

Teachers for the 21st Century: Making the Difference

A Commonwealth Government Quality Teacher Initiative

Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	3
<u>Executive Summary</u>	5
<u>The Context</u>	8
<u>Teachers for the 21st Century: Making the Difference</u>	13
<u>The Four Key Elements</u>	15
<u>Current Commonwealth Support For Teachers</u>	21

Introduction

Highly effective schools and improved student outcomes are key objectives of the Commonwealth Government. Education of the highest quality is the foundation for all our futures. It is education which empowers us to rise to the challenges of social, cultural, economic and technological change that we confront daily.

All Australian Ministers for Education have endorsed the *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* and have moved to put in place performance measures to show how well these goals are being met. These goals focus strongly on improving student outcomes. However, if the quality of outcomes is to improve, so must our efforts to support teachers in their work.

Societal changes are putting new pressures on teachers and schools, including the need to meet the academic needs of Indigenous and other students with markedly differing cultural, social and economic backgrounds. Economic demands are placing new pressures on students, teachers and schools, not least of which is the need to develop strong foundational skills, critical thinking, innovation, lifelong learning and technological and scientific literacy as the basis of our future productivity as a knowledge based economy. The latter is also impacting on how children develop and learn and requires us to focus on new ways of educational delivery and new teaching methods.

Education of the highest quality requires teachers of the highest quality. Research both here and overseas confirms that a highly skilled and professional teaching force does, and will continue, to make a difference.

The Government acknowledges the vital role that teachers have in imparting knowledge and skills to our young people, and in striving for educational equality.

Teachers for the 21st Century will improve teacher quality and increase the number of highly effective Australian schools in order to maximise student learning outcomes. It will do so by:

- lifting the quality of teaching through targeted professional development and enhancing professional standards;
- developing the skills of school leaders;
- supporting quality school management; and
- recognising and rewarding quality schools, school leaders and teachers.

The Commonwealth will provide some \$80 million over the next three years to support *Teachers for the 21st Century*. This includes \$74 million to support quality teachers, \$1.5 million for quality school leaders, \$2 million for quality school management and \$2.5 million for recognition of quality.

The Commonwealth does not employ teachers. However, it makes a major contribution to their work through its annual commitment to school education, in both government and non-government sectors, of over \$5 billion. The Commonwealth provides significant support to enhance the skills and understandings of teachers in priority areas such as literacy, numeracy, civics and citizenship, enterprise and vocational education in schools, Indigenous education and drug education.

Teachers for the 21st Century also makes clear the Commonwealth's total commitment to development for school leaders and future leaders in partnership with peak principal organisations and other key education practitioners. A fundamental component of teacher quality is the development of the skills of school leaders, particularly the skills required in developing whole school approaches to raising educational standards.

Teachers for the 21st Century outlines some of the key areas for research to identify the links between professional development and improved student learning outcomes. Research in Australia and overseas confirms the value of professional development in raising educational standards, particularly where this is implemented within the whole school context. We need to know more about the factors that forge strong links between professional development and student outcomes.

The vast majority of Australia's teachers are highly skilled, dedicated and committed to improving the educational outcomes for their students. We need to recognise and celebrate their achievements and continue to support them.

The package of measures announced in *Teachers for the 21st Century* will provide many teachers with the opportunity to upgrade their skills to ensure that they are well equipped to meet the challenges of our information rich and high technology environment.

I invite all involved in the education of our young people to support *Teachers for the 21st Century*. Working together, quality teachers will make the difference and will raise educational standards for all.

DAVID KEMP

Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs

Executive Summary

Teachers for the 21st Century will improve teacher quality and increase the number of highly effective Australian schools in order to maximise student learning outcomes.

It will do so by:

- lifting the quality of teaching through targeted professional development and enhancing professional standards;
- developing the skills of school leaders;
- supporting quality school management; and
- recognising and rewarding quality schools, school leaders and teachers.

Over the next three years a range of initiatives will support:

- Quality Teachers – around \$74.0 million;
- Quality Leaders – \$1.5 million;
- Quality School Management – \$2 million; and
- Recognition of Quality – \$2.5 million.

The Commonwealth has provided significant support to enhance the skills and understandings of teachers in targeted priority areas such as literacy, numeracy, civics and citizenship, enterprise and vocational education in schools and drug education. *Teachers for the 21st Century* will build on and extend current Commonwealth Government support for teachers, totalling around \$30 million, under a range of targeted programmes. It will also serve as a catalyst for further action by education providers and the teaching profession.

Some of the key initiatives planned include:

1. Quality Teachers

Teacher Development

- Comprehensive plans have been negotiated with State and Territory government and non-government education authorities to lift the skills of practising teachers in the key priority areas of literacy, numeracy, mathematics, science, information technology, vocational education in schools, and specialist skills for teaching Indigenous

students, students in rural or remote locations and students in urban disadvantaged schools.

- A national quality teacher information exchange project will be established to disseminate information about best practice in teacher professional development.
- Effective programmes to support beginning teachers will be identified and disseminated.
- Effective teaching practices for Indigenous students will be given special attention through community based workshops and a professional development package.

Professional Standards

- Professional teaching standards will be enhanced by working with teacher associations in key areas such as science, English/literacy and mathematics.
- The Australian College of Education will be supported in its efforts to stimulate discussion about standards of professional practice for school teachers, including for example, a national forum on professional teaching standards.

2. Quality Leaders

- Principals and aspiring school leaders will be encouraged to implement innovative approaches to whole school management through the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council.
- The Government will continue to support the activities of peak principals associations and will engage in ongoing consultation on current and emerging issues and priorities.
- The Government will support the efforts of principals organisations to develop a national framework which defines the common elements necessary for excellence in school leadership and strategies for ongoing professional development and support.
- Principals will be supported to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students through the dissemination of effective practice, the implementation of mentoring programmes and workshops.

3. Quality School Management

- School based pilots and research will help schools expand whole school planning and management to improve student learning outcomes.
- Research will be initiated into the link between professional development and student learning outcomes.

4. Recognition of Quality

- Innovation and Excellence Awards for Schools and Teachers will be established to reward quality teachers and outcomes.
- Best practice and innovations leading to improved school and student learning outcomes will be highlighted by a national conference on quality outcomes.

The Context

The times we live in

As a democracy, Australia's promise is quality of educational opportunity for all our young people. Now, more than ever, we need to be able to clearly state the community's expectations of education, to monitor the achievement of those expectations and to ensure that appropriate levels and types of support are in place to enhance the prospect of success for all our students.

Why now more than ever? The present is a complex and professionally demanding environment for teachers' work. Our society is in the middle of a number of significant social, cultural and economic changes, influenced by the revolution in information and communication technologies. That revolution is one of the central factors in producing the phenomenon of globalisation and the need for informed global perspectives.

Quality education, relevant to the conditions of the present and those we can envisage for the future, is the means by which Australia can survive and thrive in such circumstances.

The challenges for our schools

While teachers are well aware of the nature of these challenges, there are signs that the wider community is also becoming more aware of the crucial tasks schools are being called on to undertake today.

The partnerships forged through *Teachers for the 21st Century* will make the nature of teachers' work better known and understood. This is an important element of the concerted efforts necessary to raise standards of student performance.

The baseline challenges facing our schools are:

- to provide the foundation skills to *all* students in literacy, numeracy and the use of information and communication technologies which are the basis for continued educational success;
- to meet greater demands of parental choice and accountability;
- to be responsive to changes in the employment market and to the way in which our community generates its wealth;
- to develop skills of innovation, creativity and flexibility so students can contribute to Australia's future entrepreneurial culture and progress;

- to engage young people in science and mathematical issues and to recognise the growing importance of scientific issues in our daily lives; and
- to meet the academic and social needs of Indigenous and other students with markedly differing cultural, social and economic backgrounds.

Responses to those challenges

The changes in school education during the past two decades have been significant. The movement towards increased accountability and the public reporting of educational outcomes has been widely endorsed and embraced. Curricular and assessment practices in all jurisdictions have been revised, in most cases more than once. The educational use of information and communication technologies is in its infancy, but firmly established. Other initiatives, related to a range of topics but most notably to vocational education and training, have taken their place in school programmes. Educators have also responded to requests for assistance in solving a variety of significant social problems.

Stating expectations and setting standards

This process has been supported by Australia's *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* which set clear and agreed directions for school education in this country. The goals focus on enhancing educational outcomes for all students. They support the pursuit of excellence, seek to enable a diverse range of educational choices and reflect the entitlement of all young Australians to high quality schooling.

In agreeing to the National Goals for Schooling, Ministers endorsed the importance of setting standards and measuring performance in improving school and student outcomes. In fact they have supported the view that:

the achievement of these common and agreed national goals entails a commitment to collaboration for the purposes of ... increasing public confidence in school education through explicit and defensible standards that guide improvement in students' level of educational achievement and through which the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of schooling can be measured and evaluated.

In terms of practice, all Ministers have agreed on measurable goals for literacy and numeracy performance and approved a draft framework for developing key performance measures for the central issues of student participation, retention, transition and completion. Progress is also being made to develop key performance measures for science, vocational education in schools, information technology, civics and citizenship and enterprise education. Thus standards will be identified and used as a basis for reporting fundamental aspects of the performance of Australian

schools. The performance of schools will be critical to fostering new ideas and approaches to support innovation in the Australian economy. This has recently been identified in *Innovation: Unlocking the Future*, a report based on the recommendations of the National Innovation Summit.

Many highly effective Australian schools support the vision of the National Goals for Schooling through their commitment to processes of continuous evaluation and holistic improvement. Such processes involve regular review and evaluation of student and parent expectations, school and professional capabilities and a willingness to implement or trial new strategies to improve student learning outcomes. These schools set performance goals for all students and ensure that they monitor, report on and are accountable for their performance against those goals.

Quality teachers: the essential component of raising standards

Achieving the National Goals for Schooling requires a high quality teaching workforce. Research both in Australia and overseas confirms the common sense view that high quality teachers are the foundation of highly effective schools. For example, in its report *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, the US National Commission on Teaching and America's Future states categorically that "In terms of student achievement, the teacher is a more significant factor than any other kind of school resource" (1996: 6).

Another American study by Professor Linda Darling-Hammond (*Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence*, 1999) found that: "teacher quality variables appear to be more strongly related to student achievement" than other factors and that "The findings of both the qualitative and quantitative analyses suggest that policy investments in the quality of teachers may be related to improvements in student performance".

An Australian research project led by Professor Peter Hill (*A Study of School and Teacher Effectiveness: Results from the First Phase of the Victorian Quality Schools Project*, 1993) found that teacher effectiveness was the key to improved educational outcomes and suggested that it was "primarily through the quality of teaching that effective schools make a difference".

Teachers as learners

Quality teachers are themselves learners. In a later paper, *Towards High Standards for All Students* (1997), Hill expanded on the findings from the Quality Schools Project and noted that one of the eight key factors that explains differences in comparable rates of student achievement was "the extent to which teachers have participated in recent, intensive professional development programmes".

Other research confirms the value of professional development, where it is identified and implemented within the school context to meet the needs of their teachers and students, for the continuous improvement of professional practice. Central to its effectiveness is:

- the support provided from education systems and schools to embed professional development effectively in conventional work practices;
- the extent to which professional development is centred on the curriculum and agreed student learning outcomes; and
- the willingness of teachers to take responsibility for their own professional growth, to reflect upon their practices, trial new approaches and make collaborative decisions about future strategies and priorities.

In addition, international research points to the value of helping individual schools understand and translate national standards into local contexts. The process of weaving internal and external expectations together can be greatly assisted when schools and teachers are provided with the capacity to refine and improve teaching practice in order to progress towards the achievement of improved school and student outcomes.

On balance the research evidence confirms the value of ongoing investment in teacher professional development. This investment is maximised when teachers work together within their school communities to identify goals, define standards and expectations, review and refine teaching practices and prioritise areas for action and improvement. They accept responsibility for assessing the impact of their teaching on student outcomes and report on and are accountable for these outcomes.

Supporting teachers

The Preamble to the National Goals for Schooling expresses the commitment of all Ministers to collaboration for the purposes of enhancing the status and quality of the teaching profession.

This Government recognises that over the past few years, there has been growing concern over the quality and status of teaching in Australia.

The Commonwealth provides significant funding to support initial and continuing teacher education. But State and Territory government and non-government education authorities have primary responsibility for the employment eligibility, conditions and professional standards for practising teachers.

Over the last decade most States and Territories have established mechanisms to support teacher quality (for example, the Western

Australian Centre for Excellence in Teaching, the Queensland Learning and Development Foundation and the former Victorian Standards Council of the Teaching Profession).

State and Territory government and non-government teacher employers are already reviewing a range of issues relating to the status and quality of teachers (for example, the review of teacher education in New South Wales) and in some instances have moved or are moving to establish structures (for example, the Institute of Teaching in Victoria) to support the teaching profession.

While there is a range of views on how the quality and status of the teaching profession might be improved there is a general consensus that more needs to be done to:

- improve initial teacher education and ongoing development;
- more carefully target professional development to meet school and individual needs; and
- promote the value and development of teaching standards and related certification.

A number of these issues raise concerns which must be addressed by teacher employers. They include:

- the relatively poor support and adjustment processes (induction and mentoring programmes) available to new teachers;
- the lack of mechanisms which identify and reward quality classroom teaching; and
- insufficient support and incentives for teachers to pursue lifelong learning and development in relation to content knowledge and pedagogy.

Raising the standards of student performance is an on-going task, not just for teachers but for the community as a whole. It requires cooperative effort from the Commonwealth Government, State and Territory government and non-government education providers, schools, principals, professional associations and parents. But the primary means by which educational standards will be raised will be by working with and through the teaching profession.

Teachers for the 21st Century: Making the Difference

The Commonwealth Government's current contributions to the task of raising educational standards are substantial and varied. *Teachers for the 21st Century* will build on and extend these initiatives and act as a catalyst for further action by education providers and the teaching profession. It also brings together a number of new initiatives which focus sharply on areas of most urgent need.

Purpose

The central purpose of *Teachers for the 21st Century* is to improve teacher quality and increase the number of highly effective Australian schools in order to maximise student learning outcomes and raise standards of school education in this country.

It will do so by:

- improving the quality of teaching by developing, refreshing and deepening the professional skills of all teachers through targeted professional development and encouraging the development of professional standards;
- developing the skills of school leaders to support teachers and improve school performance;
- supporting whole school approaches to planning and management to increase the professional skills of teachers to improve student learning outcomes; and
- recognising and rewarding quality schools, school leaders and teachers.

Key Elements

Teachers for the 21st Century will provide funding through four key elements.

- Quality Teachers
- Quality Leaders
- Quality School Management
- Recognition of Quality

Through the implementation of these four key elements and with the collaboration of State and Territory government and non-government education authorities, principals, teachers, professional associations and

researchers, the Commonwealth seeks to ensure that our teachers are well-equipped to deliver quality education in the twenty-first century.

Factors for success

Factors critical to the success of *Teachers for the 21st Century* are as follows.

- The collaboration and cooperation of State and Territory government and non-government education authorities, individual school principals, teachers and staff, professional associations, and researchers.
- A commitment to quality and high standards of professionalism by principals and teachers.
- Teachers taking responsibility for their professional development and for using its outcomes to improve their teaching and their students' learning.
- Effective targeting of professional development to meet school and individual teachers' needs.
- Improving public perceptions of the value of teaching as a profession.
- Effective leadership from principals for the facilitation of change and improvement which supports the growth of both students and teachers.
- Active management and commitment by school leaders and staff to embrace whole school approaches to planning which enable the identification of outcomes, the reporting of outcomes and to support staff development to deliver these outcomes.
- Support for the work of national forums which seek to advance the status of teaching.

The Four Key Elements

Teachers for the 21st Century will be implemented over the next three years through a range of targeted initiatives which support each of the four key elements of *Teachers for the 21st Century*.

The Commonwealth will provide some \$80 million over the next three years to support *Teachers for the 21st Century*. This includes \$74 million to support quality teachers, \$1.5 million for quality school leaders, \$2 million for quality school management and \$2.5 million for recognition of quality.

Key Element 1. Quality Teachers

<p>Objective: To improve teachers' skills and understandings and enhance the status of teachers through teacher professional development and the further development of professional standards.</p>
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Quality Teacher Programme

It has been noted that participation in high quality teacher professional development is a key element in improving student outcomes. While completion of initial teacher training is the first step in becoming a skilled teacher, ongoing professional development is essential to ensure that teachers have access to the latest research in teaching methods and are equipped to respond to continuing changes within schools and in the external environment.

- The Quality Teacher Programme, commencing this year, will provide \$77.7 million for the renewal of teachers' skills and understanding. (This Programme will supplement targeted professional development currently funded by the Commonwealth that underpins its key initiatives in literacy, numeracy, civics and citizenship, enterprise and vocational education in schools and drug education.)

The Quality Teacher Programme will support the updating and improvement of the knowledge and skills of teachers who completed initial teacher education ten or more years ago, teachers re-entering the workforce and casual teachers in the priority areas of literacy, numeracy, mathematics, science, information technology and vocational education in schools. Provision has also been made for teachers of disadvantaged groups such as Indigenous students, students in rural and remote locations and students in urban disadvantaged schools.

State and Territory government and non-government education authorities will have a major role in implementing activities supported by the Quality Teacher Programme. Their activities will be directed to the strategic priorities of the Programme and will be the subject of annual

plans and reports to the Commonwealth. These plans and reports will be published to encourage the exchange of ideas and best practice.

National Quality Teacher Information Exchange Project

This project will facilitate information exchange through workshops, seminars and the establishment of a website which will disseminate the results of research projects and other activities occurring through the *Teachers for the 21st Century*, thus enabling teachers to access information gained via the Quality Teacher Programme.

Research on Effective Programmes for Beginning Teachers

Recent evidence points to the difficulties in attracting and retaining quality teachers. Other research confirms the need to support beginning teachers in their transition from training to teaching.

While the Quality Teacher Programme will provide significant support to enhance the professional skills of teachers who have been in the workforce for some time, the Commonwealth is also concerned that there be similar support for beginning teachers.

Some support will be provided as a result of the school-based nature of the professional development activities funded under the programme. However, more work needs to be done to identify the needs of beginning teachers, and the nature of effective programmes that assist in making the transition from training into the classroom.

The Commonwealth will commission an analysis of the range of current national and international programmes which support beginning teachers and will seek the views of teachers and key stakeholders to identify effective practice and directions for the future.

Effective Teaching Practices for Indigenous Students Project

This initiative will reinforce the aims of the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, particularly promoting the use in classrooms of teaching methods that have been shown to effectively improve Indigenous student literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Recent work has shown that educators can accelerate Indigenous student learning outcomes by combining high expectations and what is generally regarded as good teaching and learning practice and by linking this to performance indicators and targets in terms of Indigenous student outcomes.

Through the Promoting Effective Practices for Indigenous Students Project, schools will be supported to explore models of effective practice and to adopt those that meet their school and community characteristics and needs. The project will deliver school and community based

workshops and effective practice, and develop and promote a professional development package which captures the detail of current effective practice for Indigenous students.

Developing professional standards

There is growing interest in Australia and overseas in the development of professional standards and related certification for teachers, both as a means of improving the quality of teaching and enhancing the professional standing of teachers. While teacher employers and professional associations in Australia have begun work on the development and assessment of professional standards, there is much still to be done. Experience in the US suggests that engagement of teachers in a process of voluntary certification challenges them to operate at the highest possible level thereby conferring benefits on them and their schools.

While the Government sees teacher employers and the teaching profession itself as having the main responsibility for developing standards, it is keen to encourage and support the process.

The Government supports the work of the Australian College of Education, as a body representative of the teaching profession, to stimulate discussion on the need for professional standards for teachers. The Commonwealth will provide funding to the Australian College of Education to assist with a national forum on professional teaching standards.

Teacher professional associations which are currently developing advanced standards with the assistance of Commonwealth grants will also receive funding to come together to share the findings of their projects and to identify areas for further development.

Key Element 2. Quality Leaders

<p>Objective: To support school principals and their leadership teams to be highly effective educational leaders, people leaders and managers.</p>

Support for principals

School principals play a pivotal role in improving student learning. High achieving schools have principals who are effective educational leaders; they have a clear vision and high expectations for their schools which they communicate well to the school community; they focus on student achievement and they offer encouragement and support to their teachers. They have a good understanding of the changing nature of schools and teaching and understand the benefits of information communication

technologies and lead and manage the changes required to develop children in an online world. While education leadership is the most important part of a principal's job, they also have a key role in managing the school.

Principals, their deputies and their senior teachers need development programmes to help them prepare for their complex and demanding roles.

The four peak principals' associations established the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC) in 1993 with the main aim of providing professional development for principals and aspiring principals.

- The Commonwealth will provide further support for the APAPDC to focus on the professional development of school leaders and whole school management. Research on best practice models of whole school management will be identified and documented.

Key aspects of this activity will be to extend the concept of school leadership beyond school principals to include teachers in positions of responsibility. The developmental needs of these teachers will be investigated, documented and programmes developed to enhance career opportunities and skill thresholds. Through this approach current school leadership will be strengthened and will provide for the training of aspiring school principals.

The Government will also support the efforts of peak principals organisations to develop a national framework which defines the common elements necessary for excellence in school leadership and strategies for ongoing professional development and support.

The Government will continue to support information seminars with the Australian Primary Principals' Association and the Australian Secondary Principals' Association to discuss current and emerging issues and priorities.

Ongoing support will also be provided for principals through the dissemination of effective practice, the implementation of mentoring programmes and workshops to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

Key Element 3. Quality School Management

Objective: To support the development of quality school management.
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Quality school management is seen as a longer term aspect of *Teachers for the 21st Century*. Current research on innovation and best practice in Australian schools funded by the Commonwealth indicates that teacher-

related factors are particularly significant in introducing school-based management initiatives.

The research found that it is possible for schools to demonstrate a significant impact on student learning outcomes with targeted interventions or strategies, given the support of staff and school leadership and the provision of research support and assistance. Successful innovation in schools was very much dependent on the adoption of whole school management approaches with strong school leadership, the goodwill of staff and broad support across key stakeholder groups such as parents. It also depended on identification in the school community of the need for action and/or innovation to address an identified issue.

Projects will be initiated to support the widespread implementation of quality school management, including the development of a whole school management model which would enable school leaders and their staff to work together to identify outcomes and report against them.

School-based action research

This new research project will help schools and school clusters to work within a whole school framework. Within this framework schools will identify, develop and apply new approaches from a menu of issues that might include, for example, school-based planning, school-based assessment and reporting, school management/culture and specific teaching requirements.

The project will: identify teachers' professional skills; support school-based innovations intended to improve student learning outcomes; and include ways of developing teachers' understanding and skills in evaluating and assessing the impact of innovations on student learning outcomes.

Professional development and student learning outcomes

There is limited evidence currently of the nature of the linkage between teacher professional development and student learning outcomes. The evidence that is available highlights a positive connection. However, the factors contributing to this are not well understood or documented.

This project will test theories on the connection between professional development and learning outcomes and identify the characteristics of teacher professional development practices and approaches that are most effective in improving student learning outcomes.

Key Element 4. Recognition of Quality

Objective: To recognise excellent teachers and schools and by doing so help to raise the status of the teaching profession.

Despite general acceptance of the importance of the teaching profession, there is a perception that the status of teachers in our society has fallen. While studies show that parents hold their children's teachers in high regard, there appears to be a community perception that the quality of teachers as a whole is falling. The Government believes that it is essential that the status of teachers is raised and that high quality teachers are given the recognition they deserve.

The Commonwealth is not an employer of teachers and so the recognition it can give to excellent schools and teachers is limited. It already recognises outstanding schools and teachers in specific areas, such as literacy. The expansion of these awards has the capacity to both raise the status of the profession and to provide an impetus for other teachers, school leaders and schools as a whole to raise their aspirations and expand quality schooling.

Innovation and Excellence Awards

The Commonwealth will introduce a system of recognition to reinforce and acknowledge good teaching skills and practice. It will build on existing initiatives and focus on Commonwealth priorities. Awards will be made to high quality schools which deliver quality outcomes in priority areas and to individual teachers or teams of teachers who have shown excellence in contributing to improved student outcomes.

National Conference on Quality Teaching

The Government will fund a national conference on quality teaching, focussed on best practice initially, and aimed primarily at practising teachers, to demonstrate innovations that lead to improved learning outcomes.

Current Commonwealth Support For Teachers

The Commonwealth is currently providing some \$30 million across a range of targeted programmes and projects to assist teachers to secure the best possible learning outcomes for their students. Support for increasing the skills of teachers in specific priority areas is included as a focus of programme activities which support the achievement of the *National Goals for Schooling*.

The Commonwealth also funds a range of strategic projects that look at the effectiveness of schools and flexible approaches to schooling. The Commonwealth has provided significant resources to research innovation and best practice in improving student learning. This work, to be published shortly, used a model through which schools developed the capacity to evaluate the success of their innovations in terms of their impact on student learning outcomes. One outcome of this work will be an Internet-based professional development package to assist in translating the findings of the report into teacher practice. In addition, this work will be further extended by initiatives proposed under *Teachers for the 21st Century*.

The following overview of Commonwealth activity which supports teachers to improve their skills, understandings and practice in key learning areas clearly indicates the Commonwealth's recognition of teachers as leading agents of change in improving educational outcomes and performance. It is set out against the relevant *National Goals for Schooling*.

<p><i>Goal 1.4</i> Schooling should develop fully the talents and capabilities of all students. In particular, when students leave school they should <i>be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life.</i></p>

In the 2000-2001 Commonwealth Budget a further \$13.4 million was committed for the *Discovering Democracy* programme over the next four years. *Discovering Democracy* helps students to develop an understanding of the history and operations of Australia's system of government and the principles that support Australian democracy. From 1997 to 2000 the Commonwealth Government provided \$18 million for the programme. Continuation will allow the programme to become embedded in Australian schools and enable eligible teachers to be offered professional development in *Discovering Democracy* over the next four years.

The evaluation of the programme estimated that, by the beginning of 2000, about 30 per cent of eligible teachers had received some introductory professional development. Over the next few years it will be important not only to introduce the rest of the teacher cohort to the programme but also to provide further, in-depth support for those teachers and schools who have already experienced some introductory professional development.

Goal 1.5 Schooling should develop fully the talents and capabilities of all students. In particular, when students leave school they should *have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training further education, employment and life-long learning.*

A new Framework for enterprise and vocational education in schools, to span all years of school education, will support the successful transition to further education, training and employment for all students. This integrated approach offers potential for building partnerships between schools, business, industry and communities to expand vocational education opportunities, particularly in relation to career and enterprise education. It will improve community and work based learning and support services for all students including individual assistance for students at risk.

- Programmes for lower secondary students supporting their access to vocational education and training in the senior years

Development and trialing of curriculum materials and programmes to prepare Years 9 and 10 students for senior vocational programmes. A key feature of this programme is the professional development for both teachers and industry personnel.

- Enterprise education in schools teacher professional development resources – stages 2 and 3: development and implementation

Development and delivery of professional development materials for primary and secondary school teachers in relation to enterprise education. It includes booklets for primary and secondary teachers, a website and *Ed-Ventures* magazine.

- Student portfolio - assessment and reporting manual

A manual for assessing and reporting on student performance in the Key Competencies for employers. It includes a teacher handbook and further development of a computer software package developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research to enable teachers to assess

and report student performance using Key Competencies performance levels.

- Key Competencies assessment and reporting in schools-survey of schools and community

A survey of stakeholders to ascertain and document their responses to Key Competencies assessment and reporting in schools.

- State component of the VET in schools element of the School to Work Programme

Professional development activities for teachers were funded in the 1996-97 financial year under the State Component of the School to Work Programme.

Goal 1.6 Schooling should develop fully the talents and capabilities of all students. In particular, when students leave school they should *be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of this technology on society.*

Professional development in educational uses of information and communication technologies (ICT) is one of three highest priorities identified by the schools sector in its School Education Action Plan for the Information Economy, *Learning in an online world*, endorsed by MCEETYA at its March, 2000 meeting.

- Models of teacher professional development for the integration of ICT into classroom practice

An examination of existing models of pre-service education and in-service professional development, both in Australia and overseas. The project will focus on the sharing of information about good practice models through a national network involving all States and Territories and across all key learning areas.

Goal 1.8 Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave schools they should *have the knowledge and skills and attitudes necessary to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and for the creative and satisfying use of leisure time.*

The Commonwealth Government has provided a total of \$27 million under the National School Drug Education Strategy to strengthen and enhance both preventative school drug education programmes and the management of drug related incidents in schools. Funding is being provided for activities that are catalytic and encourage innovation and

good practice including specific projects that aim to improve teacher education and the teaching of drug education in schools.

- Review of pre-service teacher training in school drug education

To determine the nature, extent and quality of existing pre-service teacher training in drug education.

- Research on innovation and good practice in school drug education

Funding is being provided to assist individual schools directly in documenting their drug education activities and the subsequent outcomes. The project will identify key issues for schools, including the factors which contribute to the provision of successful school drug education.

- Caring for the kids in our community

An extensive professional development package for school principals, teachers and support staff that will provide guidance on school drug education and management of drug related issues in schools.

Goal 2.1 In terms of curriculum, students should have attained high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling encompassing the agreed eight learning areas – *science and technology*.

- Two separate investigations into the quality and status of teaching and learning of science and technology in Australian primary and secondary schools

The Commonwealth has commissioned two investigations into the quality and status of teaching and learning of science and technology in Australian primary and secondary schools. The reports from these studies will provide recommendations on priorities for improving the status and quality of teaching and learning in science and in technology.

Goal 2.2 In terms of curriculum, students should have*attained the skills of numeracy and English literacy; such that, every student should be numerate, able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level.*

It is a major policy objective, and now a nationally agreed priority, to ensure that all students attain sound foundations in literacy and numeracy. The National Literacy and Numeracy Plan reflects the commitment by all Education Ministers to literacy and numeracy as essential for all learning and makes it clear that it is crucial for children to develop the foundations of literacy and numeracy early in the school

years. Under the Literacy and Numeracy Programme the Commonwealth will provide approximately \$193 million in 2000 to education authorities to support the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan including the key area of professional development. In addition, the Commonwealth will provide approximately \$13 million to support the following strategic research initiatives which have a strong focus on teacher professional development in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

- Commonwealth Numeracy Research and Development Initiative

The Commonwealth Numeracy Research and Development Initiative provides specific support, in 2000-02, for research and development in school numeracy education focusing on the primary school level. Total funding for the Initiative is \$7 million. Professional development has been identified as one of seven broad priority areas in school numeracy education.

- The middle years initiative

The Commonwealth has allocated \$5 million over four years for strategic national projects related to the middle years of schooling. A number of research projects are currently being developed to address the literacy and numeracy needs of students in the middle years of schooling who have not developed foundational literacy and numeracy skills and therefore have difficulty coping with the demands of the schools curriculum. Projects will focus on priority areas to extend assistance to educationally disadvantaged students, including Indigenous students and to assist students who have literacy and numeracy difficulties in the transition from primary to secondary school. Effective teaching practice will be one focus of the initiative.

- Preparation of teachers to teach literacy and numeracy in primary and secondary schools

The project will identify and document good practice in equipping teachers with the knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence to use a range of strategies in the classroom to ensure that all students achieve an appropriate level of literacy and numeracy skills.

- Effective teaching and learning practices leading to improved literacy outcomes in the early years of schooling

This project will document the ways literacy skills are taught to children in the early years and the influences of different teachers and teaching approaches. This information will help us understand how foundation literacy skills are taught in Australian schools in the early years and how these impact on student outcomes.

- Leadership and understandings in literacy learning outcomes of primary schools

This project will identify how primary school principals and school leaders coordinate and promote strong literacy and numeracy outcomes in schools, and identify their beliefs and understandings towards literacy and numeracy teaching, learning and outcomes.

- National school English literacy survey professional development via the Internet

A national school English literacy survey on professional development via the Internet is being conducted by the South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment. The project will encourage teachers to use the internet for professional development purposes, using the analysis and data produced.

- Supporting readers in the middle years

The project includes the development of an on-line resource to assist teachers of students in the middle years of schooling to meet the literacy needs of less able readers in their classes.

Goal 3.3 Schooling should be socially just, so that *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling* so that their learning outcomes improve and, over time, match those of other students

The National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy was launched on 29 March and is focussing on the literacy and numeracy skills of Indigenous students and on other factors which influence their level of achievement, particularly school attendance.

The National Strategy has six key elements:

- lifting Indigenous school attendance rates to national levels;
- effectively addressing hearing and other health problems that undermine learning for many Indigenous students;
- increasing access to pre-school opportunities;
- getting and keeping good teachers in areas with the greatest need;
- using the most effective teaching methods to improve literacy and numeracy; and
- having clear measures of success.

The National Strategy will extend across pre-school and school systems and will support the establishment of stronger partnerships between parents, Indigenous communities, schools and the agencies supporting education improvement in those communities.

A range of initiatives are being developed in relation to each element of the Strategy. These initiatives include a project with the Australian Principals' Associations Professional Development Council to support stronger school leadership and more effectively engage school principals in the task of improving Indigenous students' educational outcomes.