



Australian Council of Deans of Education Incorporated

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Australian Council of Deans of Education Inc.

Submission to
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Australian Council of Deans of Education Inc.

submission to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee

inquiry into

The capacity of public universities to meet Australia's higher education needs

(Public Universities Inquiry 2001)

The Australian Council of Deans of Education Incorporated (ACDE) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

The ACDE is the national peak organisation representing deans of faculties of education and heads of schools of education in Australian universities and other institutions providing recognised teacher education qualifications. ACDE members are responsible for initial and post-initial teacher education (schools, VET, early childhood, tertiary, some other instructors/educators), education research and scholarship, and education research training.

The ACDE is incorporated as an association in the ACT, and it is governed by a Board that includes representatives from each State and Territory.

The submission is structured in the order of the sections of the inquiry's terms of reference, with the text of the terms of reference we have responded to provided.

Executive summary

This submission focuses on a small number of issues about which the ACDE believes it can make a contribution to the work of the Committee though the presentation of evidence and argument. The most significant of those issues are:

First, there is a lack of adequate process for policy development regarding initial teacher education intake levels and related matters. This issue is of increasing importance as the world experiences increasing teacher shortages, and any shortages effect most those students and communities already disadvantaged. In addition, shortages undermine the overall quality of education and the capacity of education systems to support economic, social and cultural development. This is discussed in section A.1.

1. *The ACDE recommends:* That the Senate Committee support the development of evidence-based policy for initial teacher education intakes, based on appropriate methodology and high quality research, within a consultative framework involving the major stakeholders – as recommended by the NSW Review of Teacher Education.

Second, education research and research training are of proven significance, yet are, respectively, inadequately funded and declining in the numbers participating. These matters are taken up in sections A. 3 and A. 4, and related matters are discussed in D.2.

2. *The ACDE recommends:* That the Senate Committee support more Education-specific national competitive grant schemes, and a higher level of expenditure on research and development by all sectors of the education industry.

3. *The ACDE recommends:* That the Senate Committee recognise the significance of the decline in participation in higher degree commencements in Education, and support initiatives that will reverse this decline so that there will be adequate numbers of well-prepared educational researchers (including teacher-researchers) in the future.

Third, there has been a very substantial decline in participation in the Education field of study by Indigenous students – a decline that is much greater than other fields of study, and is particularly great in higher degree programs where the number of commencing Indigenous students has more than halved since 1997. This is discussed in section D.1.

4. *The ACDE recommends:* That the Senate Committee support proposals that relieve the inequitable financial burden on so many Indigenous students, and take account of the educational, social and financial circumstances and needs of Indigenous students and their communities.

Fourth, there has been a very substantial decline in the participation by experienced teachers in postgraduate programs that would expand their professional understandings and capabilities. This decline is almost certainly a consequence of the greatly increased financial penalties involved in participating in courses for which there is little support, recognition or reward from school authorities. Leading into the late 1980s there was a very strong trend of increasing participation in postgraduate programs by teachers. The trend has been more than reversed. This is discussed in section D. 2.

5. *The ACDE recommends:* That the Senate Committee recognise the importance of teachers' participation in postgraduate study for the quality of education in Australian schools and other education institutions, and encourage the development of more comprehensive programs or changes in the HECS/fees regime so that teachers do not experience strong financial disincentives to participation in postgraduate continuing professional education.

Other issues considered include:

- funding levels for initial teacher education, especially the practicum and those elements supporting students' preparation for difficult and hard-to staff situations (A.2);
- the impact of differential HECS on the supply and retention of teachers in shortage specialisations (D);
- the likelihood that PELS will do little, if anything, to support participation in Education postgraduate programs (D.2);
- emerging difficulties in recruiting academic staff in Education related to the age profile of education faculties and international shortages in school teachers and other education industry professionals (E); and
- the importance of the issues of external accreditation of initial teacher education, and the value of the report of the National Standards and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education project (G).

Response to Inquiry terms of reference

(a) Adequacy of current funding arrangements

the adequacy of current funding arrangements with respect to:

- the capacity of universities to manage and serve increasing demand,
- institutional autonomy and flexibility, and
- the quality and diversity of teaching and research;

The ACDE supports the many other submissions to this inquiry that have:

- noted the generally low level of government funding of Australia's public universities by international standards, and
- called for substantial increases in government funding to meet the future Australian social, economic and cultural needs.

We have four specific concerns in this section:

First, universities do not have an adequate capacity to manage and serve increasing demand for initial teacher education graduates because there is not an adequate, agreed process for determining the magnitude and nature of such demand.

Second, there is inadequate financial support for practicum and other key aspects of initial teacher education, especially those aspects in many programs that enhance students preparation for successful teaching in hard-to-staff schools and other areas of need. As school authorities and other agencies are increasing attempts to meet the educational needs in rural and remote Australia, the financial capacity of universities to play their part is declining.

Third, educational research plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education, yet, compared with other industries and areas of society, research in education is grossly underfunded – the education industry employs 6.7 per cent of the Australian workforce, and has almost five million people participating as students in one capacity or another, yet education research is only 1.5 per cent of all research carried out in Australia by financial cost. Thus, the ACDE advocates greater financial and other support for educational research.

Fourth, the training of education researchers though participation in higher degrees has sharply declined since 1996. This reduces support for quality education over the long term, and thus should be reversed.

A.1 Initial teacher education intakes – policy and planning

There is no adequate process for policy development regarding initial teacher education intakes. Thus there is not the capacity to 'manage and serve increasing demand' because there is not the capability of assessing that demand.

The ACDE is concerned that school students, teachers, school authorities and the Australian community as a whole may be detrimentally affected by quite avoidable teacher shortages because of the lack of an appropriate national policy process.

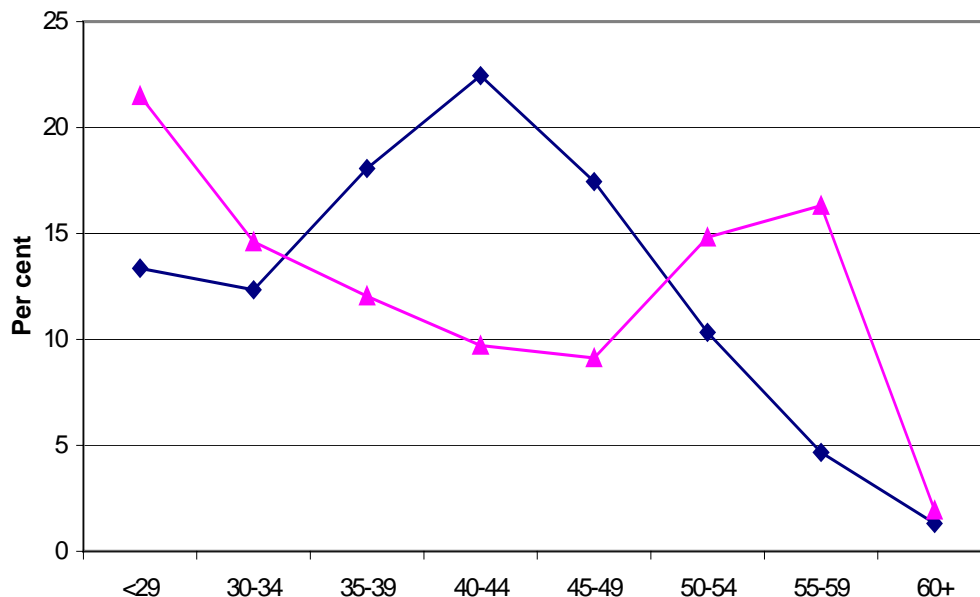
Teacher shortages are never evenly spread – their effects generally being concentrated in hard-to-staff schools where students are often already disadvantaged for many of the same reasons that make the schools unattractive to teachers and thus hard to staff. Shortages that can be damaging for student learning and the quality of teachers' professional work are frequently coped with at the school level, and central school authorities may have little awareness of them.

The ACDE has made a contribution to the process of developing good, evidence-based policy through the publication and wide distribution of *Teacher supply and demand to 2005: projections and context* (Preston 2000).

The methodology for useful projections must be appropriate, comprehensive, transparent, and use high quality data. The teacher supply and demand study released by MCEETYA in 1999 (CESCEO 1998), and which appears to provide the basis for current government policy, does not meet those criteria, whatever other valuable features it may have.

Key issues need to be addressed - such as the implications for teacher demand of the future age profiles of the teaching workforces in the different States. The importance of future age profiles is indicated by Figure 1, which graphs the age profile of the Australian teaching workforce in 1996, and projected for 2011. The implications for teacher demand are associated with the very different net separation rates for teachers in the different age ranges: very high for those under thirty, very low for those in their thirties and early forties (as the numbers leaving are balanced by those re-entering teaching), and becoming very high through the early retirement to standard retirement ages.

Figure 1: Age profile of Australian teachers, 1996 and projected for 2011



Source: 1996: ABS Census custom tables. 2006: projection by Barbara Preston, using methodology set out in Preston 2001, p. 25.

The ACDE has advocated an effective, collaborative process so that good, evidence-based policy regarding initial teacher education intake numbers can be developed.

The Report of the Review of Teacher Education, New South Wales (Ramsey 2000) took a similar position, and was supportive of the methodology in the ACDE report. The Review noted that, regarding the development of teacher supply and demand projections:

The evidence indicates that substantial work involving university vice-chancellors, advised by their deans of education, and government and nongovernment school authorities is required. This work should refine the assumptions underlying the ACDE model so that teacher supply and demand can be more accurately projected. The aim of this work should be to provide the basis for consistent planning at national and state levels. (*Executive Summary*, p. 21)

The Review recommended:

That the New South Wales Government present the case for the current Taskforce on Teacher Preparation and recruitment, established by the Council of Ministers (MCEETYA), to be replaced by a working group acting for governments, employers and universities to establish an agreed basis for the development of medium and long-term projections of national teacher supply and demand. (Recommendation 11, *Executive Summary*, p. 21)

The Review made other recommendations about teacher supply, and related matters. A taskforce is currently developing concrete proposals for the implementation of the Review.

1. *The ACDE recommends:*

That the Senate Committee support the development of evidence-based policy for initial teacher education intakes, based on appropriate methodology and high quality research, within a consultative framework involving the major stakeholders – as recommended by the NSW Review of Teacher Education.

Quality and quantity are inter-dependent

A concern with the quantitative or numerical matters of teacher supply and demand does not preclude a concern with the qualitative issues of teaching such as the professional attributes of individual teachers and the nature of their professional work, and the fine detail of the distribution or deployment of teachers with different characteristics (specialist qualifications, experience, personal or cultural characteristics). In fact, without sufficient supply it is difficult to work effectively on enhancing the quality of teachers, the quality of the teaching profession as a whole, and the quality of teaching in schools. There are many reasons for this, including:

- a tight teaching labour market makes it much more difficult for school authorities and individual schools to match individual teachers to particular positions;
- school authorities may feel they have little option but to employ unqualified, inappropriately qualified, or less than fully competent teachers, especially if a system of statutory registration does not ensure acceptable minimum standards;
- when there is a shortage of relief staff and regular teachers are overworked, school authorities are reluctant to support participation in continuing professional education and other 'quality-enhancing' activities; and individual teachers are reluctant to impose more work on their already over-worked colleagues;
- a high turnover of casual and short term replacements in permanent vacancies, and a lack of teachers with appropriate qualifications, provide a lesser quality of teaching for students;
- a high turnover of casual and short term replacements in permanent vacancies creates instability within schools and makes coherent whole-school development more difficult;
- unfilled permanent and casual relief positions creates work overload and stress for teachers, undermining the quality of their work and their job satisfaction.

This recognition of the interrelationships between the quality and quantity of teachers contrasts with the dichotomy apparent in the Ministerial media release, *The Status of Teaching: Quality not Numbers* (Kemp 2001).

Recruitment of Australian teachers to overseas positions: an increasing problem

Recruitment of Australian teachers to overseas positions appears to be becoming a serious issue. The estimate of the magnitude of the problem in Preston 2000 (p. 7) has been confirmed in the recent report of the Monash Centre for Population and Urban Research recent report for DIMA, 'Skilled Labour: Gains and Losses' (Birrell et al, 2001).

Between 1994-1996 and 1999-2000 there have been substantial increases in net outflows of resident teachers - from close to balance, to an annual net loss of around 2000 teachers (p. 12). That number of teachers is equivalent to 20 per cent of the total number of new teachers employed in Australian schools each year.

Taking account of settlers and net movements of visitors as well as residents, the net gain of teachers fell from 1817 to 824 over the period, a reduction of more than 50 per cent.

This trend is contrary to what would be expected from employment opportunities in Australia over the past decade.

At the beginning of the period there was lingering oversupply after the very large reductions in State government expenditure in Victoria and elsewhere early in the 1990s. Thus, at the time, many graduates would have been unable to find the local jobs they wanted and would have been interested in overseas positions - a 'push' out of Australia. From around 1999 local jobs have been readily available, and this 'push' factor would have diminished. Overseas recruitment agencies have been increasingly active on campuses and in the general and professional media over the past three years. Thus the trend of increasing resident movement out of Australia is likely to be largely a consequence of effective, concerted recruitment to positions overseas - a 'pull' factor.

This has qualitative implications. Those who move because they cannot get the teaching job they want in Australia are less likely to have the particular specialist skills or other attributes in high demand here. On the other hand, those who move because of competitive recruitment to overseas positions are likely to be those with the specialisations (such as maths and science teaching) or general professional and personal attributes that are in high demand internationally (including in Australia).

Thus, not only is Australia losing a relatively greater number of teachers at a time when shortages are developing here, but the specialist skills and other attributes of those moving overseas are likely to be those most in need here.

Overseas experience can be personally and professionally enriching, and should not be discouraged. But the loss to overseas positions needs to be accounted for when assessing future demand for graduates, and thus intakes into initial and specialist post-initial courses. There are also implications for the curriculum and pedagogy of courses.

A.2 Inadequate support for practicum and other elements of initial teacher education

Many aspects of initial (and post-initial) teacher education that are crucial for quality education for all school students require much higher levels of financial support than is currently available. Education faculties have cross-subsidised and done whatever else they can to maintain the quality and appropriateness of their programs so that such needs can be met. But as overall funding becomes tighter this becomes more difficult, and some programs or aspects of programs that are vital to meeting significant needs in the Australian community have been lost.

To provide an indication of the sorts of needs involved, we have reproduced below some of the recommendations of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's National Inquiry into rural and Remote Education. These recommendations arose out of the Commission's very extensive consultations with school communities throughout rural and remote Australia, school authorities, and other stakeholders:

Recommendation 5.9a: All teacher training institutions should require undergraduates to study a module on teaching in rural and remote communities, offer all students an option to undertake a fully-funded practical placement (teaching experience) in a rural or remote school and assist rural and remote communities in the direct recruitment of new graduates for their schools.

Recommendation 5.9b: The Commonwealth should ensure adequate funding to all institutions to enable them to offer practical rural and remote teaching experience placements.

Recommendation 5.9c: All teacher training institutions should require undergraduates to study a module on the rights and needs of students with special needs, including standardised, formal and informal assessment, curriculum design, instruction and classroom management strategies for teaching students with diverse educational needs with minimal extra support.

Recommendation 5.9d: All teacher training institutions should require undergraduates to study a module on cross-cultural teaching with a particular emphasis on teaching Indigenous students and teaching in Indigenous communities. More advanced Indigenous education subjects should also be available as electives.

Recommendation 5.10: All education providers should develop rural and remote school recruitment strategies at teacher training institutions and provide information, resources and support for rural and remote recruits prior to the commencement of the position. These programs should be developed and implemented in consultation with local school community partnerships. (HREOC 2000, pp. 44-45)

The ACDE broadly supports these recommendations, but notes that some require substantial financial resources - resources that universities currently have little capacity to provide. Parallel examples can be provided in other areas of particular need, such as the preparation of some shortage specialist teachers, and adequate preparation for many hard-to-staff and demanding urban as well as rural situations.

A.3 Educational research

The recently released, 671 page report, *The Impact of Educational Research* (DETYA 2000), documents the extent and value of educational research in Australia, and the important role that research plays in improving the quality of education.

Even so, funding for educational research is not sufficient, and it is well below the standard across all Australian industries or fields of research (or 'socio-economic objectives').

Around 80 per cent of funds for Education research in Australian universities comes from 'general university funds' (GUF), rather than national competitive grants, other Commonwealth sources, other levels of government, business enterprises or other sources. Across all fields ('socio-economic objectives'), 64 per cent of funds come from GUF (ABS 2000, *Research and Experimental Development: Higher Education Organisations 1998*, Cat. No. 8111.0, Table 5, page 11). There are several reasons for this. First, though Education generally does relatively well in obtaining funds from the Australian Research Council, there are not the Education-specific national competitive grants (NCG) schemes that are available in fields associated with, for example, primary production and health (in addition to funds from the National Health and Medical Research Council). Second, the 'education industry' has a relatively low commitment to research and development, especially since the down-sizing of research capacity within government school authorities (State Education Departments) around the 1980s.

While Education research accounts for 4.2 per cent of all research (by dollar value) in universities, it is only 1.5 per cent of the value of research carried out by all sectors (governments, business, private non-profit, as well as universities) (ABS 2000, *Research and Experimental Development: All Sector Summary Australia 1998-99*, Cat. No. 8112.0, Table 6, page 19). Education research is only 1.5 per cent of all research carried out in Australia, yet the education industry employs 6.7 of the Australian workforce, and up to around five million individuals participate as students – which is an indicator of the relative size of the industry in Australia. The quality of education benefits from good educational research, just as the quality and productiveness of other industries and areas of Australian society benefit from good research. This indicates that, for the education industry to have an equitable share of all

Australian research effort, funding for education research should be increased more than four-fold.

For Education as a whole (schools, VET, early childhood, adult and community, and universities) to be well served by research and development, there should be:

- more Education-specific national competitive grant schemes (current and new schemes within DETYA managed as NCG schemes, and new national schemes – for example, coordinating research priorities of school authorities via MCEETYA or a new structure)
- a higher level of expenditure on research and development by all sectors of the education industry.

2. The ACDE recommends:

That the Senate Committee support more Education-specific national competitive grant schemes, and a higher level of expenditure on research and development by all sectors of the education industry.

A.4 Research training

High quality research requires high quality researchers. The ACDE is very concerned with the sharp decline between 1997 and 2000 in the number of students commencing research higher degrees in Education. Table 1 shows the decline in Education has been 12 per cent, while across all fields of study there has been a slight increase of 2 per cent. Because those doing Education have not historically undertaken honours courses as a route to research higher degrees, coursework programs are often an important part of research training in Education (as well as crucial continuing professional education for teachers (see section D.2 below). Commencements in coursework higher degrees have fallen 9 per cent in Education since 1997, while across all fields of study commencements increased by 31 per cent. Overall, higher degree commencements in Education have fallen by 10 per cent, while they have increased by 22 per cent across all fields of study.

Developments in higher degree administration and financial support appear not to be consistent with the needs and circumstances of many of those who have historically undertaken higher degrees in education, especially experienced teachers undertaking the courses on a part time basis. However, the situation for Education compared with other fields of study appears to have deteriorated a little less in the 1999-2000 period.

3. The ACDE recommends:

That the Senate Committee recognise the significance of the decline in participation in higher degree commencements in Education, and support initiatives that will reverse this decline so that there will be adequate numbers of well-prepared educational researchers (including teacher-researchers) in the future.

Table 1: Commencing higher degree students, Education and all fields of study, 1997, 1999 and 2000

	Doctorate - research	Masters - research	Total research higher degrees	Doctorate - coursewk	Masters - coursewk	Total coursewk higher degrees	TOTAL higher degrees
1997							
Education	633	500	1 133	56	3 877	3 933	5 066
All fields	6 382	4 172	10 554	216	25 052	25 268	35822
Education as % of all fields	9.9%	12.0%	10.7%	25.9%	15.5%	15.6%	14.1%
1999							
Education	655	377	1 032	45	3 412	3 457	4 489
All fields	7 170	3 647	10 817	233	29 574	29 807	40 624
Education as % of all fields	9.1%	10.3%	9.5%	19.3%	11.5%	11.6%	11.1%
2000							
Education	676	322	998	19	3 558	3 577	4 575
All fields	7 215	3 551	10 766	270	32 760	33 030	43 796
Education as % of all fields	9.4%	9.2%	9.3%	7.0%	10.9	10.8%	10.4%
Change 1997 to 2000							
Education	+6.8%	-35.6%	-11.9%	-98.2%	-8.2%	-9.1%	-9.7%
All fields	+13.1%	-14.9%	+2.0%	+25.0%	30.8%	+30.7%	+22.3
Change 1999 to 2000							
Education	+3.2%	-14.6%	-3.3%	-57.8%	+4.3	+3.5%	+1.9
All fields	+0.6%	-2.6%	-0.5%	+15.9%	+10.8	+10.8%	+7.4%

Source: DETYA Higher education student statistics

(b) Effect of increasing reliance on private funding and market behaviour

the effect of increasing reliance on private funding and market behaviour on the sector's ability to meet Australia's education, training and research needs, including its effect on:

- the quality and diversity of education,
- the production of sufficient numbers of appropriately-qualified graduates to meet industry demand,
- the adequacy of campus infrastructure and resources,
- the maintenance and extension of Australia's long-term capacity in both basic and applied research across the diversity of fields of knowledge, and

- the operations and effect of universities' commercialised research and development structures;

The introduction of user pays into postgraduate education in the form of fees and undergraduate (initial) in the form of increased HECS levels is discussed in the context of equality of opportunity to participate in higher education. The ACDE is particularly concerned with the ultimate effects on those who benefit from the professional work and research of Education students after graduation. Schools and communities with financial resources and strength in the market for teachers and the work of researchers (and other consultants) may not feel the detrimental effects of the expansion of user pays. But those systems and schools serving lower income communities and disadvantaged students, rural and remote and Indigenous communities, may not get the benefit from Australia's higher education system to which they are entitled.

(d) Equality of opportunity to participate in higher education

the equality of opportunity to participate in higher education, including:

- the levels of access among social groups under-represented in higher education,
- the effects of the introduction of differential Higher Education Contribution Schemes and other fees and charges and changes in funding provision on the affordability and accessibility of higher education,
- the adequacy of current student income support measures, and
- the growth rates in participation by level of course and field of study relative to comparable nations;

The ACDE has three major concerns relating to access and participation. We will provide detail regarding the first and second.

The first is the sharp decline in participation by Indigenous students in Education. Again, the implications are wider than access for individuals – important as that is. Fewer indigenous teachers entering the teaching workforce, fewer Indigenous teachers with advanced professional skills, and fewer Indigenous educational researchers, will result in lesser quality teaching and education provision for Indigenous students and communities, and for all Australians.

The second is the declining participation by experienced teachers in postgraduate coursework programs which appears to be a result of the increasing real financial burden of participation. This has serious implication for the future quality of teaching throughout Australia, as well as for access by individuals to study that would enhance their personal satisfaction in the quality of their professional work.

The third is the impact of differential HECS on:

- participation in initial teacher education graduate programs (such as Graduate Diplomas in Education) of students who have undertaken substantial studies in science, mathematics, and other fields incurring larger HECS burdens, and
- the retention in the teaching profession of teachers who have recently undertaken such studies, and thus have higher HECS burdens than their colleagues who have studied in different fields.

The ACDE does not have access to quality data on these latter matters. However, in the context of increasing shortages of mathematics and science teachers there appears to be a certain contradiction in school authorities and the Commonwealth providing ad hoc incentives and support for a limited number of such teachers in the context of such comprehensive disincentives.

D.1 Indigenous students' participation in Education

The ACDE is very concerned by the sharp decline in participation by Indigenous students in the Education field of study. The general decline in participation in universities by Indigenous students has received national publicity. However, the decline in Education has been much greater.

DETYA student statistics, released in May, show a very dramatic drop in Indigenous student commencements in Education, especially in higher degrees, where they have more than halved between 1997 and 2000.

Table 2: Commencing Indigenous students, Education and All Fields, All Levels and Higher Degrees, 1997 and 2000

	1997	2000	Change – no.	Change - %
Education, all levels of course	1,224	941	- 283	-23%
All fields, all levels of course	4,028	3,510	- 518	-15%
Education, higher degrees	69	34	- 35	-51%
All fields, higher degrees	216	190	- 26	-12%

Source: DETYA Higher education student statistics

The decline in Education accounted for more than half the total decline at all course levels, and accounted for *more than the total* decline in Indigenous students commencing higher degrees. In other words, in all fields of study other than Education, there was overall a small increase in the number of Indigenous students commencing higher degrees.

ACDE members with responsibilities for programs with large Indigenous student enrolments have reported that student financing has been the major factor. There are several elements to this:

First, the HECS burden, under the current system, becomes intolerably heavy for many Indigenous students. This is because many Indigenous students are not able to enter university fully prepared, and have to take bridging or preparation courses, or repeat units, accumulating HECS liabilities as they do so. They are not fully prepared because of the inadequacy of schooling (especially in remote areas of the Northern Territory), and for many or them English is not their first (or second) language. These students accumulate HECS liabilities for the equivalent of secondary school level university preparation, which is available free for others. In addition, many students with community and family responsibilities are unable to complete units within standard time, but such responsibilities fall outside current guidelines for HECS remission. We suggest basing HECS liability on qualifications gained (rather than units enrolled in), or other changes to HECS that will lead to a more fairly distributed HECS burden.

Second, the changes to ABSTUDY appear to have had a substantial effect on participation, especially by mature age students with personal and community commitments. These are the people that the elements of ABSTUDY that were eliminated or reduced after 1997 were tailored to assist, so reduction in their participation should not be surprising. However, it is likely to seriously affect the quality of schooling in many remote Indigenous communities as members of those communities have very reduced opportunities for initial teacher education, and as more general teacher shortages develop fewer teachers from outside those communities will be available for teaching positions at schools in the communities.

The ACDE's concern is not just with access by Indigenous individuals to university education, but with the consequences for Indigenous communities and Australia as a whole.

The substantial reductions in the number of future Indigenous graduates of courses of professional education in teaching, education research, and related fields will surely be very detrimental to the quality of education in Indigenous communities, and for all students in Indigenous studies (broadly defined). Similarly, the reductions in the amount of research carried out by the much smaller number of Indigenous higher degree students will affect developments in schooling and other aspects of the education – again, especially for Indigenous communities and individuals.

Within education faculties there have been many positive, innovative programs to meet the needs of Indigenous students and their communities. Many have been able to maintain or increase their Indigenous enrolments. However, if there had not been the financial and other disincentives now operating against Indigenous participation many of the programs would now be much stronger.

4. *The ACDE recommends:*

That the Senate Committee support proposals that relieve the inequitable financial burden on so many Indigenous students, and take account of the educational, social and financial circumstances and needs of Indigenous students and their communities.

D.2 Continuing professional education for teachers: the impact of HECS, fees and PELS

Since the introduction of a general fees regime for postgraduate studies there has been a substantial decline in the participation of practicing teachers in post-initial graduate diplomas and other postgraduate coursework programs that have played a substantial role for decades in developing advanced competencies for high quality classroom practice. Exact figures are not available because of the misclassification of some programs, but between 1996 and 2000 commencements in post initial graduate diplomas appear to have fallen by more than half (from 1810 to 821 in the ‘Grad. (Post) Dip – extension area’ category), and, overall postgraduate, post-initial commencements have fallen by 17 per cent from 8123 to 6742.

Teachers generally receive little if any financial or other recognition for the substantial contribution they made to their own professional development through participation in post-initial postgraduate courses. When HECS was introduced the potential impact on participation in such courses was recognised through the ‘HECS Postgraduate Scheme for Teachers’, which exempted between 3,000 and 4,000 teachers a year from HECS liability in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This scheme was terminated when the four year National Professional Development Program was introduced in the early 1990s. It provided some financial support for teachers undertaking postgraduate study (especially in graduate certificates). Some recent programs have also provided some financial relief from fees or HECS for a limited number of teachers. Fees were progressively introduced for postgraduate coursework courses undertaken by teachers from 1997.

The impact of these developments can be seen in Table 3. Between 1991 and 2000 Education students dropped from 20 per cent to 11 per cent of commencing coursework masters students. Since 1995 the number of Education students fell by 7 per cent, while the total number of commencing students in all fields of study increased by 60 per cent. The historically large numbers of students commencing postgraduate courses in Education indicates the very high commitment that teachers have had to enhancing their professional skills. They have generally done so in their own time, with little if any time off for study, and no financial return from employers. Their reward has been in their satisfaction with their new

professional understandings and improved teaching. It is thus not surprising that the financial penalty of fees (and even HECS) can have a substantial impact on teachers' participation in postgraduate study.

Table 3. Commencing enrolments in coursework masters programs, Education and All Fields of Study, 1991, 1995 and 2000

	1991	1995	2000	Change 1991 - 1995	Change 1995 - 2000
Education	2 597	3 810	3 558	+ 46.7%	- 6.6%
All Fields of Study	12 786	20 491	32 760	+ 60.3%	+ 59.9%
Education as a proportion of All Fields of Study	20.3%	18.6%	10.9%		

Source: DETYA Selected higher education student statistics

PELS of limited value in Education

It appears that the new PELS postgraduate loans scheme will be of little benefit to practicing teachers undertaking postgraduate study. We thus are sceptical of the Minister's February 2001 statement that 'Teachers may also take advantage of the new income contingent loans scheme for postgraduates to upgrade their skills' (Kemp 2001). This is because PELS repayments (like HECS repayments) will not be tax deductible. On the other hand, up front payment of fees is tax deductible. Thus, teachers will usually be much better off paying the fees up front, taking advantage of tax deductibility, and taking out a short term standard bank loan if necessary. PELS appears designed to benefit students who are (a) undertaking high fee postgraduate courses, (b) whose income is currently low so they will not benefit greatly from any tax deductibility - perhaps because they are early in their career, or not working full time while studying, and (c) who will receive a high financial return for undertaking the course. The student most likely to benefit from PELS is thus a young business executive undertaking a high fee MBA. Experienced teachers undertaking coursework masters and specialist graduate diplomas generally do not have a temporary cash flow problem when it comes to paying the fees of postgraduate courses. However, they can expect little, if any, financial return for undertaking the course. This is especially the case for teachers seeking to advance (or 'upgrade') their *classroom* teaching skills, rather than prepare for promotion out of the classroom.

There must be sustainable solutions, other than PELS, for assisting the participation in postgraduate courses of experienced teachers and others in the education industry. Short term programs of the Commonwealth and some school authorities, directed to specific areas of policy interest, may be valuable, but are no substitute for generally improving access so that members of the teaching profession can make their own judgements about how their professional needs can best be met.

5. The ACDE recommends:

That the Senate Committee recognise the importance of teachers' participation in postgraduate study for the quality of education in Australian schools and other education institutions, and encourage the development of more comprehensive programs or changes in the HECS/fees regime so that teachers do not experience strong financial disincentives to participation in postgraduate continuing professional education.

Professional development for future age cohorts of teachers

The changing age profiles of the teaching workforce over the coming decade, indicated in Figure 1, entail some very different and specific needs for continuing professional education, much of which would be best met by sustained postgraduate study (linked closely to teachers' current and future work). Some of those needs include:

- integration of beginning teachers (during their first five years, say) into the teaching workforce when they are following a very small cohort and thus have relatively few role models;
- developing formal and informal leadership capabilities and commitments from teachers in the small cohort currently in their thirties, and related 'succession-planning' within schools, systems and professional associations;
- ensuring continuing enthusiasm and up-to-date skills of teachers in the large cohort moving into the fifties age range;
- ensuring a professionally and personally vibrant culture and positive social relations within the teaching profession and individual schools with a 'bifurcated' age profile (many teachers under thirty or over fifty, and few in between). (Preston 2001b)

(e) Factors affecting the ability of Australian public universities to attract and retain staff

the factors affecting the ability of Australian public universities to attract and retain staff in the context of competitive local and global markets and the intellectual culture of universities;

Education faculties have issues in common with other areas in universities in attracting and retaining quality staff – problems of workloads, inadequate resource support, and other aspects of working conditions, and salary levels. In addition, education faculties have particular problems related to:

- age profiles within Education faculties because of the very high rate of recruitment around the 1970s, and very low recruitment from the 1980s;
- the international shortages of teachers and other education industry professionals, especially the shortages in the cohorts now in their thirties and early forties (Figure 1) who provide a limited pool from which school (etc) systems will be able to draw their leaders over the coming decade, and thus younger teachers will have excellent career prospects outside university faculties of Education;
- the decline in the numbers of commencing higher degree students in Education (see section A.4).

These problems are likely to make it increasingly difficult for Education faculties to make high quality recruits.

(f) The capacity of public universities to contribute to economic growth

the capacity of public universities to contribute to economic growth:

- in communities and regions,
- as an export industry, and
- through research and development, both via the immediate economic contribution of universities and through sustaining national research capacity in the longer term;

A number of matters raised in other sections of this submission (such as those concerning the provision of teachers and research support for rural and remote areas, educational research and research training) are relevant to these terms of reference. Economic, cultural and social

development are underpinned by quality teaching, and evidence-based education policies. The initial and continuing education of teachers and other professionals in education, and high quality educational research, provide the basic infrastructure for quality teaching and evidence-based policies in education. Without such basic infrastructure – or foundation – longer term economic growth, and cultural and social development, are not sustainable.

(g) The regulation of the higher education in the global environment

the regulation of the higher education sector in the global environment, including:

- accreditation regimes and quality assurance,
- external mechanisms to undertake ongoing review of the capacity of the sector to meet Australia's education, training, research, social and economic needs, and
- university governance reporting requirements, structures and practices

Through 1997 and 1998 the ACDE oversaw the National Standards and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education project. The report of that project, *Preparing a Profession* (Adey 1998), incorporated a comprehensive set of national standards and guidelines for initial teacher education (pp. 5-28), a set of principles for the external accreditation of initial teacher education (pp. 37-48), and discussion of issues and options concerning such accreditation (especially pp.48-53).

The ACDE believes that the report continues to provide strategically appropriate guidance for the development of teacher education accreditation, and commends the report to the Senate Committee.

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