



# Teachers Registration Board of South Australia

Level 6, 70 Pirie Street, Adelaide SA 5000 Phone: (08) 8226 2666 Fax: (08) 8226 2667 Web Site: <http://www.trb.sa.edu.au> Email: [info@trb.sa.edu.au](mailto:info@trb.sa.edu.au)

Ms J Holmes  
Inquiry Secretary  
Parliament of Australia  
Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Holmes

The Teachers Registration Board of South Australia has previously responded to a range of national inquiries into Teacher Education. This includes a 2003 statement to the Department of Education Science and Training Review of Teaching and Teacher Education and a 1997 Advisory Committee on establishing National Standards and guidelines for Initial Teacher Education. Issues previously raised form the basis of this current response.

The Teachers Registration Board (TRB) is an Independent Statutory body, established in the 1970s pursuant to Part 1V of the Education Act, 1972 (as amended) and being entirely self-funded. The Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2004 was proclaimed in the Parliament of South Australia on March 31 2005. Under the legislation, all teachers, principals and directors at schools or recognised kindergartens who provide early childhood, primary or secondary education must be registered as teachers.

The functions of the Board are:

- To administer the provisions of the Act for the regulation of the teaching profession
- To promote the teaching profession and professional standards for teachers
- To confer and collaborate with teacher education institutions with respect to the appropriateness for registration purposes of teacher education courses
- To confer and collaborate with teacher employers, the teaching profession, teacher unions or other organizations and other bodies and persons with respect to requirements for teacher registration and professional and other standards for the Teachers Registration Board
- To confer and collaborate with other teacher regulatory authorities to ensure effective national exchange of information and promote uniformity and consistency in the regulation of the teaching profession within Australia and New Zealand
- To keep the teaching profession, professional standards for teachers and other measures for the regulation of the profession under review and to introduce change or provide advice to the Minister

The welfare and best interests of children are the primary considerations of the Board in the performance of its functions.

Therefore, the new legislation strongly highlights issues regarding the promotion of the teaching profession and professional standards and enhancing the quality of teachers and teaching. The Board is currently considering processes for establishing profession-owned teaching standards which may include Codes of Ethics/Conduct. Examining professional development requirements for renewal of registration is under discussion, in addition to other initiatives to provide advocacy for the profession in a range of forums.

Relevant to this Teacher Education inquiry, conferring and collaborating with the tertiary sector in regards to teacher education issues is a key aspect of the role of the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia. In particular, the Board is able to comment on the following Terms of Reference:

- 1. Examine and assess the criteria for selecting students for teacher training courses*
- 2. Examine the extent to which teacher training courses can attract high quality students, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences*
- 3. Examine attrition rates from teaching courses and reasons for that attrition.*

Given the ageing teacher workforce and high levels of retirement anticipated in the next 5-10 years, demand exists for a significant number of teacher education graduates throughout Australia. Therefore, universities will need to create significant numbers of placements for teacher education students at the graduate and post-graduate levels to meet employer demand. Significant resources and a prioritising of university placements for teacher education students are essential structural aspects to meet this demand. However in South Australia, teacher shortages are unequally spread, with staffing of some specialist and general secondary subjects such as agriculture, technical studies, languages, home economics, mathematics and science being of particular concern. With significant secondary teacher retirements anticipated, there will be continued graduate demand in these subject areas in the future. Similarly, staffing of isolated country regions across most levels of education is a current issue and is likely to become widespread across many rural areas in the future.

The Board recognises its role in promoting the profession with a view to ensuring that teaching is viewed positively by school leavers and the community generally such that attraction of high quality people from diverse backgrounds occurs. Given that South Australian education encompasses all students in the preschool to adult schooling sectors, our teaching profession is enriched by teachers who come from diverse backgrounds and experiences including rural, indigenous, ethnic, socio-economic and other career and lifestyle experiences. Therefore to attract and retain this diversity of school leavers and mature-aged students within teacher education courses, high quality programs and flexible pathways which recognise prior learning and support student teachers in their preparatory courses and experiences are needed. Providers of teacher education programs

and the profession need to promote teaching as a career option to their best students because these experienced teachers believe that teaching is a positive choice.

Within this context, the Board recognises the following:

- The importance of selection of teacher education students using a range of criteria and procedures including interviews, principal reports, portfolios and tertiary education profiles
- The need for providers of teacher education to establish regional tertiary campuses or programs at which country/rural students (especially school leavers) can complete the first year of their tertiary education. It would be expected that this first year would contribute to students continuing their study in an urban institution. The Board is of the view that this would lead to a reduction in the number of rural students who drop out in their first year of study
- Establish support structures for tertiary students in their early stages of study such as creative pathways/mentoring programs, with support provided by more experienced teacher education students
- Provide opportunities and creative pathways to attract and promote high school students from diverse backgrounds, including disadvantaged to select teaching as a career option including scholarships and high school/teaching education mentors
- Attract mature age students who bring a range of skills, experiences and knowledge from diverse employment, through recognising prior learning and experience and developing systems to facilitate this, with financial incentives being offered to universities who undertake this initiative
- Develop refresher courses, including online, to attract teacher education graduates back into the profession including those who have never been employed in education or who have had lengthy absences

Comment from the Board may also be raised in regards to the following Terms of Reference:

***10: Examine the construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the workforce.***

The Teachers Registration Board of South Australia has previously commissioned joint research with the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration regarding ongoing professional development of teachers of renewal purposes, with the report entitled *Professional Development Requirements of the Renewal of Licensing in the Professions*. Building on this initiative, the importance of teacher professional development is significantly strengthened within the new South Australian legislation. Furthermore, the

Board recognises the importance of a continuum of professional education from initial teacher education through the induction phase to continuous professional development for renewal purposes.

The Board and its committees are currently developing a process for establishing profession-owned professional teaching standards for registration purposes which is relevant to all South Australian teachers. The focus will be on consultatively developing standards within the MCEETYA national framework including aspects of professional knowledge, professional practice, professional relationships and professional values, which may also include Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct. The standards will encompass students completing their teacher education courses as graduates gaining provisional registration, also those seeking registration status after completion of an initial period of teaching experience, as well as those seeking renewal of registration. A key goal is highlighting the specialist knowledge of teachers and gaining recognition for the quality of teaching through promoting the commitment of the profession to ongoing professional development.

Discussions at the Board and within the professional issues committee have acknowledged the importance of current and ongoing professional learning and development. Supporting teachers to update knowledge and skills to maximise their impact on child/student learning is a focus. Some specific professional development aspects of interest include:

- Teachers identifying areas for professional learning which support professional development at the individual, preschool/school and system levels
- Opportunity for teachers to model reflective practice, with specific funding and other support structures needed to ensure effectiveness
- Engaging practicing teachers in the development of policy and/or curriculum
- Accessing professional learning and development offered by the business sector at reduced costs
- Recognising the contributions that individuals in the wider community can make to support teachers to update knowledge and skills to maximise their impact on developing capacity of children/students
- Recognising and extending the current practices of teachers which contribute to a culture of innovation
- Establishing structures that encourage opportunities for teachers to 'work-shadow' in the business/industry sector and for employees from these sectors to undertake similar placements in preschool/school environments

- Accessing financial assistance from the business sector which encompasses traditional grants but also encourages partnerships of benefit to a broad range of teachers and students
- Designing professional learning and development programs that reflect innovative thinking
- Provision of professional learning and development to academic staff by higher education institutions, thereby supporting both teacher education students and practising teachers to update knowledge and skills to maximise their impact on developing an innovative capacity in children/students
- Reviewing the balance of recency and relevancy of practice amongst academic staff
- Utilising practicing and retired teachers' contributions to higher education institution programs.

The Board is committed to promoting the profession and ensuring high standards of teacher learning across the continuum from teacher education to experienced teacher levels. The Board is working closely with a range of stakeholders, including the teacher education institutions in South Australia.

In summary, considerable research and information is already available at a national level to provide directions for the future and to work collaboratively in supporting improvements to existing programs offered at a state level.

Yours sincerely



Carmel Kerin  
**CHAIRPERSON**

13/4/05