LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

(Reference: Teacher numbers and recruitment)

Members:

MS K MacDONALD (The Chair)
MR PRATT (The Deputy Chair)
MS R DUNDAS

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

TUESDAY, 11 MAY 2004

Secretary to the committee:
Ms K McGlinn (Ph: 6205 0137)

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

The committee met at 10.08 am.

THE CHAIR: Good morning. You should understand that these hearings are legal proceedings of the Legislative Assembly protected by parliamentary privilege. That gives you certain protections but also certain responsibilities. It means that you are protected from certain legal actions, such as being sued for defamation for what you say at this public hearing. It also means that you have a responsibility to tell the committee the truth. Giving false or misleading evidence will be treated by the Assembly as a serious matter. As you noted, these proceedings are being recorded. The transcript will be sent to each of you to make sure it is a correct reflection of what you have said. The committee secretary can explain that a bit further to you afterwards.

Thank you very much for your detailed submission to the committee. Would you like to make an opening statement?

JOHN SEE

ANNE DASH and

MICHAEL BRADLEY

were called.

Mr See: I am the Secondary Principals Council executive. I am here in my capacity of having been involved in not only authoring this submission but also providing the data that the submission draws upon for the submission to the Legislative Assembly. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the findings that we have with the committee and to reiterate our concerns about the shortage of teaching staff. We believe that it is an ongoing problem. Whilst there are policies and procedures in place to improve the matter, we think that it is still something that needs to be kept very much in the public mind and in the mind of the Assembly. We would also like to talk about the quality of pre-service training that is being received by the teachers that are being employed in ACT government schools. Would you like each of my colleagues to introduce themselves?

THE CHAIR: That would be helpful.

Ms Dash: I am on the Secondary Principals Council. I am also the principal of Canberra High School.

Mr Bradley: I am the President of the ACT Secondary Principals Council which covers the high school principals, the college principals and the deputy principals. I am also currently the principal of Erindale College.

THE CHAIR: Do you have questions?

MS DUNDAS: You flagged it briefly there, John, in your discussion about training and how much training teachers are getting. You have noted quite extensively in your submission that there are a whole lot of ongoing problems, especially when there are

skills shortages, as you have put it, where teachers are not coming in and you are not getting enough maths teachers or enough specialist teachers in those areas. What kind of impact do you think that is having on student learning and student opportunities?

Mr See: Roslyn, if you had looked in our submission, you would have seen it. The response that we have been making to the shortages of teachers in particular areas is that we have been culling curriculum. We can tell you how many subjects have been culled from the various key learning areas over the last two years or so that this particular survey has been running. I do not have it in my head at the moment. The areas that have basically been affected most—my colleagues might comment on this as well—would be those in the LOTE area. Languages are not being offered anymore.

I had three languages being taught in my school, two of which are healthy at the moment. Earlier on we had a different three. We collapsed one of those simply because we could not find a teacher. Technology is another area that is a real concern. Again, there are areas where you would say, "We will either decrease the number of classes or we might stop offering, say, metalwork or woodwork or things of that nature." That varies with different schools around the ACT.

With respect to information and communications technology, computing is another area that has been hit very badly. In relation to the types of courses that would be offered to students, the shortages would be more related to the use of applications, such as Microsoft Office, which is Word, Excel and Access. You would not be getting into the programming types of languages, which are the highly skilled areas of information and communication technologies, and you might also be looking at losing things like network training, which is happening in the colleges at the moment—things like that.

They are potentially the areas affected most. We have not got the data on which particular courses are being offered, except to say that in these areas of LOTE, information technology and technology, principals are decreasing the number of subject offerings in those areas—and that is Australia-wide.

MS DUNDAS: How does that fit in with a push for vocational education in schools? Technology and IT are two areas that are growing in vocational fields. There is a lot of talk about helping students who might not be suited for mainstream classes and who do not cope well with English and maths but who are doing quite well at tech. How does that mix with what you are meant to be offering through a vocational pathway?

Mr See: With respect to vocational pathways, Michael has very strong vocational offerings at his place as well as at mine. It is mainly the college effects whereas the high schools are more in the transitional range of vocational education. The problem there is basically having staff that, in actual fact, have the required certificate IV in assessment and certification as well as the relevant experiences to enable them to teach in those vocational areas.

We have been instituting a process whereby staff in high schools and colleges receive this training on an ongoing basis. There has been funding from the professional learning fund for that. But getting staff with experiences in industry is one of the more problematic areas. Mike, do have anything to add to that?

Mr Bradley: I think applied technology, which was mentioned earlier, is a significant area of concern—getting trained staff members. It is also a question of the experience of the people too. The reduction in availability means that you end up with people with less experience in those particular areas. That will have an impact on the teaching quality in any institution. You need a variety of experiences. If you have a reduction in the number of people available, then the experience that you get is less and less. The quality of the person you get is not as good as it might have been in the past. So it also relates to the quality aspect. As your market declines and the number of people available, the people who become available may not be as highly qualified and experienced as previous ones. It is not just a question of numbers; it is a question of quality as well.

Mr See: If you look at our submission you can see in the subject expertise information that the teachers coming across are trained, but they lack that higher level of expertise in those particular areas. Education changes and the world changes and we need to be responsive to how the employment market changes. That is one reason why your professional development funding is of critical importance to continually retrain your teachers.

Can I come back to a point you raised a little earlier, Roslyn, about the training in these areas. Last year, all of the pre-service teachers at the University of Canberra who had trained in the technology area were offered positions in other systems before they made it to my place halfway through last year. That was about six or seven.

MS DUNDAS: So other states are effectively headhunting schoolteachers.

Mr Bradley: Yes.

Mr See: They got in there very quickly. That was in the technology area, which is of critical importance. When you look at the technology area, you are talking particularly about boys who like to get their hands dirty. If you haven't got teachers who can do that, you have got trouble. At the moment I have a level 2 from the technology area off on long service leave. We have a 70-year-old man replacing him. He is a very good teacher but he is 70 years of age this year.

Ms Dash: From the high school perspective, being a teacher's teacher is very important. Having that student welfare, that student discipline, is very important. You may get somebody who comes in from industry, having had another career. They have the knowledge to come into a school and to be asked to take some of the tougher classes could be very daunting. I am just thinking at a school I was at before: with LOTE we dropped Japanese. We had Japanese and German being taught and wanted to keep both. We had a teacher who left the system and, within the space of a week, we had three people come in to try to take up the teaching of Japanese. They said, "I am not doing this. It is too hard." So we have never had the expertise—taking actual classes was just too daunting.

MR PRATT: They had the technical skills—

Ms Dash: They had the training.

MR PRATT: but not the teacher training to be able to do the—

Ms Dash: They obviously had enough teacher training for our system to accept them because we will not take anyone who is not fully trained. But when they were confronted with the actual teaching—it is not just imparting the knowledge; it is all that other stuff—it was too difficult. This is one of the things that we are very concerned about.

THE CHAIR: Were they taking other courses or did they just drop out of the system altogether?

Ms Dash: They were coming in as relief teachers initially, but trained relief teachers, and decided that that was not what they wanted to do. I know one of them said, "I can see that I am not cut out to be a teacher. I don't want to do this." What the others did I am not quite sure. The concern is with ostensibly trained teachers coming in, but when they are actually in the position it is—

Mr Bradley: I think it is worth while noting too that, if there were a rule which said that retired teachers could not return to teach, we would have real problems because we depend heavily on retired teachers returning into the system in one form or another. It is common knowledge now that a teacher who retires at, say, the early age of 55, can walk straight back into a relief teaching position on a contract. We do have teachers, as John says, in their 60s. We depend heavily on the retired component at the moment.

THE CHAIR: If I could just follow on from that while you are talking about that point. The Australian Education Union has done an analysis across the schools of the age of teachers and has talked in its submission about the stark differences between them. It has not looked just at the averages and the median ages; it has looked at the modal ages as well.

Mr Bradley: Yes.

THE CHAIR: In terms of age groups they have said that the collegiate sector is the most stark.

Mr Bradley: Yes.

THE CHAIR: They say, "Half the college teachers are over 50 while only 28 per cent of high school teachers are over that age. Only nine per cent of college teachers are under 35 while 34 per cent, more than a third, of high school teachers are under 35." They have said that it is a good thing in a way that the over 55s are coming back as relief teachers, but that if something is not done about it in the future there is going to be a major problem. They are not talking just about people who are leaving the service altogether; they are talking about the fact that the over-55 relief teachers will only do certain areas—

Mr Bradley: Correct.

Ms Dash: That is right.

THE CHAIR: and they will only do certain times.

Mr See: That is right.

Ms Dash: That is right.

Mr See: And certain schools.

THE CHAIR: And certain schools. So there is a real problem in that they will not necessarily take the lower socioeconomic schools. You have all been nodding when I said that. Do you want to make some comments on the record about those points?

Mr Bradley: What has been said about the age factor is true. The age structure is something to be carefully examined. What are the implications of the age structure that you refer to? For example, with people who return to the profession after the age of 55, they have expertise and experience, but they have a different mindset and view of what they are doing from when they were a long-term permanent employee. You are shaking your head. You understand what I mean, Steve. They see things differently.

The view that we would be pushing would be that you need a mix. I know that a colleague of mine in the private sector is currently not recruiting people in the older age brackets because he needs a spread of ages. Unfortunately we do not have that spread in our system in particular in places like the colleges. We are lumped at the top, as it were—as you say.

It is also true that the retired type person will not go to certain places because they want a particular lifestyle and particular classes to take. They are more selective, and you can appreciate that. It is very rare that we have a steady situation of promotional positions in our college sector, because teachers are always moving on; you have this steady movement. It does not result in young blood coming in; it results in others coming in from elsewhere in the system of around the same age group. So you do not really have regeneration or revitalisation, and that is an issue.

On the other hand, I have colleagues in the high school sector who have the issue of having many young staff under the age of 30. At one school, the principal and deputy have more experience in years than the rest of the staff. That is not good either. Maybe Anne would like to comment.

THE CHAIR: Before Anne comments, did you want to talk about why you have this glut within the colleges? I know that the department has changed the situation. People are supposed to move around; they cannot just stay within the one school. Is it addressing the situation at all?

Ms Dash: As I was mentioning, it is part of the perception in the high schools that student discipline is the main thing. You cannot be a teacher in a high school unless you have student management. There are some teachers who have been in the system for a long time who have honed their skills, as far as their content is concerned, and would like to go to a college—we joke!—for an easier life, but sometimes it is because they have that wealth of content, if you like, and want to do it at a higher level. It does leave some high schools with the problem of constantly new teachers. There is one high school that has 23 teachers on brand new contracts. They are constantly changing, which is not good.

MR PRATT: Twenty-three on contract?

Ms Dash: Yes.

THE CHAIR: John, I think you were going to—

Mr See: On page 11 we have the breakdown of staff and, along with the data that you have received, Karin, from the AEU, it shows you the actual numbers there. One of the reasons why you still continue to have that profile in the colleges is that, as Anne said, we have experienced teachers in high schools. You get to the stage where they say, "I have been in high schools for nine, 10 or 15 years and I need a change or would like a change." I happen to be personally of the belief that I would like to have teachers in the colleges who have done a fair stint in the high schools because they learn how to motivate and manage students far better than they would in the college environment.

So you look for experienced teachers to take into the college sector. You also look, in actual fact, for teachers who have a fair degree of subject expertise. What happens is that when you replace staff you tend to replace staff of an older age group than of a younger age group. The young people who come in are in the 20 to 24 age bracket and are teaching young people who are 17, 18 and, in some cases, 19. The difference in age between the teacher and the student is very small and so the professional distance between the teacher and the student is hard to maintain. There needs to be some of that professional distance to enable them to more effectively teach the students.

Mr Bradley: You also have to understand that mobility was introduced before I was appointed to the ACT and it was not retrospective.

Mr See: No.

Mr Bradley: Therefore a lot of people in the college sector are not caught by it. The majority of staff at my place are not subject to mobility because mobility was just for new appointments—like me. There is also the other side of mobility in that, if you have trained people and no-one to replace them with, there is a pressure sometimes to resist the mobility because the principal is saying, "Who am I going to get to replace this person if they move on?" That, of course, leads into training across the system so that there are enough people to move around the system to allow mobility. Again, that is manpower projectioning and so on that you have to do within a system.

For example, Roslyn mentioned earlier that, with vocational education and training in the colleges, you need people to have a certificate IV. If you have a vacancy, you are looking for someone with a certificate IV. If a high school person does not have it, they are less suitable for you. What we are trying to do with the system is to provide training opportunities as more people are available. But, as the AEU has pointed out to you, it is true that the age factor is an important consideration. That is not to be critical of the people who are there. It is not of their making that suddenly everybody is of that age group; it is just the way it is.

MS DUNDAS: The ACT department of education has indicated that they've got a very strong recruitment campaign targeted at the universities and the newly trained teachers coming straight out of university. That's where the focus is in getting people into our

schools. They don't look as much at getting people out of other industries and into teaching or poaching people from other states and, to put it bluntly—trying to recruit teachers with five or six years experience from other places—bring them to Canberra for the lifestyle. Do you think that, if the department changed its recruiting focus, it might alleviate some of your problems? If the high schools had a greater mix would that then flow on to the colleges—getting in more teachers with experience as opposed to those straight out of university?

Mr See: There are very few teachers who come straight out of university into colleges.

MS DUNDAS: What if there were more of a diverse mix in high schools with more senior teachers from outside the ACT system coming in? Would that free up teachers who might have two or three years experience at high schools to go into colleges? I'm trying to set up a flow-on effect here—and whether or not it would work.

Mr See: In areas of particular shortage the department will recruit from other systems. The preference is to take new teachers, but they do recruit from other systems into the ACT in areas of shortage—for example, in mathematics. The problem is not so much the availability of people to teach mathematics but their expertise in that area. Some of the information you may be able to glean out of there, and that we've got elsewhere, shows that the level of expertise in mathematics is fairly shallow. There are not a lot of people with a high level of expertise, but they have some expertise and they can teach in lower areas of high schools, like in years 7 and 8. When they get into years 9 and 10 and the colleges it gets more difficult.

I'd have to say that there are instances where the recruitment section has done a great job of encouraging people to come from other places. But then they get into the maze and tangle involved in how much they're going to be paid; are we going to pay their removal expenses; what's the superannuation component and are their qualifications in actual fact correct.

MS DUNDAS: Prior learning recognition.

Mr See: I've spent from Christmas through to the end of March helping a teacher move from Queensland to here and work their way through the maze in the department.

MS DUNDAS: Is that maze just making it far too complicated for experienced teachers to enter?

Mr See: I think what happens is that it's not too complex, it's just a pain, and it's a disincentive for them. This teacher was going to go and I would have been faced with the situation of, instead of having an experienced teacher from outside the system who in actual fact had already proved his worth in the two weeks he'd been here, continuing the employment of the teacher who retired two years ago.

Ms Dash: I was on the recruitment round in, I think, 2001, going to various other places. To entice people to the ACT it's usually the lifestyle that we push and the fact that, if you buy or rent a place anywhere, you can teach anywhere. But most people have to be fairly convinced to move from where they are. That would happen with any jurisdiction, but the ones that I know in my school have come because of family reasons. There was

somebody else here, their husband or wife got a job, or something like that. So even though we see it as a very salubrious place to live and work, for other people it is, "Oh, Canberra!"

MR PRATT: It's still hard to sell that.

Ms Dash: It's still hard to sell.

MS DUNDAS: Do you think that, without trying to be too political in the current climate, pay has something to do with it?

Ms Dash: It does; that's what they ask you. Particularly I'm thinking of some of the older people when they're looking at—

MS DUNDAS:—their super and retirement.

Ms Dash: I'm thinking of one person we interviewed. He was in Armidale and he was single. He'd put in for all of the jurisdictions, anywhere in Australia. He was an absolutely magnificent teacher. They were his questions to everybody: the living, the whatever—and the pay. We didn't get him.

MR PRATT: Do you think the department avoids interstate recruitments on a cost basis? Is that an issue or not—going back to your point, John, about the administration and coordination of moving somebody?

Mr See: I don't know.

MR PRATT: In terms of the effort and the pain, as you call it?

Mr See: I don't know. I would have to say that the people in the recruitment area of the department were highly annoyed when they found out the entanglement that was happening with this person who was going through. So I think it's a case of one side not talking to the other side. From the information that we've got from across Australia on the service given by departmental officials in finding employment for young teachers, about 60 per cent of them say that it's very good, or good to excellent. That means that 40 per cent of them say it's not.

That's Australia-wide. We haven't got the figures for the ACT, but I think they were slightly better. But it depends on different parts of the department. The recruitment people get hit constantly by us: we need somebody here and we need somebody there. So they're off looking for good people. I don't think that the same feeling of urgency or importance is necessarily filtering through to the other part, which is involved in the pay and conditions these people are going to be employed under.

MR PRATT: It is the left hand and the right hand.

Mr See: It is a bit, yes. That's one thing that really desperately needs to happen—there needs to be far better coordination between those two areas. I mentioned my problems here to the curriculum part of the department and they said, "Give that to us in writing, please, so we can go and have a chat to the various people concerned."

Mr Bradley: Often that type of thing with bureaucracy is because there are different agendas and different aims in the two sections, one being more concerned about the financial side and ensuring that you keep within the Treasury guidelines et cetera and not overstepping the mark. For example, we know that, even if we are desperate for a person, at certain points in the year we won't get them because it's not going to be paid for; it's too expensive. So we've got that problem.

MR PRATT: It's the age-old question of operational requirement versus bean-counter discipline, I suppose.

Mr Bradley: Exactly, yes. You can understand where they're both coming from. Let's put it this way: unlike other aspects of administration in government, we do actually have to have a person in front of those 25 students who turn up on Monday morning. It's a different sort of game than in an administration where, if someone doesn't fill an office job for six weeks, probably not much would happen.

MR PRATT: I will put this question initially to Anne, but if others would like to respond I'd like to hear from them too. You mentioned earlier the issue of student management. Clearly you believe it's a very strong component of a teacher's duties that they have that set of skills. Are you satisfied that, as far as the teacher training and the sources available to you for recruitment are concerned, new teachers are coming to you sufficiently trained and prepared to undertake what we might call pastoral care duties, or the equivalent of those? Are you satisfied that they're getting prepared for that area of work?

Ms Dash: It varies, obviously. Some take to it like ducks to water. I would like to see a lot more work, or practicums, done in the schools so that they're getting that hands-on experience. We hear from our pre-service teachers that the theory that they're hearing in university does not transfer into real life situations in the schools. The only way they can get that is by being in the schools. So we'd like to see that idea of coming in and being mentored by teachers.

Mr See: Last year we did the survey of first year out, second year out and third year out teachers. When we asked them, "How good was the university in preparing you for managing students?" Fifty per cent of the people we surveyed—this was nearly 600 people—said that the university was excellent to good at training them on how to manage students.

As far as preparation for teaching is concerned, 60 per cent said that the universities were excellent to good at preparing them for teaching in schools. But when it came down to their school experience, nearly 80 per cent of them said that the experience they had in schools was excellent to good preparation for teaching in schools. The University of Canberra, which has that internship program—and this year they have introduced the internships into the secondary sector for the first time—is moving in the right direction. A number of other universities in Australia need to emulate that.

Mr Bradley: I think that, with the committee—I don't know whether you're doing it or not—it's more an issue of the retention of those people once they're in the system. You need to have a look at how many are still in the system after one, two and three years,

because there's been a growing concern about the loss rate. You may put in much time and effort and lose many within the first three years. The reasons for that loss rate are worth examining.

THE CHAIR: While we're talking about that, do you have any ideas or suggestions on ways to support teachers? There is a big difference between doing a practicum and then going into it and knowing that this is what you're going to be doing Monday to Friday from 9.00 till 3.00, plus all the extra time that you put in.

Mr Bradley: The daily demands.

Ms Dash: The crowded curriculum. I'd like to make a point about retired teachers. I'm looking at changing the timetable of my school for next year from a cyclic to a static one, to take advantage of retired teachers. But having people come in part time means that you don't have the 57 different programs that we have in the high schools, and things like road ready, exhibitions et cetera—and this is teacher workload if you like. This is what some of our young people are saying.

I have a meeting with my young teachers every week, just for half an hour. They are saying they have four-year degrees and expertise, and their conditions and salary compared to that of their friends in, say, the public service, who may not have a degree are just ridiculous, particularly their workload. If we start getting part-time people in they will not take on the load that a full-time teacher takes with all these programs. It comes down, I think, to just the expectations of our young teachers. They are doing 10 times the work that I did as a young teacher and it's killing them.

Mr See: I think there are suggestions in the EBA from the AEU about how we might support our young teachers more. I think that one of the things which is important for teachers all the way through their careers is the provision of good coaching and mentoring type of support. One of the things that also came out in our survey was that young teachers felt that the most supportive people in their careers were their colleagues, their peers—they were the ones that helped them through. The next one up was the person in charge of their faculty area or the subject area they were in—and, following that, up to the principal. You become less supportive as you go up.

MR PRATT: That's interesting, isn't it?

MS DUNDAS: For the Secondary Principals Association to admit that is interesting.

Mr See: You become less important in terms of providing support as you go up. How about that? When it comes down to, "How do I deal with this kid?" When they come back into the staffroom they talk to whoever's closest. That mentoring and coaching I think provides practical support right then and there. And there are some people who are better at doing that than others.

MS DUNDAS: Sorry; I was making a bit of a joke there. But what you're saying provides a very serious question. Do you find that the workload of principals and the roles they have to take on is cutting into principals' ability to mentor the younger teachers? You said you've factored it into your diary that you will meet with the younger teachers.

Ms Dash: But only half an hour a week. And they run it without me if I'm not there, because they just like talking to one another. But yes, it does.

MS DUNDAS: Is the principals' workload, in looking after all the different issues that principals have to look after—some of them being not actually teacher related—impacting on the principals' ability to help mentor younger teachers through the system?

Mr See: I would not mentor my younger teachers as frequently as Anne. I might do it once a term.

Ms Dash: I wouldn't claim to be mentoring mine either. It's the next level up that do it.

Mr See: What we do in those situations is more a case of providing them with an opportunity to talk with us about any issue that might be of interest to them, or of pressing concern.

MR PRATT: From what you're saying now does this mean that principals—this is the attitude I'm picking up—who you clearly want to see performing, let's say, a stronger leadership and mentoring role, are just too damn tied down with administration and there are insufficient back-up staff to help take at least some of that load off their shoulders? Is that the issue?

Mr Bradley: I think it's true to say that the role of the principal has changed considerably over the last 10 or 15 years. It is quite true to say that, with all the other parts of the job—the budget, the administration of the place et cetera—it means that some of the jobs that would have normally been seen as a principal's job 15 years ago have been devolved within the individual school to other staff members—and you set up structures to do that. It's just the nature of the job. You could not do it in a large institution like mine or John's or Anne's. In a small private school you'll find that the role of the principal is proportionally much more to the teacher and the coalface because of the nature of the job. We have private schools here where you have just one promotional position and that's the principal. Their pressure is that they have all the administrative demands at the same time, but they've not been able to devolve any aspect of the job because there's no-one to devolve it to. Whereas in a structure like mine, where there are 13 senior people, of course you can devolve that more.

Now, I think the role of the principal, as all the research shows us quite clearly, is extremely important in the educational side, the vision and so on. But research around the country also shows quite clearly—and John referred to the ASPA's research on this—that the important role is that of the immediate support person. For example, the classroom teacher who's been with the grade 5 class and has had something go wrong: they want to share that, they want to be able to talk to someone. The immediacy is their colleague or their supervisor, in that order. Colleague then supervisor: the research shows that quite clearly. The deputy and the principal are further down the corridor, as it were. A structure in which you ensure that the teacher has the opportunity to talk to someone, to get it off their chest maybe, or to talk about what happened that was really good, that's great.

For example, you'll find me in the staff room every lunch time if at all possible. There'll

be classroom teachers talking about this. But obviously I'm not going to be able to talk to 80-odd people, whereas a structure to allow them to talk is, quite clearly, very good. The other thing I'm supporting, which the committee may want to look into, is that we have to ask ourselves the question: with the work practices and the workplace as it currently exists, is it becoming such an organisational structure that it's beyond the capacity of some of our people coming into it? Maybe we should look at the workplace, the organisation and structure and the expectations on that, and change that a bit.

That's not just the crowded curriculum and the crowded expectations; it's saying, "Let's have a look at that workplace." It is hugely different from what it used to be. The teacher is seen as a welfare person much more than they ever used to be. The universities are helping that. But one thing you find is that nothing drops off. That's a complaint teachers come to us with all the time. Our job, as principals, is to try and reorganise it so it doesn't become so overwhelming that it drowns them. It is true that they say, "There's nothing dropping off." Is that right, Anne—from a high school?

Ms Dash: Absolutely; it is.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much for your time today.

CHRISTINE TRIMINGHAM JACK was called.

THE CHAIR: I read the card to you the other day, so there is no need to read it again. We have sent through to you some additional questions that people wanted to ask. We were on a bit of a roll the last time. Thank you for coming back again to talk to us further.

Dr Trimingham Jack: That is fine.

THE CHAIR: Ros, do you want to start asking some of your questions?

MS DUNDAS: I want to ask questions—not about the questions that we emailed through to you but about the ones that were raised by the submission we just had from the Secondary Principals Association. We will see how we go with these questions. The association talked about the survey that they did of first, second and third year teachers in the schools. If I got it down right, 50 per cent said that the university training they received was good to excellent and 80 per cent said that the school preparation time they spent in their training was excellent. Can you walk us through how much school preparation the trainee teachers at the University of Canberra get? What kind of placement do they do?

Dr Trimingham Jack: Sure. It varies on the courses that they do. If they are there for four years, my understanding is that they get about 100 days in the school, the highest number of days of any university in Australia. If they are in a graduate entry two-year degree, they get 70 days. It is pretty similar for the grad dip. I think they get 50 or 60 days for the one-year program. The amount of time they have in schools is pretty high. We pride ourselves on that fact.

You are absolutely right, there is no doubt that they just love their time in the schools. We spread it throughout the time that they have there and give them a lot of support. A lot of universities now cannot afford to have university liaison people go out and supervise them. We have held on to that and it has cost us a lot of money. They get less supervision in the first year when they are just observing. We just have somebody touching base with them. As they go up they have a lot more supervision from the university. That supervision is a mentoring role, mentoring them into the school—the whole role of teacher.

I am interested that teaching internship was mentioned. I run the teaching internship at the university and I just love it. Trainee teachers do eight weeks in the school. In the first stage they work under supervision. In the second stage they move towards taking full duty of care. I have a team of ex-principals and ex-teachers et cetera who go out and work with them. They go at least four times to see them, but usually they are there a lot more. There is mentoring into the whole school situation. Often when they go out on their pracs they are short—two or three weeks, so it is kind of into the classroom and out. But in the teaching internship I give them lectures before they go and I work in partnership with the department on that, and so it is really mentoring them into the whole situation of the school and being involved in the school.

The prac situation is what they love. I think sometimes they forget that everything they

learn at the university goes behind it. If they went out without that, they would flounder. There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes. But it is true that what they love is being out in the schools.

MS DUNDAS: I thought it was interesting that so many of the respondents found the practical experience excellent. John did not provide us with the reverse of the statistics but it would be implied that 50 per cent had problems with the actual course that they were doing. Whilst they loved the prac, they possibly had problems with the rest of the theoretical learning. Do you have any comment to make about that?

Dr Trimingham Jack: Yes, I do. It is a struggle for some of them, quite honestly. I purposely teach first year and fourth year because I like to get an idea in and I like to get an idea out. It gives me a good overview of what we are working with. I have been at the university for 4½ years now. When I first went there, I started to notice that their academic literacy was weak—that is their capacity to critically analyse, write, reflect, and produce some piece of writing, reflection, report or whatever. They have come through schools and sometimes they have never been asked to write an essay or report. They do it, but they just did not have the skills that were required. So I have put in a research project and we are monitoring their academic literacy. For some of them it is a really big step up to academic work.

Academic work sounds rather removed from the real world, but it is not. It is the capacity to think, to reflect, to research. Teachers spend their lives teaching and they should be researching. When I go out, I often look at the lessons that are done not only by our students but also in other schools. They need such skills in order to be able to research and sift through the amount of information they get off the net, out of books or whatever to be able to come up with really good information and good processes for the students. It actually requires quite a high level of thinking and some of the students really struggle with it.

It is really interesting as I am watching my own daughter at the moment. She is a mature aged person and has just gone back to university to study primary teaching. We have a first year maths subject, called reconstructing mathematical understanding. It is about developing their own mathematical understanding, not about how to teach. We do that a couple of other subjects later. It is a big step up. We have high expectations of them being able to pass. She said that some of the students say to her, "You just have to pass." She said, "No, I have to teach the stuff so I have got to understand it." So, yes, I can understand that a lot of them find that it is really hard work. It is really nice when I am out in the school because, in many ways, it is not quite so hard.

MS DUNDAS: Do you think that it is almost a circular problem? At a school level the curriculum is so full and, as we have heard from everybody else, teachers are overloaded with work—there are shortages and ongoing problems. Teachers in the high school and colleges do not have the time to prepare their students for the higher learning or the higher thinking processes that they need themselves to go on and become teachers.

THE CHAIR: Just before you answer that, can I add another aspect to that question? Do you think it is possibly the types of students who are coming into teaching thinking that they want to be a teacher—and there is no criticism of that because we need more teachers; I have been there and done that. When I went into teaching I never went in with

the expectation that there would be a high element of research and analysis required.

MR PRATT: It is academically demanding.

THE CHAIR: Where I went there was not a high level of research and analysis. Can you comment on both of those questions?

Dr Trimingham Jack: I will come back to that because I have almost lost it. I say to my staff, "Don't pull back from asking a lot of them" because I will be darned if I want teachers to go out there who do not have good minds. Public education, which is what we are about, is about the basis of democracy and citizenship—being able to make choices and decisions and to have a wide understanding of the world. I want our students not only to be able to teach the practical stuff of maths or whatever but also to have a wide understanding of citizenship. If they are in a position in Iraq they need to be able to report what is going on and take the risks.

This is the wide world that we need to prepare our students for; therefore, we do need a high quality of person coming in. We get a lot of people who come in and say, "I love children" but I am never impressed with that. You have got to like children—there is no doubt about it—but you are not there to love them; you are there to teach them, respect them and care about them. Can you see the difference? Do you know what I mean?

I am very interested in people that come in who have got a good mind, who love and are passionate about learning and are passionate about handing that on to kids. They need to have good skills and to communicate with young people—there is no doubt about that. But I find that most of our students have got that. I think last time I was here I reported about the work that was done in Education Queensland and the productive pedagogies. The social support component of classroom management, et cetera, we actually do pretty well in this country. We have trouble with the deep learning, the intellectual demands. Some of our students really find it a step up to be able to do that because they did not expect that it would be academically demanding.

MS DUNDAS: I guess that goes back to almost the question that I was asking. We are not preparing students in high school and college for the deeper demands of university, so the teachers who are then coming out of university are going back to high school and college and do not have the ability or the time to make sure that the next generation coming through has that deeper learning. We are going through this great big cycle.

Dr Trimingham Jack: It is a real issue. There is a lot of challenge. If we gave students coming into university what they want they would really like us, but they would not learn a lot. I think teachers do like us and respect us, but I want it to be demanding enough for them to be able to really support students when they go out and develop the learning. That is a real challenge for us because there is a pressure to reduce things, to make things simple and not to have as high expectations. To some degree there is some pressure out in the world even from teachers—"Don't ask them to do assignments when they're on prac. Just let them have fun and enjoy teaching." I want them to make that link between what they learn at university and what they learn out from professional experience. I do not want them saying, "University is that; professional experience is this." I want them to design lessons and units, see how they work, evaluate them and then come back. So that makes it hard. We do have quite high expectations of them and I

can see why a lot of them find it difficult.

THE CHAIR: I think I asked you this the last time you were here. You are not doing any surveys of graduates to see how many have remained in the profession, are you?

Dr Trimingham Jack: No. We have not followed that up. I thought about that afterwards. We have one year out, but that is it. We need to follow that up. I suppose it is hard to track people down. We get quite a lot of feedback. A lot of our people go into the ACT, so we are getting a lot of feedback from them. We are seeing them with regard to professional experience and a couple of years later they are taking our students. So we are seeing a cycle. No, we don't. It would be worth doing but we need a research grant for that.

MS DUNDAS: Just one other question before we get onto the questions that were sent to you. We have heard that teachers in the system are lacking morale—they are feeling undervalued and pressured. A lot of them went out on strike yesterday. In terms of the student teachers that you are dealing with through the university, are they nervous about that or are they optimistic? They are really excited about going into teaching so they have not yet been worn down by the perceptions that have affected senior teachers?

Dr Trimingham Jack: They are really excited. They come back after internship and come in and talk to me and say, "Oh, Chris, it really was terrific. I now know I can do it." They are really scared about whether they can do it. I do not think they do realise what it is they are taking on, quite honestly—the incredible demands that they have day in, day out. I use a lot of ex-principals and teachers et cetera in the teams that we have, particularly in the teaching internship. Somebody said to me last year—I just realised that she and her husband were both teachers—"On the two weeks holiday, I spend the first week being sick." You do keep going—there are no two ways about that—you drag yourself out. The teachers have such incredible commitment to the kids that they teach—there is no doubt about that. I am not saying that there are not some that don't, but the majority of the ones I come across—and I come across a lot—are really incredibly committed. They then spend the next week getting ready to go back. It is an incredibly demanding job.

I would like to put somebody with a group of kids all day. Teachers are usually at school till 5 or 6 o'clock. They go home, have dinner, maybe have a lie down because they are exhausted and then they get up and work again into the night. They put in a lot of time. They are absolutely right about the pay—it is jolly lousy. There are young people who have been in the system for a couple of years. They were so keen and are fantastic teachers, but now the reality is, "How do I buy my house? How do I afford to have kids? How do I buy a new car or a car that works? " The money is just not good.

MS DUNDAS: You do not learn about the workload pressures at university. In doing a prac for three weeks or whatever you are not going to experience, 24 hours a day, what it means to be a teacher. When they get into work, the first year out is when the workload starts to hit and the morale starts to go?

Dr Trimingham Jack: No, I do not think it hits at first. I think it takes a while. I think internship certainly gives them an idea of what it is like, but they have got all that enthusiasm. It is the long grind—it keeps going on and after a few years it starts to hit

them—coupled, quite honestly, with the money. I hear them talking a lot about that public service issue et cetera.

THE CHAIR: I am one who did not go forward and do teaching after I had done training. I suppose from speaking to friends who are still working within the area, after a few years there is a lot of grind. I am not denying that issue or the fact that previous speakers have said that so much more is expected of teachers and principals within schools these days than it was years ago because there is that much extra which has been added and nothing has been taken away. Surely there must be a point, after a certain amount of time, where bits become easier. You become used to it.

Dr Trimingham Jack: Yes, absolutely.

THE CHAIR: Are you aware of any studies that have been done anywhere throughout the world, where it gets to that level of—

MR PRATT: Over the hump.

THE CHAIR: Over the hump, over the difficult periods where people are likely to say, "I can't do this. It's just too much" and then drop out?

Dr Trimingham Jack: The first five years. I have been reading a study by Manuel. It was looking at the first five years out in Australia. I cannot remember the figures now, but they were quite high in terms of the drop out. It was looking at a need for mentoring from a variety of sources. Mentoring, I think, is absolutely critical. You do need that support because things can be really tricky in all sorts of ways. A diversity of mentoring from the school sector, from the university sector—I think it would be fantastic if we could go on doing that—from a variety of settings is really necessary. I know the ACT are very keen to have the mentoring, but you are building in another layer of work for the teachers. We would love to have our students out in the system more. Not only are they there for that prac; they may be mentored by an existing teacher.

You have to remember that adds on a really significant workload. We would really struggle even taking students on professional experience because it also adds to the workload. Mentoring is really important. If you can get them through the first five years and get them over the hump, you are fine and I think they will go on. That is the really significant issue.

The research I was writing about in the last paper I was working on was looking at young graduates out in remote indigenous schools. I was reading the DEST report and the research. Really effective teaching strategies are really important. So putting in a really effective strategy, a teaching program, for a particular population that is designed to meet the needs of that cohort could be really marvellous because they become effective. When they feel they are not effective it really makes a significant difference. It is really helping them to be effective. It is like kids in classrooms. If kids do not feel effective in classrooms they wander off and get disengaged. You need to keep them engaged and feeling that they are competent. It is the same thing for young teachers—for anybody in their work really. You need to feel that you are making a difference and that you are effective in what you do. So it is the first five years.

THE CHAIR: If you could provide us with the information about the study that has been done on the first five years out that would be good.

Dr Trimingham Jack: Do you want me to send you a copy of the article?

THE CHAIR: That would be fantastic. Any further questions?

MR PRATT: You guys covered all my questions.

MS DUNDAS: There were questions that we emailed through to Christine. I am interested—I think this question came from Steve though—about the current curriculum.

MR PRATT: I was wondering whether I had asked that last time, Ros, and that is why I backed down. Go ahead.

MS DUNDAS: If the curriculum in our schools is full, how does that translate to the curriculum in our universities in respect of readying teachers to be able to do everything a curriculum offers? We were told this morning that in high schools there are 57 different programs that sit on top of the core subjects—"road ready" training, exhibition programs, drug education, et cetera.

Dr Trimingham Jack: It's a nightmare. I have to say it's an absolute nightmare just trying to fit in everything that those students need in order to be able to go out. It gets worse and worse. We've just gone through restructuring a review. We've spent hours and hours trying to fit in everything we need and still deliver it under the credit points et cetera with the amount of time that they have. The students need two degrees, really, to be able to fit in everything that they need when they're out there.

In the secondary area, to have the amount of discipline input that they need in order to be registered—just the number of years in their particular discipline areas—is an enormous slice out of their time. Then there's all the mandated stuff—which they need, I'm not decrying that—like classroom management, working with those with special needs and looking at the social contexts, which helps them understand families and societies, et cetera. It is an incredibly crowded curriculum. We take all the discipline areas. We've just put the VET stuff in. It cost us a fortune to put all that in so they get that level III certificate. It's taking up two subjects to do that.

THE CHAIR: Are they getting certificate III or certificate IV?

Dr Trimingham Jack: Certificate III or IV. I'm not quite a secondary person, but I know we're doing it.

THE CHAIR: Certificate IV workplace assessment training?

Dr Trimingham Jack: That's right. It's that workplace assessment. We are taking up two subjects to do that. That's a big ask out of our subjects, as to what goes when you put that in. So it's an incredibly crowded curriculum. You put all the KLAs through—key learning areas—for the primary and all the other areas. We've just introduced a second science subject because of the DEST report that we are not being successful as science teachers. We would admit that. After one subject they're just getting their

confidence. We really need to put two in, so we've brought that back and put in a second subject. It's incredibly difficult to fit it all in.

MR PRATT: Going back to your earlier comment about developing academic discipline research capabilities, are you happy, therefore, that you've got enough scope left in your curriculum to take care of that requirement?

Dr Trimingham Jack: I think we do—because of the level of assignments that we ask the students to do. But there's a real tension between having the high expectations of the students and scaffolding. You've got to actually scaffold the students into that, you know. I'm sure you're aware of the funding situation with universities at the moment. You might have 200 students in a subject; you've got one permanent staff member and the rest are sessional people you bring in. That's a positive thing in a way because you might be bringing practising teachers in. We usually are, so there's the plus. The downside is that it's very difficult to get the academic rigour into the adult level—knowing how to teach them to scaffold those young people in, do the research skills and write a good essay. It's full-on teaching at university.

In first year I put in a program. In our first assignment we have a really high expectation but I give them resubmits. I go through them—they are detailed and detailed—to show them how to work it and how to research properly. I send them to the academic study skills course. The usage of academic skills has just gone up with people working through them, so it's a very high scaffolding into being able to do that. I think we could do a lot more. I will say publicly and privately that we produce a wonderful quality student—and we get feedback about that,—but I have no doubt that we could do a lot more.

THE CHAIR: Do you have a view on things that are going on within the schools, or within the curriculum, which could be taken out?

Dr Trimingham Jack: You've got the problem with the secondary level because you've got those discipline areas. One of the things I was thinking of was the whole pastoral care issue. I think that is a really big issue in the secondary level. We don't train our students for it. I trained for pastoral care in another university, so I've got that repertoire of skills. To train somebody properly, you don't do that in a one-off thing. It's quite demanding to be able to do that.

We have quite a lot of physical education students there. I was just thinking: what if you changed the requirements in the school sector so they could come in with one teaching discipline and a stream of pastoral care? What if you did that for a group of secondary students? We've got a community education program at our university, so we could deliver that. We've got the expertise to do that without even getting more people there. So there's something. You could bring in a stream of people who have—

MR PRATT: People who have specialist skills, where you've got a teacher specialising in both PE and pastoral care.

Dr Trimingham Jack: Exactly.

MR PRATT: People who provide a pastoral care capability in a school.

Dr Trimingham Jack: Yes; absolutely.

MR PRATT: On a ratio of one: five or six other teachers, perhaps, to be able to back those teachers up.

Dr Trimingham Jack: Yes. In a way the Catholic system does that. I've worked in the Catholic system and they've got that there. They do it in religious education—they build in the pastoral care aspect. But that doesn't count in the public system here. We can't have it as a second string to our students' bows in the government system because religious education is not taught.

MR PRATT: Do you think that this would add an important capability and take some of the load off other teachers who now have an increasing demand put on them by society to take on board these pastoral care duties?

Dr Trimingham Jack: Absolutely. I think it would be a great idea. As I said, I've spent some time thinking about how you would do that. I think that would be a perfect area. They'd have to have quite a bit of discipline. They'd have to be taught it. There are interpersonal skills and all those kinds of things; but I think it would be a great asset to the system. They'd have to be aware of the fact that they'd need to free their time up to do that.

THE CHAIR: You're not just suggesting that for PE, you're talking about other subjects?

MR PRATT: Or a particular skill.

MS DUNDAS: Or you're thinking about people specialising in PE or pastoral care. PE requires specific training in respect of body management, and pastoral care requires specific training.

Dr Trimingham Jack: I'm interested. I just thought about the fact that those people often have really good relationships with the young people. They often end up doing a lot of ad hoc pastoral care. But, as they haven't got the training, I'm not entirely comfortable with them doing it.

MR PRATT: They exercise a role model thing in PE anyway, don't they?

Dr Trimingham Jack: Yes, that's right.

MR PRATT: So they tend to be more—

Dr Trimingham Jack: As to whether you could fit it in with that stream or not, I'd have to go back and think. I know they have to take a minor, so the minor subject could be pastoral care. The department would have to change its requirements.

MS DUNDAS: Someone else said there was an email in relation to some specific questions in relation to costs, numbers and those kinds of things. Will we be able to get answers to those questions?

Dr Trimingham Jack: Yes. Do you want me to email you? Is that what you asked me? Yes, I can give you the answers. I can't give you an exact cost of doing a degree, but I can say pretty closely that a full-time year is $3,768. That would cost 25 per cent less if they paid the HECS fee straight up. If they're doing a two-year degree it costs twice that and if they're doing a four-year degree it costs four times that. Then they have to pay $135 per semester for the amenities and services fees. That's the cost of the degree.

You were asking about scholarships. We have $670,000 worth of scholarships for undergraduates in our university but they're not targeted specifically to teaching. Most of them are general ones; a lot of them are to do with equity—rural issues, young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds and indigenous people. Some scholarships are given automatically to the top UAIs in the ACT. They automatically get those as well if they go into teaching, but the really top UAIs tend not to go into teaching. As to how many people we took in, that was in the submission I gave you originally. If you go back and look at those figures in the original submission, you will see that the intake was 4.3. It has all the intakes for 2004.

THE CHAIR: Did we ask you last time about the number of graduates as well—not just the people coming in?

Dr Trimingham Jack: I thought I had that in there.

THE CHAIR: I'll just refresh my memory.

Dr Trimingham Jack: I'm not sure whether I gave you that or not. I think I might have had that for the second lot, but then we never got onto talking about it.

THE CHAIR: On page 4 you've got "Anticipated numbers for graduation in 2004."

Dr Trimingham Jack: That's it; yes.

THE CHAIR: We might finish there. Thank you very much for coming back again. We will be sending you a copy of the transcript to proof; and we'll keep you informed of the inquiry and when the report comes out.

Dr Trimingham Jack: I would love to read it. You asked me about the curriculum. I gave you some information but I might leave this with you. It's got our flyer in it. You can have a look at that and see exactly what is there—although it's under review at the moment so it will have some changes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MARK HOGAN and

CAROLYN BROADBENT

were called.

THE CHAIR: Do you require me to read the card to you again or do you remember, from the last time you were here, what I read out about responsibilities?

Mr Hogan: I remember.

Dr Broadbent: I remember.

THE CHAIR: Good. We have sent some questions to you. Steve or Ros, did you want to start with your questions?

MR PRATT: Yes.

Dr Broadbent: Could I just record that I didn't receive the questions, or some of the questions, until late yesterday afternoon. I have just seen these now for the first time.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Dr Broadbent: I had some indication but I haven't actually seen them.

MR PRATT: Right. I would like to ask you a question about the choked curriculum issue. What, in your experience, do you understand to be the load on teachers? Is this an issue? Is the curriculum choked? Do you think you would like to see those responsible for designing school curriculum perhaps free up some capacity to allow teachers to perform to a better standard? Is that an issue or is that just a furphy?

Dr Broadbent: Well, Mark might answer that. You are, I think, with the school situation and I am with the universities.

MR PRATT: You could probably both give an angle on that.

MS DUNDAS: Is the school curriculum so choked that it means that the university curriculum is getting choked?

MR PRATT: As well, yes.

MS DUNDAS: That is another way of putting the question.

Mr Hogan: Yes, certainly from the point of view of the school curriculum. There is a lot of that issue of social agenda items being pursued through the traditional curriculum process and certainly a lot of skill-based development and emphasis on numeracy and literacy. So, in balancing out the needs to get children to a certain level of skill development and obviously acquiring knowledge and experience and interpersonal communication skills along the way, that is leading to a very choked curriculum because there is also a certain body of knowledge that is expected to be communicated in the

teaching process itself.

We are finding that we have to shift more to the capacity to be able to use information and the knowledge that is available, so it is those skills of being able to use it, as opposed to the skills of retaining extensive slabs of knowledge. But that then obviously produces it's own pressures on the undergraduate training of the teachers. We can address some of it in the postgraduate area but certainly the undergraduate area is a different issue for us.

Dr Broadbent: Yes, I think that is certainly the case. I think one of the big issues is the breadth versus the depth in any area. So, given the amount of information, the number of curriculum areas, the aspects that we believe should be covered to prepare pre-service teachers adequately for schools means that you are making decisions all the time about units to be offered, development of new courses and ensuring that the courses are up to date, cutting edge, in relation to the needs of teachers in the schools.

I think there is certainly a difficulty when you look at the number of areas that you feel should be covered and then providing sufficient opportunity for students to pursue that particular area in sufficient depth to ensure that they are well prepared.

MS DUNDAS: Is it a circular problem in a sense, that what is being demanded of teachers is putting increased demand on what is being demanded by the universities to produce? Is there a way to break that impasse?

Dr Broadbent: I think universities and schools, as you say, reflect happenings within each area. We are responsive to curriculum innovation, for instance, changes in pedagogy that might be occurring—such as in the Queensland New Basics—and that will be reflected in the types of things that we will be dealing with at university. It will also generate all sorts of academic discussions about the nature of our course and is our course responsive to these changing trends within the school system itself. It does always create difficulties, and there will also be different perspectives on what is regarded as important in education.

MS DUNDAS: Mr Hogan, in terms of what schools are being asked to do and the number of teachers that are available to do that, have you found that schools are actually cutting some aspects of the curriculum just because they don't have the expertise to meet it, or are continually having to revise the things that they can offer students because the expertise isn't there?

Mr Hogan: No, not yet. But that doesn't mean to say that it may not be the case in a few years time if teacher shortages in specialist areas increase the way they tend to be increasing. As I indicated at the last attendance, we managed to fill all vacant positions, including the special areas at secondary level, and that includes resource teaching as well in primary levels.

Where I think we have to trim around the edges is in the number of electives that we may be able to offer in secondary schools, because that is partly due to student demand but it is also partly the ability to find appropriate staff for small clientele-type courses.

MS DUNDAS: So what specific electives would you be talking about?

Mr Hogan: That can have its biggest impact in issues like certain languages apart from mainstream European or mainstream Asian languages; certainly in some of the other areas around the dramatic arts possibilities and dance, for instance. It may not be possible to be able to provide a load for a teacher apart from a part-time load. And a decision to make things part-time is less attractive to teachers unless they find enough load from a number of places to be able to give themselves a full-time position.

MS DUNDAS: It is bringing some more problems in ICT and technology?

Mr Hogan: That's correct, yes. To a certain extent you can get around that with employing people to start with while they retrain as a teacher, so they pick up their teaching qualification. So there is some capacity to do that. And it's not something we like doing because we want to make sure that we have a good teacher first, not just a specialist who really can't relate to the students in the day-to-day process of teaching.

MS DUNDAS: Can you explain how that works. So you might have a computer expert that you bring in on contract and they are actually in a classroom situation while being trained on how to do a classroom situation, or—

Mr Hogan: Normally we wouldn't bring someone in and then ask them to train. They would already be on their way to training, part-way through.

MS DUNDAS: Okay, so they might be halfway through their course but not completed.

Mr Hogan: A diploma of education or somewhere, yes, in which case we would get them a conditional classification as a teacher, subject to their satisfactory performance and also their appraisal in the role itself, their teaching performances as well.

MS DUNDAS: So they wouldn't be full-time in a classroom until they completed that training?

Mr Hogan: They would be in a supervised capacity until that was completed, yes.

THE CHAIR: I would like to ask about the practicum experience—we talked a little bit about this last time. Looking at your submission you have said that a varied field experience program is provided. You said that the "field experience program has components virtually in each year of the course, culminating in an extended block of practicum in the final year of study, which is designed to facilitate the graduates entry into the teaching profession". I understand from a previous speaker from the University of Canberra that their students are required to do 100 days of practicum if they are doing a bachelor four-year qualification. Can you tell me how many they are doing. I think I might have asked some of these questions previously—I am sorry if I am repeating the questions that I have asked.

How much are they actually doing for a bachelor qualification in terms of practicum, and are they actually doing a block before they go into their final year? Maybe I am misreading your submission but the impression that I got is that they don't do an extended block of practicum until their final year. Is that correct?

Dr Broadbent: No.

THE CHAIR: No, okay.

Dr Broadbent: Well, perhaps they don't do an extended block, but there is a sequential development over the four-year program. In the first year students are in the schools for 12 days observing, focused observations. In the second year there are five. This year there are five. It varies. Sometimes it might be four or it might be six ongoing days that are presented at the same time as a professional studies unit, followed by a block of approximately 18 days—that varies sometimes—in the June/July period. In level 2, students go into schools. It is not 18 days for the block with the five before it. It depends on the number of days before it. The details are in here, so that students have completed, overall, approximately 20 days in level 2.

In level 3, students go into the schools for a block period, approximately 3½ weeks. And then, in the fourth year they have 40 days of field experience, which is the eight-week extended practicum.

THE CHAIR: How does that work? Do you think it is actually enough? Do you think it is appropriate that they have such a large block at the end and that the blocks beforehand are not quite as extended in the earlier years?

Dr Broadbent: We have tried many models over the years and we try to increase the number of days wherever possible across all units. That is why I hesitate a little in talking numbers because we try to grab as many as we possibly can, whether they be observation, professional development weeks built in and embedded within the professional studies units.

There has been some talk about bringing two weeks back from the level 4 into either level 2 or level 3. We are following the set pattern at the moment that was developed with the design of the bachelor of education, but there is probably an opportunity there for some flexibility and change.

At the moment, schools and students seem to respond very positively to that extended practicum in the fourth year. And I think what we are also trying to do is encourage students to have school-based experiences within the academic program. So while it is not officially field experience, or professional practice, it is experience within the school and interacting with teachers and children.

As I also mentioned, there was the community learning program, which is another five days which is done throughout the level 3 year. We would all love more. Students would certainly love to have more experiences in the schools. I think we have all agreed, staff have agreed, that we will try to find as many opportunities as we can to have students interacting with people from the school. So we are bringing people in to talk to students and there may be excursions to schools, there may be projects, research-based projects, that take students out into the schools.

THE CHAIR: Can I ask as well: do you do graduate surveys to actually keep track of whether or not the teachers are remaining once they have graduated; when the students have graduated and become teachers, if they are remaining within the teaching profession? Do you do any of those sorts of surveys?

Dr Broadbent: You did ask that question before about the graduate surveys and there is a sort of a formal survey that is sent out to all exiting students, I believe. We have, in fact, as I mentioned last time, been discussing the possibility of tracking students. I believe—and I have only heard this from the head of school in discussion—that there is a possibility of the faculty developing it's own sort of survey questionnaire. But at this stage I don't know the details of that.

I think it is important for us to understand what is happening to our students, where they are going. And we are trying, I think, in this new faculty approach, to gain more feedback from principals and schools so that we can ensure that what we are doing is meeting the needs of the various systems and sectors into which our students are going.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hogan, are you able to tell me—and I apologise if I have asked this; I didn't refresh my memory by looking at what I asked last time—if the Catholic Education Office does exit surveys of teachers leaving the system?

Mr Hogan: Yes. We do exit surveys at the point of exit rather than at the end of the year or the beginning of the year, and usually it is based on what is either said in a letter of resignation or a reason given for a move. Both our principals and the CEO directly collect that information so that we have some idea. Apart from retirements, or retirements due to ill health or something like that, the bulk of people who leave the system leave the ACT. So they actually "exit" exit, in a sense. They are lost to the ACT because they move interstate.

THE CHAIR: Have you collated that information?

Mr Hogan: Yes, the information from last year. We have not collated any for this year yet, but it would be the information from last year that I could forward through.

THE CHAIR: Have you been keeping track? Is there a rising trend of teachers leaving, do you believe? I am obviously not talking about people who are going interstate but people leaving the profession.

Mr Hogan: Apart from those retiring, and it has slightly increased because of our age profile over the years. If there was any other sort of trend it would be a trend around about the five years out to eight to nine years out of teachers who only stay for a little while and then leave. They usually leave to travel and they don't always come back. Sometimes they do.

MR PRATT: This is eight to nine?

THE CHAIR: Five years out.

Mr Hogan: Five years out, so they have had five years of teaching and then they go on a journey somewhere.

MR PRATT: That five-year hump again.

Mr Hogan: Yes. And the other one is around about nine. So they have had around about

eight or nine years and usually they are in their 30s by then.

THE CHAIR: Do you think there is a danger zone within the first five years of graduates dropping out and not feeling that it's for them, or not feeling supported that they can do it because it's too hard?

Mr Hogan: I would say less because they think it's all too hard. I think, if anything, they have just put so much energy into it that they don't actually look after themselves probably as well as they might.

MR PRATT: A bit of burnout.

Mr Hogan: So they do get a little bit of burnout.

MR PRATT: Enthusiastic burnout.

Mr Hogan: They are into everything that is going on, whether it be school sports teams or whatever. They are just very active people.

MR PRATT: I have a question following on from Karin's question. It overlaps a question I asked you last time about mentoring, et cetera. In terms of this danger period concerning the new teachers that we would all like to see retained in our systems reaching the four to five-year mark, what resources or what capacity could be provided to try to improve that retention at that hump period? Is it only mentoring, or is it something more?

Mr Hogan: I think mentoring is still the best chance because, if the mentoring is done from the very beginning of their starting in a school and is done well, a lot of the other issues about things building up on them and overextending themselves will be addressed along the right way. It's the young teachers who perhaps don't use the mentoring system well enough; they just like to take on every cause that is there and be involved in every activity, every program and so on. They're the ones that you really have to start to limit the number of things they get into. And then you've got the possibility of them getting a bit frustrated about that as well.

People entering education nowadays really do want to be putting it out in a sense, giving their energy and really serving. By and large, they are very committed people and they are very deliberately so. They like to take a stand on things. They like to get involved in pastoral care and sometimes that can lead to other pressures beyond the working day where they're constantly thinking about things. That would be true for most teachers everywhere, I think, in the sense that it's that sort of profession. The service edge is really coming through much more strongly.

MS DUNDAS: I want to change the topic for a little bit. In terms of the secondary schools that you have and their ability to teach vocational education and training courses, is that a focus in the secondary schools in the Catholic education system? Are they trying to impart certificates to their students?

Mr Hogan: Yes, the four systemic schools do, and I'm aware that the other three, the congregational schools, also have fairly strong vocational programs. There's also a lot of

cooperation so that they don't duplicate unnecessarily with each other in that, but there are also some cooperative adventures and skill centres using some Commonwealth funding. There are also some issues with the local government colleges in regard to that.

MS DUNDAS: In terms of the training that the VET teachers have, how are they trained? Where are they getting their certificate IVs in terms of being able to impart?

Mr Hogan: It depends on where their skills originated and their original teacher training. Some have picked up training in those areas, so they've actually undertaken certificate courses over time. Others have come in from industry and been part of the conditional classification thing I mentioned before, and they have actually joined the teaching profession at the vocational end and are working in that area. There is also the return to industry training that we do to make sure that their accreditation status is up-to-date. They come from a variety of places, in a sense.

MS DUNDAS: I note that Signadou is going to offer, from 2005, a secondary postgraduate course. Will that course involve certificate IVs so that the teachers have the ability to take on VET courses?

Mr Hogan: I would say that that is probably a bit limited from the point of view of what we might be able to do in the ACT, partly because of the infrastructure that the local campus is able to offer, and we would have to investigate the possibility of perhaps using some school facilities to provide the training environment, whether it is heavy equipment or sophisticated ICT.

THE CHAIR: I think that Ms Dundas is talking specifically about the certificate IV workplace assessment and training course, which is a separate course and doesn't actually require equipment to be used. It is a specific certificate course which provides for teaching vocational courses, as such.

Mr Hogan: Yes. We would be looking at that, too, as another augmentation of whatever we're attempting to do. Our original conception was to allow people to retrain in the secondary area, or to shift specialties. Certainly, picking up the vocational education thing would be a useful thing for us to do.

MS DUNDAS: In these schools, are vocational education teachers in demand? Are you facing a shortage in key areas there?

Mr Hogan: They are in demand. We don't actually have real shortages in those areas yet, but that's possible.

THE CHAIR: In your submission you say that special units are offered and one of them is in teaching students with special needs, so that that gives a broad understanding of special needs students. Because the CEO does actually deal with and its schools does have a large proportion of students who do have a disability, how does the CEO deal with, say, teaching autistic students or teaching deaf students? Do you bring in teachers who are specially trained?

Mr Hogan: If we're able to recruit somebody who is able to provide that specialty, we do, but we also provide general classroom teachers, teacher assistants and resource

teachers with specialist training in those areas. We have in-service programs that deal with that and pick up the specialist skills required for particular children with a specific special need. It requires greater than usual resourcing.

MR PRATT: We have heard elsewhere in this inquiry about pastoral care. I asked you about it last time, too, and you gave some quite interesting answers about that whole subject area. A recommendation has been made that a way of building in capacity in the government school sector—I'm going to make a comparison here; I want to see what happens here—is that perhaps a specialisation might be created in the public sector where PE teaching might become a broader skill, taking on pastoral care; that is, a specialist teacher who is a PE teacher and also a pastoral carer. In the government sector it might be proposed that they would back up other teachers, add some capacity. Is that an issue in your schooling sector, or do you have a different regime where that cancels out that sort of requirement?

Mr Hogan: We have our usual system of KLA coordinators; they look after subject areas. We also have a system in place in the ACT secondary area as well where we will have at least one year coordinator for every year. In some cases that may be one and a half positions. In very large schools we might have two if we have a two-campus school.

MR PRATT: Per year?

Mr Hogan: Per year level, yes, so it's anywhere from six to nine to 12, depending on the size of the school. They coordinate with classroom teachers in the pastoral response that is needed for particular students and also in the general pastoral outreach program. So at any time there is contact between a class teacher and a group or class, be it a tutor group or linked up with the house structures within the colleges, vertical house structures usually. That gives the capacity there for year 12s and year 7s, all the way through there, to have a closer pastoral framework of peer support and also buddy systems and various ways of doing that.

Each college has a structured pastoral program with designated staff to lead and coordinate that. Those coordinators also are the frontline people in regard to family liaison as may be needed for that particular student. The coordinators in the year or pastoral groups have an assistant principal as part of their admin support and feeding issues through to the college executive. So there would be an assistant principal assigned to work with the pastoral coordinators, the year coordinators.

MS DUNDAS: Did you say that there was a lot of focus on actual peer support as opposed to teacher support?

Mr Hogan: Peer support amongst the students, the vertical house groups where you have the younger students with the senior students for particular activities. Sport is often a good way of doing that, or social activities at the school level. There is encouragement and there is also training provided for senior students to act as peer support for the younger students. That has a number of interesting positive benefits in terms of student management, playground behaviour and various things like that where you can have the older students looking after the younger ones in times of need.

MR PRATT: A buddy system.

Mr Hogan: Yes.

MR PRATT: As to older teachers being attracted back into the system as relief teachers, et cetera, are you able to attract retired teachers back? Is that what you desire to do or is that not an issue?

Mr Hogan: What most of them do is that, once they've made a decision to retire and they finish up, they immediately register with us as a casual teacher and then they choose the days and the jobs that they want to do. So they're available on call.

THE CHAIR: We have heard from the AEU, in regard to the public system, that the retired teachers are very selective about where they go. Would you say that the same thing happened within the Catholic system?

Mr Hogan: It tends to be, yes. They have their favourite schools. That's largely because they have come from those schools as teaching staff, or they like the particular ethos of the school or the programs that are offered.

THE CHAIR: At any point is it related to being seen as going for the easier life?

MR PRATT: Less stressful teaching.

THE CHAIR: Yes, less stressful teaching. The comment has been made that the lower socioeconomic areas have the harder schools and those are the areas that the retired teachers in the public system avoid because it is too hard there and they want an easy life. They've retired and they're just making a bit of extra money.

Mr Hogan: Yes, that could be true of individual motivation. If you've ever taken an extra class, being a teacher by background, they're not the sorts of classes you enjoy even if you're on the payroll as a full-time teacher. If a casual teacher doesn't treat the class as a class to be taught, or at least a class to be managed through the programs being left by the teacher, they find that it's an extremely difficult role to fill for 40 minutes or an hour. So it's not really an easy life option. Certainly, if they pick schools that they thought were easy, or the discipline was good and so on, it could lead to pressures in getting relief staff for other schools.

MR PRATT: Against that question that Karin raised and your answer to it, how does the CEO view retired relief teaching as a resource? Is it a valuable resource, or is it one that you don't concentrate on that much in terms of improving your own capacities?

Mr Hogan: Our system wouldn't suddenly forget about those people, because they are still very much a valued resource. They have a strong role to play in terms of mentoring staff as well, just being a wise person on staff when they come in. They can have a settling influence, which is all very good. We see that anybody who is going through their different career points, their different transition points, and a lot of them realise that if they cut off completely, they really do fall apart, so a number of the retired teachers definitely want to come back and they keep coming back, sometimes four or five days at a time in a week. So they're effectively full time in a sense, but they're no longer permanent.

THE CHAIR: Looking at the head count by age range on page 7 of your submission, you have a lower amount in comparison with the public system in terms of the number going through who are getting close to the 50 to 55 age group. In the 51 to 60 age group, of your total, you have 213, which, having done the calculations, worked out to be about 22 per cent of your teaching population. That is close to a quarter of your population. Surely it must be a bit of concern for you that you have such a large number who are heading towards retirement.

Mr Hogan: Yes, that's the group we have. Consequently, we're trying to recruit at a younger age as well as they're being replaced. I did mention a career change program which is helping that. But we're very aware of our situation and I'm sure other system authorities in various parts of Australia are in the same spot, so you're looking very carefully at those figures each time and the more that can be done to keep people in the work force longer, because they're enjoying their work and aren't retiring early because they're not enjoying their work, and have them engaged in some shape or form is what we're after. We don't want people to work beyond their use-by date, either, but we respect their needs to be able to work as they wish. We can accommodate most things there, including part time or job sharing.

Dr Broadbent: May I add something to that just in terms of retired teachers being a valued resource, to say that as part of our field experience program we have a team of ACU representatives who visit schools who are part of the mentoring process for young people in schools during their field experience. As part of that team we have a number of retired teachers who are part of the team to assist us with that supervisory role.

MR PRATT: I have a question about a controversial subject in the education debate. Is gender an issue in your primary schools? Does the CEO look for additional male teachers in terms of the make-up at the moment across its primary school sectors, or is that not an issue?

Mr Hogan: On an individual school level it might be, but we don't have an affirmative recruitment policy which says males first, nor do we have one that says females first. I think we would take a similar position as the government sector. We're after good teachers first and foremost because they're the ones in front of our children and the gender is a secondary question to that. However, if there were a specific need for a particular type of teacher matching a certain profile for a school, we would try and recruit for that school on that basis. But that really depends on programs being offered, or the perceived need, or perhaps it reflects a need in the community profile at that school for a certain type of teacher.

THE CHAIR: On that note, we will finish. Thank you very much for your attendance again. Sorry, do you want to say something?

Dr Broadbent: I was just going to give you, if I could, for the record the number of days for the field experience to ensure that it's an accurate record. Level 1, 12 days. Level 2, five ongoing days and a block practicum of 16 days. Level 3, a block practicum of 18 days and a community learning program of five days. Level 4, an extended block of 40 days.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

Dr Broadbent: Just to correct the record before, which was a little abstract.

Mr Hogan: Can I add on the questions that were emailed to us that we'll try to get a written response to you as soon as possible.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for making yourselves available for our second run.

The committee adjourned at 12.02 pm.