

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

(Reference: Teacher numbers and recruitment)

Members:

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

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

TUESDAY, 8 JUNE 2004

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

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents relevant to this inquiry which have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the committee office of the Legislative Assembly (Ph: 6205 0127)

The committee met at 10.24 am.

KATY GALLAGHER,

ANNE THOMAS and

MICHAEL BATEMAN

were called.

THE CHAIR: Good morning, Minister and departmental officials. I will just read the blurb and then we will get going. 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. For the benefit of Hansard, when you first start speaking could you introduce yourself and state the position in which you appear today.

Minister, thank you for your attendance today and that of your officials. I would like to thank you in advance for allowing Mr Bateman to come back on the 25th and give us more information.

Ms Gallagher: He lobbied me strongly on that, on his desire to be—

THE CHAIR: Okay, and make sure that the Chief Minister's Department is getting it right. And thanks also to the department for putting in its very extensive submission earlier on. We do appreciate it in our inquiry. Minister, or Ms Thomas or anybody else, do you wish to make an opening statement or opening comment?

Ms Gallagher: Thank you, Madam Chair. Katy Gallagher, Minister for Education and Training. I am conscious of the fact that you have already had a session with officials for the purposes of this inquiry. I think perhaps, considering the time, we are happy to move straight to questions.

THE CHAIR: All right. We sent through some questions on scholarships in advance so that we could let you know specifically some areas we would be interested in talking about. Can you tell us how many scholarships for students currently studying to be teachers the department currently funds?

Ms Gallagher: The department doesn't fund any scholarships for students studying to be teachers but it does fund re-training programs for current teachers. You may be aware that I think earlier this year—it is all melding into one—15 teachers were completing the maths retraining program and a number of teachers were involved in a school counsellor program training to be school counsellors. I don't know if Michael or Anne wants to add to that?

Ms Thomas: Anne Thomas, Executive Director, Resource Management. Chair, the department does fund two what we call Charlie Perkins scholarships in conjunction with

the University of Canberra. But they are not specifically for teaching as such. They can be, but essentially they are targeted at undergraduate indigenous students and we support them to the tune of I think about \$2,000 to pursue their tertiary study. But that can be in any field and that is two scholarships annually.

THE CHAIR: Have you given any consideration to providing some form of financial support in order to encourage people into the teaching profession?

Ms Gallagher: That is probably a question for me. The government has not at this stage. There has not been any problem, particularly if we look at the University of Canberra, with people having interests in teaching or our ability to attract those graduates from the University of Canberra to teaching jobs in the ACT.

It is something I think the Commonwealth government has a view on in relation to male teachers, which this government has not supported, providing some \$2,000 scholarships towards enticing men to do, I think, their second year of study. From memory, I think they have to complete their first year. At this stage we haven't, particularly because there has not been any obvious need to do that.

MS DUNDAS: How many scholarships that you provide for re-training and allowing teachers to expand their skills into maths and counselling are currently operating?

Ms Thomas: There are 15 teachers completing the maths re-training program, as I think the minister said, and eight involved in the school counsellor preparatory program. In addition to that, the former teacher fellowship program supported—we have not got the exact number—well over 100 teachers to do postgraduate study of one form or another over the last two or three years. So there have been I suppose what you would call perhaps mini-scholarships, mini-fellowships, awarded to a range of teachers throughout the system. They submitted requests for support and they were given that through the teacher fellowship program.

MS DUNDAS: And when a teacher takes on a scholarship or a fellowship, are they completely taken off line out of the school or are they part time? How does it work with their current teaching load?

Ms Thomas: It depends on the nature of the program. The maths 3 training program is essentially a full-time program, although the teachers do spend some time in high schools as part of the practical aspects of the course. But essentially they are on full pay off line from their previous normal job.

Ms Gallagher: Because they are all primary school teachers, aren't they?

Ms Thomas: Yes, they are.

Ms Gallagher: They are primary that we are trying to encourage into high school.

Ms Thomas: That's right.

THE CHAIR: How many places are offered in the retraining? You might have said that.

Ms Thomas: Fifteen.

Ms Gallagher: This is the first round as well. Fifteen—I think that’s first round.

THE CHAIR: And were they all taken up?

Ms Thomas: Yes. It is essentially to address the tight labour market for maths teachers. And so rather than simply try to recruit new maths teachers into our system—which we will do—we, in conjunction with the University of Canberra, developed a program whereby we would take experienced primary teachers and retrain them as maths teachers who would be able to teach mathematics up to year 10. Hopefully that will be successful. We understand that apparently the teachers involved in the program are enjoying getting back to maths.

MS DUNDAS: And with the school counsellor program, are the teachers offline there as well?

Ms Thomas: I might stand to be corrected but perhaps Michael can answer that question.

Mr Bateman: Michael Bateman, Director, Human Resources. No, they are not. It is not the same sort of program in the way we fund it. I guess the teaching one was a little bit novel for us in lots of ways and it is the first one where we have actually off-lined people completely. At our last attendance we talked about the autism training program previous to these ones and it was similar to the counselling one where people were still working and studying.

THE CHAIR: How dire is the situation with maths teachers at the moment?

Mr Bateman: It is difficult to assess. We get information from principals that a number of teachers who are teaching mathematics are not technically qualified and it’s a way of trying to address some of those issues by making sure that those people who may end up teaching mathematics, particularly in the middle school area coming out of primary school into high school, have some basis in mathematics.

Generally, primary school teachers will move into secondary and teach mathematics because they have an interest in mathematics or have done well in mathematics previously. And I guess what we may lose a little bit in depth of knowledge we pick up in good pedagogy.

THE CHAIR: You said that you get reports that there are unqualified people teaching mathematics. Could you give me a rough idea—a very rough idea, obviously—of how much that is happening?

Mr Bateman: I don’t think it’s a great number in that, as I said, a lot of them have a basis in mathematics. It may be a second string in their qualifications, and they haven’t used it for a long time. A lot of PE teachers will include some maths, and economics teachers will include maths in their degrees and so on. So they have got some basis. It is just that technically, I guess, maths is not their main major in their qualifications. Principals will make those decisions at the school level, and we don’t necessarily know who is teaching mathematics or teaching whatever at the time. So people make those

assessments on the ground rather than at our level.

THE CHAIR: And the intention is to continue the retraining program into mathematics and science?

Ms Thomas: We will assess the maths retraining program and those newly trained teachers will be placed into schools as part of our normal placement round for teachers that takes place at the end of each year. I guess we will make an assessment about whether we feel we need to retrain another cohort of 15 or 20 teachers. I think we need to assess the success of that before we commit, because it is quite an expensive program, as you would appreciate. There are course fees. As well, taking that number of teachers off line full time is an expensive business. So we will need to assess that in the light of the supply of maths teachers we are able to recruit.

MS DUNDAS: And is that program run at the University of Canberra?

Mr Bateman: Yes. It was particularly developed for us. We had it developed with the University of Canberra to suit our needs. As Anne previously said, it is not just that they go to university and do the study. We also work with them on site at our Higgins facility. We do some basic maths with them. We have got a maths teacher who is with them and they spend time in schools. So it is not going out and becoming a student again. It is to do with the culture of moving into a high school and those other things. We are trying to deal with the total package rather than just the study.

THE CHAIR: How long did you say it ran for?

Ms Thomas: Essentially six months.

THE CHAIR: Six months, okay.

MS DUNDAS: Ms MacDonald opened up the question: are there similar problems in the sciences—physics, chemistry and biology?

Mr Bateman: In terms of our recruitment at the end of last year, general science I think we are strong enough in. There will be, I think, a developing problem in some of the specialist areas that you have identified, particularly at the higher levels, for us in the future. One of the issues we have got to work out with teacher recruitment is that there are areas in the higher end of the sciences where we have one or two teachers and our capacity to attract at the right time to replace those people will be tested.

MS DUNDAS: By higher end, do you mean years 11 and 12 or years 9 and 10?

Mr Bateman: There will be some colleges that may offer some fairly advanced astronomy and it might only be one college, so there is one teacher. At some point we will have to make a decision about whether we replace that person or whether the course is too specific to that college and that person that we can't replace them. So there will be some decisions we will have to make in the future how we handle that.

MR PRATT: Will that decision be based also on where ACT colleges are specialising in these things, and therefore concentrating specialisation, because you can't afford to

disperse the—

Mr Bateman: Lots of decisions will have to be made as to how we manage that. The problem with recruiting in anticipation is we don't know when they are going to go.

MS DUNDAS: Well there is nothing wrong with having lots of astronomy teachers through the system.

Mr Bateman: That's right. We do bulk recruitments, so we are looking to recruit to replace the more common elements of it. The difficulty is always the specialisations.

THE CHAIR: You are going to reassess that, which makes sense obviously, to see whether or not you need more teachers in that. If you decide that you need to have more, will you give consideration to just doing it through the primary schools again or would you look further afield, say to CIT or within general industry? Obviously general industry is a different kettle of fish, because you have got to actually then train people to be teachers as well.

Ms Gallagher: It's a longer investment.

Ms Thomas: I don't think we would rule out any particular strategy. It is a matter of, I guess, making an assessment about what our needs will be for next year certainly, and the year after that probably, and deciding what is the most effective way of meeting those needs. But there are obviously pools of eligible people around.

Ms Gallagher: We will look at what happens with this mass retraining. It was an innovative idea. There is no doubt that there are more primary school trained teachers around to pick from and when you are looking at the costs involved, that does have to be considered.

But retraining primary school teachers after a certain period of time and paying for their fees and their release from work is also a reward for loyalty to the ACT. It is a great benefit to the teachers and, of course, great benefit to the department when they take on those jobs within the high school. Considering some of the areas of workforce shortage, if it does work, it is probably something that we would like to do more of. But if we extend it, and extend it out of maths, it would need to be funded through an initiative, because it does then start to take on more.

MR PRATT: So you will have your first good idea on whether this pilot project is working in seven or eight months time?

Ms Gallagher: No. This first intake should nearly be finished, shouldn't it?

Ms Thomas: Yes.

MR PRATT: Okay. I probably missed that earlier.

Ms Gallagher: I don't think we mentioned, Mr Pratt, that it had started. We did say it was about a six-month course but it did start earlier this year, I think.

Mr Bateman: We have had an ex-president of the Australian Mathematics Association looking at the program and he has interviewed the people involved, both school based and the people in the program, and produced a preliminary report. He will then have another look at it post-graduation and so on. I think, at the national level, that association in particular is a little interested in what is happening.

MR PRATT: How this one flies.

THE CHAIR: What is the cost to do the retraining of the teachers?

Ms Thomas: That is a good question. There is obviously the salary cost of the individual teacher. I must confess, Ms MacDonald, I don't know, but Michael or Steve may.

Mr Bateman: Probably of the order of, when we take in salary costs and fees and other things, half a million dollars or more.

THE CHAIR: Per teacher?

Ms Thomas: No, the whole program.

Mr Bateman: No. Not per teacher, no.

THE CHAIR: Per teacher. I was about to say that's a lot of money. It made my heart stop and the minister's start. I apologise.

Mr Bateman: I think the minister nearly had a heart attack just then.

Ms Gallagher: Yes, I did, too. I was thinking, "What? They have found that internally?"

THE CHAIR: It's like, where did they get that money from?

MR PRATT: It is usually me who makes those outrageous—

Ms Gallagher: Yes, I know.

MS DUNDAS: And that money is separate to all of the PD funds that are currently floating around? It is separate funding?

Ms Gallagher: Yes.

Mr Bateman: Yes. Part of it is coming out of the PD funding arrangement. The fee structure and some of those things are funded from the professional learning fund, but the salary costs et cetera are through a government initiative.

MS DUNDAS: Okay. On how the professional learning and professional development are ongoing in schools, your submission notes that schools are meant to provide four days of teacher professional learning and that teachers are meant to be accessing the development fund. Is that actually progressing? It was a problem in the past that teachers just were not able to access the professional development fund because of demands on them.

Ms Thomas: The professional learning fund isn't particularly accessed by individual teachers. It is more by schools and by areas of the department or professional associations or whatever that will bid for funds from the professional learning fund to support some professional development activities, professional learning activities, for teachers. But at the school level, Ms Dundas, most schools, if not all of them, would have their own PD funds, and those funds, as I understand it, in most schools are available to individual teachers to support their own learning.

MS DUNDAS: But do you have any idea about whether or not it is being accessed and actually being used and teachers are having the ability to take the time off to re-evaluate their professional skills?

Ms Gallagher: They are required to have a minimum of five days. Four of those days, I think, have to be taken in stand-down, and that is usually the week before school resumes. Is that right?

Ms Thomas: Yes. Or it could be in stand-down during the year, but usually before, yes.

Ms Gallagher: Teachers return a few days before and access the training through that time and then an additional day at least through the school year. My understanding is that teachers are accessing that time. A centre for teaching and learning has just been officially opened, and I think that is going to be a great resource, too, for teachers to go to. Also, that centre will be able to do some analysis of what training teachers want and what learning and professional development they need. I think it is probably worth the committee having a look at the centre, which is located at the Stirling/Weston campus of the Canberra College.

THE CHAIR: Well, we have just been discussing field trips.

Ms Gallagher: It is a great facility for learning opportunities for teachers.

THE CHAIR: We have just been talking about visiting a couple of schools, so we might actually look at doing that as well.

Ms Thomas: It would be worth it. It is a terrific new facility. It is really lovely.

Mr Bateman: The centre is also trying to get schools involved in their program delivery as sort of lighthouse places, with smart boards. I think they are trying to use Richardson Primary School, which is ideally set up to do that. There is the environmental stuff at Farrer Primary School. So they are trying to capture whatever is happening well in various schools and use those facilities as well. So they are trying to devolve things a little away from the centre at Stirling.

MS DUNDAS: I would like to turn to one other area, if we have got time—and this is one we flagged with you on early childhood. We have heard evidence about a number of graduates of early childhood learning from the University of Canberra not going specifically into early childhood areas. They are getting their degrees, they are highly specialised, and I guess they are not being attracted to work in those areas. Is that an area that you have heard about or is it of concern to you?

Ms Gallagher: You have heard that they are going somewhere else—not into teaching?

MS DUNDAS: Not into early childhood teaching. They might then come back a year later and do an extra qualification and go into higher levels of teaching, or they might do something else entirely.

Ms Gallagher: It is certainly a more competitive area in terms of vacancies. If you look at our preschool system, a lot of teachers in the preschool system are getting towards the end of their teaching career. The attrition rate is very small. Again, I think if you looked at areas of workforce shortage in teaching, you won't find it in those preschool to year 3 years. So I think that would have an impact on the ability to get employment in these areas. I am not certain about choice to not be attracted to early childhood. I haven't heard that early childhood trained teachers are not attracted to early childhood teaching.

MS DUNDAS: You said, Minister, that most of the people in our preschools are reaching the end of their teaching life cycle?

Ms Gallagher: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: So whilst attrition is very low at the moment—

Ms Gallagher: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: has it been identified as an area in which a lot of retirements will be happening in the near future?

Mr Bateman: It is one of the areas where people can plan their move to retirement a little more easily than some of the others because a lot of the work in preschools is part time. So it is an avenue where you can lengthen your career, if the super option is not your driver to go, by reducing your work commitment. That is one of the other difficulties in attracting people or getting people in, as most young people or people starting out in a career want a full-time job and a lot of the work offered in the preschool sector of early childhood is part time.

The other difficulty is that there is a question around what early childhood means. A lot of people think it means preschool. It doesn't. It means P to 3. So we see that we are offering work in early childhood because it is in primary school early childhood, but sometimes the applicants have their heart set on a preschool job and they think they are not getting a job in early childhood.

Ms Gallagher: I am just looking at the figures for 2004. There were 107 early childhood vacancies and 360 applications for those positions. There has been additional recruitment in this area as well because of the smaller class size initiative, which has created more teaching positions in K to 3.

MS DUNDAS: So with preschool and early childhood teachers being, I guess, at the older end of their teaching lifetime, has there been any work to ensure that their skills are up to date? There has been continual movement in how we teach very young people. You are getting people who have been in the teaching profession for 20 years. How are

you keeping their skills up to date and allowing them to access the new ideas coming through?

Ms Thomas: I guess in the same way that we do for the rest of the teaching workforce in that preschool teachers and all teachers in fact in our system are required to do a minimum of five days professional development each year. I know that in terms of the preschool sector in particular, the preschool teachers do that PD as a group and on topics and areas that are specific to their work. So the way in which they would be kept up to date, to use your term, formally would be through those PD days each year.

MS DUNDAS: And that is something funded by the department, because preschools wouldn't have the resources to set up their own PD fund?

Ms Thomas: Yes, it is funded essentially through children's services.

MR PRATT: Just on the annual requirement and obligation for PD: do principals determine where that training should be done and what it should cover or is a teacher allowed to determine what they wish to pick up; or is there a combination of the teachers' needs and their individual requests and the department's needs?

Ms Thomas: The way in which it operates at the moment—and correct me if I get this wrong, Michael—is that the system, the department if you like, each year determines a priority, or it might be one or two priorities, that schools are required to address on at least one of those days each year. So the school or a cluster of schools will organise at least one PD day on whatever the system priority is for that year. The schools themselves determine three extra days that will be school-specific and one of those five days is the individual teacher's day. So at least one of those five is something that the teacher will determine for his or herself.

The way in which the three school days operate will differ from school to school. Some will do them as large groups, some will perhaps organise things on a faculty basis. If it's a big college, for example, they may do something specific to the maths faculty or whatever.

THE CHAIR: Do you think that is fulfilling the professional development needs of both the teacher and the school, the system as a whole?

Mr Bateman: Basically, yes, but you will also find that a lot of teachers are engaged in professional development outside of those days. That is the minimum requirement and the bulk of teachers would do more than that. There will be some that wouldn't and they are the ones that we need to probably focus on a little bit more.

It ties in with their professional pathways in that part of that is meant to be looking at the individual needs of the teachers as well. So when they are negotiating their pathways plan with their mentor they would be looking at their own needs and trying to map that out. One way that they can get some extra assistance in accessing PD is to take on a practicum student because the payment for practicum work goes to their own professional development. So there are mechanisms by which the ones who are highly active in this area are able to identify what they want and to support that if need be.

MR PRATT: I have heard the union make the comment that they are concerned that some teachers don't do enough in taking up PD opportunities. Is it now a part of the principal's annual appraisal report that this area is reported on as to whether he or she feels that their teacher achieved objectives?

Ms Thomas: It is not part of—sorry, I may not be answering the right question—the principal's personal appraisal but it is an essential element of every teacher's professional pathways plan, as Michael was saying. Principals are required to sign off on those pathways plans for each of their staff, so they should be very aware of the sorts of professional development requirements and needs that each member of their staff has, and that has been negotiated, as Michael said, as part of their pathways plan.

THE CHAIR: And the principals themselves: what is their professional development?

Ms Thomas: That is an interesting question. This year for the first time one of the essential elements of the principals' own professional appraisal plan is that they are required to develop a professional learning plan for themselves in conjunction with their director. So that is an element; it is actually going to be a requirement. I think that is the first time we have mandated that that should happen.

THE CHAIR: It will be interesting to see how it goes.

MS DUNDAS: There is another area of concern about the number of teachers who actually trained in a specific area doing the work. Has there been much thought given to what is happening with teacher/librarians and their professional skills?

Ms Thomas: Teacher/librarians were identified as an area of shortage last year and we attracted 72 applicants for our vacancies last year. Some schools, and particularly primary schools, don't have a full-time teacher/librarian position, so they will have a part-time position or something of that kind. So we have all our positions filled at the moment and I guess we will need to make an assessment about whether we still think it is an area of shortage for this year. I am not sure of the answer. I don't think we have identified it this year, but it certainly was last year.

MS DUNDAS: And so why are schools making the decision to have part-time teacher/librarians as opposed to full-time?

Ms Thomas: Well, especially the small primary schools. It is really a luxury resource if you have got only a small number of classes in your school. So for the best utilisation of their staffing resources, they will make the decision perhaps to have a 0.6 or a 0.5 librarian and to use the resources in other ways.

Mr Bateman: Also it is an area where I guess technology is changing the work practice in lots of way, in that students can do a lot more research on line rather than through the book stacks and so on. So it is an area where we need to use technology a lot more to, I guess, fit in with the way students like to do their work.

MS DUNDAS: But that itself requires, I guess, different learning—

Mr Bateman: It does.

MS DUNDAS: and different understanding in that not everything you find on the net is going to be real, and how you understand the information you get. Teacher/librarians do that through the books and work through the different levels of information you get from a book.

Mr Bateman: They definitely have a role in the new technology, and that is what some schools will be making a decision about—whether their teacher/librarian that they have on site is as up to date with the technology as perhaps some other people are. They are trying to get a mix of skills into those areas. So having a 0.6 teacher/librarian is not necessarily saying that they are not focusing on that aspect of learning.

MR PRATT: I would like to broach the subject of retention of teachers, particularly in early high school years. In the hearings that we have had so far we have picked up some observations, particularly, I think, from the principals who are concerned about retaining beginning teachers, et cetera. They say they have carried out a student survey—you may or may not be aware of that survey; a postgraduate five-year survey, I think—where they found that 50 per cent of teachers did not feel that they had picked up enough training in schools in student management, and student management was a concern for them. Would you agree with that?

Ms Gallagher: What survey was that, Mr Pratt?

MR PRATT: By the principals—

Ms Gallagher: The secondary principals?

MR PRATT: Yes.

Ms Gallagher: Here, in the ACT?

MR PRATT: Yes. Mind you, that survey found that those teachers were pretty satisfied with a lot of their training. But the one comment that came out—and the principals wondered if it might not go to the heart of what is burning some of the younger teachers out—was their ability to carry out student management. Do you agree with that? And what strategies might you have to see what could be done to overcome that shortfall, if that is a shortfall—and I am not sure it is?

Ms Gallagher: Well, I don't doubt that there is pressure placed on beginning teachers. Anyone who understands high schools would understand that a new teacher going into a high school would be presented with challenges, just because of the student population they are dealing with, and the age of that population. My understanding is that the retention rate is very good. I don't know if we have got a figure we can give you—I am sure we can. But I wouldn't question the fact that beginning teachers and even high school teachers as a group would be presented with challenges around that area. I wouldn't doubt that.

Ms Thomas: One thing I might just add to what the minister said in relation to behaviour management is that, with the promoting positive behaviours program that has been running quite successfully in primary schools, my understanding is that a cluster or

clusters of high schools are now working at adapting that program for use at least in the junior high school years. I don't have a lot more information about that program but I am aware that, because it has been very positively implemented in the primary school area, some of the high schools are thinking they can learn from that sort of program to up-skill teachers to promote positive behaviours in the high school years.

MR PRATT: So that is an initiative taken by a cluster or a number of clusters, but not necessarily something that the department has picked up on?

Ms Thomas: I think the department is actually managing—

MR PRATT: Monitoring or managing it?

Ms Thomas: Yes, managing the actual learning process, Mr Pratt. But perhaps we could give you some more information because I am kind of flying.

MR PRATT: I would be very keen to see that.

THE CHAIR: We would be happy to hear back from you about that once you have got more information on it.

Mr Bateman: I think there are a number of things happening that would not be badged as teacher retention initiatives, in terms of the area of behaviour management. I think the student support area has been developing their consultancy model around behaviour management and those people are working in schools with teachers quite a lot.

But just on teacher training, which I think is what the principals association was getting at—and my understanding is that that survey actually was national; and I am not too sure whether the data was picked up from principals' views or teachers' views—

MR PRATT: I might stand corrected on that—I am not sure either.

Mr Bateman: But I think it is an issue of teacher training. One of the things that all jurisdictions are concerned about is the level of teacher training and how well it prepares people to be teachers in certain aspects, and behaviour management was one of the ones identified.

One of the ways that it has been addressed, I think a little bit at the primary level, is through the internship program where those teachers spend a lot more time in schools in their final practicum, which runs for about a term. So they are learning a lot more on the job than their secondary colleagues. One of the issues we have got to address—and we are working with University of Canberra in particular—is to find ways to do that when the secondary pathway into teaching is more a degree followed by a 12-month diploma of education, whereas primary often tends to be a Bachelor of Education, which is a four-year program. Some institutions have moved to an 18-month qualification and some are looking at a two-year qualification. That may actually turn a lot of people off going into teaching, if it is a five-year qual all up. But that is where that initial part rests.

The other part of it is making sure that the people who are working in teacher training are up to date themselves. It is a common case that a lot of people who are delivering teacher

education in the institutions are very long-term and perhaps have not been near a classroom for a long period of time as well. So we actually are using more people in the teacher training program at the University of Canberra around behaviour management.

THE CHAIR: Just while we are talking about the retention issue and the issue of the practicum mix and the amount of practicum experience that teachers are getting—and please forgive me if we asked you about this last time; I have just asked the secretary and neither of us can remember if this has been raised at all: on the two issues, the retention issue and the practicum issue, I am interested in the amount of support that we are giving new teachers, not just in high schools but across the board.

Obviously the way primary teachers go in is usually structured quite differently because people who go into primary teaching decide that is what they want to do, whereas people who do a specialty may actually go and do that specialty and then decide to use that as a teaching thing. You are looking at two very different concepts, really. So to change that around is something that obviously you need to talk to the University of Canberra about.

I suppose I am interested to know whether we are giving teachers enough support when they first come in; how we can actually be giving them better and more support. We have heard from both the University of Canberra and Signadou campus of the Catholic University about their mix of practicum. I believe the University of Canberra has a higher practicum content than a lot of the other teacher training institutions. Are we giving them enough practicum experience, though, and there is also that question about support?

Ms Gallagher: In relation to support, this is an area the department has been working on in the fantastically generous wage offer or enterprise agreement to the teachers at the moment. I am making the audience laugh. There is an initiative in there for additional support for beginning teachers to allow them 15 days within their first three years to undertake professional development or observe other teachers. That is a new initiative that is part of that agreement, and it is still being negotiated. So there are efforts being made here to address some of the concerns people have had about, I guess, being thrown into a situation that you might feel you need a bit more support in.

Ms Thomas: In respect of support for new teachers, it is probably also worth mentioning to the committee that at the moment there is an induction program for new teachers. But I think, importantly, the probation process that we use for new teachers is in fact a very supportive one. With any new teacher coming into our system, a three-person panel is formed that works with that new teacher right through their first year on structuring their learning and, I guess, their orientation into the school that they are in. So they have, in a sense, almost like a mentoring panel that they meet with regularly and that they work with on any professional issues, any learning issues and generally the sorts of things that teachers need to get across.

THE CHAIR: How long has that been in place?

Ms Thomas: It has been in place for a very long time in our system.

MR PRATT: Following this theme and picking up on the mentoring and also lead teachers, experienced teachers: every school is different and they all structure themselves

differently in terms of who they recruit and what experience levels they have. Does the department now have a sort of a model that you would like to strive for—I am not saying you have got the resources to be able to do it yet—for the structure in schools; a basic model in schools for a ratio of lead teachers, mentoring set-ups, against the number of beginning teachers that you may have? Can you describe what you would really like to strive for; what you think is necessary?

Mr Bateman: Again, regarding the offer or what is in the documentation, we have been negotiating with the AEU around what we call the executive structure and the teaching structure in terms of a comparative thing. We are seeking to ensure that there is a sufficient executive structure within a school to handle the sorts of things you are talking about as well as the administrative requirements.

Today we would have schools where we probably don't have that structure in place, and the outcome of the wage negotiations when it is certified will be that we will move to ensure that that structure exists in all schools; and we have gone a bit further and looked at all schools by category to try to estimate a minimum structure for each of those schools. That will be the principal, the deputy principal and what we these days call teacher level 2s.

MR PRATT: Okay. Do you have a ratio there of how many 2s versus—

Mr Bateman: Well, we are loosely working on trying to ensure that that total is around the one to six mark for those three groups to level 1 teachers, and we think that that should enable schools to deliver those sorts of things that you are talking about. One of the outcomes of the survey the principals did is that it is a source of information for principals based on the information given by their colleagues that this sort of thing about making sure that beginning teachers are well looked after in their schools is important. We can say it all the time but getting it from your colleagues is more powerful.

I think one of the difficulties we have had over the years is that the experience of a beginning teacher is sometimes dependent on the school they go to and we are finding that that is changing in that schools are more attentive to the support levels they need to give. That is part of the collegiality, working in teams, mentoring and all those sorts of things. It has to happen and I think they are paying more attention to it.

THE CHAIR: Okay, we need to wrap up. Do you have an opinion on the practicum mix?

Mr Bateman: The practicum mix—whether it's enough or not?

THE CHAIR: I know it's one that both UC and Signadou continuously wrestle with as well.

Mr Bateman: We work closely with the two universities—more closely probably with the University of Canberra in these things because they have membership on our qualifications committee where we talk about this sort of thing. As I said, it is a national thing that we are looking at at the moment and I think anyone would say the more practicum the better. But what is the right number?

Ms Thomas: It is probably fair to say that the primary internship program with that big block of practicum time in the final year is pretty close to being right because I think it gives, new teachers, teachers who are about to graduate, a very solid period of time where they are exercising full class control. They are essentially working as a teacher for much of that period. But, as Michael said before, it is the secondary area, where you are really working with a much shorter period of time, that is the challenge.

Mr Bateman: We have been successful in negotiating with the University of Canberra an internship arrangement with secondary, but we need to wait a little bit to see how successful it is going to be.

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

Ms Thomas: Thank you.

MR PRATT: Thanks, Minister. Thanks, Anne.

THE CHAIR: If we have any other questions, we will send them on to you. There are so many things that we did not cover, so we might get you to get back to us, if you wouldn't mind.

Ms Thomas: Respond formally? Yes that's fine.

CLIVE JOHN HAGGAR and

ROBIN BALLANTYNE

were called.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I'll just quickly read the blurb. 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 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.

Robin and Clive, welcome back. If you can just state, for the Hansard record, your names and the positions in which you appear.

Mr Haggar: Clive John Haggar, Branch Secretary, Australian Education Union.

Ms Ballantyne: Robin Ballantyne, Assistant to the Secretary, Professional, Australian Education Union, ACT Branch.

THE CHAIR: We actually sent through some questions to you.

Mr Haggar: Yes, we've got those.

THE CHAIR: Did you want to start addressing those; or, Ms Dundas, did you want to ask specifically about those?

MS DUNDAS: I think the discussion about teaching institutes would be quite interesting at this point, if you have any view on that.

Mr Haggar: Yes. Well, I'll start with that one. We actually have a policy position that supports an institute. We made approaches several years ago to, I think, the first of the Carnell governments about that because we were keen to improve professional development access for teachers. It wasn't well received. Consequently, the department was at that point in time fairly hostile to the notion. We then met with the university, the principals' professional associations, the COACTEA, the peak professional body, to talk about what we called a professional consortium that would look at professional delivery and ways and means of improving teachers' access.

When we completed the 2000 agreement, there was a change of heart by government about teacher professional learning and there was some encouragement given to the notion of an institute by government; it was written into the agreement as something that would be pursued. The department, obviously with the political change, made available funds, and an officer was employed for, I think, a semester to work on a research paper.

That work fell into abeyance. There were a number of reasons why. We had a huge agenda for improvement of professional learning. We had the professional pathways

mechanisms to be introduced and it became quite clear that, as other states were moving into developing institutes, there were a lot of issues that might be best left for them to resolve and if we were to have an institute we would be in a position of picking up on best practice around the country.

Just before the last election, it was considered by the then government as something that might be a suitable election sweetener, but the work hadn't been progressed; there was certainly no great interest amongst the general membership of teachers in an institute, despite the fact that we ran articles and had discussions and so on. So that "wait and see how things develop elsewhere" has been, I think, something that has been worth while doing.

We still don't see that all of the issues at the state or territory level have been resolved. There's ongoing debate in WA. There is, particularly now, new debate in New South Wales where Bob Carr has moved unilaterally—he's got a habit of doing this—and created a body with a, if you like, governing board that doesn't contain teachers; it's people from other professions. So there's major concern from the New South Wales Teachers Federation about that makeup, whereas they were committed to an earlier model which is in fact supported by legislation.

The WA situation is a bit political, but of course last week Brendan Nelson launched a National Institute of Teacher Quality and School Leadership and made a particular point at the launch of excluding the two teacher unions from the governing body of that organisation. He was quite happy to put the Australian College of Educators on the governing board. The college has 120 or 130 members in the ACT; we have 3,800; and the Independent Education Union has something in excess of about 1,200 or 1,300.

As you could image, with 160,000 members for us and 65,000 members nationally for the IEU, we were particularly peeved at his attempt to exclude us from what we would like to see as a peak teacher professional body. He offered places on an advisory council to us, but that's not giving us the kind of recognition of our professional role that we believe that the organisations are entitled to. So the national institute is off, unfortunately, to a very bad start, from that perspective; and I can't see what he can do to restore credibility amongst the classroom teachers with that sort of position. It's very unfortunate.

MS DUNDAS: So you see the potential of a teaching institute as allowing teachers to have professional support and have that ongoing professional development and analysis of what is professional development for teachers. Is that the benefit of it, if it's done right?

Mr Haggar: Well, that's one possible benefit if it's done right; and the other benefit, of course, is around child protection issues, and there is an important role there. But in a small jurisdiction we've got to ask: is it best to have an independent body doing it, or essentially make sure our procedures, our registration arrangements, are appropriate, make sure we've got a vibrant professional community for the teaching profession? Then every dollar that might have been spent on a bureaucratic arrangement, or bureaucratic support for an institute and its secretariat, can be directed to deliver immediately for

teachers in the school environment.

I don't want to go down the path of who pays for what—which certainly was a major handicap to the development of an institute of teachers equivalent in Britain—who was going to pay the \$65 equivalent registration fee? But you start to get bound up in those sorts of lowest common denominator issues. So I think it's fair to say that we've moved from a policy position of yes, we're in favour of it in principle, to more one that said develop locally, in the states and territories and nationally, and then let's see if we can create something that delivers the best of what the institutes can offer—but perhaps not necessarily with an institute structure—that it can be done through, as we've done in other professional development arrangements, agreements between the peak unions and the employers and broadening out things like the qualifications committee where we've got representation, principals have representation, the university has representation, et cetera.

THE CHAIR: I don't know if you were here before when the Teaching and Learning Centre came up. What's your attitude towards the Teaching and Learning Centre?

Mr Haggar: Well, we're very strong supporters of the centre. In fact, the original budget brief that called for improvements was in part sourced by work that we had done using a consultant to basically try to reinforce that notion of somewhere where teachers could go for high-quality training.

THE CHAIR: There's nothing wrong with stealing good ideas.

Mr Haggar: No, not at all. By feeding that into the budget process what we got, I think, was an even better outcome, and certainly making that centre an absolute best-practice institute would be a wonderful outcome for the ACT and for schools in particular. It's valuable to do this in a former school site, although there are still functioning classes and demonstration classes, that sort of thing. I think that it's money very well spent on supporting the profession. But when they've got to spend 850 grand on fixing up the floor in the hall, which might have gone on programs, you've got to think that's a bit unfortunate.

MS DUNDAS: That actually opens up a really interesting question that's not in our terms of reference—it is slightly out of our terms of reference—about the maintenance—

THE CHAIR: No, we've always got the catch-all, “any other related matter”.

MS DUNDAS: But about the maintenance of the school grounds—and we don't just have an ageing teaching population; we have an ageing building population—is that impacting on teacher morale? I remember my teachers always getting upset when it rained because they spent most of their day walking around with buckets, not most of their day walking around doing the education program.

Mr Haggar: Yes, I think it's fair to say we've had ongoing concerns about the gradual deterioration of the infrastructure since self-government. It was always the area you could target for further reductions, and then the formula that they used until this budget was never sufficient to meet demand and moneys available from the Commonwealth

weren't sufficient either. It certainly has an impact on teacher morale, and the fact that the centre is this nice, bright, refurbished arrangement has been favourably commented on.

But I'd have to say that the report that's been commissioned—and I understand it is in the hands of the department but not yet available publicly—on school-based management spends a considerable effort focusing on the infrastructure needs as a particular problem. It's not attributable to anyone, so I'll make the remark. You could quote somebody who was close to the survey: "You could spend \$100 million on physical infrastructure in our schools to get them to standard."

MR PRATT: I think you actually said something like that before here, if I recall.

Mr Haggar: Yes, but it's not original. When that report—and I understand it's imminent—is released, that could easily inform your work.

MS DUNDAS: It's late, yes.

Mr Haggar: Well, it might be something that you could consider asking a question about. And it's the same with the students; if they're in a bright, new, pleasant environment, then the focus on learning is, I think, much improved. But this is parenthood-type stuff. I don't think it's debatable with anyone.

MS DUNDAS: In terms of the space that education is being delivered into—closed classrooms versus an open classroom model and how that allows teachers to share ideas and share resources to group students together as things happen, having a very flexible space in our schools and our classroom delivery—is that something that you think needs to be further explored, that we do need more open-plan schools or—

Mr Haggar: Well, I don't want to revisit the open-plan debate of the 1970s because our experience was that the more of those schools that were built the more parents moved their kids out of Tuggeranong Valley to places like Torrens or Garran who then advertised the fact they had four solid brick walls and closed doors. But I would say—

MR PRATT: You're talking about the Kambah model particularly, are you?

Mr Haggar: Yes, the Kambah model in particular. I'd have to say that, looking at Amaroo school, where a wonderful—

THE CHAIR: You're talking about Gold Creek?

Mr Haggar: No, this is a new one. We were at the opening the other day. It's a fantastic and very environmentally focused building. The kids love it; the teachers love it; and they were really positive about it. You could see the interactions going on. But they are also in an environment where there are smart-boards in the early childhood classrooms. And again that's an encouragement to dynamism and innovation within the classroom. So the more of those we can get, whether they're in an open-plan, flexible plan or traditional classroom, the better.

MR PRATT: Could I ask you: what do you determine to be the bill—you may have

covered this before, but I can't remember it; so if we have just tell me to shut up and we'll go on to the next question—required to bring the ACT teachers' salary position up to that of the New South Wales parity level, which, of course, is what you're seeking to have achieved here?

Mr Haggar: I'll keep it as simple as I can. But if we're talking about the top-of-the-classroom-teacher rate, which is the traditional level of comparison, we at the moment are 5½ per cent behind New South Wales. We were level pegging in October; we're now 5½ per cent behind. The offer from the government would provide a 5 per cent increase from 1 July. Obviously we've been talking with government about issues of quantum, time and duration. But that's the fixed point at the moment.

We are expecting this week—and certainly no later than next week—a decision in the New South Wales commission which will provide a further increase for them. So we would be behind them by whatever they get in that increase plus half a per cent since we're behind that with the offer, for the following 12 months. So we are talking, in those terms, around several thousand dollars.

That's been a problem for government; it's been a problem for us that the New South Wales outcome has been delayed again because of Bob Carr's behaviour in reopening the case in the commission, et cetera. It might be that, when we actually know what the real as opposed to the supposed disadvantage around gross salary is, that could help move the thing to a resolution. I would certainly be very pleased if we could make some progress. But that issue with New South Wales hangs over both parties like a bit of a cloud.

THE CHAIR: We might move on, though, because we're not here to talk about those negotiations.

MR PRATT: No, it wasn't my intention to talk about the negotiations; I'm just trying to get a feel for what the union believes is the sort of basic benchmark in terms of what's going to retain our teachers. I don't want to talk about the macro numbers or that; I'm just trying to get an idea.

Mr Haggar: I'll quote from an article—we're doing the same in the next edition of the *ACT Teacher*—in the *Sun Herald*. There's a wonderful little paragraph in an editorial that slams the Teachers Federation for taking industrial action. It also gets stuck into Bob Carr. Basically the line is: everyone understands that teaching is an undervalued and underpaid profession.

We focused on New South Wales because that's where our historical connection has been and over that period of time they've managed to do better, other than ourselves, than the other states; they've always been the consistent, along with the ACT, frontrunners. Yet you've got major media now in New South Wales talking about even New South Wales teachers being undervalued in a major way in terms of remuneration.

I think, certainly from our colleagues' perspective in New South Wales, they believe that there is strong community support for a major move within, if you like, the scale of professions and their rewards for teaching; and that's an argument that resonates fairly

strongly with our own members.

THE CHAIR: We talked before with the department about professional development and how that was made up and how it was managed. I asked the question whether or not the mix to fulfil the needs of both the individual teachers and the department as a whole, the school community as a whole, was sufficient. Do you have a view on that?

Mr Haggar: Well, the easy bit is to deal with the overall quantum. We, from the last agreement, got \$1 million guaranteed ongoing for a professional learning fund. We also have had the half million dollar fellowships which were highly valued but that funding has now run out with the next round, and we're talking about what level might be a replacement.

We are getting feedback from members that's quite varied in its evaluation of various courses and programs. I think it's become, given the high level of cynicism amongst some of our members, quite popular to denigrate some of the offerings that have been available. I'd also have to say that from time to time we might ask questions ourselves, but I'd also say there's some very good professional learning going on.

From a broader view, I've expressed concern to the fund about those areas of professional learning that one might have thought should have been centred around particular departmental or government initiatives, might have been supported by money other than that available in the professional learning fund and that we might in fact have to consider a shift so that there's more money available for schools and for individual teachers out of the fund rather than, at the moment, where we see very substantial bids coming from sections of the department to support particular programs. There's going to be an ongoing tension around who gets what slice of the cake there, and I think members are becoming aware that there is an issue there.

Earlier on, the induction program was mentioned. That's been funded out of the professional learning fund. We've supported that, but we are also aware that there used to be an induction program before we had the professional learning fund and we want to be satisfied that there's real dollar-for-dollar value-added in terms of any expansion of that program. There's a need—there's no doubt about that—and something like the beginning teacher initiatives that we're talking about now is not the sort of resource that used to exist prior to self-government, but it's nevertheless a welcome resource.

I do get concerned—and I'll ask Robin to make a couple of comments; and I've raised this on our own executive—where people make blanket comments as to whether a particular PD is worth while or not. We then check what were the evaluations like from the participants and we find they were generally well thought of. But you'll find some vocal critics from time to time.

Ms Ballantyne: I was just going to say that I think, the origins of the fund having come from an enterprise bargaining agreement, teachers feel a sort of ownership of it that perhaps they didn't in previous years when the money was just there from the department and so on. I think they do query the percentage of it that's going to systemic kinds of initiatives. But it was filling a bit of a void, I suppose; so it's probably not unnatural that the department immediately thought, "Some money at last, and let's do all these things we wanted to do."

I suppose, for me, it's pointed up by the difference with the way the money was actually used in TAFE where there's much more individual allocation and ownership of that. That's got its drawbacks, too, and allegedly TAFE teachers haven't used their individual allocations to the extent that one might have hoped. So you obviously need a kind of balance between the needs of the system and the needs of the individual.

I think what happens is that teachers' personal experience of their access to money for professional development varies very much between schools and the transparency of what the school has available for teachers, and the methods by which they might claim that or put in a bid for that for a specific use are very variable. Some schools seem to make moneys available for teachers to do a high level of professional development; in particular some of the schools that have got a high beginning-teacher population make that their priority. If they're bigger, it helps because they've got more to play around with; there's more give in the system.

But some schools and some principals are quite secretive about what moneys there are and will just tell teachers that they don't have any money for professional development. And that goes back to school-based management and the way that moneys are paid in lump lots and not perhaps tagged in the way that would make them more transparent if they were.

THE CHAIR: So you think that, when the department pays a sum, they should actually flag the amount that's gone into professional development because of the ownership issue or the fact that it's been—

Mr Haggart: There isn't a defined budget. You get your block grant—and that's based essentially on your student enrolment and the cost of operating your building and so on—and out of that you're meant to make an allocation based on your perception of need. So local management of that is generally seen as a good thing, but there are a range of qualities and, if you like, priorities given at the school level to professional development.

One of the ways in which people can generate funds for their individual use or for school use is to take in student teachers, but that's become quite administratively cumbersome; it's not particularly transparent; and one of the claims that we've had to serve as a result of the EBA process is to say we actually need direct payment back as an option, because people are saying, "I've taken two students and then my PD component has been swallowed up by whole-school initiatives" or "I want to buy a resource out of that money. If I do buy it, I don't own the resource; it's the property of the school, et cetera." So it's an absolute minefield.

MS DUNDAS: You raised a lot of major problems with how the funds are being administered. The department told us that they still think that the money's being used, that the teachers are accessing PD, that there aren't any real problems there. Is that—

Mr Haggart: I wouldn't say it's a major problem. I don't say it's a major area of debate that we've really got to have. We had a meeting of the Professional Learning Fund Committee only about a month ago and I said, "We're getting this sort of feedback; we need to make absolutely clear what should come out of the fund to support professional

learning in schools and across the system and draw the line so that we don't see sections coming into the fund with bids that are completely beyond the pale or are for initiatives that should have been directly funded by the system itself." As Robin says, there is a sense of ownership of that fund amongst teachers based on that last agreement.

THE CHAIR: We might move on, because we've got limited time, to the teacher recruitment retention and retirement initiatives in the Canberra region.

Mr Haggar: Well, I can talk a bit about New South Wales very quickly. They've got a point system. If you're in a rural, remote or hard-to-staff school, the minimum stay is two years for the more difficult ones; three for others; and then you can move and you've picked up bonus points. So the longer you're at Wilcannia, the more chance you've got of picking up a transfer to a nice north coast school.

In the isolated areas there are additional allowances based around climate; there's additional leave in the western division. There are \$5,000 bonuses if you stay beyond the minimum period, and they're quite attractive to younger people. There's assistance with, I've mentioned, housing. One of the interesting ones—I'm not sure whether it's still available in Queanbeyan, but it certainly used to be—is a cold-weather climate allowance. But they are the sorts of things they do when they get desperate to find qualified staff for these environments, and you'd be better seeking detailed information from the department of education as to what range of incentives are there.

As to our situation here, from my perspective, we've got a general problem in terms of recruitment. We don't have hard-to-staff schools in that sense; we've got some that are more attractive than others. We've not seen a particular need to create that kind of incentive. In fact, our first position would be: if you were wanting to attract younger people, maybe some component of HECS forgiveness would be one way of doing it. Again in New South Wales, that's done strategically there. They obviously provide assistance with people moving from location to location.

THE CHAIR: When you say "HECS forgiveness", you mean the department pays the HECS?

Mr Haggar: Yes, rather than, for example, saying, "We will pay a maths teacher more." It's simply a matter of saying, "Well, we can offer a recruitment incentive that's not based on salary but is nevertheless of real benefit." You were in a situation when the system was first established under the Commonwealth where you had Commonwealth teachers scholarships, which paid a lesser living allowance admittedly than what was available in New South Wales but was seen as an attractive benefit.

THE CHAIR: With regard to the issue of retention, do you believe that there's an issue in retaining the teachers?

Mr Haggar: Well, certainly I think this bid has highlighted the mobility of younger teachers. The feedback that we've had from principals is that many more younger members of staff are actively looking for work elsewhere. The key is, too: it's not just simply about bodies in front of classes; it's about the quality of the people that you've got, the degree to which they are subject specialists and the like. And certainly, that's where we are experiencing difficulty at the moment.

In New South Wales, trying to get a maths teacher to Wilcannia is a bit of an issue. In the ACT, trying to get a fully qualified maths teacher capable of doing advanced maths extended into a college environment in the Tuggeranong Valley might be an issue. So it's differently experienced; nevertheless we have problems.

MS DUNDAS: Do you think the mandated movement that teachers have to go through, that they're only going to stay at one school for three years—I think the first placement is for three years; the second placement is for seven—

Mr Haggar: Well, we're moving to four; 4, 6 and 8 years are the placement periods now and there's some variation for special education teachers. We are committed to mobility; we are committed to making it work.

We have experienced circumstances where teachers had been in the one institution for 20 to 25 years and then had to move because of declining enrolments or changing curriculum need, et cetera. People are tending to forget what it was like for those teachers—six months of sick leave, resignation from service, taking a job with another organisation to avoid a 12-month placement in a high school—because they had genuine, in the sense that it was genuinely felt, emotional crises about moving from school to school. If you've got a culture of mobility, if people have built up a range of experiences over time, they're more resilient; they're better professionals; they're more able to be adaptable to change over time as well.

Our dispute with the department around mobility was about that beginning-teacher period; we wanted a longer period than three years to be available. They've now agreed to that, once we've got the exercise in place. We actually wanted up to five years; they've suggested four as a compromise and we'll run with that. But certainly I do not want to go back to the pre-mobility circumstances where the people were locked into environments for a couple of decades, then had to move and fell apart.

THE CHAIR: Did you want to, just in closing, talk a little bit about the pre-service training issue at all? I think we've been getting a fairly clear idea from the University of Canberra as well as the ACU's Signadou about how they're running—we should have now that we've had them in twice—and from the department. I think it's always a difficult issue in terms of the mix of prac teaching. Obviously you've got different issues for primary school teachers and early childhood teachers to what you do for high school teachers in the way that they're trained.

Mr Haggar: I think, from our perspective, there are only a couple of quick comments. Firstly, the University of Canberra is now moving into a period of more stable staffing. That's very important for the re-establishment of the networks liaison arrangements that existed previously. We had a peak liaison committee, for example, that didn't meet for two years. Well, that's met recently and there were some positive outcomes there. They're revamping their field experience committee. That's also important in terms of improving the quality of delivery for their students and for schools. I think the better the liaison, the better the networking, the more capacity there is for quality improvement there.

I was interested in the comment about the survey regarding behaviour management students—that the beginning-teachers wanted more of that. I filled out a similar survey

back in 1975 for the same outcomes. We wanted more and more training in behaviour management, and even to the point where a lot of us did additional prac teaching that we didn't need to do just to get used to that sort of circumstance.

MR PRATT: So it's your position that that really is an area that can always require additional resources entitlement?

Mr Haggar: That's right. You're also in a situation where people are about to enter into a situation of being an independent professional operator and they look at their experiences and think, "Well, am I fully up to scratch?"

MR PRATT: "What do I do now, Shylock?"

Mr Haggar: Yes, that's right.

THE CHAIR: I know that this wasn't on the list of things that we sent you, but we've got CIT back to see us again and I'm curious to ask them—and I'll ask your opinion as well—about the move in the number of casual teachers who are being made permanent within this budget. There's a certain number—

Mr Haggar: We are really pleased about that initiative. We've been asking for that sort of change in the mix for many years. The fact that we had such a very large growth in casual and contract employment was in part the result of the budget pressures on CIT, and those budget pressures have meant for all staff, whether they're permanent, casual, contract, teachers or non-teaching staff, an incredible workload burden particularly over the last five years. You can't take \$10 million a year out of the budget and still sustain your performance levels in terms of student numbers.

I still think, though, that we've got to be in a position, particularly with the ageing workforce, if we're going to attract people out of industry to CIT, you've got to recognise that you can't keep expecting the user-choice arrangements to operate, including the CIT, at the funding levels for which they are supported. You're talking about \$12 a person contact-hour cost for normal courses and sometimes as low as 30 per cent of that or lower for user choice where they're competing with private providers who can peacock the market and don't have the same service delivery expectations on them. And the only way they can do that in that circumstance is to squeeze the staff harder and harder.

I'd be interested obviously, when I read the transcripts, in the CIT's response to that, but they have done it particularly tough in the last five years. That \$400,000 will help alleviate one of those issues, but I still believe that the CIT would provide better-quality outcomes if they had an overall higher funding regime. I'm not saying, "Return to where we were five years ago," but certainly you need to take some of the steam out of the pressure valve.

MR PRATT: Can I ask just—

THE CHAIR: Well, we really do have to wrap up. Can I get you to send the question to the AEU?

MR PRATT: Yes. I'll come back to you on external recruitments.

Mr Haggar: All right, happy to.

THE CHAIR: Sorry about running late.

Mr Haggar: Well, thanks again for the opportunity.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for coming back and for the submission that you made last time.

VAUGHAN CROUCHER,

LAURA MARKS and

AIDAN O'LEARY

were called.

THE CHAIR: I call the CIT people to the table. 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 action, 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.

Mr Croucher: I am the dean of learning services at the Canberra Institute of Technology.

Ms Marks: I am the senior manager of human resources at the CIT.

Mr O'Leary: I am normally the general manager of corporate services at CIT. I am acting chief executive today.

THE CHAIR: Promotion for the day!

Mr O'Leary: For three days.

THE CHAIR: A whole three days. You should enjoy that while it lasts, Mr O'Leary. Thank you for appearing today. CIT has put in a submission. We have heard from Peter Veenker and I think Mr Brightman appeared last time. He is going to be in the background today observing and listening to the questions we ask. We sent some questions through to you. Does somebody want to start while I collect my thoughts?

MS DUNDAS: I am happy to start. The area that I am interested in, and last time you were here there was a discussion about it, is how you monitor teacher satisfaction and how teachers are dealing with the stresses of teaching at CIT. We had a bit of discussion about how that is judged through WorkCover claims. WorkCover claims are one way of dealing with claims for compensation due to work related stress and injuries. Are there any other ways that you are focusing on as to how teachers are coping and how they are dealing with demands?

Ms Marks: I will deal with this question. We have a staff survey. It is for all staff—general staff as well as teaching staff. We undertook that survey two years ago and we are about to deliver another one in September of this year. The survey asks a wide range of questions, varying from interpersonal relationships that people have with their colleagues to workload and communication issues to supervision and management. We also have an area at the end where people can not only fill in questions but also add any comments. After the outcomes of that survey we gathered together a number of focus

groups from teaching and general staff and worked on the issues raised. There were issues such as a perceived lack of communication, strategies for further development and a range of other issues. The focus groups came up with some suggestions. We picked out the priority list of issues that they raised and have been dealing with them ever since. We are about to publish them on a fact sheet prior to the completion of the next survey.

The focus groups felt that there were not enough communication issues within the CIT. That has been particularly addressed by way of staff networks that we have and by regular communications about the outcomes or decisions of the numerous committees we have at the CIT. There are very many forums where people can contribute their opinions. I have some statistics here on our EAP, Employee Assistance Program, if you are interested.

MS DUNDAS: That was going to be my next question. Before you get on to EAP, the annual report indicates that you have appointed a new provider for EAP. Is that a new appointment?

Ms Marks: We were previously with Davidson Trahaire. After getting staff feedback on their performance we decided it was time to try someone else. For a period of about a year we went with another provider but were not quite as happy with their services and went back to Davidson Trahaire, after a good discussion about where we felt they had fallen down previously and the things we needed changing.

MS DUNDAS: So there wasn't any time when there wasn't an EAP service?

Ms Marks: No. There has always been an EAP service.

MS DUNDAS: The statistics tell us—

Ms Marks: Okay. What I have done is look at our last quarterly report and that took us up to the end of December 2003. We noted that in that quarter we had 52 appointments with Davidson Trahaire from staff. This is not divided into teaching staff and general staff; it is just staff all over. We had a 7.5 utilisation rate, which was based on staffing figures of 800. That was quite a decrease from the year before when we had a 14 per cent utilisation rate. Obviously in that last quarter people were not as stressed as they had been previously. We find that people get very stressed during the winter period, get ill and feel overworked.

THE CHAIR: They need to get some more sunlight.

Ms Marks: Exactly. I am a firm believer in that. Total hours of service during that quarter were 71½ hours. Normally counselling periods are about an hour's duration—staff are entitled to have up to, say, three hours—and then they get referred on to another provider. Work related issues amounted to 47 per cent and personal issues were 53 per cent. Seventy-one per cent of work related issues were interpersonal—conflict with colleagues, not happy in the work team or whatever—and the other 29 per cent were vocational; that is, people seeking career advice, thinking about retirement or moving on to another position. Seventy-five per cent of personal issues were family relationships—relationships between teenage children; there was quite a bit of that—separations and divorce, and 25 per cent were clearly stated as depression. Of the people

accessing the service, 73.3 per cent were females and 26.7 per cent were males. We assume that is because men generally are not very much into counselling and seeking that sort of assistance.

THE CHAIR: Boys, you need to express yourselves more!

MS DUNDAS: The large majority of work related contacts with the EAP service were interpersonal. The annual report talks about equity and diversity, some staff attending anti-bullying programs, the accessing of programs run by the human rights office and how information is made available on what the equity and diversity unit is doing. Am I right in saying that the equity and diversity unit would have overview of anti-bullying procedures and sexual harassment procedures through the CIT campuses?

Ms Marks: I have brought along a copy of the equity and diversity strategy that we have recently reviewed. It is built on the ACT government's equity and diversity framework. All our business plans on the equity and diversity strategy in the institute are contained and reference is constantly being made to managers about this particular strategy. I think it is fairly safe to say that we do not have a great many equity and diversity issues at the CIT. They would come through the human resources unit in my area, but there are very few.

If there is a particular problem that the EAP identifies—for instance, the 71 per cent of interpersonal issues that I mentioned—and there is a definite trend coming through in a particular area, it would always contact me and come in and talk about it. I would then try to set up a strategy within the work area where that is happening.

MS DUNDAS: What do the anti-bullying and anti-sexual harassment programs cover that you have now included in your equity and diversity strategy?

Ms Marks: The anti-bullying programs are run by the human rights commission.

MS DUNDAS: Okay.

Ms Marks: We have a policy and we have since revised that as well. Basically that talks about how anti-bullying, which is part of the equity and diversity framework, differs from harassment—either sexual or other harassment; it is a more repetitive type of harassment—and the responsibility of managers and indeed of all staff within the CIT to ensure that it is not happening in the workplace. Every staff member has access to that policy and managers are tasked with ensuring that it does not happen.

MS DUNDAS: What is the level of managers or people with that responsibility completing the human rights course?

Ms Marks: I do not have the figures on that. I could certainly find out for you.

MS DUNDAS: That would be helpful.

Ms Marks: Yes, I will do that.

MS DUNDAS: Thank you.

Ms Marks: Shall I leave that for you?

MS DUNDAS: That would be great.

THE CHAIR: Yes, that would be great.

MS DUNDAS: There will be other papers that you possibly sent us.

Mr O’Leary: Just going back to the staff satisfaction or the teacher satisfaction issue, Ms Marks mentioned the fact that we have a series of networks. The key one is what we call our Band 2 network—teachers are categorised as Band 1, Band 2, and Band 3. Band 2 are our first-line educational managers and they have a very active network. We have worked very closely with them by, firstly, supporting the network and, secondly, by spending a lot of time with them during 2002, I think it was. As a result of work with those people, we made sure that all heads of department had their own administrative support in order to assist them in doing the more routine aspects of their work. These sorts of things come out of the networks. They are not just opportunities for people to let off steam; they result in actual outcomes.

THE CHAIR: You might have heard me talking about the casual teaching positions that are being made permanent. How will you go about deciding which teachers are made permanent?

Mr O’Leary: The intent is not to make particular people permanent. The present industrial arrangements allow for situations whereby, if a casual teacher has done a certain amount of teaching over a protracted period of time, they can initiate a process. That process does not lead to the individual being made permanent; it leads to the advertising of a job.

THE CHAIR: What you are saying is that the position becomes permanent?

Mr O’Leary: Yes. We will be seeking to do the same thing here with the approximately 20 positions—it may be a bit more because we had intended to do some of this work anyway. We would work with the individual faculties to determine in which particular areas there was a need to undertake either contract or permanent recruitment. In each case, where we convert an equivalent full time position, depending on which point of the scale people are appointed at, the cost will be somewhere between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per annum.

THE CHAIR: Once the position has been advertised, there will be the normal—

Mr O’Leary: Merit process.

THE CHAIR: merit based selection process. Presumably the person who has been filling the job for however long—

Mr O’Leary: They may or may not. It may be that the position that is advertised is the aggregation of a number of small components. The vast majority of our casual teachers are not working significant numbers of hours a week. This chart—you might like to have

it—shows that this group of people do zero to one hours a week. A lot of people are on our books and might be used from time to time, but, in any given week, they may not do anything. The next band is people doing one to five hours a week. Often these are people with other jobs. We have schoolteachers who come in and do night classes and we have other people who, because they are experts, come in and do classes. You can see that the biggest single proportion is in the one to five-hour category. Then it drops off quite rapidly.

THE CHAIR: It is five to 10, 10 to 15 and 15 plus hours.

Mr O’Leary: Yes. They would probably be the priority areas, the areas where we have people doing significant numbers of hours, but it could be that a number of positions in here might be aggregated together if we needed, let us say, a teacher of cartography. Instead of having four or five casual cartography people come in, we might seek to recruit one person. None of those people may be interested in working with us on a permanent basis because they have other jobs.

THE CHAIR: It will not compromise your flexibility though. Obviously it depends on course enrolments?

Mr O’Leary: We will have a look at the individual cases. It is not going to be some kind of formula that says that in this circumstance you must do it. But the industrial arrangements will tend to deal with these 15-hour plus arrangements. A significant proportion of the conversions will probably arise out of that. The track record is, as you said, that where people have initiated a conversion, they tend to get the job. However, there is a significant proportion of casual teachers who do not want to be converted. However, we may want to.

THE CHAIR: Obviously.

Mr O’Leary: The reason is that, as a casual, you are basically committing to only 36 weeks of the year.

THE CHAIR: You come in, do the face-to-face teaching and then go away.

Mr O’Leary: That is right.

THE CHAIR: You do not have the obligations that go with being permanent.

Mr O’Leary: There is a whole range of other responsibilities that people have as a permanent member of staff that go beyond the face-to-face teaching. Whilst we might want to take into account the desires of the individual, in some cases it is not appropriate for CIT to have an excessive load of casuals. It puts pressure back on the remaining staff members, especially the head of department, if they have a significant proportion of people who are doing only their classroom teaching and do not make a wider contribution.

THE CHAIR: The issue of casual teachers and whether you may have an excessive number of casual teachers within the system has been ongoing for a number of years.

Mr O’Leary: As to whether it is excessive, in some departments people might have the view that it is. In New South Wales we hear stories of institutes that are running on 40 and 50 per cent casuals. Our level at the moment is around 30 per cent. We aim to get down to 25 per cent. If we went any lower than that, we think we would start to compromise the flexibility and also the ability to have specialisations where we do not need a whole person.

MS DUNDAS: Sorry, can I just clarify that? Is that 30 per cent of the total staffing population or 30 per cent of the teaching population?

Mr O’Leary: Thirty per cent of the teaching population.

MS DUNDAS: Which are casual?

Mr O’Leary: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: As of today.

Mr O’Leary: It is never good to take today with CIT.

MS DUNDAS: The reason I ask is that the annual report does not necessarily say that.

Mr O’Leary: Because of the guidelines, the annual report requires that we provide staffing data as at a particular day.

MS DUNDAS: So this is at a day?

Mr O’Leary: That is a snapshot. We work out our figures and we provide the figures, for instance, to the Australian Education Union. We calculate figures across the whole of the year so that we can calculate the average number. For instance, in the first semester we will tend to have more casuals than in second semester because the need for teachers tends to reduce.

THE CHAIR: The courses have settled down by that stage as well.

Mr O’Leary: Yes. For 2003 we had the equivalent of 329 full-time staff—there are more on head counts than that, but that is the equivalent—and we had 139 equivalent full-time casuals. I have not calculated the percentage there, but if you work out 139 as a percentage of 460 something it is around 30 per cent or a little less. We have aimed to bring that particular number down. It is coming down. Compared to 2002, it has dropped by 8.5 per cent.

MS DUNDAS: Yes. The casual teaching pool is regularly being used but how do you manage your relief teaching pool? Does that come out of the casual teaching pool or do you see it as a separate category?

Mr O’Leary: It would depend on the particular circumstances. If somebody were away with a cold for a day, we would not do what they do in the schools and bring in a teacher for the day. We would bring in somebody to cover their individual classes. The person might have a class only in the morning or they might have two classes. We would

perhaps bring in a couple of casuals. We also have the ability, which they do not have in the schools, to pay one of our other regular staff overtime to cover that particular class.

THE CHAIR: The departmental head may be able to fill in the class.

Ms Marks: That is true.

Mr O’Leary: There are a number of arrangements. For somebody were sick on a long-term basis, we might well bring somebody in on a short-term contract, in which case they are paid and their working conditions are the same as if they were permanent. It is just that they are employed, let us say, only for a semester, for three months or whatever it might be.

Ms Marks: I think in particular departments as well where there is a group of casual teachers they are able to arrange that in a fairly flexible way amongst themselves when they know they are going to be away.

THE CHAIR: Do we have a copy of the chart you held up before, Mr O’Leary? Is that in the annual report?

Mr O’Leary: No. As I said, the figure in the annual report is a snapshot in one particular week.

THE CHAIR: Yes. It is taken on a certain day.

Mr O’Leary: This is data across the year. I am quite happy to provide you with it.

THE CHAIR: If you would not mind. That would be useful for us.

Mr O’Leary: And it has lovely colours.

THE CHAIR: Very pretty colours, for the record. They are a lovely blue and pink—a maroony pink.

MR PRATT: We could not photocopy that.

THE CHAIR: Are there any questions?

MS DUNDAS: I am happy for you to continue.

THE CHAIR: Okay. I think we covered the professional development of teachers the last time you were here. How does the CIT handle it overall?

Mr Croucher: I will answer that question. We could probably point to four categories, I suppose: firstly, the accredited programs that we provide; secondly, other centrally provided professional development; thirdly, professional development that is organised in the faculties or divisions; and, fourthly, the individually organised professional development, often where teachers are using their professional development fund.

I might just run through some of those, if you like. As to qualifications, we offer the

certificate 4 in assessment and workplace training and the module out of that is workplace assessor, which is a minimum requirement under the Australian Qualifications Training Framework. We also have our own teacher education qualification, which is the graduate certificate and graduate diploma in tertiary teaching and learning. We evaluated that program last year. The valuation was very positive from our own teachers' view of the success of that program. They are the ones that we are running essentially as our own teacher education component. Prior to this, we relied on programs that were often conducted by the University of Canberra. Typically teachers would have had a bachelor of education TAFE; I think that was the qualification. It was before my time.

Mr O'Leary: If they were graduates, they would have been eligible to get into that particular program. In other cases they may have just completed a diploma program. While I have grabbed the microphone, I mention that the graduate diploma and the graduate certificate are higher education qualifications conducted by CIT and accredited through the Accreditation and Registration Council.

Mr Croucher: Over the past four years we have had 245 graduates from the certificate 4 in assessment and workplace training and 28 graduates in the graduate certificate and graduate diploma in tertiary teaching and learning. We have had about a dozen enrolments this year in the graduate certificate. They are accredited programs that we conduct for teacher education. There is quite a variety of centrally provided programs. The majority are funded from within CIT; however, there are a couple where we have accessed national funding opportunities. The first of these under the flexible learning framework is Learnscape, which provides professional development funding, and which the institute has to match, around flexible delivery. In the ACT we are focused on building the skills of teachers for online delivery. We have seven projects running this year. One of those is a collaborative project with the school sector working with Lake Tuggeranong College this year. Last year we ran one, working with Erindale College. So we are working with the VET in Schools component. Another national project is called Reframing the Future. Often this is focusing on supporting organisational change in institutes. We have had a number of projects over the years. This year we have one project—assisting the induction of new teachers program. There is a whole variety of other things.

Last year we instituted a conversation series around the institute, which picks up contemporary topics. We have had two this year and have moved them around the campuses. Typically, about 30 teachers come along. We vary the time and venue to assist different teachers to attend.

We have just had a project focused on working with young people, particularly the 15 to 19-year-old group. Earlier in the year we had the blue sky project, an Australian National Training Authority project looking at a lot of the underpinning philosophy behind vocational education. We were fortunate that Jane Figgis came and ran that conversation for us. We routinely run training in our online learning management system, which is WebCT, and have a number of teams running that. Each year we run a small mini-conference, which is conducted by our research unit, the Centre Undertaking Research in Vocational Education. This year it will be on assessment. Last year we ran one on employability skills. There will be another one as well this year on new thinking, teaching and learning, which is picking up recent writing on VET pedagogy. In addition, CURVE run some smaller workshops, usually at the request of individual departments or

faculties. We have run workshops on the more national VET issues, employability skills and research and evaluation skills.

Student services also run a variety of workshops. Once again, at the request of departments and faculties, they have run them in cultural awareness training—that is a routine thing we run for all staff in the institute—dealing with difficult students and dealing with diversity. The library and learning centre also provide regular workshops on copyright issues, intellectual property and information literacy. Each of those things is provided centrally to all the teachers and routinely throughout the year.

MS DUNDAS: You have given us quite an extensive list of the particular programs that teachers at CIT can access. What is their ability to do that? We have been discussing teachers in primary and secondary schools with the department—about their getting lines down or time off to access the training. How do you do it at CIT? Are teachers able to access the array of training opportunities put forward for them?

Mr O’Leary: In CIT, the industrial arrangement is that teachers’ standard annual teaching load is 720 hours, but there is a reduction of 36 hours from that figure for the purposes of professional development. Associated with each bit of teaching time there is non-teaching time. Thirty-six hours is just a little less than the equivalent of two weeks a year. So there is a significant amount of time that teachers can schedule.

If their class clashes with a particular program, then there could be an issue. They can deal with that by arranging to have a casual teacher take their class, because there is funding available to backfill through those 36 hours, rescheduling the class to another time or not going to that particular program. There is a time allowance for every classroom teacher or for every Band 1 teacher to participate in professional development.

Mr Croucher: There are three additional mechanisms which support this. First of all, I mentioned a couple of those programs—Learnscape and Reframing the Future—which have national funding and which provide release time for teachers and run over several months. The second, obviously, is those that delivered department or faculty requests were able to run them at times that suit an individual department or teachers. The other move that we have made recently, particularly with the graduate certificate and graduate diploma, is to run them in flexible online mode. We have now developed some of those modules online which allows greater flexibility for teachers.

THE CHAIR: You now owe the kitty a dollar for using the word “module”.

Mr Croucher: Supporting that, we have a range of publications too that we provide for teachers. Out of our research unit we typically summarise a lot of the national projects they are involved in. *Learning Curve* is one publication and *Research Digest* is another. There are usually about four or five of those a year. We run a VET environmental scan which summarises a lot of the national system issues. The CIT *Snapshot*, which we publish annually, has a whole host of information about CIT students, staff, et cetera. It is just to keep people well informed about the organisation.

Recently we have been through our strategic planning exercise. We ran a number of think pieces that focused on some critical issues for VET: employability skills, new pedagogy et cetera. A book called *The Blue Book—Tips for Teachers* is drawn from the

deep experience of teachers in a lot of issues of supporting students. It contains a lot of small case studies and ways to deal with that. The library has a couple: *Acknowledging the Source*, which is for both students and teachers, and *Referencing. Learning Links* taps into the latest publications in discipline areas. At the moment we are working on *Your Responsibilities Under the Disability Discrimination Act*. Once again, it focuses particularly on teachers' requirements. They are the first two publications.

The next two I mentioned were initiatives that faculties or departments undertake of themselves. Quite often this is a collaborative thing, frequently aligned to the performance management process where they identify what their needs might be in a particular department. Often they will request an input from a flexible learning solutions team or the research area. Finally, there are the decisions that individual teachers make, particularly where they are able to spend their professional development funds. A lot of those opportunities do not cost anything. Some teachers would seek to bank the professional development fund and attend a major conference perhaps every second year.

THE CHAIR: We have run out of time. We really appreciate the fact that you have come in again and provided us with that extra information. We did not touch on teacher recruitment retention and retirement initiatives, but, because we had notified you of that, we are assuming that you have prepared something. You are handing us up something, which is fantastic.

Mr Croucher: No. That is just a list of what I have covered.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Could you to let us know about the recruitment, retention and retirement initiatives, which we did not touch on.

Ms Marks: I have the paper here that Ms Dundas asked for last time. I have a feeling that it might not have been attached to the letter that was sent to you on work force development.

MS DUNDAS: The letter did indicate that it was attached. Did it come through?

THE CHAIR: I don't think we have got it.

Ms Marks: I have a feeling that it didn't. It might have been left off the list of documents, so I have brought it here with me today.

Mr O'Leary: Does that cover everything, do you think?

Ms Marks: I think it does, yes.

THE CHAIR: We will consider that. It addresses those issues then. We appreciate your providing that and thank you for the information and for your time today. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 12.24 pm.