

Feedback from school communities

- 2.1 Stakeholders from government schools, advocates for educationally disadvantaged students and their families, unions, parents groups, young people and teacher-educators expressed strong support for the principles underlying the Bill. However, concerns were expressed, primarily by the non-government school sector, about future funding arrangements and the retention of school autonomy.¹
- 2.2 The Bill is broad in its scope and is a preliminary legislative step in bringing about reform to Australia's system of education. A recurring theme in feedback from a broad range of school communities was that the Bill lacked detail.² Much of the feedback from school communities raised issues beyond the current contents of the Bill and thus beyond the scope of this inquiry.
- 2.3 This chapter focuses on feedback from school communities that specifically relates to the text of the Bill and not the broader issues surrounding education. The specific concerns raised refer to three distinct areas of the Bill.
- 2.4 The first area of concern related to the goals of education reform as provided in the objectives of the Bill at clause 3. Second, school communities raised concerns about the content and method of developing

1 Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ), *Submission 6*, p. 2; Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA), *Submission 17*, p. 12; Australian Parents Council (APC), *Submission 22*, p. 2; Independent Schools Victoria (ISV), *Submission 41*, p. 4; Australian Special Education Principals Association (ASEPA), *Submission 48*, p. 4.

2 Public Policy Institute (PPI), *Submission 4*; ISQ, *Submission 6*, p. 2; ISCA, *Submission 17*, p. 12; Australian Education Union (AEU), *Submission 20*, p. 13; Australian College of Educators, (ACE) *Submission 21*, p. 2; APC, *Submission 22*, p. 2; ISV, *Submission 41*, p. 4; ASEPA, *Submission 48*, p. 4; Mr Peter Levett, Chief Executive Officer, P&Cs Qld, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 19 February 2013, p. 1.

the National Plan for School Improvement (the National Plan). Third, school communities expressed opinions about the system of funding foreshadowed under the Bill. The three areas are addressed below.

Future of education reform and objectives of the Bill

2.5 Professor Richard Teese, Director at the Centre for Research on Education Systems, reflected the position of many stakeholders:

I see the bill as a big opportunity for us to go forward. The chief virtues of the bill are the flexible nature of the funding model and its adaptability to local circumstances, because we must ensure that wherever a school is found in Australia it is operating at the highest possible standard and is well provided for in terms of its physical stock, its staffing, its curriculum and its accessibility. I think the model does that. It is not a one size fits all. In fact, it is actually the opposite. It is actually an approach to funding that says, 'We know you are different, so here is the way we adjust for that difference' It is not going to solve everything, but it is a very significant move. ... [It] is fundamental that we pass this bill, because there are other very serious tasks that lie in front of us...³

2.6 School communities offered feedback on the proposed future direction of education reform specifically in relation to the preamble, as well as the objectives of the Bill.

Preamble

2.7 Some stakeholders called for minor amendments to the preamble of the Bill. Proposed amendments included:

- reference to the Melbourne Declaration;
- specific reference to a variety of international convention;, and
- recognising the role of parents.

Melbourne Declaration of 2008

2.8 Some stakeholders called for the Bill to be amended to better reflect, or directly incorporate the educational outcomes captured by the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (the Melbourne Declaration). In 2008, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs agreed to the Melbourne Declaration which set

3 Professor Richard Teese, Director, Centre for Research on Education Systems at the University of Melbourne, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, pp. 20-22.

out a range of skills, knowledge and capabilities considered a priority for the development of Australian students, including:

- becoming successful learners: literacy and numeracy, technology skills, logical thinking, problem solving skills, collaboration and communication;
- becoming confident and creative individuals: innovation, optimism, entrepreneurship and creativity; and
- becoming active and informed citizens: ethical integrity, civics and citizenship.⁴

2.9 Organisations supporting greater inclusion of the Declaration in the Preamble argued that the Melbourne Declaration provides a much broader and more holistic perspective on the goal of education. These stakeholders included:

- Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA);⁵
- The Smith Family;⁶
- Steiner Education Australia;⁷
- Foundation for Young Australians;⁸ and
- Independent Education Union;⁹

2.10 An alternative recommendation made by other stakeholders suggested the inclusion of the Melbourne Declaration in the text of the Bill at clause 3.¹⁰

Committee comment

2.11 Reference to the Melbourne Declaration could alleviate some of the concerns in school communities. As considered below, some stakeholders expressed concern about the Bill's stated goal of Australia becoming one of the top five countries by 2025, noting that the focus on literacy, numeracy and science within these international testing arrangements could forsake other important areas of the curriculum.¹¹

4 Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, 2008.

5 Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA), *Submission 11*, p. 1; Mr Michael Hall, Board Director, ASPA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, p. 1.

6 The Smith Family, *Submission 25*, p. 2;

7 Steiner Education Australia (SEA), *Submission 34*, p. 4.

8 FYA, *Submission 36*, p. 9.

9 Independent Education Union (IEU), *Submission 49*, p. 2.

10 Christian Schools Australia (CSA), *Submission 19*, p. 7; National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), *Submission 30*, p. 2; ASPEA, *Submission 48*, p. 2.

11 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 2; ISQ, *Submission 6*, p. 5; Dr Greg Thompson, *Submission 16*, p. 5; ACE, *Submission 21*, pp. 4-5; P&Cs Qld, *Submission 31*, p. 1; FYA, *Submission 36*, p. 6; P&Cs NSW, *Submission 37*, p. 2.

- 2.12 The breadth of these goals for education reflects the expanding understanding internationally of what students require in the 21st century.
- 2.13 Specific reference to the Melbourne Declaration, and its recognition of the importance of a broader range of skills, knowledge and capabilities, may alleviate some of these community concerns.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Preamble of the Australian Education Bill 2012 be amended to include the educational outcomes as agreed in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians 2008.

International conventions

- 2.14 Some stakeholders suggested that the Preamble be amended to make specific reference to relevant international conventions, for example:
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;¹²
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child;¹³ and
 - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.¹⁴
- 2.15 In accordance with the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*, the Bill's Explanatory Memorandum included a statement of compatibility with human rights. In this statement, the following international agreements are specifically referred to:
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child;
 - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

12 CSA, *Submission 19*, p. 6.

13 The Smith Family, *Submission 25*, p. 2.

14 Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO), *Submission 5*, p. 3, 6.

Committee comment

- 2.16 The legal status of a Preamble, is similar to that of Explanatory Memorandum: no legal rights are created, and both documents are used in the interpretation of the legislation in an Australian court.¹⁵
- 2.17 Calls for reference to certain international conventions within the Preamble of the Bill would add no additional force to the rights and obligations specified in the multilateral conventions referred to in the Bill's Explanatory Memorandum.
- 2.18 The Statement of Compatibility with Human Rights attached to the Bill, and as required under the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*, is sufficient in this regard.

Role of parents

- 2.19 A number of organisations raised concerns that the role of parents was not specifically acknowledged in the Bill.¹⁶ For example, the Australian Parents Council (APC) stated:

The lack of acknowledgement of the parent engagement imperative for school reform in the Australian Education Bill is therefore very disappointing. Simply lumping parents in with the 'broader community' (Preamble, Section 1, Lines 23-25) and absorbing parents into the category of 'other partners' (Preamble, Section 1, Line 28) is grossly insufficient.¹⁷

- 2.20 Mrs Caz Bosh, President of the APC elaborated on the central role of parents:

parents are different from the community in that they have a much more central role; they have a partnership role. There is no wording in that bill as it stands that recognises the special place of parents. The way I think about it is as a concentric circle. When we talk about having students at the centre – this bill purports to put students' needs at the centre – you would have students at the centre, parents in the next layer, schools in the one after that, and community in the one after that.¹⁸

- 2.21 APC therefore recommended the following amendment to the Preamble (proposed amended text underlined):

¹⁵ *Acts Interpretation Act 1901*, s 15AB.

¹⁶ ISQ, *Submission 6*, p. 3; APC, *Submission 22*, p. 3; P&Cs Qld, *Submission 31*, p. 2; South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs, (SA-ASPC), *Submission 33*, p. 3;

¹⁷ APC, *Submission 22*, p. 3.

¹⁸ Mrs Caz Bosch, President, APC, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, p. 1.

It is essential that Australian schooling be of a high quality, be highly equitable and work in partnership with families and communities in order to create a highly skilled and successful workforce, strengthen the economy and increase productivity, leading to greater prosperity for all.

... the Australian Government will recognise the role of the Governments of the States and Territories, non-government education authorities, parents, other partners and schools in delivering school education, and work with them to support and lift the performance of schools and school students.¹⁹

Committee comment

- 2.22 Parents play a vital role in achieving educational outcomes, and are important partners in Australian schools. The Preamble should be amended to acknowledge this partnership.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Australian Education Bill be amended to give specific reference to parents in the Preamble of the Bill in recognition of the integral role parents play in the attainment of excellent educational outcomes for all Australian students.

Objectives of Bill

- 2.23 School communities provided significant feedback on the goals of high quality and high equity in Australian education as well as becoming one of the top five countries in reading, mathematics and science by 2025.

A 'highly equitable' education system

- 2.24 The Bill states a key goal for reform is to make Australian schooling 'highly equitable'. The Australian Council of State School Organisations, the peak national body for the parents of children at government schools commented:

The Australian Education Bill will be the test of Australia's resolve on equity. ... We have a unique opportunity this year to make a difference, particularly to the futures of low-income and other disadvantaged students, to set a path to a fairer society and to boost economic prosperity.

¹⁹ APC, *Submission 22*, p. 3.

Regardless of whether you are a parent of a public school student or a private school student, the inequities of the Australian education system are now clearly visible, not only in the outcomes of the students but in the resourcing provided to their respective systems. An individual need only drive through their own neighbourhood in order to observe the differences in physical resources such as ground maintenance, age and condition of buildings, sporting fields, libraries, technologies and so on.²⁰

- 2.25 Some stakeholders called for the inclusion of a definition of ‘highly equitable’ within the Bill²¹ and recommended the definition as provided by the Gonski Review.²² The Gonski Review’s definition stated:

equity in education [is] ensuring that differences in educational outcomes are not the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possession.²³

- 2.26 The Australian College of Educators argued that addressing inequity is ‘so vital that it deserves a section of the Bill to itself’.²⁴

Committee comment

- 2.27 Clause 3(b) sets the first objective of Australian schooling to provide an excellent education for school students and then provides that this standard be available on a highly equitable basis. The Bill provides for a satisfactory presentation of the objectives of Australian schooling in its current form.
- 2.28 The term ‘highly equitable’ should be defined in the Bill with reference to the definition used by the Gonski Review, namely:
- equity in education [is] ensuring that differences in educational outcomes are not the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possession.²⁵

20 Mr Peter Garrigan, President, ACSSO, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, p. 27.

21 ASPA, *Submission 11*, p. 1; ACE, *Submission 21*, p. 2; P&Cs Qld, *Submission 31*, p. 2; FYA, *Submission 36*, p. 4; P&Cs NSW, *Submission 37*, p. 6; NDSIRG, *Submission 43*, p. 7; ASEPA, *Submission 48*, p. 1.

22 FYA, *Submission 36*, p. 11; ASEPA, *Submission 48*, p. 1; Mr Levett, P&Cs Qld, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 19 February 2013, p. 2; ACE, *Submission 21*, p. 2.

23 Review of Funding for Schooling Expert Panel (Expert Panel), *Review of funding for schooling: final report*, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), Canberra, December 2011, p. 105.

24 ACE, *Submission 21*, p. 2.

25 Expert Panel, *Review of funding for schooling: final report*, DEEWR, Canberra, December 2011, p. 105.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends the following definition of 'highly equitable' be inserted into clause 4 of the Australian Education Bill:

highly equitable means differences in educational outcomes are not the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possession.

An 'excellent education' and the top five by 2025 goal

- 2.29 Some stakeholders expressed concerns about the Bill's stated goal of Australia becoming one of the top five countries by 2025, commenting that this goal might constrict achievement in other areas of the curriculum.²⁶ For example, the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) was concerned that the goal privileges reading, mathematics and science over other subjects that it argues are equally important such as those that develop a student's creativity such as the visual arts, music and drama.²⁷
- 2.30 APPA also cautioned about pursuing the 2025 goal:
- This goal will focus Australia's attention on aspects of curriculum which may well not be viewed as important by international testing authorities in 2025.²⁸
- 2.31 In recent years the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has considered the merits of a broader knowledge base and the importance of skills such as creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration; and character related traits in both moral and performance domains.²⁹
- 2.32 This concern also exists among many young Australians. The Foundation of Young Australians (FYA) recently conducted a study of students aged 13 to 18 and found that students believed their education is not preparing them for their future.³⁰ The study found that students also believe that education is too focussed on exam results, without demonstrating the relevance of what they learn.³¹

26 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 2; ISQ, *Submission 6*, p. 5; Dr Thompson, *Submission 16*, p. 5; ACE, *Submission 21*, pp. 4-5; P&Cs Qld, *Submission 31*, p. 1; FYA, *Submission 36*, p. 6; P&Cs NSW, *Submission 37*, p. 2.

27 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

28 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

29 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

30 FYA, *Submission 36*, p. 6.

31 FYA, *Submission 36*, p. 6.

- 2.33 Consequently, FYA is concerned that the focus on reading, mathematics and science would not prepare students for the 21st century environment:

Given the broad range of skills recognised elsewhere in education policy, this goal provides a remarkably narrow concept of an ‘excellent’ education. It also ignores the global movement towards the use of a broader range of indicators to measure educational success.³²

- 2.34 The Australian College of Educators also commented on the 2025 goal:

A goal for education reform should not be based on some form of international ranking but on what constitutes a quality education for all Australians if we are to continue to be an open, democratic and informed society and to earn our living in a competitive world.³³

- 2.35 P&C Federation NSW noted:

Whilst a government has a right to be global in their vision the prescriptive ambition identified in this objective seems contrary to the broad language in the rest of the Bill. The subjective nature of “excellence” means that Australian schooling may indeed realise object 3(b)(i&ii) [equity and excellence] without ever realising object 3(b)(iii) [the 2025 goal].³⁴

- 2.36 DEEWR responded to these concerns:

There is no way around the fact that literacy and numeracy are the fundamental basics for any student in a school so, while I can appreciate feedback that says there is more to education than just reading and writing ... reading, mathematics and science are fundamental building blocks for all children ...

We know you can learn reading and writing and science through things like art. We know you can learn it through things like civics and citizenship, or citizenship education, and so we will still be encouraging that through the national curriculum. But, to give us a benchmark or give us milestones in terms of improving our literacy and numeracy, we think this is fundamentally, as I said, the building block for what all students need to be successful.³⁵

32 FYA, *Submission 36*, p. 10.

33 ACE, *Submission 21*, p. 10.

34 P&Cs NSW, *Submission 37*, p. 6.

35 Mr Tony Cook, Associate Secretary, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, pp. 9-10.

Committee comment

- 2.37 The Committee acknowledges and supports the 2025 goals focus on reading, science and mathematics. However, it is important to note the significant degree of community concern regarding the need to retain broader understandings of the goals of education.
- 2.38 The Recommendation to incorporate the holistic goals articulated in the Melbourne Declaration into the Bill is a response to this concern. This action impels us to the view that, in addition to vital numeracy and literacy skill development and testing, there be a range of evidence seeking instruments, located or developed to ensure that the broader and holistic Education Goals for Young Australians 2008, are also assessed and responded on in transparent and an easily accessible forms that contain meaningful data.
- 2.39 This meets parent, community and professional expectations and concerns raised in the course of the inquiry.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends in order to meet professional, parent and community concerns that in addition to vital numeracy and literacy skill development, testing and reporting that there be a range of evidence seeking instruments located or developed to ensure that the broader, holistic Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians 2008 are also assessed and reported on in transparent and easily accessible forms that contain meaningful data.

The National Plan for School Improvement

- 2.40 The Gonski Review recommended the development of a national plan with five reform directions as being the greatest priorities for reform.³⁶ The five reform directions to be included in the National Plan are:
- quality teaching;
 - quality learning;

36 APPA, *Submission 3*; AFDO, *Submission 5*; Montessori Australia, *Submission 10*, p. 3; Association of Heads of Independents Schools of Australia (AHISA), *Submission 14*, p. 6; The Smith Family, *Submission 25*, p. 11; Catholic Schools Office (Diocese of Broken Bay), *Submission 26*, p. 5; P&Cs Qld, *Submission 31*, p. 1; Australian Professional Teachers Association (APTA), *Submission 42*, p. 4; Department of Education and Child Development of South Australia, *Submission 45*, p. 3; Mr Hall, ASPA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, p. 1;

- empowered school leadership;
- transparency and accountability; and
- meeting student need.³⁷

2.41 The South Australian Department for Education and Child Development endorsed the top five reform priorities as specified in the Bill:

These reform directions are consistent with the requirements for quality education that our own experience backed by international evidence shows us are essential for the success of our children and young people as individuals, citizens and contributors to the economy.³⁸

2.42 DEEWR advised of the support of these reform directions in the Council of Australian Governments (COAG):

Those five reform elements have not been disagreed or argued against by anyone. They were noted by COAG. And so there really is no disagreement anywhere that those five areas are areas that are not important.³⁹

Quality teaching and quality learning

2.43 ‘Quality teaching’ and ‘quality learning’ are two distinct reform directions under the Bill. Stakeholders considered these reform directions as complementary measures – there is a clear nexus between teaching and learning.

2.44 Reaching the goal of quality learning relies on teachers who have well-grounded confidence and sound professional judgement in order to make well-informed decisions about how to tailor teaching to their students on an individual and collective level.

2.45 Dr Nicole Mockler, a teacher educator, commented on what ‘quality teaching’ should look like:

The provision of teaching of a high quality to all students is not merely a question of skill acquisition for teachers. Good teaching is highly contextual and responsive to local needs, and based upon the exercise of well-honed and finely tuned professional judgement on the part of teachers. The development of teacher professional judgement and of teachers who are confident in their

37 Australian Education Bill 2012, clause 7.

38 Department of Education and Child Development of South Australia, *Submission 45*, p. 8.

39 Mr Cook, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 15 February 2013, p. 13.

own judgement needs to be at the centre of professional learning endeavours.⁴⁰

Quality teaching is at least as much about teachers' dispositions and the quality of their relationships with their students as it is about a bundle of skills and competencies that might be expressed in 'rigorous professional standards' and packaged as 'best practice'.⁴¹

- 2.46 Valuing teacher professional judgement and professional autonomy make it possible for teachers to design appropriate learning experiences for their students. Stakeholders commented that creating an education system to which Australia aspires relies upon an approach that understands the complexity of teaching, values professional judgement and extends the level of trust and professional autonomy to teachers.⁴²

Empowering school leaders

- 2.47 AHISA noted the commitment to empowering school leaders was an on-going and increasing trend throughout the states and territories.⁴³

- 2.48 DEEWR explained the anticipated detail of this reform direction:

The bill will not necessarily list every single item of what [empowered school leadership] may be, but again it picks up on ... quite [a] differential across states and territories, we would work with states and territories – as we have through the National Partnership Agreement on Empowering Local Schools – to identify exactly what they will be doing to support that. ... But certainly it is about selection of staff, greater management of budget, moving away from having tied budget lines – which sometimes happen in states and territories, which tell schools, 'You must spend your money on this' – and giving that autonomy back to the principal to make a decision as to how to best spend that money. They are the sorts of things that this would be addressing.⁴⁴

- 2.49 School communities endorsed the need for empowered school leaders and advocated that the focus when driving this reform should remain on

40 Dr Nicole Mockler, *Submission 13*, p. 1.

41 Dr Mockler, *Submission 13*, p. 2.

42 Dr Mockler, *Submission 13*, p. 2; Dr Nicole Mocker, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 February 2013, p. 26.

43 AHISA, *Submission 14*, p. 2.

44 Mr Cook, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 15 February 2013, p. 7.

improving student learning outcomes such as curriculum implementation, pedagogy, assessment, staffing and school improvement planning.⁴⁵

2.50 ASPA commented:

Empowered leadership is about more than a set of skills ... School leaders will be empowered when they have had access to high quality training, ongoing professional learning and appropriate support.⁴⁶

2.51 AHISA commented on what 'empowered leadership' in independent schools includes:

Empowered leadership in the independent sector embraces a wider understanding of school autonomy than the freedom to select staff or manage budgets, and includes the operational autonomy to positively shape and lead the educational, pastoral, community, financial, spiritual, cultural and managerial practices in schools.⁴⁷

2.52 Some stakeholders questioned the effectiveness of increased school autonomy in achieving better educational outcomes. The Australian Education Union stated that there is a:

... lack of clear-cut evidence that local management/greater 'autonomy' over issues such as school governance, workforce, infrastructure and funding leads to direct or predictable improvements in student learning and outcomes. [While] overall there is no clear relationship between the degree of autonomy in allocating resources and a school system's overall performance, ... school autonomy over design of curricula and assessment is a key characteristic of successful school systems.⁴⁸

2.53 Professor Teese cautioned that the issue of autonomy can be 'overplayed':

autonomy is useless without resource flexibility. Whether we are talking government or non-government is irrelevant. The issue is: what is the margin of freedom of action in a school? It is for that reason that [financial] resources are absolutely critical.⁴⁹

2.54 And APPA suggested that:

45 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 4.

46 ASPA, *Submission 11*, p. 2.

47 AHISA, *Submission 14*, p. 4.

48 AEU, *Submission 20*, p. 11.

49 Professor Teese, Centre for Research on Education Systems, University of Melbourne, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, pp. 20-21.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that a significant element of school leadership is 'community leadership' ... the principal must not lead a school in isolation.⁵⁰

Transparency and accountability

- 2.55 Stakeholder consideration of the proposed transparency and accountability reform direction, focused on the efficacy of current accountability and transparency measures: matters which are to one side of the current Bill.
- 2.56 APPA reflected a common sentiment:
- there is a national challenge to use the school and system data on student performance far more effectively than is currently the case. Using NAPLAN results in ways for which they are not designed and thereby raising the status of NAPLAN to high stakes testing does not benefit students, schools or school communities and will do little to improve student achievement.⁵¹
- 2.57 However, APPA also noted:
- the use of local data in context on individual school websites and other school community media provide real transparency in regard to school operations.⁵²
- 2.58 Dr Mockler commented that a balance needs to be struck here:
- which satisfies reasonable accountability desires while not undermining the social trust required for teachers and schools to educate young Australians to the best of their abilities.⁵³
- 2.59 Finding a balance was central to the discussion, as was the developing more 'meaningful' data for parents and the broader community.⁵⁴

50 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 2 - 4.

51 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 4.

52 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 6.

53 Dr Mockler, *Submission 13*, p. 3.

54 Mrs Sharon Roni, General Manager, P&Cs NSW, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 February 2013, pp. 23-24; Professor Robert Tierney, Dean, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 February 2013, p. 33; Mr Daniel Smith, President, P&C's QLD, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 19 February 2013, pp. 2-3; Mr Levett, P&Cs QLD, *Committee Hansard*, Brisbane, 19 February 2013, p. 3; Ms Li Tan, Manager, Centre for New Public Education, FYA, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, p. 10; Professor Teese, Centre for Educational Systems, Melbourne University, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, p. 24; Dr Greg Thompson, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, pp. 36-37; Associate Professor Deborah Joy Corrigan, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Education, Monash University, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, pp.38-39; Mr Hall, ASPA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, pp. 4-5.

Meeting student need

- 2.60 Children with Disability Australia commented on the complexity of meeting student need in schools:

To achieve in this reform direction, schools will need a fundamental capacity to identify and plan for individual student need, as well as to deliver high quality education. This reform direction needs to better describe the elements required to identify and meet student needs at the system, school and student levels. One such element here is the identification and use of good practice in inclusive education. Another is the development of pathways for students from early intervention programs into school, the transition from primary to secondary school, and from school to further education or vocational options.⁵⁵

- 2.61 APPA stated that ‘student need’ should be broadly defined in the Bill to include both wellbeing and learning, whilst also acknowledging the challenges that primary schools currently face in delivering mental health services or social welfare to its student body.⁵⁶
- 2.62 Some stakeholders urged an amendment to the order by which the reform directions are listed in the Bill, arguing that ‘meeting student need’ should be prioritised ahead of the other four reform directions.⁵⁷

Consultation in the development of the National Plan

- 2.63 Stakeholders maintained the importance of appropriate consultation in the development of the National Plan.⁵⁸ The Bill provides for consultation with state and territory governments as well as non-government education authorities in the development of the National Plan. However, the Independent Schools Council of Australia noted that any agreement to implement the National Plan will have to be agreed by individual schools, and not the representative bodies that are involved in current negotiations.⁵⁹
- 2.64 Other stakeholder organisations advocated that the Bill require broader consultation in the development of the National Plan, particularly with young Australians.⁶⁰

55 Children with Disability Australia, *Submission 28*, p. 5.

56 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 5.

57 Not-For-Profit Organisations Alliance, *Submission 12*, p. 2; AEU, *Submission 20*, p. 8; The Smith Family, *Submission 25*, p. 3;

58 APPA, *Submission 3*, p. 3; CSA, *Submission 19*, p. 10; APTA, *Submission 42*, p. 4;

59 ISCA, *Submission 16*, p. 14.

60 Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, *Submission 32*, pp. 1-2; FYA, *Submission 36*, p. 5.

- 2.65 As stakeholder consultation is a prerequisite to successful reform, it is anticipated that the Government will continue to consult and be receptive to stakeholder feedback.

Balancing national consistency with schools' diversity

- 2.66 While there was broad, overall support for the development of a nationally consistent plan to improve schooling,⁶¹ school communities expressed concern that the plan must be sufficiently flexible to allow for diversity.⁶² Though supporting the development of a National Plan, Independent Schools Queensland argued:

it is imperative that any such Plan must reflect the diversity of schooling provision and the different approaches taken by individual independent schools in response to community demands. There must not be a systemic approach or a “one-size-fits-all” model for school improvement plans. Any such approaches would have a significant negative impact on the provision of choice and diversity in schooling.⁶³

- 2.67 Similarly, Independent Schools Council of Australia commented:

Independent schools would advocate for greater flexibility around school improvement strategies in order to recognise the unique characteristics of each school and the needs of their school community.⁶⁴

- 2.68 Australian Heads of Independent Schools Australia (AHISA) echoed these sentiments:

AHISA regards it as important that the desirability of the adoption of any nationally imposed strategy or target does not outweigh the consideration that schools will have differentiated capacity to meet any such targets, including the level of resources. It is important that means are put in place to assist schools with less resource capacity, and that a punitive approach is not adopted where schools have less capacity to address policy priorities.⁶⁵

61 APPA, *Submission 3*; AFDO, *Submission 5*; Montessori Australia, *Submission 10*, p. 3; AHISA, *Submission 14*, p. 6; The Smith Family, *Submission 25*, p. 11; Catholic Schools Office (Diocese of Broken Bay), *Submission 26*, p. 5; P&Cs Qld, *Submission 31*, p. 1; APTA, *Submission 42*, p. 4; Department of Education and Child Development of South Australia, *Submission 45*, p. 3; Mr Hall, ASPA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, p. 1;

62 ISCA, *Submission 17*, p. 15; ISQ, *Submission 6*, p. 6; AHISA, *Submission 14*, p. 3.

63 ISQ, *Submission 6*, p. 6.

64 ISCA, *Submission 17*, p. 19.

65 AHISA, *Submission 14*, p. 3.

Committee comment

- 2.69 The Committee received much evidence that went to the detail of the reform directions that will be detailed in the National Plan.⁶⁶ It is important to note that the clauses in the Bill enable the Commonwealth Government to develop a Plan, but the text of these clauses does not form the National Plan; the Bill, if passed, merely provides for the development of such a Plan. At the time of writing, the National Plan is still being negotiated with state and territory governments and non-government education authorities.
- 2.70 The five stated reform directions are the top priorities of education reform for Australian schooling. These directions are widely supported by governments, public and non-government education authorities and their representatives, parents, and the broader community.

School funding

- 2.71 The Gonski Review proposed a change to the structure of school funding as well as increased investment in education.
- 2.72 The Australian Education Union commented:
- if we want to ensure that every child achieves his or her full potential, we need a new funding system – not a funding system that is blind to the real needs of students but a funding system that delivers funding in a way that addresses disadvantage. The current funding arrangements we believe are inadequate and indeed the research shows is broken and failing our kids. We need a new funding system that better targets our resources.⁶⁷
- 2.73 DEEWR commented on the link between increased investment and improved educational outcomes:
- The question about additional investment is always a question about how you actually spend the investment that you get. ... We have evidence that across a range of countries where they have additional investment targeted in to particular areas, that has made a difference [to educational outcomes].⁶⁸

66 Professor Richard Teese, Director, Centre for Research on Education Systems at the University of Melbourne, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, pp. 20-22.

67 Mr Angelo Gavrielatos, Federal President, Australian Education Union, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 13 February 2013, p. 2.

68 Mr Cook, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, p. 6.

- 2.74 Ms Jane Caro, an author and public commentator, also strongly supported increased investment in education:
- Australia, of all countries, is at a point where it has got to make a decision. Are we going to invest in, improve and really put energy, effort and commitment into our public education system or are we going to become the first democracy to allow it to become a residualised welfare system of last resort for the poor? This feels like the point at which we are making that decision.⁶⁹
- 2.75 Ms Therese Temby, Chair of the National Catholic Education Commission commented:
- Section 9, the section on school funding, from our point of view needs to be strengthened to ensure that a national approach to school funding is legislated. The bill should specify the legislative arrangements, including the funding formula that will generate Commonwealth funding for Catholic and other non-government schools in school systems. We also think section 9 should be amended to include a new subsection – that systems will allocate funding based on system-defined criteria that are better able to recognise and respond to school and student needs. While we have been assured in discussions that systems will be able to distribute funding on the basis of a local school based need, section 9 is the place to ensure that system distribution of government funding is protected into the future. In our last recommendation, we suggest that section 9 has a statement that the state and territory governments will contribute funding to government schools and to non-government systems in schools.⁷⁰
- 2.76 Ms Caro described the current complexity of schools funding and how a new, clearer system would benefit public accountability:
- the way we fund public and private education in this country is really a dark art. It is so obscure, obtuse and hard to understand, and so not transparent, and so complicated. ... The public are left confused, because they cannot understand it. ... [The Gonksi funding model] makes it understandable. It makes it easy to understand why the money is going where it is going, how much money is going where, and why it is going there. It makes sense, you can make an argument, you can understand it. To my mind, that is what good policy is. It ought to be understandable by

69 Ms Caro, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 February 2013, p. 11.

70 Ms Therese Temby, Chair, National Catholic Education Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 15 February 2013, p. 22.

someone like me, who is just an ordinary citizen, without too much trouble. If it is not, then we need to work at it to make it more understandable – particularly about something as important as the future of our children.⁷¹

- 2.77 Professor Teese also commented on the benefits of a simplified, national funding system:

What we expect to do with the bill is to create a framework for wherever you go to school in this country and whatever the conditions that you are faced with. We need a national approach to funding which says: 'From now on, we're not worried about who you are or where you live. This is what you're going to get, and that's going to free your teacher to relate well to you.'⁷²

- 2.78 The new funding system, as outlined in the Bill and foreshadowed in the Government's response to the Gonski Review, would add much needed clarity to the public funding of Australian schools.

Loadings to address educational disadvantage

- 2.79 The Australian Education Union strongly supported the proposed system of loadings to address educational disadvantage funding system foreshadowed in the Bill. The Union commented on the responsibility carried by public schools to address educational disadvantage:

public schools which educate two thirds of our students and the majority of children from disadvantaged and high-needs backgrounds. Public schools educate 80% of students in lowest quartile of socio-economic disadvantage; 85% of Indigenous students; 78% of students with a funded disability; 83% of students in remote/very remote areas; and the majority of students with English language difficulties, for example over 90% of students in the ESL New Arrivals Program.⁷³

- 2.80 ASPA commented on the effect that a loadings system will have on schools' ability to address education disadvantage:

there is no doubt that being provided extra dollars – in terms of resource together with the empowered notion of leadership, to bring in some of those services that in the past have been difficult to access because you are looking at either a user-pays service or you are looking at an intergovernment-agency agreement

71 Ms Caro, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 February 2013, p. 11.

72 Professor Teese, Centre for Research on Education Systems, University of Melbourne, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, pp. 23-24.

73 AEU, *Submission 20*, p. 4. See also ACSSO, *Submission 38*, p. 1

approach; certainly the flexibility that will [be] provided to engage different models of solving local problems – will be a huge advantage. We would certainly support that notion.⁷⁴

- 2.81 Addressing areas of educational disadvantage as well as improving overall achievement across the board, requires appropriate levels of resourcing in Australian schools and targeting resources to where they are most needed. Stakeholders focused on two of the educational disadvantages specified under the Bill: disability and school location.

Students living with a disability

- 2.82 The Australian Federation for Disability Organisations (AFDO) stated that students with disability and their families are ‘not welcomed routinely into schools in the public, independent or religious school systems’.⁷⁵

- 2.83 Achieving equity and excellence in education was passionately argued by organisations who engage with students living with a disability. For example, the Australian Special Education Principals Association advocated:

that through support with targeted resources aligned to individual need, Australian students with disability can achieve high educational outcomes, which enable their participation in a diverse, skilled workforce.⁷⁶

- 2.84 AFDO advocated for a schooling system where:

All schools receiving Government funding should be education ready for the inclusion of children with disability. This includes full accessibility of all infrastructure, teacher training to ensure teachers teach for all children and creating a school environment that welcomes children with disability, including participation in extra-curricula activities and school community social events.⁷⁷

- 2.85 AFDO argued that when calculating the loading, resourcing be directed but not limited to physical, technological, digital and social support mechanisms.⁷⁸ Consequently, AFDO argued that government funding should be extended to infrastructure costs in addition to a loading.⁷⁹

74 Mr Hall, ASPA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, p. 2.

75 AFDO, *Submission 5*, p. 5. See also, Children with Disability Australia, *Submission 28*, p. 4.

76 ASEPA, *Submission 48*, p. 2.

77 AFDO, *Submission 5*, p. 3.

78 AFDO, *Submission 5*, p. 4.

79 AFDO, *Submission 5*, p. 4

2.86 The National Policy Officer for AFDO, Mr Stephen Gianni, commented that educational outcomes achieved by students with disabilities are directly linked to levels of funding.⁸⁰

2.87 The Deputy Chair of the National Independent Special Schools Association, Ms Kerrie Nelson, discussed how a loadings system will affect the current special-schools landscape:

I would hope that out of this bill, given that there might be an increase – particularly in some states, where the level of funding for students with disabilities in independent schools is very, very low – we would grow some more choice in schooling for kids with disabilities and perhaps see that there are opportunities for independent special schools to become more viable in other states, as well as to support the viability of schools here in New South Wales. I know that in my school, for example, my waiting list is well over 400 students. There is an enormous demand because it is a disability-specific school with a transition focus. There is an enormous demand for choice in schooling.⁸¹

2.88 Ms Nelson also described the benefits of a transitional-focus (between special schools and mainstream schools) to education for students with a disability, commenting that the flexibility and transferability of the disability loading will foster greater educational achievement by these students.⁸²

Committee comment

2.89 Every child with disability should be provided with an excellent education where they have the opportunity to realise their full potential. The concerns raised by representative organisations are significant.

2.90 DEEWR released its Review of Disability Standards for Education in June 2012.⁸³

Location and size of schools

2.91 Proposed loadings to address the educational disadvantages associated with the location and size of a student's school were generally applauded

80 Mr Stephen Gianni, National Policy Officer, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, p. 15.

81 Ms Kerrie Nelson, Deputy Chairperson, National Independent Special Schools Association, (NISSA) *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 February 2013, p. 45.

82 Ms Nelson, NISSA, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 18 February 2013, p. 45.

83 DEEWR, Report of the Review of the Disability of Standards for Education, Canberra, June 2012, available at:

http://foi.deewr.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/report_on_the_review_of_disability_standards_for_education_2005.pdf.

by school communities.⁸⁴ The Isolated Children's Parents' Association NSW, supported reforming the loadings system to address educational disadvantage caused by distance and remoteness:

It is therefore extremely important to the future of rural and remote communities that the funding models for rural schools and boarding schools are structured and quantified so as to allow rural and remote students to achieve their potential in learning. In order to do so, funding will need to be sufficiently targeted so as not just to maintain the status quo, but to actively reduce the currently entrenched disparity in educational outcomes due to location of school which remain despite the considerable efforts of school teachers and administrators.⁸⁵

2.92 However, the applicability of the loading to students attending schools providing distance education was queried by some stakeholders.⁸⁶ For example, the Isolated Children's Parents' Association Qld commented on the nature of distance education and its unique challenges:

the cost of educating a child studying via a School of Distance Education is greater than that required to educate a student in a mainstream school due to the method of delivery of the curriculum and the unique needs of geographically isolated children. It is therefore imperative that distance education is seen as a specialised service and financed accordingly.

Due to the geographic isolation of many of their students, it is a requirement that Schools of Distance Education in Queensland offer face to face contact through mini-schools, activity days, field services and an annual camp. The cost of schools delivering these services in isolated locations is significant and requires extensive staffing and resourcing.⁸⁷

2.93 The national Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) also commented on the costs of distance education:

While provision has been made for disadvantage associated with distance through the location loading, our concerns remain around the lack of equity being granted by government to distance

84 Isolated Children's Parents' Association Qld (ICPA-Qld), *Submission 18*, pp. 1-2; Isolated Children's Parents' Association NSW (ICPA-NSW), *Submission 39*, p. 2; Mrs Judy Newton, Federal President, Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA), *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 15 February 2013, p. 31.

85 ICPA-NSW, *Submission 39*, p. 2.

86 ICPA-Qld, *Submission 18*, pp. 1-2; ICPA-NSW, *Submission 39*, p. 2; Mrs Newton, ICPA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 15 February 2013, p. 31.

87 ICPA-Qld, *Submission 18*, pp. 1-2.

education families and students. The delivery costs of distance education must be comprehensively accounted for in all facets of this mode of education, including greater individual financial support for families who play a significant role in the delivery of distance education to their children.⁸⁸

2.94 The ICPA explained that the additional costs of educating students via distance, commenting that unique costs are borne both by the school and by parents. The school faces additional expenses when providing schooling via distance including

- basic costs such as printing and mailing out materials and resources to students;
- the need for physical equipment and resources at the school of distance education site so that appropriate facilities are in place for when the students come together at the school; and
- the ability to provide free daily contact with the school via internet and/or phone.⁸⁹

2.95 The parents of students of distance education are also bearing greater costs according to the ICPA. The Federal President of the ICPA, Mrs Judy Newton commented:

With greater demands being placed on families and the need for the home tutor to be present to supervise, assist and ensure that daily schoolwork is completed, it is vital that the role of the distance education home tutor is recognised. This role takes a tutor – often the mother – out of paid employment and away from other commitments to business and family and may necessitate employment of additional staff to fill the created void.⁹⁰

2.96 The Bill does provide for a loading for the location of a school, however as stated above, there is ambiguity about the applicability of this loading to distance education schools. Ms Newton commented on this ambiguity:

Where we usually run into a problem is that the administrative hub of the distance education centre may be in a large regional centre, whereas these children are beyond that. Our understanding is that the loading factor would not actually come into play there.⁹¹

88 Mrs Newton, ICPA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 15 February 2013, p. 31.

89 Mrs Newton, ICPA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 15 February 2013, p. 31.

90 Mrs Newton, ICPA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 15 February 2013, p. 31.

91 Mrs Newton, ICPA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 15 February 2013, p. 32.

Committee comment

- 2.97 As noted earlier in this Report, parents play a vital partnership role in the achievement of excellence in schooling. The contributions of parents are all the more important for students of distance schooling given their unique role in facilitating much of their child's learning, and absorbing many of these costs personally.
- 2.98 The Bill outlines a shift in focus from funding the costs of schooling to the costs of educating school students. This shift was a core recommendation of the Gonski Review. The Prime Minister noted that, 'The bill provides for a new funding standard, based on what it costs to educate a student at schools.'⁹²
- 2.99 The Committee notes the concerns raised by distance education providers and the parents of students attending these schools. Though the educational disadvantage presented by distance education may be reduced through investments in better telecommunications such as the National Broadband Network, these types of investments will not solely address the disadvantage.
- 2.100 Additional funding to schools providing distance education could allow them to provide greater support to students' families.
- 2.101 **The proposed system of loadings to address education disadvantage is a key element in this shift and the new funding model envisioned by the Bill should acknowledge that the specific factors of distance education are taken into account.**

Broader funding concerns

- 2.102 A repeated concern among stakeholders was the uncertainty of proposed the system of school funding.⁹³ At the time of writing, the funding formula for schools is still under negotiation through COAG processes.
- 2.103 The Bill operates in a broader context of school funding agreements and the future direction of education in Australia. The Explanatory Memorandum states that the Bill will be subject to future amendments once funding agreements are reached with stakeholders. This was confirmed in the DEEWR's submission,⁹⁴ as well as at its appearance

92 The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Prime Minister, *House of Representatives Hansard*, Wednesday 28 November 2012, p. 13639.

93 PPI, *Submission 4*, p. 6; AEU, *Submission 20*, p. 13; ACE, *Submission 21*, p. 3; Catholic Schools Office (Diocese of Broken Bay), *Submission 26*, p. 5; SEA, *Submission 34*, p. 4; ISV, *Submission 41*, p. 5;

94 DEEWR, *Submission 15*, p. 6.

before the Committee on two separate occasions.⁹⁵ DEEWR noted that this process:

allows the Government to set the broad framework, while continuing to negotiate on the detail of the funding model and associated reform.⁹⁶

2.104 It is understandable that stakeholders held concerns about the content and timing of these amendments and these broader concerns have formed part of the inquiry's public record. DEEWR indicated that these broader concerns were informing current negotiations and future proposed amendments.⁹⁷

2.105 Another concern was the uncertainty for schools regarding the expiration of current funding agreements (expiring at the end of the current calendar year) and the amount of funding these schools can expect in 2014.⁹⁸

2.106 The Prime Minister has committed that no school will be worse off under the new funding system. This commitment provides schools with the certainty that they can budget for the 2014 academic year with the knowledge that they will receive an equal or higher amount of funding from the Commonwealth Government in the 2014 academic year as what they received in the 2013 academic year.⁹⁹

2.107 Despite some stakeholders describing the proximity to funding agreements' expiry as 'unprecedented',¹⁰⁰ DEEWR clarified that the Commonwealth has previously reached funding agreements with other jurisdictions in the preceding months prior to the commencement of the unfunded academic year:

we have to remember that in some of the past quadrenniums legislation has been passed by the parliament in December for the following year. [If] you look at past quadrenniums, particularly over the last 12 years, most legislation has been passed by the parliament late in the year before it is actually introduced.¹⁰¹

95 Mr Cook, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra 15 February 2013, p. 6; Mr Cook, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, p. 7.

96 DEEWR, *Submission 15*, p. 6.

97 Mr Cook, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, p. 7.

98 ISCA, *Submission 17*, p. 12; CSA, *Submission 19*, p. 7; AACS, *Submission 23*, p. 7; Catholic Schools Office (Diocese of Broken Bay), *Submission 26*, p. 5;

99 Mr Cook, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, p. 7.

100 ISQ, *Submission 6*, p. 3.

101 Mr Cook, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, p. 8.

Committee comment

- 2.108 Australia is unique in the OECD in having an education system where all schools receive government funding, whether government, Catholic or independent. Australia is also distinct in having high levels of choice between schools and between sectors.
- 2.109 For our nation to prosper, Australia needs a population of well-educated young people. Education must be seen as a long term investment – one that will provide dividends by higher economic growth and a more equitable society.
- 2.110 Whilst the broad concerns about funding have been raised throughout this inquiry, this Advisory Report details the concerns which specifically address the terms of the Bill in the form that it has been referred. The Bill constitutes the Committee’s terms of reference, and therefore examining matters external to the Bill would exceed this reference.
- 2.111 The extent of community concern and uncertainty around the funding model is significant. However, the evidence received by the Committee gives every indication that the Government is aware of the extent of these community concerns, and is progressing funding negotiations with the relevant stakeholders.

Concluding comments

- 2.112 The key to Australia’s social and economic wellbeing, now and into the future, is a highly educated population. Education is the foundation for ensuring Australia is able to meet the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly connected global economy. Education is also the key to social cohesion and a vehicle to drive greater social capital.
- 2.113 Meeting the reform challenge posed by recent drops in Australia’s international standing, must take account of multiple and complex factors involved in driving education reform. Moreover, in the 21st century, all students need to be provided with a broader set of skills, knowledge and capabilities necessary for their future lives and careers.
- 2.114 In making these comments, the Committee supports the statement made by Professor Teese:
- The point of why this bill is so important... is to get past that obstacle in the road – the financial obstacle. It is not going to end the issues of quality or accountability. These are issues that the parliament – the law-makers – will have to continue to work on. But [Parliament] will not be saddled with the problem of an

incoherent and divisive funding system. [Parliament] will be able to focus on the issues that really matter.¹⁰²

- 2.115 As noted in chapter 1 (para 1.70-1.77), DEEWR has stated that the Government intends to introduce amendments to the Bill 'prior to its final passage'.¹⁰³ These amendments will seek to give greater clarity to a recalibrated system of schools funding which, according to many stakeholders, is long overdue and has widespread support. However, no further information was received about the nature, timing or content of these amendments.
- 2.116 The Committee can only make recommendations regarding the passage and suggested amendments to the Bill currently before it.
- 2.117 Consequently, the Committee recommends that the Bill, as referred, be passed with the amendments outlined in this advisory report.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the House of Representatives pass the Australian Education Bill 2012 with the amendments outlined in this advisory report.

Mr Mike Symon MP

Chair

102 Professor Teese, Centre for Education Systems, University of Melbourne, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 6 March 2013, p. 26.

103 Mr Kriz, DEEWR, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 14 March 2013, p. 10.

