmental context. But at a State P and C level we have got to look at the practicalities of things, and we understand the need for all schools to have equity in the placement of teachers. So there has got to be some balance. If you went to a complete free system and just recruited teachers for schools within all the "best" schools—and that does not necessarily mean the best school, it might mean the best area or it might mean a range of other things—you would get some schools that would be seriously disadvantaged by that.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** You mean all the good teachers would go to all the good areas and that would be the end of the story?

**Mr HOPE:** Because it is a selection process, if it was a school that was popular, that school would get the first pick overall. What we say though is we would like to see more teachers chosen by selection than there are now. It does tend to encourage teachers to perform better in the system, and we do not believe teachers want to perform badly anyway. I think some of the performance issues are to do with the way they have been managed in the past.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Are you saying selection on merit or selection—

**Mr HOPE:** Yes, selection on merit.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Because the issue I think at Greystanes, out west, at the moment is an issue—

**CHAIR:** Let us not talk about individual schools.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Let me give you an example where a teacher, who is a headmaster at a school that would be seen to be a disadvantage school has done an outstanding job—and that is a subjective viewpoint—but when he was posted to a school in the same area, because the parents and citizens association believed he was not selected on merit, they have objected violently to the selection, which puts an enormous amount of stress on that headmaster. What action do you take in a situation like that?

**Mr HOPE:** There are two issues. This person might be the world's best principal. I think, though, that if you have to think of one thing in your life that you are passionate about, it is your own kids and what people like to think is that when somebody comes to lead the school, that person should

be somebody that we have had a say in. The department used to have a practice of retiring people to principal's roles. For example, my local school had people who used to turn up for two years before they retired. They had no interest in leading the school and the school really suffered for that purpose. I do not think any parents and citizen association wants to see a principal come in without being involved in the process. I can sympathise with the person who is in that situation. The department does do that. It happened at my school. A person was transferred in. I was the president at the time and I was not happy about the process. I was quite happy about the person but I was not happy about the process.

**CHAIR:** I say again that this is an inquiry with very definite terms of reference, which is recruitment and training. We have spent now half an hour or more on the standard of leadership in schools. Questions about the appointment or lack of appointment of a particular principal have nothing to do with the recruitment and training of teachers, as our terms of reference spell them out, except in the general context of what people have said. We recognise that it is relevant to the retention of teachers.

**Mr HOPE:** Teachers at schools where leadership is poor have a really terrible time.

**CHAIR:** Yes, but we have been on that for about half an hour.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** If I could just close on that.

**CHAIR:** If we could move on to the specific suggestions you make in your submission about recruitment of overseas trained teachers.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Madam Chair, this is not your inquiry. It is our inquiry.

**CHAIR:** It is my role to ensure—and usually I do not have to—that we do stick to the terms of reference. This is not inquiry into anything—

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** It is your view of the terms of reference.

**CHAIR:** No, I am sorry.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** I believe that this particular incident has a major impact on accredited teachers because of its impact on morale. I appreciate that is something you probably would not be aware of.

**CHAIR:** So far we have had more than 30 minutes broadly—and that is exactly what we want to hear from you—about the running of schools. But we have now gone beyond.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Madam Chair, could I bring your attention to paragraph (7) of the terms of reference, which says "any other matter arising from these terms of reference". You are just ruling them out of order at will at the moment.

**CHAIR:** I have ruled one question out of order so far and that was Ms Parker's. I am asking you to return to the terms of reference. Any other matter related to the terms of reference, I believe, does not involve this Committee getting into a discussion about an issue in the media about who should be the principal of a particular school and obviously I am not going to name it.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** That has a major impact on the morale of teachers at that school, which would obviously have any impact on the morale of people who want to come in as teachers.

**CHAIR:** And we have been discussing that point, which is a very important point, for over half an hour.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** You cut off the discussion.



**CHAIR:** Mr Hope, with respect to questions (4), (5) and (6), you have a specific comment in your submission—

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** But not (7).

**CHAIR:** —which is a little different from the views that have been expressed by some other people about the recruitment of overseas trained teachers. I wonder whether you would like to expand on what they have to offer and we will follow on by asking about the assessment process and preparation of overseas trained teachers.

**Mr HOPE:** I think one of the things that we see every day in schools is that there are a lot of schools where there is a fairly multicultural mix of kids. Amongst the teaching force in most of those schools there is not anybody who understands those cultures. It is really just a simple matter of fact. It is a matter of just saying, "Is there some talent from overseas which can be well used to help the children and the other teachers in terms of understanding how best to teach that. There are issues with qualifications and things like that. That is not something that we look at that much because we leave that to the department. There are also issues about how some of those teachers actually manage in the environment, because if you have a teacher who has come from overseas and does not have the right support and cannot speak the language very well, that can have an impact within the class on the children. I think of all we meant to say there was, "Let us have a look at that as something which we can use to enrich the teaching work force."

**CHAIR:** And you do not have particular comments to make on the current assessment process or on better preparation?

**Mr HOPE:** Well, on better preparation because we think that if you are bringing somebody into a system that they are not used to, either because they have come from a different culture or they have come from somewhere else, they do need some tailored assistance.

**CHAIR:** In relation to your suggestion that there be a matching process if a school has an enrolment from a particular cultural group or language group, it would be useful to have teachers who speak those languages and come from that culture?

**Mr HOPE:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Do you have any firm suggestions about how that might be achieved? I assume it would mean a specific recruitment and appointment process where a teacher would be appointed to X school precisely because they spoke a certain language.

**Mr HOPE:** You would look at the needs of the school and you would try to recruit somebody for that purpose. They might already be in the department or you might even go to the extent of advertising in another country, if you had the need, or you might go to the extent of looking at that community and saying, "Can we get some of these children in the community to be trained as teachers so that they can come back and work in the area?"

**CHAIR:** So this would apply at the junior levels of teaching and, therefore, would be a major change to the current employment practices of the department?

**Mr HOPE:** The current employment practices of the department probably need a fair bit of changing anyway. For example, the Teachers Federation, when they were talking about educating Aboriginal kids, basically said, "We understand that there are special needs here and we are happy for things to be done which are logical in terms of educating kids." We say that policy ought to be broader than that. If there is a school where there is a high proportion of kids from the Middle East, Asia, Africa or wherever, and it would help to have people from that community actually within the teaching work force, let us look at the most logical way to do it and if processes need to be changed, just change them.

**The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN:** Some schools have children from 30 to 40 different non-English speaking backgrounds. How would you resolve the process in a school like that? Would you

look at the needs in terms of the newer migrant groups that are coming into Australia? How would you resolve a problem like that with such a diverse background of children within the school?

**Mr HOPE:** Do you think I am a management consultant? Sorry, I do not know. There are a lot of schools with many different cultures in them. You just have to look at it on an individual basis and say, "Are there particular groups in the school that would benefit from that?" Sometimes groups will come in and there are no issues with the culture and other times they come in and there is an issue. I think you just treat things on their merits. There is no solution in that obviously if there are 40 different nationalities it would be difficult to have 40—we are not suggesting that there be—

**The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN:** I suppose that is what my mean. There are regions, particularly in the metropolitan area, where you would have 30 to 40 different nationalities in a school.

**Mr HOPE:** Yes. I think one of the things, though, is that if there are just a few teachers from these cultures, it makes the other teachers aware that there are cultural differences and it starts to become part of the way they think in the school and they are a bit more turned on to what those are. You do not necessarily need ethnic teachers to do that because a good, well-run school will have that in it anyway, but it just helps.

**The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN:** There have been some comments, in relation to overseas trained teachers, about whether or not when these teachers to come into schools they have a good enough understanding of the cultural needs of the Australian community and children at school, so that is probably a little bit the reverse of what you are saying?

**Mr HOPE:** We are not saying that if there are 60 teachers at the school you have 60 people from overseas. There might be 60 teachers and 59 of them come from local recruits and one is somebody from overseas. We are not saying to staff a whole school with overseas people. It has to be a workable mix, and I cannot tell you what that is, even in general terms. If you are the leader of that school you think, "How can I best manage the teaching and what attributes do I need to make the teaching staff a better teaching staff overall?" One of the things in your toolbox would be to recruit people like that. I guess that is all I can say about it. We have not got an exact solution, except to say that if the department's human resources rules are the only things in the way of that, they should change. It is not like they are chiselled in stone. They are just guidelines, rules—maybe sometimes they are in awards but they can change too. You just have to go down to the industrial commission and say, "We agree on this" and change it. It is easy, isn't it?

**CHAIR:** If only it were so easy.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** It has been suggested to our Committee and in the media that new graduates are not sufficiently prepared to be in the classroom. What is your view on that?

**Mr HOPE:** Again, this is not an area that we are experts in because we do not manage the teachers, but we do observe things and we do have a fair bit to do with looking at things like curriculum and teaching institutions. Teaching institutions tend to have a focus on the academic staff, which is good; you have got to have that, but going into a classroom is pretty tough, particularly if you are 21. There are a lot of practical skills that you need and you need to keep learning those practical skills because it is something that you have to update. So it is not just graduates; experienced teachers have got lots of them but you still have to refresh and renew.

One of the gaps we see in the process is that those educational institutions are not necessarily either covering that or the induction of teachers does not cover that. It does not have to be the institution that does it; it may well be the department or the employer that does that side of it, but if the employer is taking graduates from an educational institution, it needs to look at the gaps and manage the process of putting that teacher into the working environment. If that 21 or 22 year old is just raw, and had about five minutes worth of practical teaching, or something like that, they need mentoring or another experienced person in the classroom with them for a period—I think older teachers need those things too but younger teachers really need them because they just do not have that to start off with.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** There is also a view that talented graduate teachers are snapped up by the private sector. Is that the case?

**Mr HOPE:** Certainly some of them are, but there are a lot of talented people out there. We have looked at this in the P and C, and one of the things that we are looking for in people is not necessarily only their academic record it is the other attributes because teaching is all about relationships.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Why would graduates be attracted to the private sector rather than to teach in public schools?

**Mr HOPE:** I can probably answer one of your previous questions now. One of them is that the private sector can package what they can give them in terms of money in a different way, so if they really want to attract someone they can pay them more. Although the salary of a graduate teacher is probably not too bad, it is what happens 10 years afterwards. So that if you are a graduate you look at this scale and it is almost like a death list—those people die and you can move up through the management position. But you have got a very codified career ahead of you if you go into the public system.

Many people go into the public system because they are attracted to teaching as a calling and those issues are not that important so you will find some very highly talented graduates wanting to teach in the public system. What can be an inhibitor is they get sent into a school where everybody is old and do not want to change and they have got all these wonderful ideas and they cannot implement them. They go into a staffroom that looks like a public toilet because it is a small box and they do not have their own computer. In a private school they have their own laptop and those little things, whatever they are called, that send emails and all the modern whiz-bang sort of stuff.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** They have got money.

**Mr HOPE:** But money is not everything. When they are there then all the kids have got laptops, perhaps, if it is one of the more expensive schools. If it is a systemic Catholic school sometimes there is no difference.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Is the physical environment important?

**Mr HOPE:** Yes, physical environment, your workmates, support you get from your employer—all those things that are important to anyone. If you talk to your kids and say "What career are you going into?" what are the things that attract them? Some of those things, I mean, there is not all negatives with public education. Some people go in and say they have a social conscience and want to make a difference in the world and the money is pretty good and they are happy to do it. A while ago in the newspaper there was an instance—I do not know whether it is true—where a lady lawyer in her early 30s tried to get employed by the department to teach legal studies. Legal studies is a difficult subject to teach in public education because there are not many lawyers prepared to teach it. This lady had been teaching at the University of New South Wales, I think, for a couple of years and had a Masters from Oxford or somewhere. The department said she has not got a diploma of education so she cannot teach.

There is this codified approach to recruitment of people which turns people off, like it is the attitude. I think people come out with stars in their eyes thinking they have just finished university and they want to do wonderful things. When they go into schools—we get back to leaders—despite the fact that the staffroom might look like it has been hit by a bomb and there is no equipment, a good leader will make that person feel so wanted, needed and empowered that they will like working there despite those things.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Do you have an overall monitoring role of the way the department works? Do you have a feel of the problems? Is there reporting back in any systematic fashion about individual schools or about areas?

**Mr HOPE:** The department has got its own performance reporting system and it covers a range of areas.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Do you have a separate P and C-consumer based one?

**Mr HOPE:** Within the schools we get annual reports from the schools and there is a process in most schools where the principal is supposed to call the community in and go through the issues and set priorities for the next year and report. It is a very general report and a lot of parents do not find it very satisfactory. Within the schools there is a system whereby they look at individual performance of kids and compare it over a period of time, for example, how much value has been added to that child by that school or by that class, but we do not see that because it is a privacy thing.

Now I do not necessarily want to see that, and the policy of the P and C is we do not like to see individual schools singled out as bad schools because a school goes downhill once it has been labelled bad. There are tensions between how do you manage that because in some ways many P AND Cs and many parents say they want to know those things, yet our policy at State level is that we understand that parents want to know those things but we also do not want individual schools to be, sort of, put on this league table and exposed in that way.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Does each P and C look at its school and say 'How many temporary teachers has we got? Are they unhappy? Do we lose a teacher because they are temporary?' I know of a case where a very popular music teacher was temporary for 10 years and finally he got a permanent job and disappeared. The fact that he was temporary for so long was what made him disappear. In terms of recruitment and retaining staff, if someone in the P and C said "What about this teacher being permanent?" and the fact that it took so long for the teacher to become permanent meant he was lost.

**Mr HOPE:** The answer to that is we do not do systematic performance monitoring because we would probably like to get more performance figures, but we are not a management body, we are a consumer body in a sense. If a situation such as that occurred at an individual school and the P and C became aware of it and thought it was a concern it would raise it with the principal. The principal, no doubt, would then say "That is a matter for us, go away." That happens quite frequently and we are trying to change that a little bit. A lot of principals feel they are so constrained by the department's system for managing human resources that they will not take on initiatives like that. They just say it is too hard.

It is the same as what happens when a teacher is performing very badly, it is so hard to do something about that, that principals prefer to leave it alone on the whole. In the past, sometimes if principals have said "I am putting somebody on a special program" they have been admonished by their superiors for making trouble. So the system has been about the bureaucracy rather than about good management. But that is just an observation and we do not play a formal part in that. We have lots of informal stuff and when we meet at various levels, departmental people at various levels, this anecdotal stuff we take it back and we say "That is not happening". Our role really is to try to get the department to change; we do not do that management monitoring.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** I refer to the poor ratio of male to female teachers in primary schools. One of the reasons advanced is the impact of the child protection legislation that requires the mandatory application of reporting of what is termed "inappropriate behaviour". We have heard that a spontaneous act of a compassion towards a distressed or injured student led to lengthy investigations and the destruction of the teacher's career. What is the view of the P and C on the impact of the legislation on the recruitment of male teachers in primary schools?

**Mr HOPE:** This is a really difficult issue because one of the things that we hold really dear is the fact that we want our children protected from all sorts of harm, certainly from that sort of stuff that the child protection legislation is aimed to prevent. So we have a fairly strong policy of supporting that sort of thing, but we do realise that there are difficulties in implementing anything like that and there are difficulties for the department to manage it because once somebody is reported like that, it does not matter how frivolous the report, it leads to a range of investigations which sometimes create disharmony and, in the worst case, it can destroy someone's career. All I can say is that that is our policy. We understand that there are some difficulties in implementing it which are really hard issues and we wish it were not so.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Does it have an impact on male teachers? Is that one of the reasons why there is a disproportionate ratio of male to female teachers?

**Mr HOPE:** There maybe something in that but I do not know that that is the entire story. I think there is so much choice around now for people in terms of jobs, and that is one of the issues. Males in general are less inclined to go into teaching than they were when the current "grey power" were recruited. When I was at university there were a lot of people going into teaching because there were teachers' college scholarships and it was one of the main professions. It was seen as being something which was a good profession for males to go into particularly because, post-war, anything that had the word "profession" attached to it was a good thing.

I think these days there are so many other things. With what I do, the degree I did, the whole profession changed with technology and it is just a completely different profession now. I do not think the lack of males in primary schools is a big issue, but that is a personal view and I do not think the P and C has any data on it to say that it is or is not happening. Perhaps it would be good to survey that to find out whether it is an issue.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** The Committee has also heard about the negative impact of teachers having to be politically correct at all times, and the impact of that culture on the recruitment of teachers in the public school system. Do you have any views on that?

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** What does that mean?

**CHAIR:** You can say "yes", "no", "I do not know" or "next question"?

**Mr HOPE:** I think it is an issue because public schools have been attacked over those sorts of things. One notable example was when the Prime Minister said "public schools have got no values".

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Is that what he said?

**Mr HOPE:** No, not exactly; but that is the way it was taken. I guess that is the risk a politician takes, to say things and have them interpreted differently from its meaning.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** By the media?

**Mr HOPE:** Yes. When one reads the media we know they have got it wrong, but we do not know which way. Many parents whose kids go to public school and teach their kids their own sets of values, whatever they happen to be, would be quite offended by that. Sometimes there is a view that people who go into teaching tend to be on one part of the political spectrum. I do not know about that, there are a lot of activists. Teachers are active in politics and have their own particular views. I have not heard that parents who have kids at public school are concerned about that sort of stuff about their own kids. It is more of a broader political issue, when it comes to thinking, whether their kid has been poisoned by some political correctness at the school? The answer is: We do not think so.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Your submission mentions secondary teachers having the opportunity to be retrained to teach subjects other than those for which they were originally qualified. Why do you consider that an important opportunity to teachers?

**Mr HOPE:** It was put into our submission as one of the sorts of things that could be done. However, there are some dangers with that. If you try to retrain someone from English to mathematics and their brain is not a maths brain, you would be wasting your time. Earlier we talked about legal studies. Hardly anyone is trained to teach legal studies. If you want to offer that course you have to do some retraining. Sometimes you will find that teachers have taught primary for quite a while and have decided to change and teach secondary, because they have run out of steam and they need a new challenge. For teachers who have good teaching skills it can reinvigorate them so we do not lose them.

When you look at what teachers do, they go to school, they go to college or university and then they teach. They are in an educational institution forever. I do not know a lot of people who

changed jobs every five years to do something completely different. A teacher with that continuum, because of the department's HR system, finds a good school and stays there for 20 to 25 years and vegetates. It is important to give people the opportunity, if they want to stay in the work force, to do different things. It is a combination of taking advantage of where there is a need, particularly in the hard subjects in which there are few teachers, and where it will work. Do not do it where it will not work.

**CHAIR:** You would like the notion of increasing the percentage of career-change teachers, as they are referred to, in the total workforce?

**Mr HOPE:** Yes, it gives people a new lease on life. They have something different. It is like a teacher at a school who has been there for six or seven years and is part of the furniture, really good practice means that that teacher should be moved to another school. I do not mean moved from Lindfield to Wagga, but it could be Lindfield to North Sydney, to at least a different environment. Maybe a teacher in a primary school will be moved from first class to second class, and not stay on first class for 30 years.

**CHAIR:** You mean that someone who has been in a totally different career, not in schools at all since they left university, who decides at a later stage in life to have a change?

**Mr HOPE:** Yes. One of the problems within schools is that a huge number of people have worked only in schools, and that shows sometimes in their ability to do things around the school as well as in management attitudes. If someone is 38 and is sick of their life—perhaps a carpenter hurts his back and wants to teach woodworking, or an engineer decides to teach physics because of the sudden calling that he cannot resist—why not take them?

A lot is said about retaining teachers and it is good to retain people's skills but there is a lot to be said for having people moving in and out of the profession over time. A principal in my area said to me one day, "I went and managed a grog shop for a year and then came back to teaching." There is a scheme that allows people to take sabbaticals, but most teachers do not do that. There is nothing wrong with someone teaching until they are 29 and then going into something else in coming back to teaching ten years later. There is nothing to stop that, except the system. The system does not like people changing States, it is so restrictive. If one partner is moved from Melbourne to Sydney it is just bad luck, they cannot work here because they are not in our system.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** That is a very parochial attitude for so-called educators who are supposed to be enlightened, is it not?

**Mr HOPE:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** When you say "the system" do you mean where people start on the salary scale and those kinds of things? Or do you mean more intangible attitudes? Or both?

**Mr HOPE:** It is not the attitude so much. There is a bureaucratic system that encompasses the HR management in the department, which has built up over the years. I am not saying that this is easy to do. Managing the placement of teachers and their performance is not an easy issue, I preface my answer with that. The Teachers Federation and the department have come to a happy medium of allowing people to move through the system by a set of rules, in an easy. We do not look outside that. There is a case of saying that that system needs to be changed, because it is not in line with the way things are done currently and effectively. It is not good for teachers, because it is a demotivator. It does not allow new blood to be brought in. It is claimed to be "fair", but is it fair to the kids and the teachers who want a varied life?

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** In the concept of this nebulous word "flexibility" and what is "fair", are you suggesting that flexibility in the system means that a principal in a school for 20 years and doing a great job has been there for long and has, to use another nebulous word, vegetated? Are you suggesting that you are going to be inflexible and say that a person cannot stay? I assume you would have flexibilities to enable proper merit assessment of a person's longevity. You would not suggest that because someone has been there for a long time that they have vegetated?

**Mr HOPE:** No, that is a non sequitur, it does not follow. You are not vegetated in just because you have been there for 20 years. I am saying that the momentum in that situation is for people to be comfortable in their job and not have new challenges. Probably there would be plenty of cases of a moving a principal with 20 years standing would be the wrong thing. I do not know if there would be many, I suspect that for anyone in one job for 20 years there would be a good case for moving them. In the interests of flexibility and doing the right thing for the school and the children it has merit. I am saying that the system is too inflexible. I am not saying let us replace one inflexibility with another.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** Fair enough.

**Mr HOPE:** Teachers do not have enough choice in what they do and that is a big demotivator. If I were a graduate and going to such a lock-step system, I might not really want to do that, not because of the merits of the profession but just because of the way it is managed.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** What is the P and C hoping this inquiry will achieve?

**Mr HOPE:** When we have any inquiries like this, it provides an outside look at what someone else is doing. In this case we are looking at one service provider, the Department of Education and Training. Because it is a monopoly provider of services in the New South Wales Government there has to be accountability for what it does. He has to have ways of having input about what it is doing and people saying that they want certain things to be done so that they have some input into their futures. We have talked to the Minister in the past about bringing fresh blood into senior management in the department because it had not had any. Whether what we said made any difference we do not know, but there have been changes at the top and so there are fresh ideas in there now.

We hope that the Committee would be looking at some of those issues and coming up with ideas whether they are adopted or not. What they do is to raise debate in the department and the Government and amongst parliamentarians. Parliamentarians are the people who make our laws. We would like to be better informed about these issues and have more an impact from time to time by going through these sorts of valuable processes. Sometimes you need an outside push and because the parties that are there now are very comfortable with what they do. It is hard to change internally sometimes. But the world is changing and consumers are much different from what they were like when I went to school. We did not have calculators or computers. The attitude to discipline was very different and kids were a lot less sophisticated. Their needs are now quite different and the system has changed a bit, but maybe not enough, because the overall outcome is that so many kids are disengaged when they are at school. The hope for the future is the graduates.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Specifically, what is your wish list?

**Mr HOPE:** To do with recruitment of graduates?

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Yes.

**Mr HOPE:** We would like to see a critique of the current system, which would lead to a new plan for recruiting graduates which was not necessarily confined by legal constraints or by things to do with constraints imposed by legal instrumentation such as the current award. Would like to see a fresh approach to what the kids needs. If they need new graduates coming into the system, which they do, what is the best way to make life interesting, challenging and reporting for those graduates?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** It seems to me that the last time the education system was overhauled was following the Wyndham report in the 1960s.

**CHAIR:** It was 1957, but introduced in the 1960s.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I think the first Wyndham graduates were 1967, from memory.

**Mr HOPE:** That is right.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Has there been anything like that since, and if not, would you like to see it?

**Mr HOPE:** If you talk to the departmental people, they will say there have been wonderful changes—and there have been. There has been updating of a whole range of things. There has recently been a curriculum overhaul done by the Board of Studies. In my view, it needs to be looked at again. There has also been the Institute of Teachers which has come along. We support the Institute of Teachers because it is something that will raise the status of the profession, and hopefully the standards. So that is a big innovation. But we have some concerns about it, because we do not want it to be turned into some bureaucratic institution which takes the time of teachers away from their job, which is entertaining the kids, teaching them, and getting them to love learning.

**CHAIR:** You also say in your submission that you do not want to see it turned into a club-style of institution?

**Mr HOPE:** That is right. If you let the academics get all the sway, you get these wonderful curriculums and these wonderful things, but you find that the teachers are filling in the forms, making sure that the people who come onto the site are not going to affect the kids, making sure that there are enough cricket balls in the store, and a whole range of different things in their job. I do not think there has ever been a redesigning of what a teacher's job is; it just gets added to.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** In other words, the curriculum has been changed, that is the subject matter taught, and presumably the teachers have been up-skilled to do that, but, in your view, the role of schools in society has not been looked at?

**Mr HOPE:** You cannot operate within a society and not change to meet it. So it has changed.

**CHAIR:** Is the implication of what you are saying that we should look at having certain types of jobs in schools done by non-teachers, more so than occurs at the moment? I think you have said that often teachers do certain jobs which are not really what teachers are about.

**Mr HOPE:** One of our policies relates to getting people who are not teachers to help with computers. We have not extended the policy. But if you look at other professions and how they operate, usually you get a mix of skills. For example, in engineering not everybody is an engineer; there are technicians, drafts people, and a whole range of people who contribute to the overall product. I do not want to mouth off too much about that because it is not in our policy. Certainly teachers themselves often say that the only people they want in schools are teachers, together with a couple of ancillary staff. The job is becoming quite a lot different.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** I do not think too many principals would say that, though, in terms of their job.

**Mr HOPE:** There is still a limit to it, though. The other resource that is in the school which often goes unnoticed is the children. If you have a school of 60 teachers, it might have 600 children. Let us say that was a workplace and the teacher was the foreman, the supervisor or the management, and the 600 children were the workers. Would the 600 work force be just listening all day, locked in a room, for 12 consecutive years, six hours a day? What if they did that? Would there be a riot? Would they be at the pub at lunchtime for three hours because they did not want to come back? How would that work? You really have to look at the environment we provide for the kids and the staff, and the way the kids learn, because the way they learn is different now. I talked about not having a calculator when I went to school; we had log tables. The way kids learn and interact is different because the technology is different. To expect a teacher to be able to come in on Monday morning, 5,000 across Australia, and give this wonderful exposition of the subject and have everybody really bopping to it consistently is just idiotic.

My son learnt a lot from watching the nature channel. You look at 87 different learning styles in the one presentation. What is a teacher's job? A teacher's job is maybe to use that sort of material and then put the kids to work together as a team in actually using that information, which is what they



are going to have to do in life when they are working. I can imagine that this really worthwhile profession of teaching look at what is being done now—they were not alive when the reasons for the current method of teaching were put in place—and they say, "Why did they do that?" Then they would say, "Why would I teach in that situation, except that I have this idea in my head that I must teach because it is driving me, it is a vocation, and I have to go out there and save the kids of the world"? Our service providers have a responsibility to make it a place where people want to be. We are trying to keep people in some sort of a disciplined environment within a room for such a long time. Look at all the energy the kids have.

**CHAIR:** It is hard enough for us to sit still for the hour and a half—

**Mr HOPE:** That is right. You are getting bored already; you want to have lunch, or whatever.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** What is the biggest obstacle here? Is it the rigidity of the union or the Teachers Federation, or is it the rigidity of the bureaucracy within the department?

**Mr HOPE:** I do not think that is the right way to look at it. The Department of Education and Training is a very big organisation; it is like a big ship, and it is really hard to move it around. The Teachers Federation is used to interacting with that big ship, and it has ways to do it. If the federation goes outside the square, it gets bonked over the head, so it soon learns not to do that. If you look at what has happened in other industries where there has been change that has worked well and everybody has been happy about it—there have not been headlines in the paper like "Peter Reith sent the soldiers down to keep the wharfies happy"—it is because the people who work in those businesses, and the businesses themselves, have realised that together they have to move on, and they have enjoyed it.

I remember going to a supplier of a place I once worked for, and they got the union representative to talk about what had happened. They said, "We used to get paid our salary plus overtime, so we used to make the machinery break down so we would get all the overtime. We also used to get bored. So, rather than work, we used to head butt the boss. That was the most interesting thing they did. They did this in the late 1980s, early 1990s. They simply got a salary package and they made the machinery work. If it broke down at night, they would not have to come in. They were all happy; it was a local solution to a problem.

The education system is a lot more complex than that. They have their favourite words they use, such as, "We are moving towards something", which means, "The problem is too big, and we are not doing anything really but we just think we should." I think the new management that are coming in understand the need for change. From a government perspective, if you are a Minister and you go for too much change you lose your job, so there are disincentives there. Lots of things can go wrong as soon as you start to change things. So it is not trivial.

The fact is that there is as much need for change in education as there is in our crummy train system, but the trick is getting it right. I do not think it is necessarily bad incrementalism, because incrementalism sometimes does not work either. But it is about having a smart strategy, and you must have a strategy for change, not just a vision for what you want. You must have a plan, and you have to get people to buy into the plan. That includes the department management, the community and the union. I think the union would respond fairly positively to something that was put in context. A few years ago the union and the department said, "We are going to trade off professional development for pay increases." Can you believe that a profession would do that?

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** The education department, like many departments, changes constantly. No doubt the Teachers Federation has been dealing with change for the last 80 years.

**Mr HOPE:** It has. I am not having a shot at the Teachers Federation or the department; I am simply saying that things have to move on and you cannot keep defending things when you look at what is happening at the level of the kids. It is just not there yet. A lot of wonderful things are done. My three kids have come out of the system and they are relatively well adjusted.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** Consumers are not always right?

Corrected

**Mr HOPE:** That is right. You cannot say it is all wrong, but what you can say is that there are things that you can see that need changing, and we as parents want to see some of those things happen.

**(The witness withdrew)**

**(Short adjournment)**

**GEOFFREY PAUL RIORDAN**, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Technology, Sydney, Broadway, New South Wales, 2007, sworn and examined:

**CHAIR:** Welcome. In what capacity are you appearing before the Committee? Are you appearing as an individual or on behalf of the University of Technology, Sydney [UTS]?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I understand that I have been invited to appear because I am responsible for the accelerated teacher training program. So I am appearing on behalf of UTS.

**CHAIR:** You have received some questions from us.

**Dr RIORDAN:** I have.

**CHAIR:** Would you like to make an opening statement? For instance, you just told me that you might not need the limited time that we have given you because of the small number of students.

**Dr RIORDAN:** I think the information that I have to share will come out in the questioning—it has to do with the nature of the program. So I am happy to take questions.

**CHAIR:** We have a few broad questions about graduate recruitment before we turn to the program. We start with what can be done to improve graduate recruitment and we follow that by asking whether there is a need to increase the number of graduates generally. Do we have to focus on specific areas of shortage? Then there is the issue of the rate at which new teachers leave the profession, which is obviously associated both with training and with recruitment. Would you like to give us your thoughts on those issues?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Thank you. I assume that by "graduate recruitment" you are talking about the recruitment of graduate teachers into the teaching profession not the recruitment of graduate students into post-graduate—

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**Dr RIORDAN:** I want to clarify that point because I have views about both of those issues. One is a challenge we have more so than employers and the other is a challenge that employers have. As to the recruitment of graduate teachers, I think the Department of Education and Training does an outstanding job given the complexity of their task, which is to recruit a large number of teachers for primary and secondary to a wide range of schools across the whole State each year. I would not like to have that responsibility or be involved in that. There is nothing that I am aware of that they do not do well and there is nothing that I could add that they would not tell you as well.

It would make it easier if they had the freedom to offer, through resources, different types of conditions for beginning teachers. It would make it easier if they had the resources to offer beginning teachers a reduced teaching load or if they had the resources to be able to train properly and professionally develop mentor teachers to take on these neophyte teachers. But, like I have said, the department know that and they do their best to resource it. Like a lot of things in a big education system, it gets down to resources more so than a lack of imagination about what you would do if you had them.

**CHAIR:** In the absence or shortage of some programs do you think the implication is that teaching is a quite difficult, if not frightening, profession to undertake for new graduates?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Absolutely.

**CHAIR:** Without the confidence that those things are there graduates might not be recruited in the first place. Or is it a matter of the attrition rate of teachers?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I think it is partly that. As you say, people know as they are training to teach and as they go out into schools and do their professional experience placements that it is going to be

very difficult to make that transition from a student teacher to a fully fledged practising and independent teacher. To some extent that is part of the problem. I am hesitant not because I do not know what to suggest but because I know it is a resource issue at the end of the day.

**CHAIR:** We often find that we deal in wish lists. Our last question to witnesses is usually, "What would you like to see come out of this inquiry?" or "If you had a magic pot of money what would you do with it?"

**Dr RIORDAN:** Okay. There are two parts to the question you asked me a few moments ago. The first is: Is the absence of those supports a detriment to people wanting to do it? The answer is yes. But even more so I think it works this way: If those supports were available then the department could make that well known and people might be less reticent about applying if they knew there was going to be support. So I think it works in both ways.

**CHAIR:** The mentoring program seems to be a popular and well-supported initiative. They should be telling people that that exists.

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes, absolutely. I am not suggesting that they are not but if they could do more of it and it could be built into the award that teachers could begin on a lesser load. I understand industrially why advocates for teachers' interests in the Teachers Federation have argued so effectively for comparatively high starting salaries compared with other professions. I think they are acting in their members' interests. But it may well be that there could be another pathway into teaching—a slightly lesser salary for a slightly reduced teaching load. We know from research, locally and internationally, that the best way to prepare teachers is to have a gradual transition from universities into schools. So anything we can do at the university end—that is, start with internship programs while they are still students with us and then move into schools, where they start off with a lesser load and continue to do that, beginning professional development to make that transition as seamless as possible—we know will be effective. But, again, it is a complex issue. There are industrial matters to be managed and also resource implications.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I want to pick up on something you said earlier. You said that the Department of Education and Training is doing a great job recruiting, training and providing education. We have received a number of submissions, some of which say they are doing a good job, some of which say they are not and some of which deal with other aspects. Why do you say that the department is doing a good job? On what basis do you say that? Let me give you some options. Is it because you are in university and you think it is tougher in schools? Is it because you have read international literature, studied outcomes here and compared education systems? What is the basis of your comment that the department is doing a great job? Why do you say that?

**Dr RIORDAN:** What is the evidence.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Yes.

**Dr RIORDAN:** I do not know that I actually went so far as to say that in every aspect the department is doing a great job, but certainly in recruitment. Thank you for asking the question because I think they are doing a great job in general as well. The basis for that is, given the complexity of the task of providing educational services for an increasingly diverse and pluralist society, where there has been the ongoing decay of what we might call social capital, where we have evidence of long-term disadvantage, unemployment, large numbers of people from non-English-speaking backgrounds—all the things that we hear about in the press—the fact that schools operate as they do under the constraint of resources and, a little controversially, the constraint of the comprehensive high school model—that is, the standard type of provision of curriculum in schools that somehow must meet the educational needs of the wide diversity of school communities—and given all the complexity and the resource constraints under which they operate, I think they do an outstanding job, as evidenced by the number of students who stay on to complete years 11 and 12.

I have done research personally, commissioned by the current and former education Ministers, into things such as suspensions and school violence and I have first-hand evidence of, by and large, outstanding practice in the management of really difficult problems behaviourally that schools must deal with. I think they do outstandingly well, and have done since the early 1990s, when

children with a wider variety of special learning needs were integrated into regular schools. Principals have to provide services for those students and because of resource constraints the students must—if I remember correctly—have two types of disability to attract extra funding. Beginning teachers have difficulty meeting the range of educational needs. And I am an optimist. It is tough.

The other thing I think is really difficult—at the moment I am writing a paper that I was commissioned to write for the futures project—is increasingly the community is asking public schools to be more and more responsive to community needs. The people who bear that responsibility at the coalface are school principals. They are so constrained in terms of staffing and the number of resources they have available to deploy for special programs but they are held increasingly accountable by parents over things that oftentimes they cannot control. So I think, given all that, they are doing a really good job. I could also run the alternate script and make criticisms but the criticisms I would make are no different from the ones that people in the department who are doing this are aware of. That is the nature of the challenge of schooling in a complex society.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** You have elaborated on your statement but you have not really given evidence. Have you looked at evidence of retention rates, suspensions, violence, special needs, integration, the range of needs and the increasing accountability by parents? We just heard from a representative of the Parents and Citizens Federation that there are not that many quantitative surveys about what schools are delivering to kids—and there probably should be from a consumer point of view. When you say that schools are doing a great job in all these areas, what is your evidence?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I appreciate your line of questioning. I have just come from talking to the secondary principals conference about how we have to move increasingly towards evidence-based practice. I have my computer outside; I can go and get it. I surveyed—

**CHAIR:** If you wish you can perhaps take the question on notice and come back to us. Given the limited time you have today you could probably answer the question more efficiently by coming back to us later—if Arthur is happy with that.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I am happy to take it on notice.

**Dr RIORDAN:** I would like to give you a couple of quick statistics that I do know, so that you might be more satisfied and then I can write a longer response if you find that helpful. But just on one matter, I have done the most extensive survey ever in the history of New South Wales—skiting a bit—of non-government schools in New South Wales. It can demonstrate that they serve the same types of communities, the schools that I surveyed. These were Catholic systemic schools. I surveyed one-third of all the schools in the State and I asked a range of questions about the types of demands parents were making on schools and the vast majority, I cannot tell you the exact number, reported a gradual increase in questioning school authority and school decisions around disciplinary matters, so there is one piece of evidence.

There is a lot of data around to show that in the last 15 or 20 years in New South Wales, Australia and all round the world school retention rates have been going up in years 11 and 12. When you say what sort of evidence, I do not carry that statistic in my mind but I know that has presented a real challenge to schools, and I have evidence of the actual data, the rate of suspension of students from government and non-government schools in New South Wales for the past couple of years. In terms of percentage of students it is a very small percentage.

**CHAIR:** Let us take up the offer that you take it on notice. We do not usually grill our witnesses to such an extent on their credentials and evidence.

**Dr RIORDAN:** It is good fun, though.

**CHAIR:** We have brought you here because of your particular knowledge of the Accelerated Teacher Training Program. It would be remiss of us if we did not ask you about it.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Could you outline the aims of the Accelerated Teacher Training Program?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Sure. The aims of it are to provide a pathway for people who are in careers that are related to science and have a scientific background, a pathway for them to change from that career into becoming high school science teachers in as short a time period as possible, the purpose being to provide more graduates who can fill science teaching positions. That was the purpose of it.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** We have had a fairly mixed response among the submissions. I do not know whether you have read them. Some people have stated that they come out and they cannot teach for nuts what they know and others say that it is great that they got them so quickly. Presumably, you are involved in providing this program?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Obviously, you are an advocate for it?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** You have these questions, do you not?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I do. Before I go too far I should explain what the detail of the program is and how it differs from the other accelerated teacher training programs because all of them are different. There are two types of secondary teacher education programs, graduate entry programs and integrated four- or five-year programs. We have a graduate entry program, which normally means that people will come and do a one-year, add-on Graduate Diploma of Education. To get into the program they have to have an undergraduate degree in the discipline area or areas in which they want to specialise. When we get our students into the Accelerated Teacher Training Program we are not making any special arrangement for them at all. We assess their current transcript with the Department of Education and Training and we identify what subjects the students would need to do in science to graduate from the University of Technology, Sydney [UTS] with a fully-fledged science degree.

Under the UTS Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (R.P.L) we are able to credit up to two-thirds of any award based on previous study, or professional or other relevant non-credentialed learning. We select only those people who have at least two-thirds of the relevant undergraduate degree. Two-thirds of a three-year degree is equivalent to one year full-time study. We offer them a condensed one-year program in six months by offering mid year full second semester and then summer classes in science. They do a full one year of science, usually in physics because usually that is the area where they are finished, and then in March they start, just like every other grad dip ed student when they do the normal one-year grad dip ed science program. To the extent that there might be a criticism that these people are not prepared to teach, or are not very effective at teaching, they would be no different to any other of our graduates. In other courses they give them a condensed four-year degree in 18 months or 12 months. They are quite different courses. The accelerated part is not teacher training, the accelerated part is upgrading the science award.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Hopefully they have the grounding for that because they have done it years ago and they have put at least some aspects of it into practice.

**Dr RIORDAN:** Absolutely. Typically they are CSIRO researchers, or they have been working as engineers or in the IT industry. They have maths and science in their undergraduate degree, but they may not have a major in physics, which they are required to have, so they will do a couple of subjects there. They are very bright people. It is often difficult to get longevity with jobs in research because they are what we call soft funded. The project might go four or five years, but then there will be no more funding so there are these really competent science researchers who are looking for employment. This is attracting those sorts of people, but in small numbers. It is not all good news.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Are their scholarships satisfactory?

**Dr RIORDAN:** No.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** If they had a reasonable salary and then they go back to being undergraduates they are lucky they do not get a HECS debt.

**Dr RIORDAN:** That is right. This is what I was saying before. Everyone knows that it is not adequate. It is a matter of resources. They have part-time jobs during the six months of the science retraining, but it is very difficult for them to hold down part-time work in the one year of the grad dip ed because they have mandatory school experience.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Face to face?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes, they have to do a lot. They have to do about 45 days face-to-face practice teaching in that one year and it is very hard for them in that way. They drive taxis and do things like that.

**CHAIR:** Do you have more applicants than you can handle?

**Dr RIORDAN:** No.

**CHAIR:** Or would you like more?

**Dr RIORDAN:** We could take as many as are able. Because we can work only within the existing rules of accredited prior learning, we take everyone that we can who meet that requirement of having the equivalent of two-thirds of the degree and, unfortunately, it is not many. It varies from one to four a year. It is a very small number. The other programs are much bigger.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** You are running courses in the summer period for five students?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes, we are. The science faculty is.

**CHAIR:** Is it costly for the faculty or are there other students who are doing the summer school who can be included?

**Dr RIORDAN:** No, that part of the program is very costly for the science faculty.

**CHAIR:** Because there is an increasing tendency towards summer school, and even winter school—the University of New South Wales—for undergraduates. I wonder whether that tendency means that these students can be with those groups and that makes it more cost effective?

**Dr RIORDAN:** They can be, but to the best of my knowledge in the science faculty that is not the case. They just run those classes and we charge a per-student fee that either does or does not cover the cost.

**CHAIR:** You are talking about small numbers. What sort of age? Is it possible to generalise?

**Dr RIORDAN:** There is no-one under 30. They are 30 to 45, that sort of range. It is not uncommon for us to have students with PhDs in science, although I do not think any of the 10 or so that we have had have been that well qualified. But it is not uncommon for us in grad dip ed to have very qualified people. Invariably their problems are in the teacher education part not the science part. It is not a content problem in this program. It might be in others but it is not in this program.

**CHAIR:** When you say that their problems are in the teacher ed part, what problems?

**Dr RIORDAN:** The difficulties that people encounter in preparing to be teachers can fall into one or two categories. They can be either the intellectual challenge of mastering the material or the challenge of managing classrooms of students—the actual art and science of being a classroom teacher. Our experience is that the vast majority of the problems are in the actual classroom practice, and these students are no different. They can be very bright.

Corrected

**CHAIR:** You are not saying they have more difficulty, you are saying it is the same for every teacher?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Absolutely. They are no different to other students in the grad dip because of the nature of the program but also because of the things that they have brought into the program.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** How many students have successfully graduated? I suppose that is the difference between the graduates and the employed.

**Dr RIORDAN:** There are two ways I can answer it. One is that we have had only one student in four years drop out.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Out of how many?

**Dr RIORDAN:** That is the other part of it. We had three in 2002 and one dropped out. We had five in 2003, all of whom graduated. In 2004 we had only one student who satisfied the department and got a scholarship, but in reviewing all of the applications we offered two places to students to whom the department did not offer a scholarship and let them in through the accelerated pathway. We funded it.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** A total of what, about one dozen?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Less, it is 11 and we have one who started this year, one dozen—one dozen people. I told you it is not many.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** One dozen with a drop-out rate of one?

**Dr RIORDAN:** So far we have had one drop out. To the best of our knowledge all the others are employed by the department.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** As yet it is a small program?

**Dr RIORDAN:** And it will probably only ever be a small program because of the requirement for entry.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Will it stay limited to science? Is that a UTS policy or a department request? Has it been worked out in co-operation? Could it be in maths? Could it be technology?

**Dr RIORDAN:** It could be anything. I probably am not being very clear. When we say "the program", the program is just those students the department sponsors and pays fees as opposed to students who come in and occupy a HECS place. Although they are very small numbers and that is a concern to your inquiry, the general number of people we have come into secondary teacher education is going up rapidly. We have about 240 equivalent full-time students in one-year grad dip eds this year, 2005, only one of whom is in the Accelerated Teacher Training Program in science. Four years ago we had about 40 students. We attribute the rapid growth to the campaign Teach New South Wales, the offering of scholarships and also our offering a wider range of secondary specialisations. There is a lot of demand.

**CHAIR:** Are you focusing on secondary teacher shortage?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes. We have shifted HECS places, Commonwealth-supported places, away from other programs in our faculty to take on as many teacher education places as we can fill with qualified students. We are not excluding any student who meets the requirement in a secondary area. We are offering more places in the primary area as well. For the last several years we have been asked by the department to do that, like every other university in the State, and we are doing that.

**CHAIR:** Is UTS doing it more? Is there a more co-operative or successful arrangement between you and the department than there is, perhaps, with other universities?



**Dr RIORDAN:** There is only a dozen or so of us. My experience of it through the Teacher Education Council and various meetings I have been to is that there are excellent relations and they are dealt with both formally and informally. We are asked if we can do something about it and if we can we do. It is a very healthy relationship.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Earlier you mentioned your survey but you also mentioned students who, as far as you knew, were in public secondary schools. Do you have a plan in place to monitor how they are going to evaluate their placement in schools?

**Dr RIORDAN:** No.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Do you think that would be a good idea?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I do. Although I know the department has commissioned people to do that research, not just from our program but all of them, because I have had surveys. We had to tender for this after the first year and when we did the tender I built in a \$5,000 evaluation fee. But given the small numbers we have never invoiced for that, so we have not done the evaluation because we know the people individually. They end up in the department because they have got a scholarship, they are bound to, and we have got a close relationship with the people who are managing the program, they get employed and then someone has been commissioned—I cannot remember that person's name, but I remember doing the surveys—and they do follow-up on that. The department would be able to answer that question for you.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** It would be interesting to know how they have gone.

**Dr RIORDAN:** Very. It is not that we are disinterested but, as I described the nature of the program before, those students, from our point of view, in terms of the program and the preparation, are no different to any other student. The thing that makes them different is they are bonded to the department—the department paid their fees—and the different bit of the program is what happens in the science faculty not in our faculty.

**CHAIR:** Just looking at the questions we asked you—some you have already dealt with—there is a question about whether or not the program, because of the way it is done, restricts graduates from regional and regional areas?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes, it does.

**CHAIR:** It does, but Charles Sturt, for instance, has a similar program.

**Dr RIORDAN:** They do, but it is in a different area. We do not offer any of our initial teacher preparation courses by distance mode, they are all face-to-face attendance. We do offer some block mode, which means that we will offer what would normally be once a semester length subject in condensed mode in one, two or three weeks, meeting every day, and we do that to offer greater flexibility to students through summer and winter schools, as you were mentioning before, but we do not offer anything by distance.

**CHAIR:** And that is something that UTS does not do in general so it is not specific to this?

**Dr RIORDAN:** That is right, and most universities will not do that. We think it is a very effective way for professional development once people are in the profession, but it is not a very effective way of initial teacher preparation because a lot of what they do involves workshops and modelling actual teaching practices, so it is pretty hard to mediate that over the Internet.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Yet TAFE do that with child studies courses, for example.

**Dr RIORDAN:** They do that with a number of courses.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Quite successfully, would you not think?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I have got no way of knowing that.

**CHAIR:** So question 9, once they are in the department teaching then the conditions for professional development opportunities and so on are identical once they actually start teaching?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** So they graduate from UTS with their basic sort of degree and their teaching qualification and they are on a par with others?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Does the department locate them in specific schools or do they go into a broader pool, do you know?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I do. Unless it has changed—and please check this with the department, do not just take my word for it—I think the arrangement they have with the department is that they agree to teach, if not in a specific school then in a certain hard-to-staff area. The whole reason for the accelerated program was that certain areas have been difficult to staff.

**CHAIR:** So while they are bonded there is that condition?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** It is back to the fifties and sixties in that sense, is it not?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Well, it works.

**CHAIR:** What about overseas-trained teachers, people whose initial qualifications are overseas, is that an area where the two-thirds accreditation process you were describing can be applied to people who were originally trained elsewhere?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Some of the students we have had have been in that category, that their initial undergraduate degree was from an overseas institution, but there are well-established processes in universities and in the department to analyse those degrees and look at transcripts and make a determination of their equivalents. Just like every other applicant we have with an overseas degree, we get information based on the outcome of that analysis and make our decision accordingly.

**CHAIR:** Do you also add a language requirement on top of the academic qualifications—a minimum ability in English I mean?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes. The way that we manage that for these students is no different to any other applicant, and that is that students who have a private credential or qualification from an institution where the medium instruction was English do not need to meet a language requirement, and where it was not, they have to have a particular IELTS (International English Language Teaching System) score of 7. It is actually a higher level of English required for teacher education than it is for other university courses. But we not do any other assessment of the person's written or spoken English above that, except that when the students are selected by the department I understand they may be interviewed and some assessment of their spoken English may be made there. But again, ask the department that, I am not sure.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** You may not know the answer to this so we might have to go to the department for theirs: the bond situation, you said that they are bonded to go to particular areas. Are they able to pay back funds and release themselves from that bond?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I think so.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** There is nothing to stop them then going through this accelerated process under a bond situation?

**Dr RIORDAN:** In changing their mind, paying back the bond and then getting a job?

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Yes, going elsewhere?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I think that is right, but I think that has to be taken in the context there is nothing to stop those identical students applying for direct entry into a HECS place. They are not actually getting any advantage in their treatment from us than any other student who might apply. The main difference is they are not paying their fees, the department is paying them, and they are getting a very small sort of honorarium, whatever, except in science, where they are given entry into those summer and winter classes. But I would imagine if a student came in that category that we could make that arrangement for them as well because of our desire to increase the number of people with maths, science and IT qualifications graduating to meet employer needs.

**CHAIR:** Question 12. I suppose what we are driving at is, given the diversity and perhaps the longer away from the school education year of the people you are training, do they need more of an induction program or a mentoring program et cetera when they graduate and start teaching, or do you regard them as starting on an even footing with all teachers and that all teachers need those things?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes. I do not think there is anything particular about the program because it is a graduate program that would require them to have additional induction over and above what all graduates would require. That is because the majority of our secondary teacher education students are mature age career change people and we have actually marketed to that group. It has been a deliberate marketing campaign from UTS from our advertisements, you will see, to attract people into secondary teacher education as a career change.

**CHAIR:** You can take this on notice, if you like, to give us some figures, but what sort of percentage are you achieving of mature age of career change?

**Dr RIORDAN:** It is very high; it is the majority. But we have got people in the faculty who would have access to that information. I could provide that for you.

**CHAIR:** We were told yesterday, I think by Dr Brock from the department, that that is becoming more and more common in all universities, that the percentage of people straight out of school in teacher education courses is dropping and the number of career change mature age, whatever we should call them, is growing. But you are saying UTS is specifically marketing for that?

**Dr RIORDAN:** In secondary teacher education we are, and in primary teacher education in the last five years we have increased in some years up to 50 per cent of the intake into the primary teacher education being mature age entry as well.

**CHAIR:** Why has UTS done that?

**Dr RIORDAN:** For several reasons: there is an increasing demand from those students; secondly, we are of the view that these people can make excellent teachers; thirdly, we find that in some instances they are better qualified than the younger students. So we apply the same entry criteria, but it is different in primary and secondary. Let me start again. In the secondary area, if two people were equally qualified we would not discriminate against them on the basis of whether they are career-change or not, even though we are marketing to them, we offer the places to the people who are the best qualified. But, because of the nature of the applicants and, we think, because of our marketing campaign, the bulk of them happen to be more mature-age, career-change people.

In the primary area, that is a UAC course, and in the process of making offers you take into account their UAI or their estimated UAI, and we make a choice about what sort of percentage of students we take in there, and we have gone from about 30 up to as high as 50 per cent in the last four or five years. It is not as though the mature age students are weaker academically, in many cases they are in fact more able, we have done that deliberately because we think they will make better teachers in primary schools as well. Often they are women in their late twenties or early thirties who have had other careers, who have retired, have left work, have a couple of young children and want a career change into primary teaching; there are quite a few of those and others.

**CHAIR:** So is the marketing, in effect, a competitive bid by UTS to get a share of a market that is out there?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Yes. And to create a market: two things. The market is not fixed. So the department's marketing campaign "Teach NSW" has actually increased the size of the market. We are attempting to do that as well by saying career-change is an excellent pathway that we can facilitate and also we want to increase the share of quality students we are getting—sure, that is the business we are in, if you like.

**CHAIR:** We have got a number of questions here a bit more broadly about training for graduates entering the school system and also questions about what schools should do to enhance the practical element of teacher education, et cetera. You may feel that these go a bit beyond your expertise—tell us if they do—but we would be interested in your answers to some of these questions about the UTS students in general. Are the graduates entering the school system sufficiently prepared for life in the classroom? We have certainly heard some views that in general graduates are not sufficiently prepared. Would you like to comment?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Well, if they are not well prepared it is not for the want of trying.

**CHAIR:** I think the comments probably relate more to the practical experience like literally life in the classroom; not to the academic side of the preparation but to the culture shock perhaps that it might be for some people to find themselves with a classroom of children.

**Dr RIORDAN:** It is difficult to answer this question or respond to this without actually looking at it as a thing about expectations and how reasonable they are, because of course if resources were unlimited and if students did not need to earn an income as quickly as they could, and all sorts of other variables out there, we would have students doing a lot more prac. But it is always a call that we have to make between what we can afford to pay for—because it costs us a lot of money to provide prac experience for students—how much time and how many schools are able to offer and are willing to take prac students and how quickly students want to get through their program and get out to schools. So it is a matter of balancing those three. So we do, I think I said earlier, 45 days in the grad. Dip.Ed. That is accurate to within a day or two. I have not got all the figures in front of me. I am just conscious that that is on record, but it is in that ballpark of 45 days.

**CHAIR:** Again, you can take on notice confirmation of figures.

**Dr RIORDAN:** Sure. It is about 45 days for that program. Now, is 45 days being in a classroom, observing people and taking lessons enough for a person to walk into a school and to be as confident as an experienced teacher? Of course not, but it is enough for them to walk into a school and be a beginner teacher.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** You said that in an ideal world with more resources you would extend the practical time. Is that the answer to having teachers more prepared?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I have given this quite a lot of thought and it is part of my job to work these things out, to do as well as we can. The whole answer is around not universities doing more practical in isolation of other things but it is the total management of the transition from student to teacher, and it works at both ends. We know—it is not a mystery—how to do it well. The way you do it well is that you start off with a number of observational visits and then they move gradually to a graduated program with people teaching responsibility. At some stage they shift from being a student to an employee of the department and then over an extended period of time, through mentorship, induction and ongoing professional development, they become a fully-fledged teacher on a full teacher salary. We know that is how you do it.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Comments have been made to the inquiry that talented graduates are snapped up early by the private sector. Has that been your experience?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I am hesitant to answer that because I do not have data and we do not research it; we do not keep data on that. I can offer an opinion that I do not think it is as big a problem

as people make out. When I say we do not have data, I know that in our primary program the vast majority of our graduates go to government schools. If there is a problem with the secondary programs, the difficulty the department has is that when it employs a teacher, that teacher can be deployed anywhere in the State, but if the student is applying for a job in a non-government school, it is to a specific school in the location where they want to teach. If you could offer the same type of employment opportunities, to the extent that it is a problem, it would address it. To the extent that non-government schools taking the best teachers is a problem, giving the department the same opportunities to recruit to specific schools would address the problem, to my mind.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Do you think that is a good idea?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I absolutely think it is a good idea.

**CHAIR:** How would you staff the less popular schools?

**Dr RIORDAN:** That is another type of problem, but you do not solve that problem by the current policy because, in effect, an unintended consequence of the current approach is that you might lose otherwise capable graduates as potential employees. Solve each problem on its merits; do not have a single policy. That is my view. In saying that, I am aware of the complexity of the industrial issues that this approach would bring about.

**CHAIR:** Are you talking incentives, financial or otherwise?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Why not? Why should they be different to other employees working in other industries and other areas who have to be offered incentives to go and work in remote locations? Why not? This is not a view that is widely shared, but my view is that the department should employ teachers into regions not into the State and that each region should be able to offer a different type of incentive package and each region should be resourced accordingly. So once you are employed into the north-west region of the State, that would be your employer and that is where you would work. You could be recruited from those communities to work in those communities. You could be paid and rewarded on a different scale or whatever else.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** How long would they stay in that region though?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Why should we restrict their rights as an employee? Why would you oblige teachers as employees when the State does not oblige other employees? At the moment the Northern Territory is facing a problem where they are having difficulty in attracting teachers because their salaries are much lower than New South Wales. That is simple. You just pay them more.

**CHAIR:** I guess that is how mining companies get people to go to various places?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Absolutely. The State has, for years, assumed and required a particular altruism of teachers.

**CHAIR:** This Committee knows from previous inquiries that all sorts of other professionals, and not only ones employed by the State but a range of medical ones, such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, doctors and nurses. In huge parts of the State it is incredibly difficult to recruit and people tend to stay a short time and then resign or go somewhere else. It is not just a problem that the employers of teachers have.

**Dr RIORDAN:** We know what does not work and that is just blaming people for not doing it.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** I want to flesh out that last point. If you are saying that incentives are a good thing to offer and we made an assumption that talented graduates will be attracted by incentives and that the private sector is able to offer incentives, how is it then that your statements that graduates go into the public sector more than the private sector stack up and what is the reason for that?

**Dr RIORDAN:** Preference. A lot of graduates want to work in public schools; a lot of them want to work in government schools. They want to work in particular areas and a lot of our students come from those schools. Equally, other graduates want to work in the sort of school they went to—a Catholic local systemic school, an independent school or whatever. It is not that every teacher is not an individual with their own ideology, political position, value set or whatever else.

They are not going to government schools, though, because necessarily they offer better working conditions than other schools. They work in government schools because they want to. They make those choices. When you said governments offer incentives and schools do not, quasi-government agencies like universities offer incentives too. Have a look at what happens in universities. There is not a single award for universities. Each university has its own enterprise agreement. That is precisely to address these sorts of problems. How do we attract quality people? We have to look at incentives; we have to look at what type of employer we are. The reason we do not do that with teachers is that they are such a huge occupational group that it is going to cost the State a fortune.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** If people are making those choices for all the right reasons, then they get into that environment and they are not supported as much as they had hoped, do you think that is a reason why we lose so many in the early years?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I think so. I think that would explain part of it. And I think it is also because often beginning teachers are placed in the most difficult schools. Ask the department about this because they have the data on this. They survey this. They are working this out all the time.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** If you were offering incentives to graduates to go to particular schools you are probably offering them to go to difficult schools?

**Dr RIORDAN:** You could be, or the other thing you would be doing is you would be offering incentives for experienced teachers to go to them too. The incentives might not just be financial; the incentives may be reduced teaching loads; they may be all sorts of things. It is not just that you get paid an extra \$10,000. There are all sorts of incentives and, in fact, we know that one of the things teachers want more than money—if there is anything they want more than money—is time, reduced workloads, to reduce the pressure on marking, preparation and so on.

**CHAIR:** You can take this question on notice, if you like. Do you have particular comments to make about the role you foresee for the Institute of Teachers and whether it will benefit the profession?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I do not think I would have too much more to contribute than what my colleagues coming in later from the Teacher Education Council would have to say, but generally we welcome that.

**CHAIR:** What do you want to see come out of the inquiry, other than what you have already said. We probably have a fair idea. Is there anything else you want to say?

**Dr RIORDAN:** I think that it would be great if there could be support for the department to respond more freely to the challenges it faces in staffing schools and the particular learning challenges that the kids present—anything that could assist them to respond more flexibly. My observation is in education that universities and schools, it is not because we do not know what to do; it is because we are unable to do it, so anything that frees up that capacity for experimentation, for flexibility, for trial, for evaluation of that and for learning, I think, would be helpful.

**(The witness withdrew)**

**RODNEY GORDON FRANCIS**, Associate Professor, Accelerated Teacher Training Course, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga campus, sworn and examined:

**CHAIR:** Do you appear before the Committee on behalf of the university or as an individual?

**Dr FRANCIS:** The university knows I am here and so to that extent I am also representing the university, but many of the ideas will not necessarily be those of everybody within the university, obviously; many will be my own.

**CHAIR:** You have received questions from us?

**Dr FRANCIS:** I have.

**CHAIR:** We will go through them but we do go off on tangents. Would you like to make an opening statement or are you happy to go straight into questions?

**Dr FRANCIS:** I might make just a couple of overall comments that deal with three areas I see as part of this—recruitment, training and retention—which are the three broad areas. Many of these will be fleshed out with the questions but I put on record some points. In terms of recruitment, I think what we are doing is an outdated system of teacher recruitment that was for pre-baby boomer times; it does not suit generation X or Y and the way in which those people now operate and think about the world. It is too rigid and inflexible. It is predicated primarily and secondary, in particular, on one factor; that is, the content code and nothing else. It is too centralised, it is too late and altruism is not what drives the teachers of generation X and Y anymore. That is broadly some of the issues, as I see them. We might discuss some of the ways we can get around that.

In terms of training, we need to look at a range of entry pathways rather than just the traditional ones. But that said, I do not want to return to the mistakes we made in the 1960s where we believed we could train a teacher in three months and let them loose. The system has been wearing those people for the last 25 to 30 years. Some of them are excellent but a large number of them have not been the best value to the system. While we need alternative pathways, the pathways still need to be substantial, reflective and authentic in terms of what we are trying to achieve. Increasingly research in all the professions across the world—and I like to have a particular rural bent, given where I am coming from—is that the way in which you get people in areas where they are difficult to staff is to get people from difficult areas who do not see it as a black hole they will fall into when they go over the mountains.

In terms of retention, one of the questions illustrates one of the key misconceptions that the research does not show. One question is: Do we prepare them well enough for the classroom? Broadly speaking, and there are obviously variations, I think there is a reasonable job and there is too much made of that because, in fact, the research indicates the primary reason for severance is not the classroom: it is all the things around the classroom. Research from Britain, the United States of America and some Australian research—two of them were doctoral students in the same way—show it is generally more about support, school culture and the social context in which they are placed. Those three things are not taken into account in any way if we get back to recruitment.

I think we need to think not just about the classroom because the preparation of teachers has for too long just been about the classroom. One of the reasons why some mature-aged people do a much better job is because they are more job ready and socially ready to cope. The practical that students do, and the whole range of things that they engage in, in traditional teacher education programs—they know what a classroom is. They have been in there many times. They may go to schools where kids have got different views and different values but primarily across the board of adolescents there are variations from place to place. There may be a percentage of some more difficult kids in some places than others. Our students know that: they have experienced many of those. The thing that gets them most to sever from where they are generally is not that, and that is what the research shows.

**CHAIR:** Obviously those themes will come out as we ask these slightly amended questions. We have questions in relation to the broad issue of graduate recruitment and then on your role about the Accelerated Teacher Training Program [ATTP]. A lot of what you have just said relates to the broader issues of recruitment because the ATTPs are relatively small. How would you recruit graduates?

**Dr FRANCIS:** I have been giving this a lot of thought for sometime. Let me say, and from listening to what was in the previous session, there is some quite strong evidence, particularly from work on rural teachers and rural schools, that incentives are less than lifestyle for people. So straight incentive is not necessarily, for example, the way to get someone to go to a rural school. The amount of \$5,000 or \$10,000 compared with other aspects that people see as important in lifestyle in the end means nothing—half of it goes in tax anyway. If you actually look at the research on rural schools that is what they tell you. In relation to that, you also get some quite, I think, generally bad messages given to students about how those things operate.

Recently we had people from the Department of Educating and Training talking to our students saying "Those schools are two-year schools" not that they were great places to teach and this is what they are about and this is how you can do it. But they said "It is a two-year school. You can go there for two years and then you get out" and that is the kind of message of how it has become. The language of eight points, has become two years, has become as you get there: it is just a means of getting out and then to where you want to go. If that is the kind of language that we are using it is not necessarily to me a message that is appropriate. Many of the incentives are based around getting out, a bit of extra money and that kind of thing. I do not believe the level of incentive is sufficient.

The level of incentive to overcome what people perceive as lifestyle and other things needs to be different to how it is now. Whether that is substantially more money or whether it is a whole range of other things, I am not sure but the research at the moment shows that the nature of the incentives at the moment, particularly in rural areas, does not overcome, for a lot of people, lifestyle choices. Some other interesting things have just happened and this will come up in the Accelerated Teacher Training Program. We are trying to encourage people with fantastic industry skills with career change so we have just taken away in the past six months something that has existed for the past 30 years, that is, those people who came in got a 1:3 increase in salary incentive to bring them into the system. That no longer exists. So in the time when we are trying to get more people in they have got to start as a starting teacher, and I think that is quite absurd, but that has just happened in the past six months.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** What is 1:3?

**Dr FRANCIS:** What happens up to 12 years of work, they can get a salary increment for each three years of work in their industry they get a one-year salary increment. That has been around since the 1970s.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Do you mean if they have been 10 years in research—

**Dr FRANCIS:** Up to 12 years so they can get four years of increments under the present system that has just been taken away in the past six months—last year. I had to tell people in the middle of my program that that has changed. Now for the ones that get sponsored they have gone along with that, but those who have come in under fee paying under that view say the bets are off.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Did anything replace it?

**Dr FRANCIS:** No. In fact, I have had three people who were paying their own fees pull out of the program for that very reason. I am saying that if we are trying to recruit quality people, that was one incentive for those people who were working that has now been removed.

**CHAIR:** When say that incentives do not outweigh lifestyle, does that mean that the incentives have to be brought about in terms of lifestyle?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Yes, I think it needs to be broader than just money. It needs to be in terms of lifestyle. The sorts of things people talk about are access to education and medical resources and about



the costs to go on holidays and a whole range of things. When you add all that up anyway what is \$5,000 or \$10,000?

**CHAIR:** Would it be better, for instance, to offer a specific sum of money to pay for a teacher and perhaps their family to go on a holiday?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Or it may well be, "We will pay for your annual holidays" or whatever, I do not know. There is a whole range of things which we can explore that I think have not perhaps been explored, particularly when people say it is lifestyle that is the issue. So what do they mean by lifestyle? What are the things that are most important to people if we want them to move there? I hear the same from medical people trying to move to rural areas and so on, it is no different, they talk about lifestyle. It is often the partner's lifestyle as well, and that is the other issue with small regional schools.

Schools are in every place. One of the problems we face with schools, more than even hospitals, is that if you have a spouse who is working, we have encouraged both people to be working, but if you cannot find a job for the other one, will they go there? All of those things are lifestyle and we have to tease out a little bit more about what they are and what is more likely to get people. But that aside, the other evidence we know is that if you recruit from rural areas, for example, people will tend to teach in rural areas in all the professions right across the world. We are still only band aiding that in medicine and it is not working, I can tell you.

**CHAIR:** Does that mean the department's recent set of efforts—programs such as Teach NSW et cetera—is not reaching out sufficiently to rural areas to recruit those young people?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Let us look at it from my own institution. I could argue from an economic rational point of view that the university in Wagga Wagga could be packed up and moved to Sydney and we could do the same things there. But, on the other hand, I could say 87 per cent of our students who are recruited from rural areas teach in rural areas. If you look at the same of teachers in Sydney it is the reverse. The argument is other arguments about why it is there and why it is doing what it is doing. When I say there needs to be more flexible ways in recruitment, one of the things that has shown up very strongly in the accelerated programs is that because it is a mixture of distance and to a relative extent it stays on campus, we are accessing people into teacher education who up to now could never have been able to get into education because if they live at Tooleybuc and Tottenham and those sorts of place where we have got our students doing the program, they could not take their family and themselves and anyone else to a campus to be a teacher. I get principals saying "I have got someone from Tottenham who is doing this program. This will be the first time in 10 years I have actually had a fully trained industrial arts teacher at my school because no-one else has wanted to come here for the past seven or eight years."

**CHAIR:** Can the committee take it almost as read that your comments about recruitment would also apply to the reasons why new teachers in rural areas might disproportionately leave the profession?

**Dr FRANCIS:** One of the points that I made in my initial statement, particularly in secondary—and I will focus on that—is that the primary way in which people are placed is the code that they get. What have you done in your study? What are you able to teach? A principal says "I want someone who can teach A, B and C." The computer finds a match that fits. We match it in terms of content. Now that takes no notion of context, so you get silly situations arising where someone from my institution, for example, who wants to teach in rural areas ends up being placed in Sydney, and someone from Sydney ends up being placed in Griffith. Both of them hate it. Both of them sever the system because the system does not include, in terms of its measures of what we want, context. That is just as important as being on the system. It says "I am a principal from a rural school who wants these kinds of codes and someone who understands this kind of community and this kind of context and is actually willing to teach in this sort of place." If in some way that was included in the way in which people were appointed we would get a much closer match. If you do that what it effectively means is centralised staffing has got to go.

**CHAIR:** And replaced by individual school recruitment on a regional basis?

**Dr FRANCIS:** As a minimum, regional. The notion I heard before, which, in fact, happens in some other countries in the world where regional areas become the employers and then if you want to move from region to region you effectively apply to a position that is vacant in another region. So it can work that way. When you are close to that situation you are more able to understand context and to build in other things other than just a computer set of codes.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** Is that inflexible? If the region stops at Fairfield railway station, Fairfield east primary school is in one region and Fairfield West Primary School is another region?

**Dr FRANCIS:** The way in which you design any system has got to take account of all variables. If you are changing the way you staff you might not design the break so that Fairfield West is in a different region to Fairfield east, for example. I am not saying it is a simplistic thing to say we have some existing regions and I will let you do it there, you have got to rebuild the system if you are going to change some of the variables. If you change one thing in your system you have to change them all.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Could you outline the aims of the Accelerated Teacher Training Program?

**Dr FRANCIS:** The aims of our ATTP are exactly the same as the four-year parallel technology program, that is, to create teachers that are effective classroom teachers who can cope with the flexibility of the context in which they are in, who understand their discipline well and pedagogy and the social constructs in which that has to operate. I would think you could go around the country and look at many teacher education programs and find that they will be pretty much the same. They get exactly the same four-year award as any four-year teacher education program. In fact, I think there is a misconception because one of the questions was: Do they have the same access to professional or development opportunities as graduates who have completed a Bachelor of Education. Basically, to give a quick outline, any four-year teacher education course that is an integrated program effectively has two years of discipline study and two years of education in a rough mix. They get close to a block of two years credit for their discipline knowledge, that is what they already bring to the program, and effectively they do two years of teacher training.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Is that squashed into 18 months?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Yes, because we use the summer session. So we start in the middle of the year and they do four sessions, but they do the four sessions in 18 months rather than two years.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** How many people have gone through your program since it started?

**CHAIR:** That information can be tabled.

**Dr FRANCIS:** I can table a document that you might find useful and I will give the totals. We have graduated four DET-sponsored students, 169 in technology and 55 fee-paying students who have paid their own way into teacher education. Teachers find it extraordinary that people pay \$16,000 or \$17,000 out of their own pocket to become a teacher. That is generally the case. A lot of teachers do not realise their high standing in the community. Many people in the community believe that teachers are of high standing, and that is one of the reasons why they come into the program.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** How many people dropped out in that?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Over the whole program, the attrition rate is about 10 per cent. Less than half the standard teacher education program. In maths we have had 12 DET sponsored and four fee paying. Presently we have 103 people in the program, of which 70 are DET sponsored and about 30 are fee paying.

**CHAIR:** That is 169, 55 and 103 with technology included.

**Dr FRANCIS:** We have graduated in total nearly 180 students in DET sponsored and 60 fee-paying students within technology and applied studies [TAS] and maths.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** No wonder the University of Technology, Sydney blokes are trying to catch up.

**Dr FRANCIS:** We believe it is a highly successful program with relatively low attrition. The low attrition, in part, is because they were all mature-age students. They are coming out of the work force in which, because of the way it is structured, they get no salary. They have to be committed to do it in the first place. So high commitment is needed. There is also high selection pressure. In most cases we select a small number from a very large number of applicants. In some years we have had 400 or 500 initial applications for 60, 70 or 80 places. The selection pressure is high, which enables us to look very closely at what we want.

We want not only industry training but much more than that. We are looking for ones that are continually into life-long learning who have done a whole lot of other things. They have been engaged in some high education settings, which may include people in a company who train the apprentices because they are good at it, or they work with youth groups outside. In their curriculum vitae they are the sorts of things we are looking for. And some have had engagement with adolescents. Because of the high selection pressure we have been able to select fairly strongly. The mature-age people we have are highly motivated because they are not getting paid, and so the attrition rate tends to be low. I do not have all the data, the DET has it. My anecdotal and gut feeling from the feedback we get from the students is that they have a much lower severance rate as well.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Are they all employed by the department when they graduate?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Interestingly, quite a number of fee-payers still want to be government school teachers, but they want to teach in Tamworth or Bathurst or Cobar, because that is where they live.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Do you think they should be allowed to do that? That is what you do, under your regional scheme.

**Dr FRANCIS:** Yes. One of the things I have talked to the department about is that they believe they have the school staffed when they have staffed all positions. In fact, you need 120 to 130 per cent staffing to staff the system.

**CHAIR:** Do you offer the course at different campuses in addition to Wagga Wagga?

**Dr FRANCIS:** No.

**CHAIR:** A person would have to travel from Tamworth to Wagga Wagga?

**Dr FRANCIS:** It is a distance education program with a high amount of on-line and three residential periods.

**CHAIR:** Does that include the subject content as well as the diploma part?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Yes. And it has a very different kind of model. They spend a semester attached to a school for two days a week for one term, where they do integrated study of curriculum on a problem-based approach. They then have a 10-week internship where they teach a full load a whole term, less one class.

**CHAIR:** Normally close to where they live?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Presumably that would be quite a logistical and organisational operation?

**Dr FRANCIS:** And we have a day training for every mentor that works with those teachers all around the State as well.

**CHAIR:** Who pays for that kind of operation? How does the funding work?

**Dr FRANCIS:** The fee-paying students pay their own and the DET sponsors the others. So out of that money we do all those tasks. We use a high proportion of what they give us to produce the quality that we believe is important.

**CHAIR:** Are there any issues in relation to Federal funding for the faculties and the way in which the mix of funding for students works? The Committee has heard that there is an issue about the practicum.

**Dr FRANCIS:** The faculty did an analysis last week. The money we get for a practicum subject, I am not sure what it is at the moment, and we have finished the standard four-week practicum, and after we have paid the practicum we have \$14 left per student to pay for the staffing and everything else for the subject.

**CHAIR:** That would not go a long way.

**Dr FRANCIS:** In other words, the university and the faculty subsidise subsidises practicum on the basis of other sorts of things that they do.

**CHAIR:** And that relates to all of your teacher education students, not only the ones doing the accelerated program.

**Dr FRANCIS:** That particular program is funded in a slightly different way, but that does not impinge upon that government line of funding.

**CHAIR:** Because you are able to build that cost into your tender?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** When did the Charles Sturt University embark on the program?

**Dr FRANCIS:** We are into the fourth intake now, we are about to take the fifth intake, so it could have been 2002.

**CHAIR:** Were you the first, other than the Newcastle pilot?

**Dr FRANCIS:** No, we came on board at exactly the same time as Newcastle. I think the first intake may have been 2001. Initially it was an expression of interest and we said that we would have a go and that was like a pilot run. Then the department put it out to tender and we gained the tender and that is where we are up to at the moment.

**CHAIR:** Have you ironed out any bugs or changed much since the initial pilot?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Yes, we use a fairly high level of evaluation. For every residential school, every group of students, we have done some modification on the way in sequencing, how we deal with students with different kinds of discipline backgrounds, because obviously there would be slight variations. Someone may have a background in metal and they are different from someone with a wood background, for example. So I think we are better at that. We have changed some of the ways we do things at the residential schools. Structurally and overall we believe the program operates very well.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Have you evaluated their progress post university?

**Dr FRANCIS:** We have a staff member who is involved in a PhD doing some of that, collecting data. I cannot share that with you at the moment because it is part of the ethics of research at this stage and it is not out and about yet. But we are doing it in that way.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** In your handout, what does TAS refer to?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Technology and applied studies.

**CHAIR:** Are you picking up some overseas trained teachers, or will you?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Yes, we do. Yesterday I had this discussion with people from another university. Certainly in the very first group it was very loosely organised in terms of looking at their level of English, and that was a bigger issue. That has been tightened up and the DET has a process in which they put them through something at the University of New South Wales.

**CHAIR:** A pre-employment program?

**Dr FRANCIS:** No, it is an English-language test. They have to reach a reasonably high standard. We have not have the same problem in terms of English at all that we had in the very early part of the program. The issue is more about the cultural background. We have a number of people in this program who have degrees from overseas universities and in theory could have gone into a diploma of education, which would be shorter. However, because of the nature of this program they have chosen to come to this program because it gives them a much more extended time in which to come to grips with that culture.

**CHAIR:** Is the cultural lack of familiarity more of a problem in rural areas because there is less cultural diversity there?

**Dr FRANCIS:** No, we have not found that at all. In fact a number have been appointed to rural areas and been highly successful. I do not want to put labels on things but let us say that in a sense there are either very, very good or of a struggle. It tends to be with their own personal characteristics of whether they are flexible enough to want to change and embrace a different cultural way of operating, as opposed to hanging onto what they already know. I am dealing with the two ends at the moment; one is having extreme difficulty because of the pattern in his head; his previous experience is that students sit and listen and the only preparation he needs to do is the contents, because his job is to tell students and their job is to learn and if they muck up that is their problem, not his. Others say the first thing they did at the end of the week was to go down to the department to learn how to teach. It is a personal characteristic about how much they want to cope with that difference or whether they still want to retain in their head the model of what school was like when they were at school. We spend a lot of time with that group and I often pull them aside and talk about it.

**CHAIR:** One reason I asked the question about diversity in rural areas is because the P and C suggested that the department should be looking at overseas-trained teachers more with a view to appointing them deliberately to schools that have a high percentage of non-English-speaking background students, preferably in the relevant language or cultural area. With exceptions the majority of those schools would be in the urban area.

**Dr FRANCIS:** The schools with the most diverse problems in the State are at Griffith.

**CHAIR:** That is true.

**Dr FRANCIS:** That is changing, where I come from there are not enough teachers teaching English as a second language to cope with the influx of refugees and so on in local schools. But that is changing.

**CHAIR:** Are the departmental scholarships sufficient, or is that a real problem? You are getting a lot of applicants, more than you have room for.

**Dr FRANCIS:** You could almost say they are inverse incentive to finish quickly and be successful. It has been extremely difficult for some students because they get their fees paid and they get \$1,500. For 18 months they are expected to live off whatever means they have, or their spouse, or

whatever. That has led to a number of really severe situations, including marriage breakdown and all sorts of problems, which I will not go into. Some have been put under extreme pressure, particularly overseas students who have very good qualifications and are trying to make something of their generally poorly paid jobs. That pressure has been very severe.

**CHAIR:** The residential schools make it more complex.

**Dr FRANCIS:** That is a cost to the student. By the same token the reason our program has been successful is that distance gives a lot of people much more flexibility to do that than having to go during the daytime instead of going to work, or working part-time. It has given them flexibility in being able to survive better. In fact, some people who transferred from another institution actually came to our institution because of that reason. The flexibility allows them to earn some money whereas if they are going from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. to a more traditional university, that would be difficult for them. There is certainly an incentive for them to get out in the minimum time. It certainly means they are extremely focused in making the choice, because they know they are not going to get much money. In one sense, that is the reverse incentive.

The department, to its credit, in cases where there have been hardships, has allowed the students to slow down a bit and go part-time. I do not know that it needs any more money, but it needs more flexibility in terms of how long the program could go for some people. Building that into the program might be a way around it. I think that if you start giving them too much money, they will wallow around in it. As I said, the reverse incentive works fairly well in terms of getting people who are highly motivated and want to finish as quickly as they can. But, in many cases, if there were a little more flexibility—so instead of taking 18 months it might take two years, because for one or two semesters they could slow down and do one or two subjects less—perhaps that would be a way around it.

**CHAIR:** We have more general questions about training on which you may want to comment. Co-incidentally, quite a lot of what you have said is also relevant to that group of questions. You have pointed out that No. 13 is wrong; it really should not focus on—

**Dr FRANCIS:** It should not just be about the classroom, and the research shows that.

**CHAIR:** It is about the management of the school, the management of the department, and so on?

**Dr FRANCIS:** The culture of the school, the social context in which they are placed, the degree of support they get, and the mentoring they get, or lack thereof.

**CHAIR:** We spoke about the problems in the practicum. You regard that stage as very important. What about the issues of induction and continuing education, and mentoring that, the kind of support that graduates get?

**Dr FRANCIS:** If you look at the plethora of teacher education reviews that have occurred in the last 30 or 40 years, one of the things that often comes up is that a beginning teacher should have a lesser load. There is not a great deal of evidence in the literature that says that, because you are only doing less of the same. If you look at the evidence and then try to make some suppositions from it that says there are a whole range of things about the culture of the school, the support it gets, and those kinds of things, it is critical. There is some evidence in some places that suggests that if you actually use the resource to support the mentor so they can do the mentoring properly, you might get better value than by just giving a reduced load to the teacher. They feel valued in taking on that role. They then take it as a serious role, and not just something that happens and then it is bypassed down the corridor.

The department has some fabulous resources for mentors and mentor programs in schools, but it is incredibly patchy about how they are taken up and used. They are outstanding in some places, but almost non-existent in others. You asked about what the difference is. In the end, it all boils down to time and resources. So there is some evidence from the United Kingdom and other places that would suggest that support of the mentor may well be a better use of resources than the beginning teacher.

**CHAIR:** Yesterday we heard evidence suggesting that, for example, a mentor might be used to take the load of, say, a head teacher, while the head teacher then worked with the beginning teacher, so that that sort of flexibility of not necessarily working on one person's load but thinking of the needs of the beginning teacher and the needs of the school—

**Dr FRANCIS:** If I were a principal and I understood the literature on mentoring, I would want to have some flexibility. In most organisations we appoint a mentor. But what we tend to find is that over time people will seek out their own—and very rapidly in many cases. Sometimes we pick out someone for the wrong reasons; we think they are very experienced. But if they do not also connect in other ways, that does not necessarily turn out to be a good mentor relationship. In the end, they start to seek out people. If I am a principal who has a bunch of resources, I might say to the head teacher, "Let's do it that way for the first term and see how it goes." But I might find that one person is working very closely with another person on a regular basis. At that point I might say, "Let's now think about how we use that resource more flexibly to provide greater support in some other way."

**CHAIR:** We have not dealt with the Institute of Teachers. Is it too early to ask you about that? Is it a good thing?

**Dr FRANCIS:** I will talk about it from a university perspective at one level, and I will then talk about a couple of things that I see as important for myself. I think there is a lot of potential in the Institute of Teachers in terms of what it is trying to do. However, at the moment the group that we work with in terms of courses is the Teacher Qualification Advisory Panel. We have courses approved through it, and that enables graduates of the program to obtain a stamp to say they have the appropriate requirements.

The Institute of Teachers was to pick up that role. I hear that the Teacher Qualification Advisory Panel may still be staying. The question I ask is: Do we then need to have two sets of information for two separate groups, with double the workload, and is that really the intent of the changes? I am just supposing there. My view is that we need one quality assurance group, so that in one sense the systems then have to agree that they are happy with that. If that does not happen, and it still breaks down underneath that into another form of subsets of the way in which they are done, I think that will just add another layer of bureaucratic options rather than having a change in the way we think about things.

The institute should be a registration and professional body that does a range of things: registers teachers and registers courses; brokers professional development in part; and facilitates partnerships in a range of ways between university systems, university schools, a range of other organisations, and so on. It also produces monographs on its own research, if you like, on issues as they arise, much like the Queensland group does. They have a very strong background in that, and some of that material is excellent.

I know systems and schools organise pay. I would like to suggest a system that operates in some other places. If the institute is about identifying the status of teachers, if you say the levy, whether you are a head teacher or whatever, is the status point, and then somehow or other you get paid. At the moment we have a system where you say, "I am in this status position, so I get this pay. In order to get to this other area, you have to pay me an increased amount of money to jump across that status point, then to another status point."

If, however, we start to break those two things apart, and break away pay from status, we have a different way of thinking. That is where the Institute of Teachers can come in. At the moment it operates in part of the tertiary sector in some places, and in a couple of places at the school sector. In other words, at some point of time, for the professional development done and the expertise you have, you are identified by the registration body as having that status. Once you gain that status, you start the pay at that level and over a range; you do not just have one range. Instead of having a disjuncture, you only get paid one level of increment more than you had before, so it does not cost the system a lot more money to recognise that status. The pay rates overlap each other, so that you break away status from pay.

**CHAIR:** Would that be like the concept of leading teachers?

**Dr FRANCIS:** Yes, we have had leading teachers. The leading teacher was a parallel deputy that had a different role. There was another position whereby we gave teachers who were considered to have expertise a little bit extra—

**CHAIR:** I think that was the leading teacher position, was it not?

**Dr FRANCIS:** No, leading teacher was a position in a school. I forget the other position at the moment. We have a system that is disjuncture. That is part of the problem in high schools. In the primary school situation, often I think there is better leadership. There are so many more places and ways in which you can get leadership opportunity. You can go from being the principal of a small school to being assistant principal at a larger school; there are various ways in which you can manage your career to gain the leadership skills you need. In effect, they are doing the same kinds of things because they are changing their status and playing around with their pay, and they overlap. Sometimes they may even go backwards here to move forward there, and so on. In secondary schools it is here, here and there, with nowhere to go in between. Unless we reorganise the way in which they operate, and recognise the level of status and link that in some way to pay, I think in the long run we will end up with a lot of 50-year-old burned-out teachers who will never get up the pile.

**CHAIR:** The institute could put their levels in concrete—

**Dr FRANCIS:** It could play around with what the status positions are and what skills you need to have them, and identify and recognise them. Some teachers say, "If someone says you are doing a fantastic job and you are actually operating at the status of what a head teacher does, you may not hold that position at that point in time but you are recognised as having those skills." That is the really important thing for a lot of people. A pat on the head is just as good as a pay rise in many cases, in terms of how people regard the way people think about them. That is the sort of conversation I have with teachers. They say, "I want someone to recognise that I am operating at that level. If I am operating at that level, what incentive is there for me to stay operating at that level knowing that one in 10 will end up being a head teacher?" The institute, being independent of the systems, could explore a whole range of those options of looking at other ways of thinking about the relationship between status and pay in a registration sense.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Do you see any advantages in a system in which teachers can move more freely in and out of the private sector and back into the public sector? It seems that once they leave the public sector and then move back—

**Dr FRANCIS:** I have that written in my notes somewhere. I think the system needs to be more flexible in allowing people to move in and out of the system. A teacher may say, "I want to do another job for three years, and I do not want be disadvantaged in coming back." As I said earlier, if we talk about Generation X and Y people, that is the way they tend to think about things. They will move around. They should be given that opportunity, so we do not lose them. We might lose them for a period of time, but we should make it such that it is welcoming and relatively easy for them to move back into the system if that is where they want to go. At the moment I know some promotions positions are open for people to move backwards and forwards. But how do we recognise someone who has been working for 10 years in a private school if they want to come back as an assistant teacher in a government school? What is the pay rate?

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Earlier you said that altruism no longer drives Generation X. Do you say that pragmatic flexibility drives it?

**Dr FRANCIS:** I was referring to altruism in saying, "I am prepared to change my lifestyle rather than spend three, four or five years out in the west, because the system said I am going to do my bit; I am going to go out there and do that before I think about my own lifestyle." That is why they are in the game. The teachers are certainly not there for pay; they are there because they like the feeling of doing something for people. In the same way, they respond to people saying, "You are doing a good job." But in the change to Generation X and Y, "You are doing a good job" needs to be attached to something. It is not just someone going like that and saying, "You are operating, you have the status but the registration body says you are there now doing that. Fantastic. Let's see if you can keep



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moving to the next level." A person could still be in the classroom but have the status of operation of someone doing many of the things that would be done at a head teacher or deputy level.

**Document tabled and ordered to be made public.**

**CHAIR:** Thank you for your evidence. In answer to Robyn's question, you said you had some information in your notes. If you feel that the Committee has missed something we would be grateful if you could contact us with additional information.

**Dr FRANCIS:** I will go back through my notes and provide any information that I have but did not cover.

**CHAIR:** You could telephone us.

**Dr FRANCIS:** I can email something to Victoria.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much.

**Dr FRANCIS:** Thank you for this opportunity.

**(The witness withdrew)**

**(Luncheon adjournment)**

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**ANDREW PAUL GONCZI**, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Technology, Sydney, PO Box 123, Broadway, 2007, and

**TONI DOWNES**, Professor and Head of School, University of Western Sydney, Locked Bag 1797, Penrith South, sworn and examined:

**CHAIR:** In what capacity are you appearing before the Committee today?

**Professor GONCZI:** I am representing the Australian Council of Deans of Education and the Teacher Education Council of New South Wales.

**Professor DOWNES:** I am also representing the Australian Council of Deans of Education and the New South Wales Teacher Education Council.

**CHAIR:** Do either or both of you wish to make an opening statement or shall we proceed to the questions we sent you?

**Professor GONCZI:** I am happy to proceed to questions.

**Professor DOWNES:** Same here.

**CHAIR:** We have found with other witnesses that we should have asked particular questions but that has offered the opportunity for dialogue. We tend to hop around a bit and individual Committee members might want to ask different questions. We have divided the topics broadly into recruitment, training and the Institute of Teachers. If you think our questions are in the wrong order do not hesitate to hop around. We will start with what can be done to improve graduate recruitment and the issue of shortages. Do we need more teachers and, if so, in what areas?

**Professor GONCZI:** To start off, the Australian Council of Deans of Education commissioned a fairly substantial review of workplace needs across the nation. But that was about four or five years ago and we have not done anything since then. So, in a sense, our figures are out of date on this. I am sure you already know those sorts of things.

**CHAIR:** The department has given us figures but other people have questioned them.

**Professor GONCZI:** The only general point I would make is that one of the issues that is occasionally forgotten—in case no-one has mentioned it before—is that we produce teachers not only for the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. Many of our universities produce teachers to go to other States and all of us, whether we want to or not, produce teachers who go to other countries. I think it is important to view the shortage not merely in terms of Australia; the rest of the western world is experiencing the same kinds of shortages as Australia. That is evident from the number of advertisements that I am sure people have seen in the paper. There is a worldwide shortage; it is not just Australia. I think those sorts of things need to be kept in mind. That is all I can say about that.

**Professor DOWNES:** I might also comment from the perspective of the particular university I come from. The official figures often do not reflect the needs on the ground in terms of local principals contacting the university and talking about the shortage of teachers in their schools. That is sometimes at odds with the national or State conditions and reflects local conditions and circumstances as to whether they can have a full-time teacher replacement. We often find there is conflict. We might stand up and say, "Our principals are telling us there is a huge shortage of primary teachers in the Campbelltown area", but that group of principals cannot staff their schools for a whole pile of reasons.

**CHAIR:** Is that because of an inability to get casual or relief teachers or an inability to fill full-time permanent positions?

**Professor DOWNES:** You might want to ask them or a New South Wales DET person, but the way in which the principals explain it to me is that there are rules and regulations in the department that say that a position must be held open for a person on maternity leave, for example, so they can only put a casual in that position; they cannot get permanent, ongoing staff. So they come knocking on the door of the university, begging for a casual—well before the students have necessarily finished their programs.

**CHAIR:** In other words, there might be enough teachers in New South Wales but in certain parts of Sydney and in many parts of country New South Wales it is hard to find one. Many people have said that to us and there are lots of different ideas about how to solve that problem. I guess you would probably agree that, with that qualification, the specific problem areas are science, maths and technology. Are there others?

**Professor DOWNES:** There are geographical areas that are hard to staff.

**CHAIR:** That is what I meant by "with that qualification".

**Professor GONCZI:** Definitely.

**CHAIR:** What is your anecdotal knowledge of new teachers leaving the profession within a short time? Apart from the universities producing graduates, are there problems with the way in which our schools or the system retains new teachers?

**Professor DOWNES:** May I comment on two fronts? One is generically related to working conditions, structured entry into the work force and career progression. I think they are the issues that tend to lead to a range of teachers leaving after three, four or five years. Secondly, our particular university graduates the largest number of indigenous teachers. There are particular issues around retaining our graduates in school positions after they have successfully completed their teacher education. That also relates to some of the complexities of the community and school relationship. Everybody in the school expects them to be an expert on everything in the community, and that is too much for a beginning teacher. Everybody in the community expects them to be an expert on everything in the school, and that is too much for a beginning teacher. It is also a pathway to other public service positions. In the indigenous teacher area there are specific issues that could well be addressed.

**CHAIR:** How many indigenous teachers are graduating from UWS?

**Professor DOWNES:** We have graduated about 150 since 1983, when we started. It varies from 20 to zero in any year. There is a range of issues around why a cohort of 30 who start with you may not finish with you or may finish as a cohort of 30. This year we expect to graduate about 20 in our April ceremony.

**CHAIR:** Why are they dropping out? It sounds to me as though those reasons would be very relevant to this inquiry. We have not yet had any evidence about indigenous teachers. We have had quite a bit of discussion about teachers trained overseas and teachers from non-English speaking backgrounds but nothing about indigenous teachers.

**Professor DOWNES:** In terms of progression in our program, we can say most strongly that there is something about the essence of a cohort. If the cohort is cohesive the cohort holds the group together through their teacher education program because it is an Aboriginal teacher education program. When that cohesion is lost and they returned to diverse and disparate communities if there is not then a support structure in place—as I said, there are unrealistic expectations; some of our graduates talk about the fact that on day one they are expected to be perfect whereas if they were non-indigenous they would be called a beginning teacher and allowed to make mistakes; they are under the spotlight and there are the unrealistic expectations of the two communities—they have lost the cohesion that came with being together for five years while they did their training. There are some significant issues.

**CHAIR:** Are all of your indigenous graduates appointed by the department under special provisions and appointed to schools with particular percentages of indigenous enrolments?

**Professor DOWNES:** No, some are and some are not.

**CHAIR:** Is that their choice or the department's choice?

**Professor DOWNES:** Ask the department.

**CHAIR:** We have heard that answer a bit. We are building up quite a list of questions for the department. Departmental officers appeared before the Committee yesterday and we told them that, as normal, we will address questions to them as the inquiry progresses. But if you have any comments on this issue, please make them. We have been told that it is one of the groups where there are special appointment provisions and we are gradually hearing a lot of evidence about a big centralised staffing operation that can lack diversity and flexibility.

**Professor DOWNES:** All I can say is that some of the issues around lack of flexibility also apply in this case. But there are specific issues and I am sure that the Aboriginal education parts of DET will explain those complexities.

**CHAIR:** We will follow that up with them. Andrew, do you have any comments on this issue?

**Professor GONCZI:** I can make an indirect comment about indigenous students and give a little example. We at UTS have a very large number of indigenous students—probably the largest single cohort of indigenous students in any course anywhere in Australia. There are about 100 or so. None of them are training to be schoolteachers; they are training to be community educators and suchlike. Interestingly, by contrast, we have no indigenous students in our teacher education courses.

**CHAIR:** Why is that? Is it an accident?

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes. The reason why we have such a large number in the community education area is that it is a word-of-mouth thing. We found that by having good contacts with indigenous communities throughout Australia, advertising in the right kinds of areas and so on—they are all adult students; the youngest is probably aged 30—there is a very strong word-of-mouth thing in the indigenous communities. I think that helps the cohorts keep going. I endorse what Toni said about the cohort. Our people come in as blocks and support each other. One of our staff members is an indigenous older fellow in his sixties who goes around to all the communities throughout Australia, helping them to do their assignments, to keep on track and so on in between the times they are with us. I think that way of doing things is probably why we have had more success than anywhere else. Amongst the youngest students who might come to do teacher education courses there is no word of mouth. A couple of people we have had on our Kuring-gai campus have felt uncomfortable because it is a middle-class area with middle-class students on the whole. Without having a cohort of people there already I think it is impossible to start.

**CHAIR:** So someone who wants to do the course would perhaps gravitate to UWS instead.

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes, exactly.

**Professor DOWNES:** Four universities do teacher education at school education level and each with reasonable cohorts. We all tend to draw on slightly different parts of New South Wales.

**CHAIR:** What are the four?

**Professor DOWNES:** The Australian Catholic University have quite a reasonable cohort in their primary teacher education program. The University of New England have quite a reasonable cohort across their primary and secondary and the University of Sydney does some secondary teacher education. Macquarie happens to do early childhood and UTS does adult. So if you map New South Wales you can see that, in one sense, we have carved up the work relatively effectively. However, Andrew and I were saying that both of us cross-subsidise our indigenous teacher education programs from our traditional programs, we would argue at twice the cost.

**CHAIR:** Is that because you are providing more staff by ratio or because you have people like the man you talked about, who travels around New South Wales helping with assignments?

**Professor GONCZI:** In our case the travel budget for our staff—the students are funded through a separate fund from Canberra to come to us—is funded largely by us and, yes, it would be three times the normal cost.

**Professor DOWNES:** We will not cancel a class if it turned out that there were only eight students in it. If a cohort starts falling off in a mainstream program and you have to take it through third, fourth and fifth year and there are only 10 left, you restructure and move them on. In this case, regardless of the attrition rates, we see a cohort through.

**CHAIR:** And therefore the university has to find from within its funds, funds to meet this extra cost?

**Professor DOWNES:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** You nodded before when Professor Gonczi said that word of mouth was really important to the recruitment of a cohort?

**Professor DOWNES:** Yes. We have two indigenous teacher education academics who have connections in rural and regional towns. They do the recruitment and the initial pre-screening testing. We have our own direct entry model. It is their community connections and the connections of our 150 past graduands that create—you do not put an ad in a newspaper.

**CHAIR:** We meant our questions about new teachers leaving the profession to apply to the entire teacher education group, but it is really useful because we have had no evidence about indigenous students until now. Do you want to make any comments about the broader group of students?

**Professor GONCZI:** I guess we could speculate. I have not seen a lot of research on this. I do not know whether there is research that I have not seen, but anecdotally people leave because they do not see a long-term career that is as dynamic as, possibly, some others. Most professions have people leaving in reasonably large numbers in the first few years because people have to start off somewhere doing something. I am not sure how much worse, if at all, this is in professions like accountancy and so on. I know there is a big focus on it for obvious reasons in times of shortage, but if we had a bit more research it would help us to make a decision about these sorts of things.

**CHAIR:** Yesterday Dr Brock from the department gave us some research, and we will get more from him. He referred not only to Australian research but also to some very interesting UK and USA research. We either have that or we will get more on it. Some of the opinions we are getting thrown at us in answer to this question, leaving the statistics out of it, are also interesting. Even today we have had a disagreement between whether it is life in the classroom or whether it is life in the system that is the difficulty and we have had quite diverse views. Some people say that young teachers find the classroom, particularly in secondary schools, a very difficult place to be but other people say that the classroom is okay but the school system, the department system is big, inflexible and unfriendly.

**Professor GONCZI:** It would be interesting to see if there is a difference, first of all, between the department and younger teachers in non-government schools to see whether there is a difference. You might be able to draw some conclusions on that. But it would also be interesting to contrast it with other professions to see whether this is just a normal sort of thing for young people.

**CHAIR:** The figure the department gave us was 17 per cent in the first five years, but that is actually less, for instance, than the New South Wales Public Service so perhaps there are a few myths around.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** I am interested in your view of the possibility of flexibility being brought into recruitment and training and then when they move out. Do you see a problem with the structure designed for a different generation to what was termed by one of our other witnesses as

the Generation X and Y expectation and the difficulties of meshing the two, the group with the flexibility coming in and out of careers or changes to a very structured system? What are your views? Have I made myself clear on that?

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes.

**Professor DOWNES:** I will frame my answer in the sense that UWS is completely moving away from any undergraduate teacher training education program to graduate entry teacher education program and say that some of that relates to our increasing number of career change applicants, the increasing number of overseas qualified professionals particularly in our part of Sydney and those two groups who already have degrees looking for a teacher qualification, and then giving the school leaver the opportunity to have a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Social Science, a Bachelor of Science a Bachelor of Health or a Bachelor of Business and a teaching qualification so that they are set up for that boutique type of career structure where they can move from career to career.

As part of our negotiations and consultation with our stakeholders we found our career advisers in our high schools to be the strongest supporters of this notion of being able to say to school leavers, "Here is a pathway into teaching that has flexibility and allows you to have other qualifications and other options at the end of it. He is an opportunity to leave the school environment and get to know the world before coming back into teaching." In some ways that is counter to some of the step up into teaching stuff that we are trying to do with years 11 and 12—take them from schools, put them into universities and put them back in schools. It was quite interesting to hear the career advisers saying that this model would work as well for school leavers as it would for the career change. In practice, once the school leavers get there they really do not want to be into a Bachelor of Arts so we need to work with them to broaden their horizons before we then bring them back into teaching. We are attempting, foolishly or bravely, to have a go at addressing that issue.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** We have also heard comments about a lack of flexibility once people go out of the government sector into the private sector or go out into the work force and try to come back into public education and the difficulties it can cause. Have you experienced that or do you have any comments to make on that?

**Professor DOWNES:** You are not talking about our students, are you? You are talking about teachers moving from system to system?

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Yes and the disincentive sometimes to give people career options because once they leave they cannot come back in.

**Professor DOWNES:** I do not think I could comment on that. Employers would give you the best answer.

**Professor GONCZI:** The only thing I would say is that I do not think there is a lot of evidence from other professions of people leaving the profession and going off and doing other things before going back into it. There have been attempts in the nursing profession, for example, to bring people back in but it has not been very successful. Once people leave, very rarely will they want to come back. If one could help that to occur that would be good, but I do not think there will ever be a rush back into the profession from people who have left it.

**CHAIR:** Perhaps with the exception of women who have been out of the work force with young children?

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** But perhaps they would accept that they would come back on the salary level that they were on, although it gets complicated if they have some years of casual teaching. They often are left behind.

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes, I am really commenting on something that is outside our area. But all of those rules make it more difficult. I can understand why the rules are there, I suppose.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** If you are talking about incentives to keep people involved in gauging the teaching profession, do you think that teacher exchange programs and those sorts of programs, such as return to work type things, might be good incentives? I know in the TAFE system you used to be able to take time to go back into the industry and come back again. Do you think they are good incentives?

**Professor DOWNES:** I am sure they work for a small percentage. My view would be that a workplace that values your expertise and your professionalism, and allows you to act professionally—classroom, school or community—is what most teachers most want. That notion of a reasonable career path and reasonable working conditions would be the types of things, I would imagine, that people are looking for.

**Professor GONCZI:** Things like that are always worthwhile doing. For example, exchange programs in universities are often a way to motivate someone to keep intellectually active and so on. I think they could very well work in the school system as well. Interestingly, in TAFE the return-to-work provisions are not taken out. There are far more places available and there are people to take them up. I am not sure that that is a good analogy with school teaching, but it is something. However, I would agree with Professor Downes completely that far more important is the sense of being treated like a professional, which, frankly, is lacking to some degree. Obviously, it is spotty across the whole system, but those other things motivate people. It is interesting that within universities we have a motivational structure, which is called promotion, to various academic levels and that encourages people to work hard and so on, whereas within school teaching really it is promotion only into administrative positions. If you did not want to move into administration it would be quite demotivating not to be able to move beyond seven years of a salary scale.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** You talk about being professionally valued. How does it affect career change teachers having experienced a culture and a work environment that might have had all the bells and whistles—computers and airconditioning, for example—coming into a school environment where conditions are quite substandard in contrast?

**Professor DOWNES:** One of our doctorate students at the moment, who is a senior teacher in a local high school, has been examining the pathways of 10 of our Accelerated Teacher Education Program students and all are dissatisfied and have issues with being 10 years manager of a bank, working for Telstra and working for international aid. They did not talk about the physical conditions. They say things like, "They do not realise I have some expertise here." They talked about the professional recognition. They talked about not being treated as a beginner who knew nothing and had to learn it on the job. That research is available if you are interested in it.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Yes.

**Professor DOWNES:** It has some very telling stories. The group in the accelerated were not just overseas qualified professionals who have the additional cultural and linguistic competencies to come to grips with, but Anglo-Australians who had been very competent senior people who had made a choice. The stories of how devalued they felt—and they accepted that they were beginning teachers—their generic expertise and their maturity and their ability to make complex decisions were some of the issues they talked about, not the airconditioning and not the computer.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** And not life in the classroom, getting back to that comment I made earlier?

**Professor DOWNES:** No, life in the staff room.

**CHAIR:** Are we talking about the culture of schools or the culture of the teaching service as a problem in some places?

**Professor DOWNES:** Or just the difference between the cultures they have come from in terms of the private sector or whatever it was they were doing—the contrast in culture. I am not saying that the culture in schooling is not necessarily appropriate, but it is sufficiently different that it is creating difficulties and some of our accelerated graduates have not stayed.

**CHAIR:** We would be very grateful if we could get that research from you.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I was interested in question six, interviewing or assessing them. Presumably if they are going to be devalued in a classroom, that is not what they will be interviewed about. I notice that Newcastle university interviews doctors as well as taking into account their UAI, and it would seem a reasonable thing to do for teachers, particularly if they are having a major career change.

**Professor GONCZI:** I do not think it makes any difference, to be honest with you. There are a number of things to be said about it. First of all, the intake of doctors at Newcastle university is very small.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** It is being used as a selection criteria, which is a different thing from what you would be doing.

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes.

**Professor DOWNES:** Can I just comment on that because we are setting up a medical faculty of the University of Western Sydney? We have done an analysis across Australia of all methods of entry and if they would take those interviews away, they would still end up with the same students.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I do not think that is right.

**CHAIR:** Maybe you will have to provide that submission to Arthur.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I would want evidence for that proposition. You are saying it would come out exactly the same as the UAI and that the interview is just a little thing? I do not think so.

**Professor DOWNES:** So close that it is not worth necessarily the funds. You might appear to be seen to be paying attention to these issues but if you then do the correlation—Professor Yeoman is the foundation head and I might get him to—

**CHAIR:** Perhaps Arthur might check that out.

**Professor DOWNES:** Yes. He has just spent the last period of time collecting data around Australia and analysing that data.

**CHAIR:** So, Andrew, why are you saying that you do not think it makes much difference?

**Professor GONCZI:** The sort of people who are clearly inappropriate for teaching discover that themselves within three months or actually the first practicum visit that they go out on. Using a selection thing to exclude the wrong people, we do not need that, because it happens anyway. At the other end, getting some people in who do not get the UAI but who might become good teachers, you might get a few people at that level but, frankly, I think we need high UAI for teaching rather than low. I do not think you would pick up too many people who did not reach our minimum standards but who would be good teachers. You might find that you get a few, but that is about all. The actual cost of doing it compared to the benefits of it, I think, would be very, very limited. And remember that we take in 500, 600, 700 or perhaps 1,000 at the University of Western Sydney [UWS]—many, many hundreds in all of our universities—and it is simply not possible, cost wise, to interview them. We just do not have the staff or the money to do that, so I just cannot see that it is worth doing.

**Professor DOWNES:** I am not sure we would necessarily want to anyway, given that the variety of careers that our graduates go into are not limited to classrooms.

**Professor GONCZI:** That is true.

**Professor DOWNES:** They can be museum educators.



**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I suppose it is caveat emptor with most courses, is it not?

**Professor GONCZI:** Absolutely.

**Professor DOWNES:** Probably the point of serious interview is at getting the job.

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** We have questions about getting more students from rural and regional New South Wales, which we talked about before lunch with Associate Professor Francis from Charles Sturt University.

**Professor GONCZI:** I must say that I was not sure what that question was aiming at. I would presume that there are quite a few students from rural and regional New South Wales teaching in rural areas. I am quite sure who would have figures on this. We do a little bit, but we do not have a specific database that looks at where our students come from. They just come.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** The point was made by Rod Francis from Charles Sturt University that country people do not see the country as a disadvantage and city people sometimes do.

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** So that if you recruit people from the country, they are more than happy to go back there and if you do not recruit them from the country but you have recruited them from the city, they are not happy to go there.

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** So, therefore, where you get your students from is where they are going to go to or where they are willing to go to and obviously if the universities simply take it on UAI and country schools have worse UAIs, then the question is: do you want an affirmative action program so that you can staff your country schools?

**Professor GONCZI:** Personally I would say that the answer to that is yes. You are right; the evidence is that people coming from the country will stay there but people do not go to the country for a long period. I think there is a good case for saying there ought to be affirmative action but, again, I do not know how far you would want to go with that in terms of UAIs.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** It is either 10 points or 20 points or however many points it is.

**Professor GONCZI:** Exactly.

**CHAIR:** The other debate was not necessarily about affirmative action but again it comes back to the flexibility of the staffing operation. There are two possibilities. If a very centralised, whole of State operation was replaced, for instance, by a regionally based staffing operation, someone from Wagga Wagga may train and then be appointed to a school in their region.

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** The other issue was whether the department should do more selective matching of people and their backgrounds. Rod Francis made a comment that lifestyle-type context is often much more important than, for instance, salary incentives when dealing with difficulties of attracting people to more isolated schools and rural communities.

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes. The more general question about how you select people for particular areas, again it is just a prejudice; it is a personal view and nothing more than that and perhaps it is not worth saying, but I think the more local the recruitment is, the better it is going to be.

Personally, I think that if you can have school recruitment rather than even regions, you would be doing a great service to the community but you would not be doing a great service to the department because it would make it much more difficult to find people for the most difficult schools; but you would do a hell of a lot of good across the rest of the schools. Getting the balance between these things is a very difficult thing.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Is it not the Australian tradition of equity, though? You keep a relatively authoritarian model so that you can spread your talent where it wants to go and where it does not want to go and you have got much more equity where you have the market forces, like you have with the medical profession. You cannot get a doctor to go to Woop Woop for love or money.

**Professor DOWNES:** But if they do not stay? This is not a rural-regional argument because it could be a south-western Sydney argument and it could be an argument for teaching in Cabramatta where there are 41 different languages. It could be about cultural backgrounds.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** It is about disadvantage, is it not?

**Professor DOWNES:** No, it is about diversity. We could have that argument but if you are arguing that a centralised system that imposes the one-size-fits-all teacher into any slot in order to improve the quality associated with the various groups who are marginalised because of the dominant framework, I think you need to think again.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Is that not what is happening?

**Professor DOWNES:** Well, how many last the distance? That 17 per cent that Paul Brock talked about, what is that number in Campbelltown? What is that number in Fairfield? How much higher than the average is it? Is that 17 per cent taking into account the eastern suburbs, where they stay? Is there differential across that attrition rate? What is it that prepares the person? We are working with south-western Sydney at the moment on what we call the teacher education program for hard-to-staff schools.

**CHAIR:** Can you tell us a bit about that?

**Professor DOWNES:** I understand your rural-regional, but it is not that simple.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** But it is disadvantaged areas or difficult to teach areas. It is areas that are perceived as having discipline problems or social problems, is it not?

**Professor DOWNES:** Well yes. Sometimes it is lifestyle—do you want to live in Brewarrina? Sometimes it is the complexity, the social and ethnic mix of the schools; sometimes it is the schools poor professional culture. There is a whole pile of reasons. How would you address that? Getting a more diverse group of people into teacher education programs. We could argue it might be about getting males in. It is very complex about what a diverse student-teacher body is. It is not as simple as giving an extra 10 points, although the UWS does that with any greater Western Sydney applicant.

**CHAIR:** What about the transfer points system in terms of incentives once you are a teacher? You do your time out west and that gets you extra points so that you could go somewhere that might be more pleasant. Are those kinds of things necessary because otherwise there is no way of getting teachers to go to certain schools?

**Professor DOWNES:** I think I am out of my depth there. You should talk to the employers about that.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** We have people from academia almost unanimously and people from parents and citizens associations saying that the department should allow more autonomy at a local level.

**Professor DOWNES:** Yes.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** That is why I am interested in this equity model, which says we are going to staff everywhere and we are going to spread the quality evenly and if that means that some of the young kids have to take the tough end of town and maybe they only stay two years, at least you have middle of the road or good graduates going out to Woop Woop and for two years those people do their best and that is better than the area would get in a market economy, where all the best students went to all the best schools from day one, would it not?

**Professor DOWNES:** Except Woop Woop has probably got a relieving principal, a relieving deputy principal, seven beginning teachers and no support, and the community deserves something better than that.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Sure, but if it was a market model, would it be any better off? They might all be beginner teachers, but they are quite good beginner teachers and they are really enthusiastic. They might be getting burnt out, but let us say that all the good teachers went and the residualisation happened. We had an inquiry into Campbelltown Hospital where we talked about how to staff night shifts.

**Professor DOWNES:** Does Queensland and Victoria suffer that residualisation?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** It is a question of what is the bottom of the bucket in terms of what the market will deliver?

**Professor DOWNES:** Does the data from Queensland and Victorian show that they suffer the residualisation model you are talking about, because they have something other than just that top-down centralised model.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** But is the data collected honestly? We have a real problem that the parent and citizens association and others have talked about that they do not want to have comparisons across schools because it stigmatises the ones that are lower. And, of course, now you can send your kid to any school you want and as soon as there is a hint that the school is not much good, the enrolments fall much more quickly.

**CHAIR:** We are probably getting a fair way away from the expertise of these two people. You know about teacher training and the two universities you come from but it is not necessarily more than your opinion of what is happening in the school system.

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes, I think that is probably fair. As Council of Deans, I do not think it is our job to comment on some of these things necessarily but, as individuals, I suppose we have got views about it. I have one point on the market system because it comes back to your question about the culture within schools. Schools which are staffed amorously across the whole State are much more difficult to develop a kind of an individual school culture and positive atmosphere than those where the principal, teachers and parents choose the people that they want.

I think that there are upsides and downsides in some of this. I think the market model would work perfectly well if the market model was allowed to operate, and a market model is that you provide incentives to people to go to these areas of a significant kind. If you provided \$100,000 or whatever the money is to go to Brewarrina, then people would go to Brewarrina. You need incentives—and a whole range of them—and then, I think, the market system would work pretty well. You would also help the culture within schools, which would do some of the other things that you were talking about before, but it is a personal view rather than an ACDE view.

**Professor DOWNES:** I will make another teacher education comment on it, that is, that the principals who were the most critical about graduates are principals who do not get to choose their staff.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Sure.

**Professor DOWNES:** We find in the Catholic systemic sector, which is strong in Western Sydney, as opposed to an elite kind of non-government sector, because they can pick the graduate to match the needs of the school, they are asking us to send out people with a whole pile of different strengths. They do not want a one size fits all. When we talk to our public school counterparts in New South Wales, in south-western Sydney in particular, they want a one size fits all because they will be given somebody.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** They are going to get the person with the points who comes up the top of the computer list, are they not?

**CHAIR:** We should move on. One way or the other you have probably talked about a number of the questions dealing with training, preparation of graduates and so on. Have you any comments to make about the co-operation between universities, the department and the Commonwealth Government, which covers obviously information flowing in both directions, funding and so on? With respect to question 14, we have heard that a large part of the problem with the practicum is really a funding problem for universities?

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes, it is only part of the problems. Just on question 13, Toni and I were just quickly discussing this earlier. It is fairly clear that there is not very good co-operation between universities and the Commonwealth Government and the Department of Education and Training—it is not well organised—and how we would do this. Terry Lovett, who is the chair of the council, suggested to me that we should see if there was some ability to bring MCEETYA and the AVCC together in a formal systematic way to discuss some of these issues, that is the best thing that he can think of and that Toni and I could think of to enable this to occur because, unfortunately, there are not very many across State committees which link into the Federal Government. I think that that would work because it would then enable some sort of coherence to occur in relation to the practicum, for example, and the sort of national awards which have been used and the amount of money and so on. That is the only thing that I could come up with.

**CHAIR:** That implies that probably universities throughout Australia are having similar issues?

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes, it is exactly the same in every State.

**CHAIR:** Toni, did you want to add anything?

**Professor DOWNES:** Just to say that some of the other issues around the practicum of teacher education is about finding sufficient quality placements. My university makes 3,500 placements a year. I can assure you the last 70, if the person can walk and talk we make the placements. We are so desperate that by the time we get to being able to place students in schools the issue of quality has long gone by. That is very distressing for us, but it is our reality.

**CHAIR:** Are schools unwilling to take them? Is the department unwilling to encourage schools to take them?

**Professor DOWNES:** No, I think everybody has got the best of intentions, but the staff at the schools are sometimes very exhausted, they have many other priorities; there is a whole range of reasons why I think they are not in a position to or choose not to take them.

**CHAIR:** If there were more funds to pay the supervisors, for instance, would that help, or you do not think that money is the major issue there?

**Professor DOWNES:** No, I do not think it is the major issue, but it might help. The other thing I would like to put on the record is the notion of the paid internship, coming back to, I guess, the medical model of there being a structured transition point between being a graduate and being a fully accredited teacher where you are engaged in a structured environment, whether it be a paid internship or whether it be in a reduced teaching load structured position, but some period of time to give the graduate, who has a range of threshold knowledge and skills, the opportunity to put that into place in a structured and limited way. Certainly, with the type of students at Western Sydney, they cannot financially afford to spend additional time in the university and in schools that are hard to staff school

principals say to us, "Don't encourage them to go on to internship, just give them to us now". So there is that tension. Maybe paid internships might be a way of thinking creatively about that.

**CHAIR:** Presumably we would not be asking them to work 80 hours a week? The medical model—perhaps Arthur may disagree with me—is not a terribly good model in that respect, is it, where interns seem to become a bit of a slave labour force?

**Professor DOWNES:** No.

**CHAIR:** Others have said to us that there needs to be a lot more thought about a progressive movement from student to fully-fledged teacher rather than one day you are a student and the next day you are a teacher and you sink or swim, I guess.

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes. We were particularly worried by the statements in the Victorian inquiry into teacher education, which you might not have seen, about having teacher-ready—to use their term—people going out, and the point that Toni has raised is something that across all States and universities we believe that teacher education is a continuum which must go on way beyond the moment that someone is employed in a school and the responsibilities and how that occurs really needs to be looked at.

**CHAIR:** Did you have other comments to make about the practicum? Before, when I made the comment, you said there were lots of other problems.

**Professor GONCZI:** The major problem is finding places and I do not think, as Toni says, that it is the money, but how we get into the profession that kind of sense of professionalism which encompasses a responsibility to work with the newly-emerging people and succession planning, whatever you want to call it, how we get that is part of the culture. I must say it does amaze me because by comparison to other professions I think teaching does far worse. Part of it is the fact that teachers are busy. Like Toni, every faculty in the country finds difficulty getting places, but of the places we get, how many would be quality places I honestly would not like to say—not half. So there is not the commitment there as a profession, which I think is really most unfortunate, but I do not know what to do.

**CHAIR:** I am not sure, and correct me if I am wrong, but I would have guessed that the UTS might be sending more students to easier-to-staff schools, on balance, than the UWS is and I would have thought that maybe the UTS will find it a bit easier to find placements?

**Professor GONCZI:** No, we do not. We send our students everywhere actually, but, as it happens, the North Shore, where most of the teacher education occurs, we do send a good number of our students there, but we send them to southwest Sydney and to the country regions as well. We try to ensure that all of our students get a range of practical experiences which go from easy to difficult.

**CHAIR:** And the UWS does the same, Toni, you try to send them throughout the metropolitan area, for instance?

**Professor DOWNES:** Yes, but it does not turn out that way because many of our students have very limited access to transport. Many non-recent school leavers have family commitments or are holding down 20 or 30-hour jobs, so often, although they vary in terms of the number of placements they have, the students are desperately seeking close-to-work, close-to-home placements.

**CHAIR:** And that is more of a problem for you than it is for the UTS?

**Professor GONCZI:** Yes.

**Professor DOWNES:** I think so. The lack of public transport in Western Sydney is renowned, I am sure.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Shocking.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Chronic.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** And you cannot rely on it anyway.

**CHAIR:** And, putting on my hat as a board member of the UWS, there are other issues as well for students. I think the continuing education area we have probably sort of addressed, and it is more in the realm of the department. Looking at question 18, do you have comments about, say, the mentoring programs, the induction programs and so on? I am conscious of the time too, so skipping through a bit as we must get onto the institute. Or is that, again, something that you cannot speak on in an expert sort of way?

**Professor DOWNES:** Just quickly. Because we stay in relative contact with our beginning teachers, if the department had the resources and the opportunity to expand its mentoring teachers of the beginning teacher program that it has in that select number of schools over short periods of time, if that was an integral part of the infrastructure of the department, an ongoing, funded project that occurred in any school with a reasonable number of beginning teachers, we would strongly support that. It is an excellent program, it has been well evaluated, but it is too narrowly focused in terms of the sheer number of dollars available. And of course you never know whether it is ongoing; you never know if there is going to be money there for it next year.

**CHAIR:** Do the mentors play any role with the students who are on the practical placements?

**Professor DOWNES:** They may well. It varies from situation to situation, but they certainly can.

**CHAIR:** You would think that would be very useful if they have got that role in relation to beginning teachers, full-time teachers, if they then also played that role with the people who are struggling to learn as they are still students.

**Professor DOWNES:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** The Institute of Teachers, what sort of role will it play? How will it benefit the profession? We have got a specific question about the national institute as well. We know it is early days and we have not yet talked to the institute; we will be doing that on our next hearing day.

**Professor GONCZI:** There are a lot of parameters to this question on the institute. Perhaps I will start and then hand over to Toni. We accept the Institute of Teachers and see that it certainly has a role. The development of standards is one of those roles which it has engaged in, but from the perspective of teacher education faculties, certainly the Teacher Education Council, that is the New South Wales deans, are of the view that we should have national accreditation rather than State accreditation for our courses. While I think it is probably fair to say that we are working with the institute, it is not necessarily something that we want to do as much as get the national accreditation.

It seems silly to us to have institutes in every State, each of which determine their own standards and so on; it is not going to be in the interests of mobility and certainly not in our interests, I think, as universities. That would be my view about that. I think the institute in developing, for example, a professional development policy for teachers, has a very valuable role, and that is something the department has not really managed to do, that is, to have compulsory continuing professional education. We think that that is fundamentally important. But that is basically all I will say.

**Professor DOWNES:** I would certainly support that notion that we would prefer accreditation at the national level and we would prefer a national set of beginning teacher standards and point out that as far back as the mid-nineties the Australian Council of Deans of Education published a set of national beginning teacher education standards before it became the in thing. This other comment that I am making now is more in my own capacity rather than the Australian Council of Deans of Education, and that is that I think the universities would be more comfortable in a relationship with the New South Wales Institute of Teachers if it had the professional standing and the distance from government that other national professional bodies, such as the Australian Medical Association, the Institute of Engineers, the CPA, had. We understand that education is a political

activity, but while the New South Wales Institute of Teachers is seen as an arm of government, it is very hard to fully understand your relationship with it as a professional body.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** If it is seen as an arm of government it always fascinates me that universities want to teach their own students, then examine them and then have their courses accredited so that everyone who goes to their courses gets a gong and everyone who does not go through one of the courses that are offered does not get a gong, then what difference, I wonder, is the education system, which should be separate from the examination system or the accreditation system. What would you say about that?

It seems everyone who has come from the academic side here wants the courses to be bigger and better, which does have that little ring of self-interest about it, dare one say. And certainly if we look at teachers who had not got a Dip.Ed. but still did quite well, and how they then disappear and they are all going to have to have this Dip.Ed., which is a year or 18 months or two years even of training, some of which is done, if it is mid-career, with no pay in the meantime, is it not necessary or possible to have an examination system separate from this teaching system?

**Professor DOWNES:** I might have lost your point, I am sorry.

**Professor GONCZI:** Let me answer it first.

**Professor DOWNES:** I will see if I can work it out.

**Professor GONCZI:** It is possible—of course it is possible—but it would be very expensive. Currently we do have a system which relies both on our own internal procedures and also procedures that occur outside our doors in that everyone who is a student teacher gets assessed by a practising teacher in a school. Whether they do that very effectively or not, that is part of our process. So part of our examining system to see whether people are adequate to go out into teaching already does that. But it would be possible. There are examples in other countries where a professional association is the one that makes the determination as to whether someone gets into the profession or not and I guess this is not something we have discussed as a council of deans, but I would not be opposed to that. As long as someone else paid for it I would be actually quite happy.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** There are four possibilities, are there not: the government can do it, an independent body can do it, a professional body can do it or an academic body can do it, the assumption being that it is going to be the end point of an academic process controlled by that academic establishment, and then they all make a deal that will correct each other, and Bob's your uncle. It does not have to be like that, does it?

**Professor DOWNES:** In France the Government has a teacher education examination and from that you can move into the profession. In the United Kingdom they have separated out some of the assessment of the quality of graduates through their Teacher Training Authority which does not have a direct association—it can be any system which we choose to put in place but I cannot quite grasp what you are accusing us of. Are you saying that like faculties of medicine we just would not want people to roll up and do an exam and become an accredited doctor without doing a medical degree?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** If the examination were adequate then whatever training you had had the examination would have said that you knew the content. But if you take post graduate medical education, which I can speak about, the courses are all terribly mostly, but the examinations are very rigorous. So, in a sense, there is a very hard door to get through but what path you choose to get through that door is almost your own. The main thing they concentrate on is the examination. We have had a string of various academics here who have said that they have taught for a year and get terrific results and they would really like to teach for two for everyone who wants to become a teacher. That is all very well, but then you talk about the cost of the examination which is nothing compared to the cost of the several years in the course.

**Professor DOWNES:** If you look at some of the United States of America data—and it is readily available—it shows attrition and quality of teaching for the different pathways, including the examination-only pathway, it might be the employer who is more concerned about the quality of the

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teacher they get and how long they stay. I am not sure that it is necessarily an issue for the universities.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Effectively universities want to have a monopoly with an accreditation of their courses—

**CHAIR:** We are well over time. Do you want to agree to differ?

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** It is an issue that the Committee ought to look at because we are getting a very biased lot of evidence at the moment that we should have more elaborate teacher training programs.

**CHAIR:** By the time we finish our hearings hopefully we will have heard from a range of stakeholders and consumers and everyone else with an interest.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I did not notice this point being raised in any of the submissions.

**Professor GONCZI:** It is a reasonable question. Genuinely it is not something that is outside the bounds of the terms of reference, absolutely not, and I think it should be looked at.

**(The witnesses withdrew)**



**KWONG CHIU LEE DOW**, Professor Emeritus, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, sworn and examined:

**CHAIR:** In what capacity do you appear before this Committee?

**Professor LEE DOW:** I do not think I am here to represent any one group, but I have mentioned four things: First, I chaired the national committee on teaching and teacher education in 2002-03. Second, I am presently deputy chair of the body to which you have made reference in the past hour, the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership. Third, I have a track record, as the previous speakers, I was Dean of Education in the University of Melbourne for 20 years. Fourth, I have been very much connected with Victorian State education. I chaired the Victorian Board of Studies and its subsequent organisation, the Curriculum Assessment Authority from 1997-2004. They are the background reasons, I suspect, I am here.

**CHAIR:** Why have there been so many inquiries into teacher education? Is it time we stopped inquiring and started doing things?

**Professor LEE DOW:** I am sure that you will find that there is quite a lot of agreement as to what needs to be done. The questions you must be asking yourselves all the time are: Is it actually happening? How much is happening? When is the next real impetus? What are the constraints and barriers to that? I do not think it is necessarily unhealthy that there are a number of these parallel inquiries. One of the things I think, from listening, that this Committee is bumping up against is that education is very much to do with individuals and individual institutions. In Australia it is very bound within State legislation and State boundaries. Increasingly we are seeing ourselves, as Andrew Gonczi said, as national. We talk about Australian teachers. We say Australian teachers do very well when they go to London. We do not say New South Wales teachers do very well.

Increasingly, everyone talks about globalisation but what is happening is that the more local and parochial perspectives are giving way to a more national view, but we are still constrained by legislative requirements. You will see this played out really sharply in issues around the New South Wales Institute of Teachers, and you heard Andrew Gonczi on that, and this national institute which is seeking to improve and provide basis of standards and frameworks for quality teaching and for school leadership. But it too can be charged with the same issue. Gonczi said the New South Wales institute is too close to the Government but plenty of people will say that the national institute is too close to Brendan Nelson and to the Commonwealth Government.

I thinking that picking your way between the needs of individual schools and communities and State requirements and this national overlay is one of the real issues of this moment. It is healthy that, just as Victoria has done its review of teacher education, you are doing this one, the Commonwealth did one and there is now going to be a House of Representatives' inquiry which I hope will actually build on and use the work that my committee was doing in 2002-03. In so far as there can be mutual reinforcement, and wider community and public understanding about these issues then that is healthy. I suppose what is not healthy is if this is becoming a great costly exercise which can be accused of being more a talking shop than an urgent action thing, and that is where it is up to a lot of us to try to ensure that there is the appropriate moving on and action coming out of it.

**CHAIR:** Usually we invite witnesses to make an opening statement but that may have been yours: it certainly was a very broad response to my question. Is there anything else you want to say before we ask questions?

**Professor LEE DOW:** I want to add two additional things. First, why I think this inquiry and these general inquiries are important is that the one thing where there is abundant research evidence is that if you want to improve student learning then the single most important thing by a long way is improving the quality of teaching—not numbers, not student-staff ratios. That is really at the core of what you are looking at and I think that is a very important matter. Second, I will give us a statistic that bears on the previous discussion that is interesting.

We got some evidence during our review from one State, Victoria, that said that if you look at 100 applicants for teacher education courses you find that 56 actually get offered a place in a

course; 41 of those actually enrol; 31 of them actually complete the course and get a qualification; 23 of them say "I want to actually teach in a school next year" and how many actually do? Fifteen. So that attrition may vary a little bit from place to place et cetera but it actually tells us something about how there are points of loss all the way along that chain in terms of who actually starts really teaching in a school, and then we have got those issues about how long before people start to leave, how many leave and so forth. I have a lot of data and evidence on that if you want it, but that is probably enough to get started.

**CHAIR:** We will probably ask you to provide any data that is not available in your report or others. Have you prepared individual answers or do you want to talk about the range of questions?

**Professor LEE DOW:** On the issue of recruitment, I will start with question number two and I will affirm what was said in the past hour. I do not think that Australian schools are in crisis about teacher numbers. Our review found that in terms overall—it varies from State to State and region to region—there is not going to be any serious shortage of primary teachers. There could be shortages of secondary teachers, not severe. They will show up, especially as has just been said earlier, in those particular field areas and you mentioned mathematics, science and technology. I would add foreign languages and to a lesser degree some of the visual and performing arts areas and, of course, very much to do with location—hard-to-staff schools.

I have a feeling that the media cannot resist whenever there is an investigation or inquiries to portray this as crisis and shock/horror. I do not think we are in that situation. Australian education and Australian teachers actually do pretty well by international standards. There is both anecdotal evidence of that I just mentioned of Australians going overseas and being well regarded. So, those who are involved in their preparation must be doing something right.

**CHAIR:** Is the term "knowledge economy" and its relevance to teaching, just a fashionable basket?

**Professor LEE DOW:** It carries two sets of connotations. One is recognition that those fields of activity and areas of employment that are to do with high-level training are important. The notion is simple: We had an agricultural economy, we had a manufacturing economy, now we have an economy in which the brain power matters. Singapore says, "We have no natural resources. We have a tiny piece of land. Our success depends on the trained capacities of our people". The knowledge economy, so far as teaching is concerned, is about that.

We use phrases such as "knowledge workers" and, of course, it can tip you into a debate. As governments say, we must have more and more students completing year 12 and build up retention rates to 90 per cent. It can tip one into the kinds of issues that are running at the moment about shortages of skilled labour and practical skills and training and different ways of learning. To talk about the knowledge economy carries those connotations as well. I do not think it leads inexorably to any one answer. We can spend an hour on those issues. That is what it is really about

**CHAIR:** Does it mean that we need a more highly qualified teaching profession?

**Professor LEE DOW:** It means much more highly qualified because we can no longer allow kids to leave school after year 9 or 10 and hope that they will walk into a job in a bank or a post office or the railways—that has all gone. They may become highly trained in something, it might be of a very practical bent, and let us hope that we can do better in a number of those areas; but they need to be trained in something and we cannot afford to have a series of young people who feel that they do not have much going for them at age 14 or 15 and want to disengage. How you actually engage with all of that community right across the country is hard, and that is not something that earlier generations of teachers had to cope with. The people who taught me were teaching less than 10 per cent of the age group in year 12.

**CHAIR:** So, we need a more highly qualified teaching profession. Perhaps also it is harder to motivate some of the students.

**Professor LEE DOW:** It is difficult for the public to understand that teaching is actually a much more complex and demanding job than is generally presented. We expect our people to know a

lot about how to engage with students and keep their interests up, to cope with the fact that they have the total community staying right behind them to the end of school and bringing all of the social issues that arise across the community as a whole. The kind of knowledge levels and expectations we want is changing. It is not so much increasing but it is changing more rapidly. I was involved very much in issues around science and mathematics teaching in that review, not only that but that to a significant extent. Generations of science teacher were, in the past, able to go for at least 20 years, if not a lifetime, with a fairly secure knowledge base that they could continue to use.

Nowadays people are on much shorter time lines. An additional point is that we are looking for a more diverse teacher work force in this additional sense; we need people who can take students through, sustain them in mathematics to year 12, much bigger proportions of the age group. We want people who can take students who have not been successful in the middle and late years of primary school and get them going in the early years of secondary school. It may be that we have quite different sorts of background teachers for that. I sometimes argue—and this is personal—that a well-experienced primary teacher might be more effective to be retrained. New South Wales is looking at this and doing something about it. It may be better to retrain for the early years of secondary teaching than having a bright young graduate with pure mathematics 3 who might be the right person for year 12 but may not necessarily be for some of the students who are having real difficulties in recovering themselves in years 7 and 8. We cannot say there is one way of training a teacher.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** I am interested in learning more about that concept. You are suggesting that primary trained to middle school level may be able to translate?

**Professor LEE DOW:** Yes.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** That occurs in other countries?

**Professor LEE DOW:** Yes. Our best teachers, the most capable in really assisting individuals to learn, are people who have come from a special education background. They are able to teach kids in years 7 and 8 as well as years 3, 4, 5 and 6, although they may have come through a primary track.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Earlier you mentioned the value and expectations that the community has on teaching and how teaching is valued. That would seem to me to translate into whether it is a valued profession for people to join. How do we increase or improve the value of teaching to attract that diversity of people from whatever career field they may be?

**Professor LEE DOW:** There are long-term and short-term answers to that. Long term, it is the community having a better understanding of the importance of its teachers. So groups such as yours that are reporting are a very positive help. You actually show that there is a community public valuing of high-quality teaching and a search to try to improve those things. In the short term there is a whole series of initiatives that can be taken—and I know in New South Wales a number of those are already being taken—to attract into teaching both young people who have other options. They can be financial, through scholarships, internship support, and things of that kind.

Also, we need to make it more normal for people mid-career—not 48-year-olds close to retrenchment, but people in their late twenties or early thirties—who may feel that they would like a career change and who are altruistic in part and want a reasonable salary but not one reaching for the sky, to make that transition. It is not easy for people to do that now. What does a lawyer who comes out of a big legal firm in his early thirties and wants to become a teacher have to do? Does he or she have to stop employment totally for 12 months to go off to the University of Sydney and do a diploma in education? It is those sorts of things. We should make it more normal for people to come into teaching from different backgrounds and already with some career confidence and so forth.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Does that require recognition of their previous career for entry into teaching?

**Professor LEE DOW:** Yes, I would have thought so. Just as we are still fighting in the twenty-first century this business of people trained and having reached a certain level in one State system going interstate and getting proper recognition. If we cannot get that right it is pretty grim. We

certainly should be giving recognition to that. I think that is why some of the non-government schools, particularly the independent schools, are stealing the march; they are doing that now and they are getting some very good, committed people who engage and stay. We have to do a lot more of that. We are talking about that, we are on the way. I do not think there is any in-principle antagonism to it, but within the complexities of a big bureaucratic system it is not so straightforward. I am not unsympathetic to the problems, but we have to crash through with it.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I am interested in this because when legislation brought in the Institute of Teachers, the top-end private schools said they do not need that and that they would decide whether teachers are any good or not, thank you very much. I was told that only half the people had a diploma of education, which some people regarded as a waste of a year. Now we have the Institute of Teachers to raise standards, the assumption is that that will be a diploma of education, and some academics have told the Committee that it should take at least 1½ or two years. I can see the empire being built under their eyes. When I look at post-graduate medical education, with which I have some experience, it has some very fancy examinations that cost squillions to do. The training for that is whatever one can do.

The training and the examinations are totally separate. If there is no training, tough luck, it is a question of whether you can get through an examination. Taking that model, if you have an elaborate exam could you test in a classroom at whatever expense was incurred? Could you simply test people and let them teach themselves, and thus save 12 to 18 months. Of course the schools may then make that evaluation and later ask for accreditation of that process through the Institute of Teachers. What about that model? We seem to be going down a model at the moment that seems very good for empire builders of education. But is it really what we need?

**Professor LEE DOW:** Let us pack it into two areas. First, how long does it take to train a teacher? Second, how do you know when they are trained? And then there is the assessment. Of course there are people who one would think would be empire builders because they keep on advocating longer and longer courses. I am not part of that, but I understand where some people are coming from. My age contemporaries became primary teachers. They left school after year 11 and went to a primary teachers college for two years and that was it: They were a primary teacher forever and ever. A number of people have reacted against that. So they said you must go to year 12 and then do it. Then they said you must do three years, then they said you must have a degree, then you had to do four years, and now they are saying it is all right to train an engineer and a lawyer in four years, but a teacher has to do five years. I think this is going about things the wrong way, because it premises the idea of the front-end loader; it does not acknowledge the importance of ongoing professional education.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Or life experience.

**Professor LEE DOW:** That is right. Certainly in Queensland it is the norm that if you are going to be a secondary teacher, you do a first degree and then you do two years, a significant proportion of which is spent actually in school and some of that is at least partially paid. So, in a sense, you are a paid intern and you get your qualification at the end of that. It is not necessarily bad; in fact, it has positives to it. You have to say, "We could keep doing this. The mentoring we are talking about for first year teachers, and the care within the school environment and so forth, is perhaps more important and you do not need that fifth year."

The next question you raised is a very interesting one, and I heard you discussing it with Tony and Andrew: Who should declare whether a person is fit to teach at the end of this university-responsible program? I suppose the traditional university view in all fields, whether it be in accounting, engineering or health, has been that in terms of deciding the appropriate curriculum and assessment for the degree qualification, traditionally and historically that has been a responsibility of the university. Universities are then very slow to want to give up that. They acknowledge a couple of things.

First, they acknowledge that it is quite proper for professional bodies—whether it be Engineers Australia, an architect professional group, or the Australian Medical Council—to accredit that course and say the profession will not accept this unless certain things are changed. Of course, the universities always do change it, so the profession does accept it. The profession accepts also that

employers have a very powerful say. You could graduate an education graduate from university X in Sydney, and if the New South Wales education department says, "That qualification is unsuitable for employment in New South Wales government schools; we will not employ any of those graduates", things will change pretty fast.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Without a DipEd?

**Professor LEE DOW:** They might say the DipEd is no good.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** You are speaking hypothetically?

**Professor LEE DOW:** Yes. I suppose there are those checks and balances. In addition to that, we now have this new national body called the Australian Universities Quality Agency, which is concerned with auditing the quality of programs, courses and teaching of each of our universities. The university view is that all these mechanisms already exist. Do we need something additional to that, and do we need something that singles out education teaching from what is required in other fields? What you were getting from the two deans was a sense that, given that these other things exist—they could not quite understand whether you were asking for something additional, and if so what it was.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I do not think they quite understood the question. May I come back to your earlier answer. Your answer was interesting, in that you said, "First I will answer how long it takes to train a teacher, and then I will answer who should credit them." Firstly, can you assess how good a teacher is through an examination or other system? If you can, what does it matter how long it takes to train them? Let us say you have an evaluation. Then you could say, "We do not care how you get the evaluation. If you can get through this substantial and thorough gate, how you train yourself to get through it is your business. You can do certain courses that make us more likely to view you favourably, or you can go into a lion's den of 15 kindergartens in a row and see if you can handle them all shouting at you, and then we will assess you."

If that is the case, why do we not concentrate on the assessment system rather than the teaching system? It seems that at the moment we are putting all the effort into the teaching system, then saying, "If you have been through that teaching system, you get accredited without an evaluation." Whereas the private schools are saying to us, "You do not need a DipEd. We will interview you; we will test you out. We will put you in the classroom, and if you are no good we will sack you." In a sense they are saying, "We will skip that other process; we will do the evaluation."

We have set up this huge institute to do this. In a sense, the private schools are saying, "We will solve your discipline problems; you will not have discipline problems in our classes. If you are any good, we will say you are okay and we will employ you, regardless of whether you have a DipEd or other training." In other words, are you not simply making another bureaucracy, in terms of both the institute and the training for that accreditation, rather than looking at an evaluation in a different way?

**Professor LEE DOW:** Let me try to give you a quick, sharp answer. I think we have to live in a practical world of today's realities. What you are saying, in principle, has a lot going for it. After all, universities do not themselves require long periods of training for university teaching. So how is it that they can then say, "You must have all this training for school teaching"? You have a point in principle. I think the practical reality is that the norm for the qualifying of the next generation of teachers into the foreseeable future, let us say the next five to 10 years, will require some formal courses and programs that ensure, in addition to subject content knowledge, that people know something about how students learn, something about techniques of assessment, et cetera, which could be learned basically starting from a school perspective and just spending a bit of time in university courses, rather than starting from a university perspective and spending a bit of time in schools. It could be done that way. I do not see that coming in the short to medium term in Australia.

But you are onto something that is the subject of a big debate in the United States. They are saying exactly what you are saying: Why do you have to go to a school of education? If you have the subject content knowledge, why can you not get that assessment and the recognition done by the profession in the school setting? If you could work that through, that might be an alternative. I would not recommend that in the next five to 10 years in this country, for a whole series of reasons which

would take a long time to go through. But you are onto something that is a big debate right here and now in the United States.

**CHAIR:** I refer to question 6. This may be a matter that is a little beyond your expertise, and if that is the case please say so. We are interested in whether you have a view on the incentives. There is a problem with staffing hard-to-staff schools, whether they be in geographically unwanted regions or disadvantaged areas. Do you have a view on whether New South Wales and the department are solving this problem?

**Professor LEE DOW:** Yes, I do have a view, and it is partially informed but not fully. When we did this review in 2002-03 we spoke to each of the State education departments and to a raft of different people within them. I came away from that impressed by a number of quite specific initiatives, which were under way in New South Wales and less well developed in many other parts of Australia, that looked at both trying to encourage people to be willing to go into hard-to-staff schools, incentives to get people into those geographic regions, initiatives to try to get physics teachers, initiatives to try to get primary teachers into the teaching of junior science, and a whole series of things. The short answer is that I think New South Wales has been doing pretty well. I am not sufficiently appraised of exactly where things are at this moment in other States to say New South Wales is way ahead, but certainly in 2003 I think it was ahead of pretty much all the rest of the country on specific initiatives to do some of those differentiated things.

**CHAIR:** That is interesting, because one or two witnesses have said that they feel Victoria does this better than New South Wales. Victoria is a more compact State and perhaps the problems may be fewer in that State, but certainly it has been suggested by some that Victoria is better. You do not agree?

**Professor LEE DOW:** You can point to some initiatives in Victoria, and you can point to others in New South Wales. My guess is that there are horses for courses in this, and that each is looking to the priority pressures and needs.

**CHAIR:** In theory, could someone look at what is happening in all the States and Territories, pick out the best one and say, "We could come up with a pretty good model"?

**Professor LEE DOW:** We did go around and do that. I do not think we came out with a view that here is a best model which we could then imprint right across the country. I think we came out with a view that there is enough variation in need in different parts of the country. I hesitate taking your point, Madam Chair, about not commenting on the previous session. Let me just say this. One of the people I spoke to was the Minister for Education in Queensland, Anna Bligh, about the issue of requiring new graduate teachers to go to remote schools in Queensland and spend a period of time there, and thereby enabling them to come back. She said, "Kwong, if we did not do that, we would go broke. The idea that you can do it by financial incentives is just not possible for a State like Queensland." I have to accept that.

**CHAIR:** We have heard quite a bit about the culture and traditions of the New South Wales department and some suggestions that we do what we do because we have been doing it for decades. I think one of the witnesses said it was a big ship and it is a bit hard to turn around. I am wondering whether some of the practices that exist for staffing hard-to-staff schools may be so rooted in the culture of the different State systems that it is not necessarily a matter of saying this one works best but, given the systems of transfer points and all the different non-monetary incentives and whether you have a very centralised staffing operation or not, the whole thing is so intrinsically related that it is difficult to unpack it and say, "If you do this, you will solve this problem."

**Professor LEE DOW:** I suspect that is right. One of the things about compact Victoria has been that we have taken a lot of the rhetoric about giving individual schools and school principals much more authority and giving them responsibility to lead, to go out and find their teachers, to as it were compete with other schools, and so forth. That has worked in large part in Victoria and it has meant it has been a more devolved system. But it is one thing to do it in a compact State like that. I would not be wanting to pontificate on how possible that is when you get into States that are much larger geographically and with many more problems in remote areas.

**CHAIR:** Queensland is perhaps more difficult than New South Wales?

**Professor LEE DOW:** Yes, exactly, that is a good example.

**CHAIR:** Obviously time is getting short. In a quick discussion earlier we thought the questions that relate particularly to your past work that we would like to ask you about are your views about schools benefiting from greater self-management responsibility, which is the point you just made about Victoria, and probably question 17 about the National Institute of Quality Teaching and school leadership. They seem to be the two we have not talked much about.

**Professor LEE DOW:** Yes. On that one, the New South Wales institute and the national institute, and the other various State institutes, I think this is going to be a tricky business. I am very committed to trying to ensure that the national institute succeeds. I am putting quite a lot of time into that at the moment but it will only succeed in the Australian environment if we are able to work collaboratively and co-operatively with the State institutes. It will not quite work by saying we want one or the other. The way I put it is this: If we were in France we would have a national institute only. If we were in Canada, we would have the provincial or the State institutes only. But we cannot change our culture and our traditions overnight and we are locked into this complexity.

In a way I think the State institutes are almost the prior need because the States are the employers of teachers, not the Commonwealth. But if in time we want to make it quite genuine that we can have national standards and be confident in New South Wales that if we accept teachers from Western Australia or South Australia or Victoria that they really are going to meet our needs—although we are doing it at the moment by mutual recognition and some say we have it solved and we do not need this national body—I think there is a place for trying to build some standards and national recognition. We are talking about national awards for teachers, to give recognition to high-achieving teachers.

We have national subject associations. The Maths Association has a project that the National Institute for Quality Teaching is supporting. It has gone as a professional body to talk about standards for highly accomplished maths teachers and it wants to work out how that will work and be operational in schools and so forth. There is a place for a national body as well but I think it is a positive that we now have the State bodies, provided each of us can be a bit modest about what we are doing rather than saying we have arrived, so you can all go. We probably have to live with it for a while. I do not know how long.

**CHAIR:** In the future you would prefer to see a more national approach?

**Professor LEE DOW:** When I am in China and I feel myself immersed in 1.3 billion people and I look back to Australia with less than 20 million running eight separate education systems, I wonder whether in the long haul that is sensible.

**CHAIR:** We have probably covered most areas. There may be some things we will want to get back to you on. Do you want to round things out by saying what you would like to see come out of the inquiry or do you think it is implicit in what you said at the beginning?

**Professor LEE DOW:** I think it is implicit but I think it is positive to have the inquiry. I think it is focusing on exactly the issues that really matter if what in the end matters is young people improving their learning, improving their job prospects and their sense of wellbeing and capacities. If that is at the end of it, then inquiries like this are really important. I do not think this is a waste of time or a waste of money because there are other inquiries; I think it is valuable and it is valuable because it accords public recognition to putting these issues on a priority agenda. None of us in any one of these inquiries is going to solve everything but we ought to push a few things along. I think we in Australia tend to knock ourselves. We are improving, things are a bit better.

**(The witness withdrew)**

**(Short adjournment)**

Corrected

**VICKI MAREE BREWER**, Member, New South Wales Secondary Principals Council, Bridge Street, Sydney, affirmed and examined:

**KENNETH JAMES McALPINE**, Deputy President, New South Wales Secondary Principals Council, Bridge Street, Sydney, sworn and examined:

**CHAIR:** Welcome. Are you both appearing as representatives of the New South Wales Secondary Principals Council?

**Ms BREWER:** Yes.

**Mr McALPINE:** I am appearing on behalf of the Secondary Principals Council but in my head I am also a principal.

**CHAIR:** Do either of you wish to make an opening statement? You have seen the questions that we sent you. We tend to go through those but we also tend to hop around and go off on different tracks as different Committee members choose. Would you like to begin with a statement?

**Ms BREWER:** Yes, I would like to say that I have some very strong views about teacher training, some very strong views about the quality of teachers who are walking into our wonderful public schools and I believe that these views are representative of many, if not all, principals and other colleagues. I would like the opportunity to share those views with you today.

**CHAIR:** Will they come out as we go through our questions?

**Ms BREWER:** I certainly hope so.

**CHAIR:** Jim, do you want to say anything?

**Mr McALPINE:** As I was saying over the cup of coffee, I appreciate the opportunity—even if this will not necessarily change all practices—to reflect myself on practice. During the January holidays I quickly consulted other members of the executive of the Secondary Principals Council. So the roughly two pages of brief comments reflect the views of the executive but they also reflect my own views. I also have significant experience as a school principal. This is my sixteenth year as a principal and I am in my second school. I had my background in Tumut on the south-west slopes, which is a small rural-type school. I experienced the difficulties of attracting and keeping staff and developing staff in that sort of setting. I am now at Moss Vale, which is quite different. It is quite monocultural and not as difficult to get bottoms on seats—but that is a little different from getting quality teachers.

**CHAIR:** What about you, Vicki? Is your experience of the schools you have worked in directly relevant to your views?

**Ms BREWER:** Yes. I work in Western Sydney at Seven Hills High School and I have only ever been in Western Sydney. With respect to my colleague, that is where the action is. That is where we have the most staff changeovers, the most new teachers, the most energy and so on.

**CHAIR:** We have divided the questions into headings: recruitment, secondary schools, training and support and the new Institute of Teachers. In asking about recruiting, we are talking about how you go about it—for example, are we recruiting enough? Coming back to what you said, there may be lots of teachers to go around in certain areas but that still does not mean there are enough teachers in some geographical or subject areas. We are finding that the definition of "recruitment" is getting broader and broader as we talk to different witnesses. Are the department's current means of recruiting graduates effective?

**Ms BREWER:** I think they are. There are certainly enough teachers at the coalface. That is not the issue. The issue is the quality. While we all will expect in schools to professionally develop young teachers, new graduates and retrained people, while we all want to give them the best and while



they all start raw, we have been increasingly over the past half-dozen years, perhaps decades, getting into the system people whose skills are so weak, so undeveloped and so substandard—I am using strong language—that it needs to be redressed.

I will give some quick examples. I have been at Seven Hills High School for five years as principal. In that time four brand-new teachers have come into the school. They are in their first year. One was 65—there is nothing the matter with being 65 or 56—and all were previously engineers or something like that. They had not been involved in education and had not seen a student in 30 years. All of a sudden the penny dropped and they thought, "I want to teach", for a whole range of reasons. Invariably, most of them were trained overseas in their previous occupations and there were cultural gaps, language differences and a need for specialist pedagogy. Their understanding of behaviour management strategies was not even at the most basic level. So the issue is not the number of teachers in schools; the department has "fixed" that. It is the quality.

**CHAIR:** Are the people you are talking about coming out of the accelerated teacher training program or are they what we seem to be calling "career-change" teachers, who are coming out of the standard university education programs?

**Ms BREWER:** Both. I think Jim has something to say about that issue.

**Mr McALPINE:** I will comment on both aspects. I am not convinced that a recruitment process that produces the wrong teachers is an effective recruitment process. It might put bottoms on seats but the process is missing out at the moment—as I mentioned in the paper I submitted—on potentially very, very good teachers, who are being snaffled by the publicly funded private sector before we get the chance to offer them a position. That is one of the things that the Secondary Principals Council for a number of years has been drawing to the attention of the Department of Education and Training, but with an apparent lack of success.

I can give anecdotal examples. There is one particular example of a girl at the University of Canberra who had an arts degree but who decided that she wanted not to pursue a career in marketing, promotion and so on but to become a primary school teacher. She did two years of a Bachelor of Education. In June last year she was interviewed by the New South Wales system and by the ACT system. In August she was offered a position for this year in the ACT system. She still has not heard from the New South Wales system. I have no doubt that she will be an excellent teacher. There are other examples. Two years ago at Macquarie University, which I mentioned, 21 out of 23 science graduates were employed as teachers by the private sector before anything happened in relation to employment by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. I think that is a particular problem.

In terms of the accelerated teacher training program, there are major deficiencies in that in a couple of respects. When those people are placed on internships within schools there is no opportunity for the supervisor within the school to say, "This person won't make a teacher". We had that experience in my school 18 months ago. It was very difficult for the head teacher in charge of that person not to be able to say, "Do not employ this person". There is that aspect of it.

**CHAIR:** Is it not permitted to say that?

**Mr McALPINE:** No, there is no category of comments that allows that kind of comment. He made it informally but it does not become part of the formal report on the teacher. Hopefully, reading between the lines, the system might say, "We will not employ that person." The other aspect of that, the accelerated teacher training program, is that people are being trained in a short period of time in the area of what is called TAS, technology and applied studies. In secondary schools what is needed is not TAS teachers. That is a description of a key learning area. What is needed is someone who can teach industrial arts, metal technic, wood technic, design and technology, technology as it is now called—real subjects with real skills. A person may have been an engineer or a plumber or something like that and has a particular interest but does not have the background or the teaching methodologies in those particular subjects and does not have the rigour to go with it, yet those people are going through the program without the real training that is required to make good teachers.

**CHAIR:** In a subject area such as that, which has undergone vast changes, would your comments also apply to young graduates coming out of traditional university courses that there is a mismatch between what is happening in schools and the traditional subject areas?

**Mr McALPINE:** Vicki could probably answer that because I do not have the younger ones.

**Ms BREWER:** Yes, absolutely. For so many years we have been saying privately and to university people, "Will you please factor in things like behaviour management strategies and pedagogical methods for young people so that when they start in schools they have a background in Bill Rogers and Michael Grenda, people who have done fabulous things with behaviour management? Young 20-year-olds are starting in tough schools with little or no knowledge of how to deal with tough kids, how to engage kids. So behaviour management is a big issue for us. Even apart from the accelerated teachers, even apart from the vast number of overseas trained teachers who are experiencing huge difficulties in our schools—

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Would you elaborate on what you mean by behaviour management?

**Ms BREWER:** Skills in managing a group of 30 people. As basic as forwarding them in, settling them down, starting them on work, the transition from instruction to group work, the transition from group work to teacher instruction. In other words how you manage a large group of people, the verbal skills and the non-verbal skills. That takes a good operator. Young 20-year-olds are coming into schools, as they have always come into schools, without the appropriate background in that area. The problem is that today, I think, there would be many educators who would say it is getting tougher out there. Young kids these days are savvy. They are into technology; they are not necessarily compliant. They expect their teachers, rightly, to be on the ball. It is a new generation. We have got to be better and still we are having the same methods in teacher training, it seems to us, being used that we had when we went through university.

**Mr McALPINE:** Except for, if I can follow that sentence through, my own experience in recent years has been that the University of Wollongong preparation of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education [PDHPE] teachers has been exemplary. From my experience at the chalk face, the ones coming out are much more capable of teaching than teachers in other subject areas from other universities. I do not know what they are doing right but it is probably worth a bit of intense study of the University of Wollongong's teacher training processes in PE. They are coming out keen, excited, using a whole range of different teaching approaches and being very effective with kids. If you do some surveys with the kids, top of the list with kids from all ability levels seems to be PE.

**CHAIR:** You are basically saying, correct me if I am wrong, that you feel universities are doing generally what they have done for a long time but the problems in schools arises from the changes in students, particularly secondary school students? While the university courses may have been adequate for preparing young teachers in the past, they are becoming less and less adequate because the students have changed but the university courses have not?

**Ms BREWER:** Absolutely.

**CHAIR:** Are you criticising the department's recruiting procedures or are you saying that, given this problem in training, the department has only this pool of newly trained teachers, so that is what the schools are getting? Are you saying there is a problem in the universities? I think Jim may have said there is a problem with their department's bureaucracy and its methods.

**Ms BREWER:** Yes.

**Mr McALPINE:** I think I mentioned in that report, I cannot remember, that the staffing directorate does not want at all for committed and hard-working people. It has been absolutely gutted in terms of staff itself as part of the structural changes that occurred last year. As a result there are quite a few people there who are doing more than one job. That makes it really difficult for them, even though they have the best will in the world and they are delightful people.

**Ms BREWER:** The non-govs are gutting our best graduates.

**CHAIR:** Right at the beginning?

**Ms BREWER:** Halfway through the graduates' final year at university, they are offering them places. The tragedy is we know there are many fine young men and women who want to come back to the government system. They were themselves in a government school when they were students at school and they want that, but when you are offered a job you take it. It is tragic.

**Mr McALPINE:** I have got a couple of examples of casual teachers in very recent years who have been wonderful. We have been able to use them as casual teachers, but in the appointment process of permanent teachers they have not worked their way far enough up the list and they have been snaffled. A school in the Southern Highlands called Oxley College got a very good PDHPE teacher, and last year we had for six months an excellent English teacher in a casual capacity replacing a maternity leave who was snaffled by Ascham. She will probably end up headmistress.

**CHAIR:** When you say snaffled, what is the attraction? Is it the salary?

**Mr McALPINE:** The attraction is a permanent position.

**Ms BREWER:** They offer nothing other than the job. If in July the non-govs are calling for offers, suggestions, applications and the young students get them they usually take them.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Where is the breakdown happening?

**Ms BREWER:** The breakdown is with the Department of Education not getting its recruitment practices in early enough, at least to be competitive with the non-govs.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** If they were early enough, do you believe that would rectify the problem?

**Ms BREWER:** I do not know whether it would rectify it, but at least we would be competitive and certainly there would be some young people who would choose to go back to a government school because that is where their passion and belief are. We are not competitive. We cannot possibly compete.

**Mr McALPINE:** I know it is really important to be part of a statewide system, and I am committed to a statewide system. But sometimes you see a casual teacher who is exemplary in every respect. If we could somehow or other fast track them into permanent employment, even if it did not mean a permanent position, I think the system would be a lot stronger for it and we would not lose those people to other schools.

**CHAIR:** When we spoke to the department yesterday morning, it gave us examples of its current programs, such as talking to students six months before they graduate. The department is saying it has started to address this issue in the last couple of years. By implication it is saying it previously was not doing it as well as it might have. As to your comment about casuals, does it relate to the rules about the staffing process?

**Mr McALPINE:** Yes, that is all it is.

**CHAIR:** The department cannot offer the type of casual you are talking about a full-time job.

**Mr McALPINE:** Not under the current staffing agreement.

**CHAIR:** Whilst it is still a problem with the department, it is a problem where the department is trapped because of the staffing agreement.

**Mr McALPINE:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Whereas in the case of doing aggressive recruiting at universities, the department is free to do so, and from what it said yesterday it is beginning to do so.

**Mr McALPINE:** I have received an e-mail today from the University of Wollongong, which is coincidental, offering opportunities for principals and executive members of schools to go and assist their potential graduates in teaching with mock interviews for when they go before the department to become teachers. So Wollongong students are going to be better prepared at putting their case for being teachers. That probably increases their chances of being employed in the private sector.

**Ms BREWER:** That is right. The non-govs get them to sign on the dotted line. That is the difference.

**CHAIR:** Do you want to change the staffing agreement? Obviously there are difficult issues about practices and rules and industrial agreements. Do you see that the staffing agreement is creating some of the problems?

**Ms BREWER:** We want more flexibility.

**CHAIR:** For principals?

**Ms BREWER:** For principals.

**CHAIR:** For school-based recruitment?

**Mr McALPINE:** Principals and school communities.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Do you want to interview and recruit on your own or interview and put them on yourself out of your own school budget?

**Ms BREWER:** It is much more sophisticated and complex than that. We are part of a State system and we respect that. But we want some measure of flexibility. If someone great comes along, we would like the opportunity to employ them. That is not to say we are going to throw out the whole State staffing infrastructure for that, but we want a bit of that and a bit of that.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** If you start cherrypicking, will that not make the system fall over?

**Mr McALPINE:** I do not think so. I think my little suggestion of being able to offer permanent employment, not a permanent position to a good casual teacher would not mean that I would cherrypick that teacher but that the State system would get that teacher.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** You are assuming if you do not require the teacher for 35 hours a week, or what ever the full-time hours are, that another school in the system will also think that teacher is wonderful and offer the corresponding number of hours to make that person full-time?

**Mr McALPINE:** I am not actually looking at it in those terms. If I get a casual or temporary teacher doing a block for someone on leave and they are really good, young, fit, keen, raring to go and the kids love them, it would be a shame that the system cannot recognise our professional judgement of that person as someone who should be given priority employment, not in our school but within the system.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** There are good casual teachers who have been kicking around for years that cannot be made permanent. That was a problem in my son's school. A teacher eventually went to God knows where because the department had been unable to make him permanent, despite the fact he had been working full-time for some years as a casual. He was much mourned by the two schools who shared him, half-time each.

**Mr McALPINE:** That is what I am saying.

**Ms BREWER:** That is what we would agree with.

**CHAIR:** You are saying that the current system of priority needs to be changed for a more flexible and more school-based or regional-based system? Does the association have a fixed view or policy on this issue?

**Mr McALPINE:** I think for quite a few years the Principals Council has wanted greater flexibility rather than total flexibility. We do not want to be the employing authority and all that that entails. But we do want to be able to make sure that the best teachers are coming into the State system and, as a result of that, into our own schools.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** Does that mean making recommendations through a system?

**Ms BREWER:** The Secondary Principals Council has made recommendations about staffing. Certainly greater flexibility is what our position has been and has been recommended.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** I meant in the case of a particular individual, perhaps some ability to have an involvement in making a recommendation that carries some weight in getting a casual made permanent as opposed to changing the system?

**Ms BREWER:** The bureaucracy that is the department does not quite work that way. We can recommend.

**Mr McALPINE:** But we would like that.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Can you suggest a hybrid system? Presumably the department likes to have a bunch of casuals. With any more permanence, it would have to actually place them. The department has a pool of partly used casuals, which presumably gives it flexibility. If there are too many casuals, which results in a loss of good teachers, perhaps more of them should be made permanent and have a smaller pool of casuals. How does your idea of spotting a good one and making them permanent fit with this pool of casuals and the system as it is? When you ask for more flexibility, have you thought about what that actually means in procedural terms?

**Ms BREWER:** Yes, it would mean that schools would be allowed to employ a percentage of their classroom teachers from interview so that we would still be part of a statewide system. For example, difficult to staff schools—such as, schools at Mount Druitt and Broken Hill—need a statewide system to prop them up. A principal there cannot possibly find recruits. It has to be part of the State system and we accept that. But if every school had the capacity to employ 25 per cent of its classroom teachers based on interview that would become interesting.

**CHAIR:** That interview would involve a principal, parents, departmental representatives? It would be like the current system?

**Ms BREWER:** It is what we have now for executive. We operate with a hybrid system in our schools now for executive, its deputy and principal. But at the classroom teacher level we get who walks in the door and it is get the outcomes, teach the kids, do it fabulously, but you get given what you get. I have a maths faculty where every single maths teacher is overseas trained. That has significant implications for mathematics learning at Seven Hills.

**CHAIR:** Is that because their training is in a language other than English?

**Ms BREWER:** Absolutely.

**CHAIR:** It is language and cultural difficulties?

**Ms BREWER:** Yes, it is huge difficulties.

**CHAIR:** We have a couple of questions about the current assessment process. Obviously, there are an awful lot of overseas-trained teachers in New South Wales and, obviously, an awful lot of

them have not been accepted in employment. Do you see a way of having better assessment processes and better preparation processes to make that pool of overseas-trained teachers, particularly in the shortage areas of maths, et cetera, work better?

**Ms BREWER:** We are told that the assessment systems have become more rigorous for new overseas teachers into our system or teachers who have been engineers, for example. I am certainly not seeing that. I am seeing people walk in the door who are, and I repeat my anecdote, 65 years of age who were engineers for 40 years or thereabouts in India and are now ready to start teaching mathematics and whose English skills are very difficult and very raw. That is an example of what it is right across Western Sydney.

**CHAIR:** Given that there is a shortage of maths and science teachers and therefore the department needs everyone it can get, would the problem be overcome by a staffing system that spread those teachers across schools so that you did not end up with everyone in your maths faculty overseas trained while another school might not have any?

**Ms BREWER:** But no school should have to have below-par teachers. I know we have systems in place, and you would know we have systems in place for deeming someone unsatisfactory. It is amazingly, incredibly difficult to make someone unsatisfactory. The two people in my school who have been on programs because their teaching has been unsatisfactory were carted off in a black car to another school to try again. They were then it carted off in the black car to another school to try again. Eventually some school passed the 65-year-old.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Is that because of a starting agreement?

**Ms BREWER:** It is difficult. It is political. It is industrial. It is procedural fairness.

**Mr McALPINE:** There is an agreed process of putting a teacher on an improvement program.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** You are not suggesting that those processes are wrong?

**Ms BREWER:** They have no teeth.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** It does not sound as though they are right.

**The Hon. IAN WEST:** The processes are the checks and balances you have to have.

**Ms BREWER:** It is appropriate for procedural fairness. Absolutely. Of course.

**Mr McALPINE:** It is very fair for the teacher. It is not very fair on the kids.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Who are the most important in the system?

**Mr McALPINE:** The kids.

**CHAIR:** I know this is a difficult question, but is it better to have a less than satisfactory maths teacher or no maths teacher? Is that the situation we are facing?

**Mr McALPINE:** That is a situation that is arising, and I would not use mathematics as an example but it is probably a useful one. The survey that was done by the Australian Secondary Principals Association last year on staffing shortages across Australia, produced some interesting information in that what has been occurring has been changing the curriculum in schools to reflect the teachers that are available rather than providing the curriculum without teachers being present to be able to do it properly. It has become a bit of a trend—it is not endemic at this stage—for schools to delete certain subjects because you cannot get a good teacher for it.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Is that not simply being realistic? At an individual school level you cannot say, "We cannot offer mathematics if we do not have any maths teachers."

**Mr McALPINE:** It is absolutely realistic. I agree it is realistic, but it is unfortunate in that we are contorting the curriculum not to meet the needs of the kids but to meet the needs of the teachers that are available.

**CHAIR:** We were given legal studies as an example, which was, perhaps, less controversial. Lots of schools cannot offer legal studies because they cannot find anyone to teach it.

**Mr McALPINE:** I had an example myself quite a few years ago when I was in the South West Slopes of having a very good teacher of Japanese. After five years her family decided to move. We had to drop Japanese because they could not get a Japanese teacher.

**The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN:** My understanding from what you said is that it was not necessary for casual teachers to take up a position at a specific school, but if they then became permanent they would be listed to fall into the next lot of full-time positions that came up. But that does not resolve how you would staff schools in Western New South Wales. What is your view on principals being able to interview, and a number of casual teachers being given permanence and then moving up the list? What is your view on a number of issues this Committee has discussed in relation to staffing difficult schools or picking up staffing in, say, Western New South Wales?

**Mr McALPINE:** What is needed here is probably a little bit outside the brief. But to attract teachers to unattractive places there needs to be great attractions. I know that there are some systems in place to encourage teachers to go out to the more difficult areas, and I think that is possibly the way to go: Guaranteed transfer rights after X number of years, a couple of plane flights a year out, long weekends, various little schemes and extra funding in some cases. Those things are a way of attracting people who might not otherwise go out there and if some really good casuals who were offered permanent employment were told they could have four years in Brewarrina and at the end of it they could have the cottage by the sea, or whatever, an overseas trip and a sabbatical to do a bit of study are the sorts of things that could be very useful.

**The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN:** Previous comments have been made that people who come from rural or regional New South Wales who do teacher training are more likely to want to go back to teach in those areas. Have you seen evidence of that in the teachers with whom you have been involved and other schools that you speak to?

**Mr McALPINE:** In my position at Tumut it was a lot easier to get beginning teachers who came from a rural base. There were a lot of city-based teacher trainees who would be offered a job there. They would ring me up during the January holidays and say, "Where is Tumut?" I would describe it to them as being a delightful location midway between Canberra and Wagga Wagga in a straight line with nice people, good pine trees and what have you. They would say, "How far out of Sydney is that?" I would tell them and they would say, "No thanks."

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** They had not majored in geography.

**Mr McALPINE:** No, they had not. Some city people have a very narrow view of the world, whereas a lot of country kids are much more prepared to go places. I have heard of city people who shop only in Neutral Bay for bananas rather than go out to the Eastern Suburbs. There is that sort of location or thinking with a lot of the graduates from Sydney, whereas rural graduates, if you have lived in a country town you can live in another country town. I am a graduate of Condobolin Intermediate High School, Leaving Certificate 1965. It is possible for those people to be a bit more adventurous with where they will go.

**Ms BREWER:** Some 25 years ago, when I started teaching, we were bonded for three years and if you were sent to Wagga Wagga, Broken Hill or Tumut then it did not matter if you did not know where it was because you had to go or you had to pay off your bond. That is the way we broadened our experiences. That is the way we propped up the State system with good people. Now we are Sydneycentric and if you live in Sydney you are not prepared to travel any more than 40 minutes, and that is it. You know that the private schools will snaffle you up if you are half decent because you know that the State schools are a bit slow off the mark. I do not know if you have heard

in your talks throughout the days about bonding systems. I would recommend that that would be something that you consider.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Does that impact on Western Sydney as well?

**Ms BREWER:** It would. It absolutely would.

**Mr McALPINE:** When I was employed in 1970 under a bond if you taught west of Mount Druitt it counted as country service because they had great difficulty getting teachers to go out there. My first teaching was at Emu Plains and that counted as country service. Mind you, it was a bit then.

**The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN:** We were talking about beginning teachers in rural areas. Some of the other comments to the Committee relate to acting principals in a lot of those rural schools. After the newer group of teachers were sent out, what would be your view about retaining experienced people in those schools?

**Ms BREWER:** Retention is just such a huge issue because, as you would know, we have had more resignations than we have ever had before. I think we are losing one in five new teachers, not just in rural schools but also in city schools. I come back to what I said before. I think it is partly to do with the training. We have so many new recruits coming out absolutely shellshocked and because they are not bonded they do not have to stay. Years ago you had to fight your way through and last three years. By the time three years were up you sort of got over that hump. You learned some of the skills, even if you were not all that wonderful. Retention is about better training at university level, bonding people to persuade them that they have two or three years before they can really learn this craft.

**CHAIR:** The statistics we have heard about current enrolments in teacher education programs show a rapidly increasing percentage of what is called career change people. In other words, in some universities half or more of the people currently undergoing teacher education courses are not young people. Do you use phrases like shellshocked when career change people come out and they go to a school or is part of the solution to the recruitment and retention difficulties encouraging the move towards flexibility and career change teachers?

**Ms BREWER:** I am not a terribly optimistic about career change teachers because I have not seen terribly many successful teachers out of that system. I could be biased. It may well be that all seven teachers at Seven Hills High School who are career change teachers are just bad eggs.

**CHAIR:** We are talking about people doing the standard courses, not accelerated ones or any sort of special entry. Probably not many of them have made it into the schools yet.

**Mr McALPINE:** I think there is a wonderful zeal about career change teachers that does not necessarily translate into effective practice in the classroom. Part of teaching is that you tend to reflect the teaching that you experienced. If you are out of school for only four years and you go back teaching then you are not far removed from the classroom and go on from there you develop new skills and move onwards. If you have been out of the school for 20 years the school in your mind is well and truly out of date and you expect the practices in a classroom, the school and the system to be the same, but they are not. I think a lot of them, although they are full of zeal and passionate conviction, find it really difficult because school is quite different from what they thought it would be.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Can I explore that issue a little bit? So you are saying that the shell shock or the culture shock that those career change people might find when they come into the classroom is because of those expectations of what they think the classroom environment to be. How much is it also a factor of what their former professional environment was in comparison with the resources, et cetera, that are available to them in schools?

**Mr McALPINE:** I think that the craft of teaching continues to evolve and change and it requires certain skills that I do not have any more, as I see when I wander around the classrooms and see some wonderful operators. I think that for a career change person who has been, say for example, an engineer—I give that example because I had one a couple of years ago who was appointed to teach physics and he found great difficulties because he was in his late 30s. He had a mind set about what the teaching of physics was. He had also been in the sort of sheltered workshop of working for BHP in



Wollongong, so there was not really the opportunity to have the broad experience that you get in the schools of all the fluctuating ways of human organisms on every occasion. When you are working in a sort of engineers environment like that, it is very difficult to have the experiences that broaden you in such a way that you can work in with the kids. So I think there are difficulties there.

If I could come back to the question before about what can we do for the training of teachers so that they can accommodate going out west and keeping people out there: in the late 80s, I had a job which was a travelling job with the old boards as a liaison officer in the western region. One of the many schools was Bourke. At that stage I went out to visit Bourke on a mission and there was a number of students from Sydney University doing teacher training who had been sent there for something like six weeks and they were accommodated. The idea of that—and I do not know whether it still continues—is that it would be a good idea for students in their teacher training to have a substantial experience in a school in the bush with the intention that those people would enjoy that teaching in country schools.

Perhaps, as part of the training process, that could be—if it has not disappeared—expanded so that there were more opportunities for significant experience in schools in those locations. There are a lot of really great places in the country and I think that people, once they get the opportunity to live there, can see that, hey, this is not all bad. The coffee might not be as good as it might be elsewhere and so on, but there are lots of really good things about the people and the things you can do in the country, and it is a different existence. But if you do not get the experience of a substantial nature, then I think it is probably very hard to accommodate. I think that if we could do something like that in the training, it might help.

**Ms BREWER:** A similar program operates from the University of Western Sydney [UWS]. They have sent some science recruits to a number of schools and they stayed with us for a year, so they are really learning at the coalface, on the ground. The irony is that the State system has supported them. We have helped train these new people, but the non-government positions come out in July and they sign on the dotted line, and we are still training them for a job in a private school because our State system cannot offer positions until—when do they offer them?—January of the following year. So there are some systems in place to assist graduates to help to train them to do things differently, but we are too slow off the mark. We are losing them.

**CHAIR:** Can I ask a question? I think, Jim, you mentioned BHP at Wollongong being a closed shop and an adjustment thing. I think a couple of witnesses now have put to us that a lot of schools are closed shops in a cultural kind of sense and that one of the reasons why perhaps particularly career change people but young teachers as well find it difficult to adjust is that at schools—particularly schools where a large number of teachers have been at the school for a long period of time—it can be quite a difficult environment to break into. They do not necessarily feel welcome. Their kind of new or different ways of doing things are not appreciated, so in other words the whole argument can be turned around and put that we actually need to find ways of making schools more welcoming to new and different kind of teachers.

**Mr McALPINE:** I would agree with that, Jan, and I see examples of that in particular faculties and in particular places and so on, depending on the nature of the individuals in that place. I think the schools themselves keep moving forward but in terms of their openness to new people and new ideas, that is a significant variable. I know that the Australian Capital Territory about three or four years ago changed its system for the appointment of teachers so that your first appointment is for three years. From there you go to another appointment for five years, and then you can go to an appointment where you can stay longer.

They have a nice little microcosm so it is very easy to control that sort of thing, but there is something to be said—and we have talked about it over the years and various Ministers have talked about it from time to time—about putting a maximum period of time that you can spend in a school. That is clearly desirable in some respects, but when you see a teacher who is doing a brilliant job and you have still got them there in their eighteenth year in the school, you would think that you do not want them to go to another place and there is a tension there. But I agree generally; schools need to be flexible, open, and encouraging of young people. Probably in Vicki's area it is a lot easier because you have so much turnover.

**Ms BREWER:** They are all new.

**Mr McALPINE:** But in the staid areas, it is much more difficult.

**CHAIR:** Do things like the mentoring program and the induction program—we have questions on that—work? Do they help from both points of view, like encouraging the school to be more welcoming but also making the new graduates feel that they have got somewhere to go?

**Ms BREWER:** It is fabulous.

**CHAIR:** Do you have a mentor program for your school?

**Ms BREWER:** Yes, but the mentor is shared among three schools. I am not complaining but it would be lovely to have her full time. It is a wonderful resource. We are so grateful for it. I take your point, Jan, that schools are very like silos but I think you will find—and I can only speak for Western Sydney—that we are very proud of our induction programs for new teachers because we have so many new teachers and we have to get that right. I see ourselves as a training institution. Our professional responsibility is to retrain the new people, to help them with behaviour management and pedagogy because we will fail them if we do not. So it is most important that we are not only welcoming but that we give professional learning experiences, on-the-job training, to help them cope. May I say I am very proud of what we do in Western Sydney with new teachers. I am not saying it is all fabulous, but we try very hard and there are some wonderful, wonderful programs. The mentor program is wonderful.

**CHAIR:** So does it need expanding? Are there ways to develop it?

**Ms BREWER:** Yes, it is only very new. I am sure the department will look, if they have got the funds and if they can find the funds—they should find the funds. It is the only way to help struggling new teachers—and to give them someone on the job to learn from. You know, I learn a lot from my hairdresser. I see her and the way she manages her team. She is there watching them. She is there showing them. She is there telling them. She is there leading them. Once you go in a classroom, it is very hard to get someone in there to lead and help and show and model and assist. A teacher mentor is able to do that with the young teachers and I can only recommend it highly.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** We have had suggestions that the mentor program, Mentoring the Mentors, in fact is also a way to go so that they feel their role is valued more. Do you have a view on that?

**Ms BREWER:** We have the only had a mentor for this year, so a very short period of time, but I am so thrilled by it and so excited. I got to choose her so that was fabulous.

**CHAIR:** What she already on your staff?

**Ms BREWER:** No.

**CHAIR:** So you chose her from a transfer from another school?

**Ms BREWER:** Interview.

**CHAIR:** But by interview?

**Ms BREWER:** Yes, that is right.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** So interviewing prospective staff and being able to choose them yourself—

**Ms BREWER:** It is very good, otherwise you get who walks in the door.

**Mr McALPINE:** In terms of our increasing accountabilities, where we are becoming—and this has probably been said before—increasingly accountable for the outcomes, the results or the

education of the children, however it is measured, it is pretty good to have some control over the inputs as well.

**Ms BREWER:** That is right.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** So you would like to see that expanded?

**Ms BREWER:** Absolutely. You know, we cannot even ask in our staffing any more for a male or a female PE teacher because it is discriminatory. So you might be in need of a male PE teacher because the three others are female and you need somebody to supervise the boys when they are in the loos changing and all of that, but we are not allowed to ask for it. It is this kind of restriction that is —

**CHAIR:** And you used to be able to ask it?

**Ms BREWER:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** When did that change?

**Ms BREWER:** Just recently. It is something to do with discrimination.

**Mr McALPINE:** I think it was 1999 or thereabouts—an anti-discrimination Act.

**Ms BREWER:** It is silly.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** Ms Brewer, you are from Western Sydney, is that right?

**Ms BREWER:** Yes, the Seven Hills High School.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** I used to work in Blacktown. You said that teachers would enter this bonding for three years. You do not think it is an old-fashioned scheme, do you?

**Ms BREWER:** It probably is, but we are desperate. We will do anything.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** It is very compulsive. At one end you are saying you want more autonomy for schools but at the other end you are saying that disadvantaged schools need people with handcuffs who are sent out there for three years, more or less. I mean, is there not some inconsistency in this position?

**Ms BREWER:** There may well be, but our system is huge. Our system is enormous. Whatever structure is in place is going to be flexible, and it is going to be complex. I think it would be a good thing for some bonded teachers to be within our system. It would be a good thing for some of the teachers to be selected on merit. It would be a good thing—et cetera, et cetera. Let us have a bit each way. What we are after is flexibility.

**CHAIR:** Some witnesses have said to us that the trouble with the bonded system, for instance, is that it more or less guarantees that rural schools will always have the most inexperienced teachers; that the way it works in practice is to more or less guarantee that no experienced teachers will be west of the mountains, et cetera, in a few of the great towns like Condobolin, or wherever. That is partly a view from rural areas. Do you see that as a problem?

**Ms BREWER:** But it is naive to think that many of the schools, if not most of the schools, in Western Sydney do not primarily have inexperienced teachers. That is the reality. Why would you, if you are an experienced teacher, not want to teach at the Cherrybrook High School for example, rather than stay at the Seven Hills High School where it is tough? You are an experienced teacher, so you want to go somewhere where, you know, the life is a bit more comfortable. That is a fair call. Why would you want to stay at the Seven Hills High School when it is a 7-10 school when you are thirsting to teach seniors? Quite rightly, they should move on for professional development reasons if for

nothing else. We in the west, like those colleagues in rural schools, understand and expect that the bulk of their staff will be young and inexperienced. That is not necessarily a bad thing, but there are problems with it.

**Mr McALPINE:** Mind you, when I was at Tumut, some of our best teachers were in their first couple of years of teaching, and I remember one young chap who, by the end of his first year of being a teacher, was appointed as a year adviser. He did a great job. He had a great rapport with kids, out playing at lunchtime at the cricket nets and all the sorts of things that old blokes do not do. But the establishment of the relationship with kids is really important in teaching, and young people can do it. If you have a significant group of them, they are a wonderful collegial support for each other. They create their own social milieu in the little village and they have a really good time. Okay, they turn over, they keep moving, but as long as you get new people who are enthusiastic and well trained, I do not think that it matters too much.

**Ms BREWER:** Half of my staff have tongue studs and tattoos.

**The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN:** Nothing wrong with that!

**CHAIR:** We are nearly up to time, but we have not yet asked you a word about the New South Wales Institute of Teachers. What sort of role do you see it playing? Obviously, we are aware that it is very new. Are you positive about it? How do you think it will benefit the profession? Do you have any objections, butts, or fears?

**Mr McALPINE:** We have no objections, no fears.

**Ms BREWER:** No.

**Mr McALPINE:** We have been asking for something of that nature for a number of years as a Principals' Council. It will be interesting to see how it evolves and how it develops. I think having a framework of standards for various levels of competency in teaching and various professional levels in teaching is excellent and I think that the work that is going into it is excellent. I think it will lead in turn to the ability of teachers to be able to reflect more effectively on what they are doing, how they can progress further, and how they can see where they are going in their teaching and what they need to do to support it personally rather than having it done to them by some external body. I think it is really good.

**CHAIR:** Do you see it overcoming the kinds of problems in university training that you talked about at the beginning, Vicki? Do you see it as putting a bit of pressure or increasing the standard?

**Ms BREWER:** I hope so. I hope that because it has teeth we are going to see results. Time will tell.

**CHAIR:** If it is doing that sort of intervention in universities it has to be related not only to the sort of academic and teacher preparation of things but to those more intangible sorts of things about the practical side of teaching and preparation for that?

**Ms BREWER:** We have seen the competencies for graduate teachers and I look at them and I think there is no way that the graduate teacher will be able to achieve half of those when they leave university. But time will tell. It is too early.

**CHAIR:** Yes, we may be doing this part of our inquiry too early, but it is certainly useful for us to document any questions or fears.

**Mr McALPINE:** I think the direction of it is really good, and if it can help establish higher standards and help the training of teachers achieve those higher standards then it is going to be good for our classrooms.

**CHAIR:** So what do you want to see come out of our inquiry? You know there have been a lot of inquiries, as we were saying to Professor Lee Dow before, but can we do things that are different? Can we do useful things that are different from some of the other inquiries?

**Ms BREWER:** I guess you are the only ones who know that, but we would argue for more flexibility and staffing; we would argue for a much more rigorous process of training teachers at university level; more work on behaviour management and pedagogy; we would argue for the DET to get its act together so that they are at least competitive in employing graduates compared with the non-govs. In other words, the non-govs do it in July, well let DET do it in July. We need to think very carefully about the retraining of teachers and the minimum standards that we are accepting into the profession, particularly with regards to language skills, interpersonal skills and relevance to young people and their learning and needs.

**CHAIR:** We did not ask you earlier and we had a question about the retraining, for instance, of primary teachers to become secondary teachers. Do you have the same sorts of reservations about the process?

**Ms BREWER:** I have not come across anyone who has been retrained. I support it in principle, provided that the graduate has the appropriate academic and pedagogical skills.

**Mr McALPINE:** If I could just follow on from that, I have met some of the teachers who started their life as primary teachers; some of them are in the retirement process over the last few years, but they then went through and did the University of New England external degrees and changed their qualifications to secondary, and they became very good secondary teachers because they had a really good understanding of the interaction that is required in a classroom. My primary mates always have a shot at me because I teach a subject, they teach children. I think those particular skills that they bring with them are really good.

**The Hon. ROBYN PARKER:** Just to expand on that particular issue, and you may have covered this earlier, I am not sure, what do you think of an idea of primary school trained teachers being able to teach middle school—years 7 and 8 perhaps?

**Mr McALPINE:** The Charles Sturt University Albury campus has introduced a middle school degree and I think that is a wonderful concept. I think the work that we need to do in the middle school years will not fade. There is a huge amount of research showing that we are not doing that well enough and I think the more we can share our teaching across stages three and four, years 5, 6, 7 and 8, the more we can learn from each other. Some of those linkages programs have been very successful. I think we need to encourage more.

**Ms BREWER:** Certainly.

**Mr McALPINE:** If I could just say one thing in terms of what I would like to see come out of the inquiry. I do not like any inquiry that comes out with mild-mannered recommendations. So I would encourage all of you to bite the bullet, come out with something strong, go for it, push us in a future direction, and do not agree with anything we have said unless you really feel passionately committed to it like Vicki does. But make it worthwhile. If you are going to put all this time into it, you have got a significant opportunity to really push it along in the right direction, and if we can contribute a little bit I would be very grateful.

**The Hon. Dr ARTHUR CHESTERFIELD-EVANS:** We will do our best.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for that and thank you for sharing your thoughts and being so frank, and thank you for preparing to come. We very much appreciate it. There may be things we want to follow up with you, but at this stage I do not think we have got anything on notice. Something may come up where it would be sensible for us to get your opinion, if that is all right.

**(The witnesses withdrew)**

**The Committee adjourned at 5.20 p.m.**