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National Mapping of Teacher Professional Learning Project

Final Report

19 November 2008

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This report gives an account of a twelve month mapping project into the policies and practices of teacher professional learning in Australia, and provides guidelines for quality professional learning into the future. The project was funded by the former Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), which has since become the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The assistance of schools and school principals, statutory bodies, universities, and professional associations from around Australia is gratefully acknowledged. We acknowledge, also, the support and professional engagement of members of the 'Mapping' Reference Group throughout this project. Lastly, we appreciate the contribution of all those teachers, school leaders and members of non-school stakeholder bodies who completed survey questionnaires and/or participated in interviews. The views expressed in the report are those of the authors and not necessarily of DEEWR or any other individual or organisation.

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| AAMT | Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers |
| AATE | Australian Association for the Teaching of English |
| ABCN | Australian Business Community Network |
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| ACDE | Australian Council of Deans of Education |
| ACE | Australian College of Educators (formerly Australian College of Education) |
| ACEL | Australian Council for Educational Leaders |
| ACER | Australian Council for Educational Research |
| ACHPER | Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation |
| ACT | Australian Capital Territory |
| AEU | Australian Education Union |
| AFTRAA | Australasian Forum of Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities |
| AFMLTA | Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations |
| AGQTP | Australia Government Quality Teacher Programme |
| AIS | Association of Independent Schools (NSW) |
| AISV | Association of Independent Schools of Victoria |
| AISWA | Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia Incorporated |
| AJCPTA | Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations |
| ALEA | Australian Literacy Educators' Association |
| AP | Assistant Principal |
| APC | Australian Parents' Council |
| ASTA | Australian Science Teachers' Association |
| ASTA | Australian Science Teachers Association |
| ATEA | Australian Teacher Education Association |
| BTR | Queensland Board of Teacher Registration (QLD) |
| CAER | Centre for Applied Educational Research |
| CDU | Charles Darwin University |
| CEC | Catholic Education Commission (NSW) |
| CEOM | Catholic Education Office Melbourne |
| CLASS | Centenary Learning Alliance of State Schools (QLD) |
| CMS | Classroom Management Strategies program (WA) |
| CPD | continual professional development |
| CSPLD | Curriculum Support and Professional Learning Directorate (Tasmania) |
| CSU | Charles Sturt University |
| DE&T | Department of Education and Training (VIC) |
| DEECD | Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (VIC) |
| DEET | Department of Education Employment and Training (Northern Territory) |
| DEEWR | Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations |
| DEST | Department of Education, Science and Training |
| DETA | Queensland Department of Education Training and the Arts |
| DoE | Department of Education (Tasmania) |
| DP | Deputy Principal |
| DPL | Division of Professional Learning (Sydney University) |
| ECU | Edith Cowan University |
| ELP | Enhancing Learning Project |
| FTE | Full-Time Equivalent |
| GPS | Great Public Schools Association of Queensland |
| HBE | Hawker Brownlow Education |
| HOD | Head of Department |
| HSC | Higher School Certificate |
| HTAA | History Teachers Association of Australia |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technologies |
| ISCA | Independent Schools Council of Australia |
| ISQ | Independent Schools Queensland |
| IT | Information Technology |

| | |
|---------|--|
| KLAs | Key Learning Areas |
| LOTE | Languages Other Than English |
| MCEETYA | Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs |
| MLATS | Mathematics Learning and Teaching for Success (NT, VIC, SA) |
| NBPTS | National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (USA) |
| NCEC | National Catholic Education Commission |
| NIDA | National Institute for the Dramatic Arts |
| NPDP | National Professional Development Program |
| NSW | New South Wales |
| NSW DET | New South Wales Department of Education and Training |
| NSW IT | New South Wales Institute of Teachers |
| NT | Northern Territory |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PD | professional development |
| PEEL | Project for Enhancing Effective Learning |
| PL | professional learning |
| PLCs | Professional Learning Communities |
| PLEAC | Professional Learning Endorsement and Advisory Committee (NSW IT) |
| PLI | Professional Learning Institute (WA) |
| PLU | Professional Learning Unit (CEOM) |
| PoLTs | Principles of Learning and Teaching |
| PSP | Priority Schools Program |
| PSQT | Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers |
| PTCWA | Professional Teaching Council of Western Australia |
| QCT | Queensland College of Teachers |
| QLD | Queensland |
| QUT | Queensland University of Technology |
| RAISE | Raising Achievement in Schools (WA) |
| RIPPLE | Research Institute for Professional Practice, Learning and Education |
| SA | South Australia |
| SATAC | South Australian Tertiary Admission Centre (SA/NT) |
| SC | Secondary College |
| SCIPP | Science Centre for Innovation and Professional Practice |
| SES | socio-economic status |
| SOSE | Studies of Society and the Environment |
| STELLA | Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy in Australia |
| TAFE | Technical and Further Education |
| TARS | Teacher Assessment Review Schedule (NSW) |
| TAS | Tasmania |
| TEC | Toowoomba Education Coalition (Queensland) |
| TESOL | Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages |
| THRASS | Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills |
| TIRTLE | Tasmanian Institute for Research in Teaching and Learning Environments |
| TQA | Tasmanian Qualifications Authority |
| USQ | University of Southern Queensland |
| VIC | Victoria |
| VIT | Victorian Institute of Teaching |
| WA | Western Australia |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a comprehensive mapping of current teacher professional learning activities across Australia in both government and non-government school sectors. While the purpose was not to judge whether these examples of professional learning were effective or the best quality available, some guidelines for quality professional learning into the future have been developed and included in this report on the basis of the survey and interview data.

A comparison was also made with an earlier mapping exercise initiated by the Federal Government, namely *PD 2000* (McRae et al., 2001) in order to identify significant trends in the past seven years.

This mapping project has shown how vital it is that teachers be given support to reflect on and inquire into teaching and learning, and how this should be seen as an important form of capacity building at the start of the 21st century. There is a correlation between enhancing the skills and knowledge of the education workforce and enhancing student achievement and well being. In learning organisations like schools, a vibrant culture of professional learning provides a necessary context in which teachers are better able to attend to the learning of their students. This ongoing process of reflection and inquiry requires resourcing in order to sustain it.

KEY FINDINGS AND RELATED GUIDELINES:

The following key findings about contemporary professional learning policy and practice in Australia have been drawn from a synthesis and multilevel analysis of the surveys and interviews used in this research. Guidelines for professional learning have been developed from the key findings and these are included after each key finding. The guidelines attempt to capture the experiences reported in the surveys and interviews in the form of succinct statements about what teachers and other educational stakeholders feel is quality professional learning.

1. Professional learning is a key way to implement reform at both a system wide and school level.

Guidelines for professional learning:

- Professional learning should involve strategic planning, at system-wide, school and individual levels.

Professional learning is now seen to be a crucial lever for school and system-wide educational reform. It is an important form of capacity building. The national survey used in this research showed that 98 per cent of schools have a professional learning program. Educational leaders and school principals interviewed all indicated that they saw professional learning as a vital component in any agenda to bring about educational change. Teachers also attribute changes in their own professional practice to professional learning activities. To bring about effective change at a system-wide and school level, a coordinated approach is necessary, one which builds on and sustains teachers' commitment to continuing professional learning.

2. Professional learning is integral to the professional lives of teachers, not an 'add on.'

Guidelines for professional learning:

- Professional learning should be explicitly embedded within teachers' work.
- Professional learning should be diverse, and appropriate to the individuals' and groups' needs.

Teachers recognise the need to continually review their professional knowledge and practice, and to access new knowledge and skills, in order to enhance the learning and engagement of their students. They see their learning as a professional responsibility and an important way in which they are accountable to their school communities. They combine their sense of responsibility to their school communities with a strong personal commitment to continuing learning. The majority of teachers (64 per cent) give professional learning a *very* high priority in their work.

There is wider appreciation of the need for sustained (ongoing or continual) professional learning as opposed to one-off professional development sessions or events. However, teachers and school leaders

are mindful of the dangers of increased ‘demands’ with respect to professional development unless there is some modification to the ways in which professional learning is valued and *embedded* within their working lives.

3. Professional learning is being shaped by standards-based reforms.

Guidelines for professional learning:

- *Teacher registration bodies, systems and schools should work together to share their historical and contemporary knowledge about inducting early career teachers into the profession.*
- *Governments, teacher registration bodies and schools themselves should investigate and value a variety of evidence in accounting for teachers’ professional learning.*

Systems and organisations have attempted to formalise professional learning by introducing a range of reforms to improve accountability including the development of professional standards.

While standards relate to accountability, they are more importantly seen by systems and professional associations as a key means of supporting the teaching profession by providing a specific focus on *continuing* professional learning by identifying knowledge, skills, capabilities and descriptors of accomplishment at various stages of the teaching lifecycle.

There is acknowledgement that professional standards need to be living documents, facilitating continual inquiry, enabling teachers to address the complex challenges they face at the start of the 21st century.

4. Professional learning is dynamic, collaborative, and generative.

Guidelines for professional learning:

- *Schools and teachers should be encouraged to form and develop a range of professional learning partnerships.*

Recent years have witnessed increasing activity and innovation with respect to professional learning. Schools and teachers are operating in a complex professional landscape. In response, many teachers and schools have seized the opportunity to develop dynamic and generative collaborations, most notably in the form of ongoing networks for professional learning. Survey results show an 18 per cent increase in collaboration between clusters of schools in professional learning since *PD 2000*.

There is positive evidence, too, of partnerships between schools, universities, industry and commercial providers of professional learning. In some jurisdictions there is impressive commitment to cross-sector collaboration and partnerships. These partnerships and collaborations are often sustained by on-line communication.

5. Professional learning is grounded in local school communities.

Guidelines for professional learning:

- *Teachers should be encouraged to develop and/or extend professional learning networks with colleagues.*

There is growing recognition, at the level of policy, systems, and school practices, of the value of on-site professional learning mediated by critical friends or consultants rather than knowledge or expertise ‘acquired’ from outsiders.

Although the majority of professional learning activity is organised by schools, often in association with projects supported or resourced by systems or other professional bodies, there appears to be more systematic planning for professional learning which uses distributed models of leadership, networking and professional communities, rather than rigid prescriptions of *what* teachers should learn and *how* they should learn it.

Two of the three most popular formats for professional learning activities are workshopping with colleagues and engaging in focused dialogue with other teachers about their work. These both involve the use of local knowledge and expertise in ongoing programs or projects.

Parent and community involvement with teachers in schools has also been shown to be an important factor in contributing to teachers' understanding of the local school community.

6. Professional learning involves an enhanced role for universities.

Guidelines for professional learning:

- Sectors should be encouraged to work collaboratively in cross-sectoral partnerships.

There is strong evidence of an enhanced role of the university sector in most jurisdictions beyond providing pre-service teacher education and higher degree courses, with little connection to schools and teachers. Today many universities are engaged in ongoing partnerships with schools and recognise the need to tailor their courses, and the ongoing professional work of teacher educators so that they work more productively with schools and teachers to provide support along the continuum from pre-service to early career to experienced and accomplished teachers.

7. Professional learning involves practitioner inquiry

Guidelines for professional learning:

- Teaching should be recognised as engaging in continuing inquiry into practice, and this inquiry should be recognised as strongly collegial and collaborative in nature.

On every level, schools, professional organisations and systems are engaged in more widespread planning for, and support of, practitioner inquiry including providing teachers with skills to read research, to synthesise and interpret data, and to conduct their own inquiries.

Practitioner inquiry, in its many manifestations, would seem to be addressing the stated preference of large numbers of teachers for activity that challenges their thinking and practice and connects with some bigger picture issues that give meaning to their teaching. In other respects, such projects offer the potential to build 'cultures of inquiry' in systems and in schools (Reid, 2004).

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents a comprehensive mapping of current teacher professional learning activities across Australia in both government and non-government school sectors, and provides guidelines for quality professional learning into the future.

A team of researchers from Monash University was contracted by the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) – now the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) – to perform this task.

The research included:

- a literature review;
- surveys of 830 school principals and 4,600 teachers;
- 86 consultations with school and non-school stakeholders; and
- ongoing dialogue with a DEEWR appointed Reference Group.

A LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive critical review of the literature relating to the professional learning of teachers in both national and international contexts has been conducted. This review identifies various kinds of professional learning, the perceived effectiveness of diverse approaches, and the perceived role of professional learning within school communities and system wide educational reform. It investigates how professional learning enhances teacher, student and school capacity, as well as how professional learning works to inform, form and reform teachers' professional identities.

The review considers professional learning activities and programs that have been implemented and reported on in Australian States and Territories in the years since the publication of *PD 2000*, a report on professional development in Australia previously commissioned by the Federal Government. It summarises a range of initiatives with respect to the kind of professional learning which each promotes, and its effect on enhancing teacher, student and school capacity. There is a specific focus on the ways in which professional learning is being reconceptualised within the context of standards-based reforms that are currently being implemented in Australia. These reforms include state and national policy initiatives such as teacher accreditation, strategic plans and national testing, and the links that are being established between professional learning, teacher registration and professional standards.

The review also compares professional learning initiatives in the past three years to what research considers 'best practice' in relation to the professional learning of teachers.

SURVEYS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

Two surveys were designed in consultation with DEEWR, one undertaken by school principals and the other by teachers. These surveys were based on questions used for *PD 2000*, in order to facilitate comparison with the findings of that report.

The findings of these surveys are presented in this report. Their aim is to:

- Map the nature and purpose of professional learning implemented by education authorities, professional associations and schools;
- Describe recent trends in professional learning activities, particularly in relation to broad areas of Australian Government priorities in school education;
- Note any registration/accreditation requirements for completing professional learning and identify any links with career progression and teaching standards;
- Provide information on the range and quality of professional learning providers available, noting alternative or non-traditional providers;
- Describe teachers' attitudes towards and involvement with professional learning and its perceived impact on teaching and learning outcomes;

- Identify teachers' access to professional learning and factors influencing that access (including availability of funding) and describe the demographic profile of users and, if relevant, non-users of professional learning;
- Note teacher preferences in relation to time, mode, content and purpose of professional learning and identify positive and negative factors, as perceived by teachers, which influence the effectiveness of professional learning activities; and
- Identify good practice in providing funding and evaluating professional learning, including to teachers in rural and remote locations, with attention to the correlation between improved professional learning practice and improved student outcomes.

The data from the surveys have been analysed by:

- Examining descriptive statistics to explore patterns across school levels (sectors, types, and states) and school roles (teachers and administrators);
- Examining associations between predictors (e.g., level of implementation, level of professional learning) and outcomes (e.g., achievement indicators); and
- Providing a descriptive analysis (for each of the phases from implementation of the program to student outcomes) across states.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations have been conducted with stakeholders located in all states and territories in order to discuss teacher professional learning. These consultations included interviews with key stakeholders in each state (Education Departments, Teacher Registration Authorities, and Higher Education Institutions) and at a national level (national professional associations and other peak bodies). Members of the research team also visited selected schools in each state in order to gain insight into the ways key personnel (including principals and teachers) viewed professional learning and their involvement in any significant professional learning initiatives.

The primary aim of the visits was not simply to confirm the trends in professional learning reflected in the surveys, but to gain an insight into 'best practice' as it is currently understood by teachers, school leaders and key stakeholders around Australia.

When choosing schools to visit in each state, the Monash research team invited representatives from government, Catholic and independent sectors to nominate significant examples of professional learning. It was up to those representatives to decide what they considered to be significant. In this way, the research team was able to chart, not only actual instances of professional learning but the views of system representatives, school leaders and teachers about the kinds of professional learning they feel are desirable.

Taken together, the survey results and interviews reflect the ongoing efforts by teachers and school leaders to better understand their work and thus enhance the quality of student learning in Australian schools.

REFERENCE GROUP

Monash University established a Reference Group to act as 'critical friends' throughout this research. Reference Group meetings have been convened on three occasions, and members have maintained contact with the research team throughout the project.

KEY FINDINGS

This report shows that a diversity of views about professional learning currently exists in Australia. A number of commonalities are evident across all states and educational sectors, largely deriving from the standards-based reforms that have been implemented in Australia over the past decade or more. The professional landscape created by these reforms is reflected in a shared vocabulary, including words like 'outcomes', 'standards', and 'accountability'. Within this landscape, however, there are significant differences of opinion with respect to what constitutes quality professional learning which

have given rise to a diverse range of initiatives at local, state and national level. This report attempts to capture those differences without adjudicating between them.

There is consensus about the value of professional learning with all respondents acknowledging the correlation between enhancing the skills and knowledge of the education workforce and enhancing student achievement and well being. This involves teachers continually reflecting on their professional learning in the light of student learning outcomes – a process of inquiry which requires resourcing in order to sustain it. Overall, there is a view that in learning organisations like schools, a culture of professional learning provides a necessary context in which teachers are better able to attend to the learning of their students. To invoke an old saying, teachers gladly teach and gladly learn; by teaching they learn, and by learning they teach better.

PD 2000 begins by noting that ‘the cost of teacher professional development is high’, quoting figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics for 1996, and asking: ‘Does that expenditure provide value for money?’ (McRae et al., 2001). The views of the educators contained in this report indicate that their answer to this question would be ‘yes’. Net expenditure on professional learning per employee places Education eighth out of the sixteen industry categories used by the ABS (ABS, 6362.0). It is vital that teachers be given support to reflect on and inquire into teaching and learning, and that this be seen as an important form of capacity building at the start of the 21st century. It also seems clear, however, that the educators who participated in the surveys and interviews reported in this volume would question attempts to gauge the effectiveness of any professional learning which diminished a sense of the complexity of teachers’ work and what they are trying to achieve.

KEY FINDINGS IN DETAIL

1. Professional learning is a key way to implement reform at both a system wide and school level.

There is widespread recognition of the importance of professional learning as shown by both the survey and interview data. Far from being unrecognised or treated simply as a marginal activity, professional learning is now seen to be a crucial lever for school and system-wide educational reform.

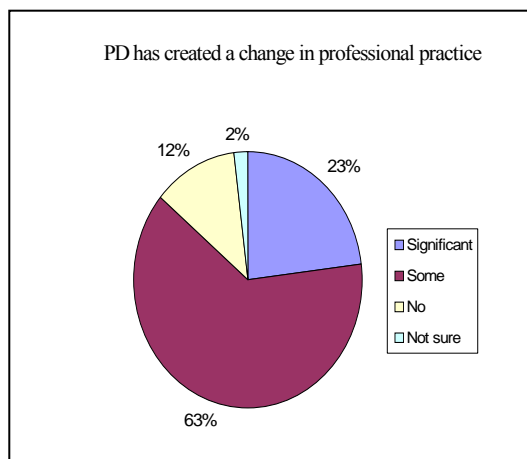
The educational leaders who were interviewed all indicated that they the provision of quality professional learning as a vital component in any agenda to bring about educational reform. School principals typically saw the provision of quality professional learning as a way of bringing about school reform. This learning might be focused on a particular issue, such as improving the teaching of numeracy or improving ICT skills, or it might be designed to promote a collaborative culture that enables the school to respond more effectively to the needs of the community it serves. A number of school leaders indicated that they had provided support for staff to facilitate better social relationships within their schools and vis-à-vis the wider school community (e.g., in TRIBES projects in Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, and in Birdwood High School in SA).

**98% of schools
have a professional
learning program**

Source: School Survey (2007-8)

Findings from the survey show that 98 per cent of schools have a professional learning program, and, of these, 95 per cent have a budget set aside for this. Although the majority of schools in all sectors stated they have a defined budget for professional learning, government schools are significantly more likely to have this (97 per cent) than schools from the other two sectors (89 per cent of Catholic schools and 90 per cent of independent schools).

School leaders who were interviewed showed how they had managed to ensure that professional learning received recurrent funding and how they had worked to have professional learning recognized as integral to the



operation of their institution. They spoke about achieving some level of autonomy in funding professional learning programs, but that it was usual for schools to have an initial period when they were dependent upon other sources of funds (such as those provided through the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme) in order to begin the process of professional learning and renewal necessary to bring about school change. Some leaders indicated that the changes brought about by professional learning initiatives had convinced the school community of the value of investment of this kind. The survey showed that 86 per cent of teachers see a change to their own professional practice as a result of professional learning activities (23 per cent a ‘significant change’, 63 per cent ‘some change’).

2. *Professional learning is integral to the professional lives of teachers, not an ‘add on.’*

Professional learning is considered to be an important form of capacity building, equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills that they require in order to meet the needs of their students at the start of the 21st century. It is perceived by teachers themselves to be a necessary extension of their teaching and of their work with students.

According to the Teacher Survey, the majority of teachers (64 per cent) give professional learning a very high priority in their work. (It is noteworthy, however, that the survey results show a significant difference between teachers of primary-aged students and those of secondary-aged students – more primary teachers accord high priority to professional learning [69 per cent] than do secondary teachers [57 per cent]).

64% of teachers
give professional
learning a very high
priority

Source: Teacher Survey (2007-8)

The teachers interviewed recognise the need to continually review their professional knowledge and practice, and to access new knowledge and skills, in order to enhance the learning and engagement of their pupils. Teachers indicated that they saw their learning as a professional responsibility and an important way in which they are accountable to their school communities. *PD 2000* reported a tension between professional learning as an individual pursuit and the professional development mandated by schools or systems. The interviews conducted for this report suggest that teachers recognise the need to justify their professional learning with respect to the agreed goals of their school, combining their sense of responsibility with a strong personal commitment to continuing learning.

While a majority of teachers and school leaders support the notion of professional learning as an integral part of their working lives, they are also concerned about the impact of ‘extra’ commitments being ‘added onto’ their already substantial workloads. In the survey, when teachers were asked about topics in which they felt they needed more professional development, ‘time management’ and ‘stress management’ were two of the top four areas of need. This would suggest that teachers and school leaders in Australia are already anxious about time and stress in their work. By implication teachers are mindful of the dangers of increased ‘demands’ with respect to professional development, unless there is some modification to the ways in which professional learning is valued and embedded within their working lives.

For teachers, 2 of the top 4
areas of need in their
professional learning are:

- time management and
- stress management

Source: Teacher Survey (2007-8)

3. *Professional learning is being shaped by standards-based reforms.*

The tensions highlighted in *PD 2000* around professional learning as an individual pursuit and professional development as something done at the behest of a system or a school have been displaced by recognition on the part of both systems and teachers of the need for accountability. Systems and organisations have attempted to formalise professional learning by introducing a range of standards-based reforms, including the development of professional standards and other forms of accountability, such as student outcome data.

The word ‘standards’ implies accountability, but it should be noted that those systems and professional associations which have developed professional standards also see them as a key means of supporting the teaching profession. This involves a specific focus on continuing professional learning. The New South Wales Institute of Teachers (NSW IT) and the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) have each established a set of standards in order to provide a framework for teachers to reflect on their professional practice. It is particularly interesting to note the way that these authorities have promoted their standards as a means of giving support to early career teachers. One of the major challenges over the past decade has been to provide support for early career teachers, after a period of time when relatively few people were joining the profession, and teachers were arguably in danger of losing their historical memory about the needs of beginning teachers. These standards are intended to provide both beginning teachers and their mentors with a mean of focusing on the professional knowledge, practice and wider professional engagement necessary for successful induction into the profession. It seems fair to say that the systems and other professional bodies which have developed standards are mindful of the need for those standards to be living documents that enable teachers to address the complex challenges they face at the start of the 21st century. For this to happen, they need to facilitate continuing inquiry.

Survey results suggest that the school administration is the most frequently cited source of decision-making about professional learning programs (50 per cent of schools stated this), followed by peers (42 per cent), the individual staff member (33 per cent) and the employing authority (20 per cent). When selecting between certain programs or initiatives, schools and teachers are required to negotiate between these different parties. ‘Current school priorities’ is the most frequently cited basis for choosing a school’s professional learning programs, and this is nearly universal (95 per cent).

Schools and teachers need to negotiate between a range of factors and a range of decision-makers when choosing professional learning programs and activities

Source: School Survey (2007-8)

It is not, however, the only basis and most schools mentioned more than one reason for their decisions relating to professional learning. Surveys of staff wishes and needs (52 per cent), recent issues (presumably unplanned and outside recognised school priorities) (40 per cent), organisation reviews (34 per cent) and staff reviews (30 per cent) also provide a basis for professional learning in many schools. The majority of teachers (55 per cent) stated that their participation in professional learning activities was determined by personal choice. An item in the teacher survey that asked about the topics covered in professional learning activities showed there is an increased rate of participation in the majority of topics, ranging from teaching practice, institutional maintenance, equity issues, and personal skills or issues. There is also an increase in the number of teachers who feel they need more professional learning in these areas.

4. *Professional learning is dynamic, collaborative, and generative.*

In Australia in the last three years, there has been a great deal of activity and innovation with respect to professional learning, and this has resulted in a more complex professional landscape than ever before. In some jurisdictions and between some sectors there are dynamic and generative collaborations between teachers and between schools (i.e., in ongoing networks). There is positive evidence of partnerships between schools, universities, industry and commercial providers of professional learning. In some jurisdictions there is impressive commitment to cross-sector collaboration and partnerships (e.g., NSW, QLD and SA). It would seem there have been fewer developments and less innovation in the area of home and school partnerships.

A significant change since *PD 2000* is an 18 per cent increase in collaboration between clusters of schools. There were differences across sectors and schools types, with government and Catholic schools more likely to use a regional or central office (75 per cent) than independent schools (14 and 12 per cent), and secondary schools more likely to use a higher education institutions (23 per cent) than primary schools (10 per cent). Independent schools’ most indicated provider of professional learning was a private provider (63 per cent).

5. *Professional learning is grounded in local school communities.*

There is growing recognition, at the level of policy, systems, and school practices, of the value of on-site professional learning mediated by critical friends rather than knowledge or expertise ‘acquired’ from outsiders, and of sustained (ongoing, or continual) professional learning as opposed to one-off professional development sessions or events. The authors of *PD 2000* noted ‘a move away from one-off activities towards those that are serial or otherwise on-going’, although they had ‘no benchmark data to assess a trend in this area’ (McRae et al., 2001, p.10). The survey and interviews conducted for this inquiry confirm this change in practices. An examination of the documentation for teachers and schools seeking funding for professional learning initiatives, such as for ‘action learning projects’ in AGQTP applications and in various state supported programs, suggests that funding tends to value proposals that are on-site, ongoing and collaborative rather than one-off ‘events’ directed toward individual teachers’ professional learning.

Teachers’ ‘local’ professional learning is interfacing with more traditional ‘knowledge.’ This growing recognition is reflected in more systematic planning for professional learning, which often operates on flexible and distributed models of leadership, networking and professional communities, rather than rigid prescriptions of what teachers should learn and how they should learn it. The school survey was interested to identify who schools use as providers of activities for professional development. Respondents stated that the most common provider of professional learning activities is staff from their school (92 per cent). This was reflected right across school sectors, types and location.

Teachers indicated in responses to the survey that the majority of professional learning activity is organised by the teachers’ schools (83 per cent). Two of the three most popular formats for professional learning activities are workshopping with colleagues (63 per cent) and engaging in focused dialogue with other teachers about their work (52 per cent). These both involve using the formats of ongoing, local knowledge and expertise. Parent and community involvement with teachers in schools is an important factor in contributing to teachers’ understanding of the local school community. Data from the survey showed that 82 per cent of teachers feel they need more professional learning in the area of parent and community involvement, highlighting the importance of this to teachers and schools. This was chosen by a larger proportion of teachers in the sample than any other listed topic.

Teachers say their main area of need for professional development is ‘parent and community involvement’

– 82% state this

Source: Teacher Survey (2007-8)

6. *Professional learning involves an enhanced role for universities.*

There is strong evidence of an enhanced role of the university sector in most (but not all) jurisdictions, and the nature of this role seems to be changing from one where universities were seen merely as providers of pre-service teacher education and higher degree courses and were otherwise not strongly connected with schools and teachers. This evidence is more strongly apparent from the interview data than from the surveys. Neither of the surveys probed the role that the tertiary sector plays in supporting professional learning. The importance placed on professional learning by schools is apparent in the way several schools interviewed are providing for teachers to do university-related study leading to the award of a degree, sometimes at doctoral level, and certainly at Masters. Systems are also recognising the importance of credentials of this kind (e.g., Monash University MEd in partnership with DEECD, and similar programs operating in QLD, NSW and SA).

Universities themselves are recognising the need to tailor their courses, and the ongoing professional work of teacher educators, in such a way that they work more productively at the interface between the academy and schools. They see value in terms of teachers’ professional learning and in terms of their own pedagogy in grounding professional learning within schools. This means an awareness of ongoing work with and support for teachers along the continuum from pre-service to early career to experienced and accomplished teachers. Flinders University, University of Sydney, University of

Western Sydney and the University of Southern Queensland are representative of other universities across Australia who are actively seeking out and/or developing partnerships with schools. The partnerships involve offering opportunities for ‘further study’, and they involve ongoing dialogue and professional learning activity between schools and the university. This awareness is partially reflected in the survey findings in a decided shift in the university credentials that teachers hold. In the eight years since *PD 2000* there has been a decrease in the percentage of teachers whose highest qualification is a certificate/diploma (19 per cent down to 12 per cent), and an increase in those who have an undergraduate bachelor’s degree of at least 3 years (43 per cent up to 50 per cent) or a master’s degree (9 per cent up to 13 per cent). Teachers are tending to spend more of their time in learning to become teachers, and learning to become better teachers in formal teacher education courses. Beyond this, there are numerous documented cases of professional learning activities and projects generated through systems-driven and systems-supported school-university partnerships: e.g., in AGQTP funded projects, in DECS’s *Learning to Learn* project, in DETA’s *The Learning Space* initiative, in DEECD’s 19 projects focusing on the professional learning of school leaders, and in DEECD’s *Professional Learning Leave* program.

7. *Professional learning involves practitioner inquiry*

On every level, schools, professional organisations and systems are engaged in more widespread planning for, and support of, practitioner inquiry. This combination of planning and support is focused on giving teachers time, space, resources, scaffolding, and professional networks/partnerships for engaging in these forms of inquiry. This is evident in the proliferation of ‘action learning’ and ‘action research’ projects in schools. There is still a wide diversity of approaches and models even within these projects. Sometimes such projects are embracing the critical potential of ‘outcomes-based learning’ – i.e. making those very ‘outcomes’ an object of inquiry, as in the STELLA Scholars project (see Meiers, 2006) – and sometimes they are taking the outcomes as a given, thus providing strong guidance and direction for teachers’ learning.

There is lively debate across all jurisdictions about the question of what constitutes ‘evidence’ of professional learning (as indeed, there is in other western countries – see Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature, p. 36). In response to this debate, schools (e.g., Kambrya SC in Victoria) and systems (e.g., DECS in SA and the RAISe program in WA) are now providing teachers with skills to read research, to synthesise and interpret data, and to conduct their own inquiries. Courses at Flinders University, for example, have been developed in recent years to do precisely this.

When teachers were asked in the survey about professional development activities they like best, 43 per cent of them chose ‘an activity that challenges my thinking and practice with ideas and theories that help explain underlying ideas about society and education’. Half of the teacher respondents chose between three to five activities they liked best, which were a combination of practical and theoretical approaches.

Practitioner inquiry, in its many manifestations, would seem to be addressing the stated preference of large numbers of teachers for activity that challenges their thinking and practice and connects with some bigger picture issues that give meaning to their teaching. In other respects, such projects offer the potential to build ‘cultures of inquiry’ in schools and in schools (Reid, 2004).

82% of teachers prefer a combination of theoretical and practical professional learning activities

Source: Teacher Survey (2007-8)

GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Recommendations derived from the findings are made in the conclusion. As a ‘Mapping’ exercise, this report does not make judgments about the quality of the professional learning reported in the surveys and the interviews. However, in the course of the project a strong consensus about effective professional learning appeared to emerge from the surveys and the interviews. The conclusion to this report attempts to capture this consensus in the form of a set of guidelines for quality professional learning.

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CHAPTER ONE: THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW: A COMPARISON WITH PD 2000

1.1 WHAT DIFFERENCES EXIST BETWEEN PD 2000 AND CURRENT UNDERSTANDINGS AND PRACTICE RELATING TO PROFESSIONAL LEARNING?

1.1.1 *Changes in vocabulary*

The differences between present-day understandings of professional learning and the state of play in 2000 as described by *PD 2000 Australia: A national mapping of school teacher professional development* (McRae et al., 2001) are partly captured by changes in language. Although one state (Queensland) has actually reverted to the term, 'professional development', in order to name the professional learning activities in which teachers engage, the preference in other states appears to be to use the term 'professional learning'. The latter connotes individual autonomy and motivation, an image of professionals consciously monitoring their professional practice, learning from their work, and arriving at new understandings or knowledge on that basis. Such learning is typically situated learning, reflecting the professional experiences and insights that become available to teachers within their local school communities. The former term, 'professional development', is usually taken to mean activities done at the behest of employers or systems, involving knowledge that is delivered by outside experts. The Literature Review shows how the contrast between these positions has been played out in the policy documents and research related to the field.

This is not to say that *PD 2000* opts for the latter model as opposed to the former. As a mapping exercise it covers a range of viewpoints, beginning with an account of tensions that have traditionally shaped the professional practice of teachers, most notably that between an acknowledgment of teachers' autonomy and a recognition that they 'are not self-employed'. This means that 'the choices they have are constrained by the priorities of their employers, and... by the directions and requirements of governments in their interpretations of the general wishes of the communities that elect them.' Against this background, *PD 2000* notes that there are teachers who nonetheless subscribe to alternative models of professional development which go beyond system-wide requirements: 'Some teachers argue cogently that most of the things they do entail professional development of one sort or another. They think constantly about their work and ways in which its effectiveness could be improved; they talk about these matters with their colleagues and trial and assess new ways as a matter of course. They are truly 'professional' in this regard...' (McRae et al., 2001).

Yet there are many reasons to feel dissatisfied with such binaries, as the Literature Review makes clear. This particular change in vocabulary - from professional 'development' to professional 'learning' - hardly does justice to the differences between the historical moment of *PD 2000* and our current educational landscape, as though we can speak of a 'before' (when professional development or 'pd' was dominant) and an 'after' (when a thousand flowers, in the form of locally situated examples of professional learning, have blossomed). The language used to name and describe professional learning is undoubtedly significant, but the same words spoken by different people can mean different things (it should be noted, for example, that the use of the term 'professional development' in Queensland embraces a far richer understanding of professional learning than the caricature presented in the opening paragraph), and we need to probe deeper than the difference between 'learning' and 'development' suggests.

To understand the difference between then and now, it is necessary to acknowledge that professional learning (or 'professional development') is now being mediated by the standards-based educational reforms that have occurred over the past decade. These have arguably promoted a greater sense of regulation and accountability, even with respect to professional learning that is occurring at a local level. Indeed, if we were obliged to choose a single word that captures the difference between then and now, it would surely be the word 'standards'. This does not enable us to step beyond the debates that have surrounded teacher professional learning, as though every major issue has been resolved - the word 'standards' is itself a contested space, meaning different things to different people - but signals the way those debates have fundamentally changed and are now located on different terrain. By and large, the interviews we have conducted in each state reflect this change.

The move towards establishing standards can be traced in *PD 2000*, albeit in an incipient form. This is especially so with reference to professional standards, where various fledgling efforts (most notably Lawrence Ingvarson's (1998) promotion of a model of professional standards based on the US example of

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards [NBPTS]) are seen as pointers to the future, without any strong evidence to show either the profession's willingness to embrace such standards or decisive moves by governments at a federal and state level to develop standards frameworks. All this has changed since *PD 2000*.

1.1.2 Other continuities/discontinuities

PD 2000 recognizes an increasing emphasis in research on teacher professional development on the value of situated learning that is ongoing. It gives especially favourable accounts of the work of Ball and Cohen (1999) which it describes as reflecting 'the main current of opinion, when they argue that: 'professional learning must be education for professional practice if it is to be either professionally responsible or usable. Thus a conception of the practice itself, and what it takes to practice well, should lie at the foundation of professional education'' (cited in McRae et al., 2001, p.21). The writers of this Report also observe – in a way which still resonates today – that such a focus on professional development should not be taken to mean that there is any strong causal link between teacher professional development and student learning, and they recognise the challenges that this poses when it comes to arguing the need for investing in professional development. They nonetheless refer positively to an increasing emphasis in the literature on 'active, collaborative learning', noting the growing incidence of terms like 'learning organisations' or 'learning communities' as a way of capturing current trends. Indeed, they write that 'references to the centrality and importance of active, collaborative learning are ubiquitous in the literature', and an important vehicle for 'redefining teacher practice' in a way that serves the needs of a post modern age (pp.24-25).

Many of the concepts of professional learning presented in *PD 2000* still figure in debates today. 'Pedagogical content knowledge' as distinct from 'discipline knowledge', 'learning communities', 'insider/outsider' professional development models which emphasize the need for teachers both to generate knowledge on the basis of their ongoing experiences and to benefit from the input of knowledgeable 'outsiders' – these concepts and distinctions still shape contemporary research and debates about professional learning. The interviews and surveys conducted for this report show that people continue to locate their work within the spectrum of views identified by *PD 2000*.

The most significant difference between the professional landscape described in *PD 2000* and current conditions is that the prospect of standards based reforms discussed in *PD 2000* has now become a reality. The intervening years have witnessed a proliferation of standards, both with respect to standards for students' learning and professional standards to guide teaching. Such developments were already in evidence prior to 2000 – one need only think of how the *National Curriculum Statements and Profiles* (1994) introduced a new way to talk about student learning, formalizing a set of learning continua against which students' progression could be monitored. We could also note how the learning continua in the *National Curriculum Statements and Profiles* have since been formalized into a set of benchmarks that has provided a framework for standardised testing of literacy and numeracy across the states. However, other standards-based initiatives, most notably the development of professional standards by key professional associations, as well as the work of statutory authorities like the Victorian Institute of Teaching and the New South Wales Institute of Teachers to establish standards frameworks for induction into the profession, have only occurred in the years since *PD 2000* was published.

1.1.3 The cyclical nature of educational reform

Some of the people we interviewed commented on the cyclical nature of educational reform, and this gave us food for thought. Have we moved forward or backward since *PD 2000*? Or are we just going around in circles? One of the teachers who participated in a group discussion in South Australia, for example, was critical of the way in which governments had imposed wave after wave of reform, without consulting the profession in any meaningful way, and (in his view) even completely discounting the knowledge and experience of teachers. The same teacher noted that many ideas which were now being touted as 'new', such as action research and collaborative learning, were actually around in the 1980s. This was not, however, a case of 'been there/done that' – the teacher who made these comments was intelligently striving for a perspective on the professional learning he had recently been experiencing as part of the South Australian initiative, *Learning to Learn*, and he was very mindful of the pitfalls of cynicism (or, for that matter, of a wistful nostalgia for the good old days).

Similar attempts to appraise the current moment were offered by other stakeholders. It is easy to treat with a pinch of salt those who speak about professional learning of an earlier period – they might be referring to the advent in Australia of action research in the 1980s or the moment of National Professional Development Program (NPDP) in the early 1990s - as though they are guilty of nostalgia. Yet this would be to discount the wealth of experience that such people actually bring to the table. People associated with significant stakeholders, such as the University of Sydney, spoke of their experiences in the later 1990s of needing to work hard and strategically to maintain ongoing relationships with schools when funding for such partnerships dried up. That is, programs or opportunities such as ‘Innovative Links’ and others associated with NPDP did not have widespread government support through the later 1990s and early 2000s. In many cases these partnerships did falter, as with professional associations’ links with universities, and in some jurisdictions they have not been re-established on any widespread scale.

Such a struggle provides a valuable perspective on current efforts by bodies such as NSW DET, the very proactive NSW Government’s AGQTP Cross-sectoral Management Committee and those associated with the South Australian initiative, *Learning to Learn*, to now explicitly pursue a policy of building and enriching school-university partnerships, and providing funding opportunities for these partnerships. We are seeing the development of dynamic systems, which help to generate lively and meaningful programs in schools, and mutually beneficial partnerships between schools and universities (and in some cases industry partners). In this respect, the optimism expressed in *PD 2000*, when it positively evaluates the potential of ‘a practice-based [teacher professional development] curriculum’ (p.21) is arguably being realised. This is not a matter of recycling old ideas, but of recognising that good ideas require a lot of work. They do not simply happen, but necessitate careful planning and strategic implementation. In this respect, it seems apparent that some current initiatives involving sustained professional learning and productive partnerships between schools and universities can be located in a history of such work, and those advocating those initiatives would only strengthen their case by cultivating an historical perspective of this kind. To acknowledge the richness of the educational traditions available to us, and to explicitly build on them, would also be a way of countering the cynicism that is sometimes produced when governments introduce waves of reform without regard to the knowledge and experience that people have developed over the years.

1.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

The differences between then and now partly explain why this report assumes a different structure from *PD 2000*. It also needs to be noted that the design of the inquiry as negotiated with DEST (as it was called then) has inevitably produced a different kind of report.

The design of this inquiry specified interviews with key stakeholders as a way of gaining insight into our existing professional landscape, enabling us to explore dimensions of professional learning that were not available to the authors of the earlier report. Although *PD 2000* includes some interviews, the key form of data collection on which it relies are surveys, and accordingly much of the Report comprises conclusions drawn from the survey data. We have replicated those surveys (for the sake of comparability), and reached conclusions about the current state of professional learning on the basis of results which can be found in Chapters 3 and 4 of the current report. However, unlike *PD 2000*, the following report comprises chapters in which we report on interviews conducted with stakeholders - such as systems representatives, professional associations, academics, school principals, teachers - in each jurisdiction. These extended interviews do more than triangulate the conclusions that we have drawn from the surveys. They offer a qualitative dimension that enables us to provide (without casting any aspersions on the quality of *PD 2000*) a more nuanced account of professional learning in Australia than might have otherwise been possible.

Other differences between this Report and *PD 2000* derive from the changing nature of the professional landscape in Australia, such as the standards-based reforms that have been implemented in various ways across the states and territories, as well as at a federal level. Although our aim is to offer cases of each jurisdiction, in which we try to capture the distinctive nature of the professional landscape in each state, we shall also describe - in a separate discussion – the attempts by national bodies to formulate professional standards, noting the ways that these intersect with initiatives at a state level. We are not proposing to give an exhaustive account of the initiatives and debates relating to professional standards (other documents attempt to do that – see e.g. Hayes, 2006), but to consider ways in which standards are providing frameworks for reconceptualising professional learning.

Chapter 2 presents an extensive review of the literature relating to the professional learning of teachers in both national and international contexts has been conducted. This review identifies various kinds of professional learning, the perceived effectiveness of various approaches, and the perceived role of professional learning within school communities and system wide educational reform. It investigates how professional learning enhances teacher, student and school capacity, as well as how professional learning works to inform, form and reform teachers' professional identities.

Chapters 3 and 4 describe, synthesise and analyse two surveys completed by school principals and classroom teachers, respectively. The items in both surveys were closely aligned with the survey instrument used in *PD 2000*, in order to generate some points of direct comparison with current practices, attitudes and beliefs with respect to professional learning. The surveys include government, Catholic and independent schools in all states and territories, except for government schools in the Northern Territory and Catholic schools in one diocese in Queensland. The national samples are 2,000 schools and 20,000 teachers, which replicates the samples used in *PD 2000*. As well as asking about professional learning, both surveys will gather some demographic data on schools and teachers in order to highlight any differences with relation to professional learning formats, topics and activities.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide qualitative accounts of the views, attitudes and experiences of a wide variety of participants and stakeholders as they emerged in interviews with the team of Monash researchers. The primary purpose of these chapters is to present cases about professional learning in all states and territories in Australia. Chapter 5 sketches out an overview of the professional learning landscape across the country, with particular attention to the ways in which professional learning policy and practice are currently being influenced by standards-based reforms. Chapter 6 comprises cases about professional learning in each of the jurisdictions. These cases have been constructed on the basis of interviews which members of the research team conducted with key stakeholders in each state. We refrained from imposing our own preconceptions of what might constitute quality professional learning and attempted to access the range of viewpoints available.

In Chapter 7, we draw together the diverse insights, understandings, and attitudes about professional learning in Australia, and we critically consider the range of policy and practices that support and drive this learning. There is no doubt that this is an extraordinarily complex landscape of professional learning. Mindful of this complexity, we articulate and tease out some key findings from this comprehensive mapping exercise. And we make a series of recommendations for policy makers, education offices, higher education institutions, professional associations, professional bodies, school leaders and practitioners.

1.3 HOW WAS THIS INQUIRY INTO PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CONDUCTED?

1.3.1 The surveys

Two surveys investigating teacher professional learning practices, policies and attitudes were designed and distributed – one to school principals and one to classroom teachers - in conjunction with a national survey of teachers working in these schools.

The surveys mostly replicate the school and teacher surveys conducted as part of the *PD 2000* project. Revisiting these earlier surveys was both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, the results from the present surveys could be compared with results from the previous survey to examine changes in the professional development programs and activities of schools and teachers over the last eight years. On the other hand, however, the need to make comparisons with the earlier surveys at times constrained the present survey in terms of the wording and content of the questionnaire. While this was rarely problematic, it meant, for instance, that the question in the 2008 surveys followed the wording of the questions for the *PD 2000* survey in asking about professional development experiences (implying formally structured events and sessions) rather than professional learning (implying a wider range of professional learning programs and activities, including more open-ended and ongoing inquiry-based activities).

1.3.1.1 The Survey Process

A survey (see Appendix 2) was sent to 2,000 school principals across Australia asking about their professional development programs. The survey asked for information on the following areas:

- Whether the school has a professional development program
- Who makes the decisions about what will be in the program and what/who influences these decisions
- How the professional development program is planned
- The time allocated to professional development
- What activities are included in professional development programs
- Who provides these activities and who participates
- What topics are covered
- How providers of professional development activities are located
- How PD activities are evaluated
- Information on school budgets for professional development programs

Information was also collected about the type of the school (primary, secondary, combined or special school), the sector (government, Catholic, independent), the location (state/territory and size of town/city), the number of students enrolments, and the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students at the school in this report for a full.

A sample of 2,000 schools was selected, which is about one in every five Australian schools. Schools were randomly selected from a stratified sample, with the strata consisting of state/territory and school sector as part of the explicit sampling frame, and school type implicit in the sample selection. Results from the achieved sample were weighted by state, sector and type. Government schools in the Northern Territory and Catholic schools from one Queensland diocese did not participated in the survey. The response rate was 42.2 per cent.

Although the term ‘national’ is used in this report to describe both the school and teacher surveys, permission was not received to conduct the survey among Northern Territory government schools and Catholic schools in one Queensland Catholic diocese. Schools in these two jurisdictions are less than 2 per cent of schools nationally and have less than 1 per cent of teachers nationally.

Of the 833 schools that responded to the survey, 16 (or 1.9 per cent) did not have a professional development program. Most of the tables in this chapter are necessarily based on the remaining 817 schools that reported having a professional development program.

A different survey (see Appendix 4) was sent to 20 000 teachers across Australia, asking them about their involvement in and experiences of professional development activities in their work. The survey asked questions in the following areas:

- Topics covered by professional development programs in schools
- Teachers’ self-defined areas of need within these topics
- Time spent on professional development, both in and out of school hours
- How participation in activities is determined
- Formats for professional development activities
- Organisation for and planning of activities
- Personal expenditure on professional development
- Professional development activities’ contribution towards academic credentials
- Impact of professional development on the personal practice of teachers
- Hindrances to participation in professional development
- Preferred activities and formats for profession development
- The priority teachers give to professional development in their work
- Preference for activities to be held off or on site, and in or out of school hours

Demographic data was gathered about the teachers and the schools in which they taught in order to highlight differences to responses in the above areas. The personal data collected asked about gender, general student level taught (primary or secondary), length of teaching career, full-time or part-time and type of employment (ongoing, contract or sessional), main duties at school (teaching, administration), level of academic qualification and length of time this has been held, enrolment in further formal qualifications and if this is related to teaching, membership of professional organisations, and main area of teaching. Information about the school included school sector (government, Catholic, independent), school type (primary, secondary,

combined, senior college, special school), student enrolment, state/territory and location (city or town), and the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students.

As with *PD 2000*, this second survey set out to sample approximately 3 per cent of the teacher population in order to receive enough data from sub groups to describe trends with a degree of reliability. These sub groups are with respect to gender, sectoral affiliation, school level (primary or secondary), and state/territory. Investigation of other sub groups (when response numbers have been sufficient) has also been included to clarify particular issues and for comparison with *PD 2000*, and can be found at the end of this chapter. These other variables are major roles (administration or teaching), location (city or town), length of professional service, and full-time and part-time employment.

Available data showed the population of teachers in Australia for 2006 to be 239,639 (ABS 2006). A sample size of just under 10 per cent of the population was randomly selected, stratified for state/territory, school sector and type. Survey responses were received from 4,574 teachers, which is a 23.1 per cent response rate and represents 1.9 per cent of the total teacher population. Too few teachers from the Northern Territory responded to be able to make claims about trends in any sector or school type from there (this was mostly due to government schools from the Northern Territory not participating in the surveys). It should also be noted that although teachers in the ACT and Tasmania were over sampled the response rates were too low to be able to make claims about trends in these states/territories either. The sample was weighted for state/territory, school sector, the student level (whether primary or secondary), and teachers' gender.

The *PD 2000* report did not state how the 2000 survey sample was selected in relation to multi-campus schools. With the 2008 survey, we combined all campuses of a school when selections were made in order to ensure that teachers on all campuses had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the survey.

1.3.2 The consultations

Consultations have been conducted with stakeholders located in all states and territories in order to discuss teacher professional learning policy, practices, beliefs and experiences. These consultations included extended interviews with key stakeholders in each state (Education Departments, Teacher Registration Authorities, Higher Education Institutions) and at a national level (national professional associations and other peak bodies). Members of the research team also visited selected schools in each state. These schools were generally recommended by state education departments or professional bodies in order to gain insight into the ways key personnel (including principals and teachers) viewed professional learning and their involvement in any significant professional learning initiatives. The interviewers were as keen to document innovative or best-practice professional learning programs, activities and strategies, as they were to report on systems-led initiatives that seemed to be achieving positive outcomes for schools, teachers and students.

The primary aim of the visits was not simply to confirm the trends in professional learning reflected in the surveys, but to gain an insight into 'best practice' as it is currently understood by teachers, school leaders and key stakeholders around Australia. The consultations provide a qualitative or human dimension, showing the commitment of educators around the country to engaging in continuing professional learning.

1.3.2.1 The consultation process

The interviewers from the research team at Monash designed two sets of questions (see Appendices 2 and 3), which constituted the basis of semi-structured interviews (Flick, 2006). These questions were trialled with a sample of educators in a range of settings before the interview process officially began. Each interviewee was sent a copy of the questions some days before the interviews took place. When it came to the point of the interview, itself, it was important that the interaction allowed for the diversity of experiences, understandings, knowledge, critical judgements and attitudes of the different interviewees to emerge. The research team felt it was crucial for the interviewer to be able to engage in an as authentic a professional conversation as possible with his/her interlocutor. This required an extended interview and it required some flexibility. The research team believed, with Mishler (1991), that the roles of the interviewee and the interviewer would best be considered as 'research collaborators'. The interviewer was most often guiding the conversation, but there was a strong sense in which both interviewer and interviewee were jointly constructing the interview.

In constructing accounts of the 83 interviews, the research team wrote extended prose cases of each interview and grouped them in ways that retained some distinctive sense of the professional learning culture/s of each state jurisdiction, while allowing for comparisons and contrasts to be drawn in subsequent analysis. These cases were intended to present a nuanced account of each interview, in ways that gave a clear sense of the socio-cultural context within which the interviewee was operating in their professional setting (Freebody, 2003), and that tried to do justice to each individual's personal and professional identity (Kamler, 2001) or voice.

It was important when working with the genre of the 'case', that the writers of these cases were mindful and attuned to various issues, experiences, practices and attitudes that were common to different schools or regions or jurisdictions. And yet we did not want to merely construct dozens of 'cases' that seemed all of a type. For this reason, the cases can be seen to take on different styles and voices. It was important that the content of the interview drive the structure and the style of the cases, rather than have a report which presented a neat and singular sense of 'case genre' into which the diverse reality and the multifarious experiences and knowledge of the interviewees would be made to fit (see Bakhtin, 1981). Just as important, was the need to provide an opportunity for each interviewee to read and respond to the case that had been written from the interview. This process of seeking feedback and responding to this feedback was another way in which the process of interviewing was seen as a joint construction of knowledge.

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CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In debates about the role of teaching in the global ‘knowledge economy’, much has been written about the ‘new’ knowledge and skills that teachers need to be continually learning and re-learning in order to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. For example, a recent report for the International Labour Organisation (ILA) and the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) highlights the pace of change in the knowledge and skills needed by students and teachers in the twenty-first century. To address these needs, the report urges that continuing professional development for teachers must be a priority in education policy (Siniscalco, 2005, p. 26). Other international reports emphasize the value of education *cultures* that stimulate and support teachers’ continuing or lifelong learning. Here the focus is as much on retaining as on developing effective teachers and school leaders (OECD, 2005d). Typically, these reports advocate practitioner collaboration, teacher networks and research-led innovation (e.g., OECD, 2005b). Cultures underpinned by lifelong learning, as reported in *Australia’s teachers: Australia’s future* (Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, 2003), are characterised by ‘high quality and pertinent professional learning and development opportunities’ that ‘rejuvenate, motivate and retain good teachers’ (p. 39).

In 2001, a report for the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, *PD 2000 Australia: A national mapping of school teacher professional development* (McRae et al., 2001), had identified a growing consensus amongst politicians, policy-makers, researchers, teacher educators and teachers across Australia with respect to teacher professional learning. In the years since *PD 2000 Australia*, the consensus has strengthened. Literature from across the world has rapidly converged around arguments that professional learning should play a key role in improving the quality of students’ learning.¹ One OECD report considers teacher professional learning to be a ‘key policy lever’ for achieving these improvements (OECD, 2005a, p. 20).²

There is considerable disagreement, however, about which particular strategies or practices of professional learning should inform professional learning planning and policy making. This has given risen to vigorous debate in Australia and internationally. For example, Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001), Darling-Hammond (2004) and Petrosky (2004, 2006) in the US, Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) in the UK, and Locke (2004) in New Zealand, argue the benefits of professional learning strategies and practices that are flexible and that build on teachers’ existing professional knowledge. They have strong criticisms of more highly structured strategies and practices that are delivered in similar ways across a nation, irrespective of the context and setting of the schools involved. Sometimes, government policy with respect to professional learning has drawn on this research; in those instances they have supported more open-ended projects and programs. On the other hand, governments have sometimes invested considerable resources in the provision of highly structured professional development content and activities. And there is evidence that teachers often respond enthusiastically to the opportunity to participate in these forms of ‘pd’ (see Hill and Crevola, 1998).

¹ This consensus is apparent across states of Australia and across the western world. See DE&T[VIC] (2004), The Allen Consulting Group (2003), NITL (2005), The State of Queensland (2004), Department of Education Tasmania (2006), in Australia; The US Department of Education (2001), in the US; General Teaching Council for England [GTCE] (2004), Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, and Wallace (2005), in the UK; Ministry of Education (2006), in New Zealand; and OECD (2005c, 1998). See also Cochran-Smith (2006), Lovat (2003), Reid (2004).

² This suggests a significant shift in the landscape of education policy since 1995, in Europe at least. A study in the European Union shows that, overall, only a small portion of total education budgets across the world was spent on ‘in-service training’ compared with pre-service preparation of teachers in the early 1990s (EURYDICE, 1995, p. 26).

Government policy documents and research literature from Australia and the Western world have generally acknowledged the complex and multifaceted nature of these debates about teacher professional learning. Invariably, each new contribution (like this text) serves both to represent and contribute to the debates. The following Literature Review will address a wide range of the literature and debates about teacher professional learning under the following headings:

- Definitions of professional learning and factors that influence these definitions;
- Diversity in professional learning practices;
- Systemic approaches to professional learning in Australia;
- Principles of professional learning;
- The role of language in framing policy and possibilities;
- Professional learning and professional standards;
- A note about evidence of professional learning; and
- Teacher writing: Documenting and focusing professional learning

2.2 DEFINITIONS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THESE DEFINITIONS

PD 2000 Australia began its reporting of teachers' PD by listing a range of terms associated with teachers' professional learning. These included 'training and development,' 'in-service education,' 'professional learning,' and 'training and professional development' (McRae et al., 2001). While these terms have retained their currency since 2000, others have entered professional and policy discourse. These include 'staff development,' 'continuing education,' 'continuing professional development,' and 'lifelong learning for teachers'. The literature shows there is little consensus as to the definition of any one of these terms; and there is no agreement about an overarching definition for all the professional learning practices encompassed by these various words.

In 2007, when there is such disagreement about professional learning at the level of definitions, research has come to agree that it is highly problematic to make simple qualitative comparisons between professional learning strategies and programs. Most studies argue that an understanding of the *context* of any teacher professional learning is vital for any judgment of its value. Whether professional learning is conceived of in terms of a system-driven initiative or as an activity that is organised at a local level, it is necessary to focus on how it addresses the needs of teachers *within their own professional and school-based contexts*.

There is a multiplicity of cultural, curriculum, policy and political factors that influence the development of different teacher learning programs and practices at national and local levels. Bolam and McMahon (2004) and many other researchers argue that professional learning across the world is characterised by rich diversity and difference; this is especially the case when it is underpinned by cultures of innovation and 'reasonable risk taking' (Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education (CRTTE), 2003, p. 26). There are plenty of examples of this throughout Australia (CRTTE, 2003; DEST, 2002; Education and Training Committee (ETC), 2005; Lovat, 2003; Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS), 2001). When literature about teacher learning focuses on this diversity and difference, it shows how the practices of successful professional learning communities are so very different, and how they are profoundly influenced by

differences in context (e.g., Mayer, 2003). The context may include the backgrounds of the students in the schools, the different curriculums operating in the different state and school settings, and the different professional and cultural backgrounds of the teachers themselves. Some studies argue that the professional *cultures* or the *communities* in which teachers operate are more important factors in the effectiveness of professional learning programs or practices than the particular characteristics or qualities of individual teachers within those communities (e.g. Borko, 2004; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993, 2001; Little, 2002; Wells, 2001).

The authors of *PD 2000 Australia* framed their project with the term ‘professional development’ and defined it as ‘deliberate processes designed for the purposes of teacher post-initial professionally related education and training’ (McRae et al., 2001, preface note). This makes it clear that any incidental or informal professional learning that might occur was not a major consideration of that study. Occasionally, an OECD report has adopted this methodology – e.g. the PISA index of Staff Professional development concentrates on ‘formal programs’ (OECD, 2005c, p. 105). Many researchers also take this approach. Gordon (2004), for instance, rejects more wide-ranging notions of teachers’ learning. He favours a definition that is tightly framed, one that is premised on the need to identify and measure concrete outcomes of *successful* professional learning and school improvement. His definition, characteristic of much school improvement and school effectiveness research into professional learning (e.g. Hattie, 2004; Purdie and Ellis, 2005), proposes a list of ‘*successful* professional development’ elements.

Successful professional development... includes a combination of experiences that empower (1) individual educators, (2) educational teams, and (3) the educational organization to improve (4) curriculum, (5) instruction, and (6) student assessment in order to (7) facilitate student growth and development. The first three elements in this definition (empowerment of individual educators, teams, and the organization) are concerned with *capacity building*. Capacity building does not directly affect student learning, but increases the ability of individuals, groups, and schools to affect student learning. The next three elements (improvement of curriculum, instruction, and student assessment) are *core elements* of professional development – they affect student learning directly. The seventh element, facilitating student growth and development, is the ultimate purpose of professional development. (Emphasis in original) (Gordon, 2004, p. 5)

There are potential implications at a policy level and in practice when some elements of a professional learning program are categorized as ‘*core elements*.’ There are further implications when these ‘core elements’ are those whose outcomes can be more easily identified and measured. Gordon argues that this approach is ‘empowering’ and that it contributes to ‘capacity building’ for individual teachers. It is worth noting that Gordon’s list gives priority to those elements that have *direct* and *measurable* outcomes (e.g. in students’ test scores) over those other elements that have *indirect* influences on student learning. This prioritising is likely to result in less value being ascribed to teacher learning that impacts on teachers’ practice in *indirect* ways. There are, for example, some learning activities which impact crucially on a teacher’s sense of purpose, enabling that teacher to clarify his or her values and thus arrive at a better sense of his or her professional role (cf. Goodson, 1992, 2003; Lave and Wenger, 1991, 1991³).

³ Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that ‘learning and a sense of identity are inseparable: They are aspects of the same phenomenon’ (p. 31).

An English teacher from regional Victoria wrote recently about a professional learning session at a state conference when she met with colleagues from other schools and regions. At that session, teachers spoke about and reflected upon their particular professional settings and the different problems and successes they experience in those settings.

I think these connections with people – the discussions, the debates, even just the chance to unload all that goes on – is one of the things I cherish most about professional learning. Recently, I went to an English coordinators' conference and sat in a session that was exactly this – the chance to discuss and describe the experience of being an English coordinator. I came away feeling a million times better having heard similar, worse and better stories. I gained some valuable perspective about my role as a coordinator. This is perhaps an unmeasurable outcome of my learning in that session (except on a sanity scale maybe!). But it was one of the more valuable, timely and reassuring professional learning experiences I've had. (Teacher at a VATE professional learning event led by Professor Jeff Wilhelm, in April 2007. Text accessed on VATE website September 2007.)

The teacher here describes her VATE professional learning session as 'one of the more valuable, timely and reassuring professional learning experiences I've had,' and yet she senses that any direct outcome of her participation would be difficult to measure. This is indeed the sort of 'capacity building' that Gordon's notion of non-core elements includes, and yet, by implication, Gordon would present this learning as less important.

Day (1997), in contrast, suggests a definition of teacher professional learning that is wide ranging, including both expected (deliberate) and unexpected elements, as well as learning that is framed by moral or ethical dimensions. The learning may be extended over time and/or it may focus on a particular activity or event or outcome. Day's definition, unlike Gordon's, builds in the possibility of professional learning outcomes that are unexpected, outcomes that may be easily measured in the short term, as well as outcomes that are measurable but perhaps not evident for some time after the initial professional learning activity.

Professional development consists of all natural experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues. (Day, 1997, p. 4)

In using the term 'natural' Day would seem to be referring to professional learning that is not formally planned, and learning that often occurs with unexpected outcomes, or learning that occurs throughout the course of a teacher's workday (such as in the classroom when working with students). This definition serves Day to argue for the need to plan more for *scope* of professional learning possibilities rather than planning for *certainty* in professional learning outcomes (see also Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2001). He uses this definition to recommend that teachers and administrators consider a wide range of professional learning outcomes when evaluating their impact on teachers' knowledge and practices.

Little (2001) also emphasises the need to take into account possibilities rather than certainties when considering professional learning. She is especially mindful of the ways in which policy and curriculum contexts powerfully mediate teachers' professional learning. And she (like Sachs, 2003; Parr, 2007) is also conscious of the ways that teachers are able to negotiate opportunities to engage in professional learning.

Little (2001) proposes four categories of 'learning opportunities' for teachers 'in the context of reform' agendas. They are:

- (i) **professional development as inspiration and goal setting**
This can involve expanding or enriching professional teams or building relationships and communities;
- (ii) **professional development as knowledge and skills development**
This usually involves some pre-determined content or target for professional development. A professional development target can be tied to 'school-wide' or government-identified priorities, such as ICT or literacy development;
- (iii) **professional development as inquiry**
In this opportunity, the focus for teacher learning emerges from a commitment to solve particular local problems identified by the teachers involved (rather than being stipulated by others) in the early stages of their professional learning. It can often develop into an ongoing and recursive process such as action research; and
- (iv) **professional development as collaboration and community**
Here, teacher learning builds from within established professional communities. The focus of professional learning in these communities is to a large extent determined by the individuals and groups actively participating in them, and this focus may shift and change over time.

The range of definitions presented above provides a mere snapshot of the lively theoretical and practical debates on professional learning in Australia and internationally. In so many ways, these different approaches to defining professional learning help to explain the continuing questions about how it should be enacted in Australia and about what future professional learning policy should concentrate on. There are no simple answers here, just as there is no one single approach or practice that should be adopted. It is clear, however, that any future policy making needs to be underpinned by well thought out definitions and rationales for teachers' learning.

Before leaving this section on definitions, it is important to include a few words about the learning that occurs within pre-service teacher education programs. Such learning is sometimes spoken about in close association with registered teachers (e.g., Britzman, 2003, Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The focus for *PD 2000* was on professional development *after* initial teacher preparation studies. The authors of this present Literature Review acknowledge the concerns of Britzman (2003) and Feiman-Nemser (2001) about drawing a simple separation between pre-service and professional learning. Britzman and Feiman-Nemser argue that professional learning is better regarded as a continuum from pre-service teacher preparation onward throughout a teacher's career (see also DEST, 2002; CRTTE, 2003; ETC, 2005; OECD, 2005d). They recommend that there should be no clear separation between the two notions of professional learning. However, considering the constraints of space and time, the focus of this Literature Review will again be on 'post-initial' or 'in-service learning.'

2.3 DIVERSITY IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PRACTICES ACROSS AUSTRALIA

It is impossible to represent the full range of professional learning strategies and practices across all Australian settings and contexts in a single literature review. However, this section of the literature gives some indication of the diversity of approaches to professional learning currently enacted in Australia.

Beveridge, Groundwater-Smith, Kemmis and Wasson (2005) provided a useful sense of this diversity when they categorised professional learning strategies in a New South Wales project, known as The Priority Action Schools Program (PASP). The PASP was designed to provide intensive support to 74 schools in New South Wales with concentrations of students from low socio-economic status. Schools aimed to improve students' engagement in learning, to improve students' learning outcomes, to reduce disruptive behaviour, and to improve student attendance rates. A broader aim was to foster better cooperation between schools, the Technical and Further Education sector (TAFE), and other agencies and community organisations.

Beveridge et al. (2005) describe the dynamics of the PASP they were working with as a combination of 'pressure and support.' The literature suggests that this is the case for many professional learning programs in all Australian jurisdictions. In the PASP, participating schools planned for and undertook focused inquiry into the particular problems or challenges they wished to address in their setting. As part of this inquiry, they designed and planned for the approaches they wished to use. Part of the 'pressure' came in the need for schools to include in their planning what evidence or data they would be generating, and how they would be evaluating this evidence/data. They needed to have thought ahead about the ways in which they would evaluate the learning of participating teachers and the learning of the school as a whole. The 'support' they received came in various forms and activities, such as:

- opportunities to work with an academic partner or critical friend over extended periods of time;
- learning opportunities – seminars and workshops – for principal class teachers and other school leaders to engage in action research or action inquiry;
- instances where principal class teachers and other school leaders were given access to a set of approaches and models for generating/collecting evidence or data;
- pro-active participation by teachers in mid-year evaluation visits by both academic partners and members of a State Government team;
- collaborative documentation of learning through professional portfolios;
- publications and forums to share knowledge within and between schools; and
- provision of a dedicated space and time for teachers to describe and reflect on the value of their learning – most often at a conference at the conclusion of the program.

Through a similar combination of pressure and support in programs across Australian jurisdictions, a rich range of professional learning strategies has emerged. These strategies are enacted in different ways in diverse school settings and across different curriculum contexts. The list below draws on strategies adopted by different schools and networks of schools in the PASP (see Beveridge et al., 2005), but it goes well beyond this. It represents a range of best-practice strategies for professional learning in schools across Australia, the sorts of strategies endorsed by a number of large-scale international studies of professional learning (e.g. Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, and Wallace, 2005; Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005; Earl, Watson, Levin, Leithwood, Fullan, and Torrance, 2003; Elmore, 2000):

- *making explicit shared beliefs and values and / or commitment to a particular approach to pedagogy or curriculum*
Usually, this involves a process of generating a key vision statement of beliefs and values (and/or pedagogy). This statement serves to focus the professional learning to be engaged in across a school or network of schools.
- *attending or convening a conference/s*
It is traditional for teachers to learn, renew or revitalize their knowledge and practices through attendance at conferences convened by professional associations and special interest groups. Schools sometimes organize their own conferences around a particular professional learning focus. Teachers attending such conferences are often required to document and reflect on the ways in which their participation in the conference contributes to their learning and professional growth.
- *addressing the needs of a specific cohort*
The ‘specific cohort’ usually relates to a particular group of students in the school setting/s. A small group of teachers is assigned to better meet the needs of this cohort, and this group of teachers proceed to develop a small-scale, action inquiry process, which often involves implementing some reforms in pedagogy, curriculum, assessment or relationship building with these students. The value of this program can then be shared with colleagues in the school as a way of generating a shift in practices across the whole school.
- *professional learning teams*
This is a component of the special cohort approach. However, it can also be adopted across whole schools. (See pages 32-33 of this chapter for discussion of professional learning communities.) The teams may work with similar cohorts of students or they may be composed of teachers working across different faculties. The strategy involves collaborative groups of teachers generating a clear focus for their learning (often articulated in advance as intended learning outcomes), being allocated time and space for the groups to work together, being required to report on this learning, and having access to support and guidance from an external critical friend or academic partner.
- *learning centres*
This involves drawing on the existing professional expertise and energies in the school to form closer working relationships amongst teachers and others. Such a strategy connects together a wide range of people (classroom teachers, special needs and literacy intervention specialists, parents and critical friend or academic support) and resources that relate to student learning. It focuses these individuals in a newly formed ‘learning centre’ that has structural, pedagogical and professional learning implications.
- *learning technology centres*
This is a particular iteration of the above. It is increasingly common to see personnel, administrative structures and resourcing focused in a particular information and communication technology (ICT) centre, based in a school and/or as a virtual network across schools (sometimes linked by webcasts). As with other learning centres, ‘members’ of learning technology centres are required to document their learning programs and share their learning with others in their centres and/or with their school communities.
- *mentoring and modeling, and co-mentoring*

This involves a range of strategies for collaboration on a one-to-one or one-to-small-group basis. It usually occurs between a more experienced teacher and a less experienced teacher in a school. Increasingly, the relationship between participating teachers is explicitly framed as a co-mentoring one, where meaningful learning is experienced by *both* teachers, rather than relationships where it is expected that the younger or newer teacher in the school is the only learner (see also DEST, 2002; ETC, 2005; NSW DE&T, 2006).

- *induction programs*

Such programs consist of a balance of disseminating knowledge about the school and preparing teachers to engage in ongoing professional learning throughout their time in the school. Richer induction programs utilize the sorts of mentoring and co-mentoring dynamics outlined above. The programs are designed to help teachers generate supportive and productive professional relationships, to learn about the particular environments, practices and cultures of the new school, and to build professional learning networks with new colleagues. For graduate teachers, especially, effective induction is an essential phase within ‘the continuum of professional learning, beginning with pre-service education and extending throughout the teaching career’ (see also DEST, 2002, p. 11).

- *team teaching*

This involves planned and focused work for pairs or small groups of teachers, who plan their teaching together, and who may also team-teach in the same classroom with the same students. Like mentoring and modeling, and co-mentoring, team teaching requires care in connecting teachers with each other, and in building relationships between those teachers.

- *student voice*

In this strategy, students are considered a key stakeholder in the school learning community. Their views about teaching practices and teachers’ professional relationships with students are highly valued. Some schools systematically survey students about what they see as effective teaching. The data from these surveys can become an important element in action inquiry or action research. Some schools develop the capacity of small groups of students to engage in more rigorous reflection on, and evaluation of, the teaching practices in that school. Such student groups can also discuss and report on the value of relationships that the school might have with community groups in which these students are active participants outside school hours.

- *networked schools*

Some groups of teachers from different schools work together outside of school hours (e.g. meeting face-to-face at each others’ schools, and maintaining online dialogue). These networks may form to enact particular focused projects, and the projects may last for a year or more. Occasionally, the networks continue to meet together to learn with and from each other over longer periods of time, shifting the focus (and intended outcomes) of this learning over many years – e.g. The Learning to Learn Project (DECS, 2004); The Ithaca Project (Landvogt, 2005); The Project for Enhancing Effective Professional Learning (PEEL) (Mitchell, Loughran and Mitchell, 2001).

In the years leading up to the publication of *PD 2000*, there had been several other large-scale international studies of teachers’ professional learning practices and structures. These included Wilson and Berne’s (1999) in-depth survey of teacher learning practices across a wide range of settings in the western world. This survey and critical review was published in the highly regarded journal *Review of Research in Education*. One year later, a report for the US Department of Education

(2000), titled *Does professional development change teaching practice? Results from a three year study* documented a three year evaluation of the outcomes of what was termed a 'reform' model of professional learning for teachers in different US schools. Both these studies drew on Fenstermacher's (1994) broad ranging and widely respected evaluation of research into teacher knowledge and professional learning in *Review of research in education*.

In these three reports, as elsewhere, there was an appreciation of the complex and multi-faceted nature of teachers' professional knowledge and professional development/learning practices. There was also some concern, in all three texts, about a perceived lack of coherence or system in professional learning. Too often teacher learning seemed like 'a patchwork of opportunities—formal and informal, mandatory and voluntary, serendipitous and planned – stitched together into a fragmented and incoherent 'curriculum'' (Wilson and Berne, 1999, p. 174).

The US Department of Education (2000) report documented what it saw as incoherence in existing practices, before implementing and then evaluating a national initiative called the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, which they believed would be characterised by coherence and consistency. This Eisenhower initiative included the development of some key professional development programs, which were then implemented in different settings across the country. The key programs were expected to act as a 'mechanism for deepening teachers' content knowledge and developing their teaching abilities' (p. 1). The program attempted to regulate and centrally control the teachers' learning, closely prescribing the activities that teachers were required to complete and the teaching strategies they were to implement. One interesting finding of that report was that despite the efforts to regulate and quality-control the programs, there was significant variation in the quality of the professional development, within schools, between schools and in the same school settings over time (US DoE, 2000).

This report and much literature associated with the standards movements in Australia and overseas in the last ten years (e.g. Centre for Applied Educational Research [CAER], 2002; Hawley and Valli, 1999; Ingvarson, 1998, 2002) have urged teachers and policy makers to develop more systemic and regulated approaches to professional development. In response to this urging, professional development programs in different parts of the world have often been developed that require teachers to learn particular content and/or skills, to quickly deliver specific learning outcomes and to *demonstrate* that these outcomes have been achieved (generally through students' performance on certain tests). This has sometimes resulted in measurable evidence of improvements in some data – in this instance, students' test scores – in a relatively short period of time (e.g. First Steps, reported on in ACER, 1993. See also the in-progress report by Ken Rowe on *AISV-ACER Working-Out-What-Works (WOWW) Project* in Milburn, 2007; and discussion in NITL, 2005 of similar projects). Australian federal government professional learning policy continues to support these approaches in some areas.

While it is encouraging to see these improvements, the literature highlights some concerns about the increasing workloads for teachers who must collect, synthesise and present the data, as they seek to demonstrate the value of their learning in these programs. Little (2001) describes how teachers in the UK are increasingly expected to generate and document evidence to prove that their professional learning was worth the investment by schools or others. She describes how this has intensified the pressures on teachers' work, which in turn has had an impact on the ability of those teachers to learn. As Little says, requirements to document learning in more and more detail have been just as likely to 'drain from teachers the energy and concentration needed to learn' as they are to focus and enhance their learning and expertise (Little, 2001, p. 33). Other English and Australian research reports that describe some potentially positive reform efforts in the area of professional learning have also shown some unfortunate consequences of these reforms on teachers' ability to learn (Gale and Densmore, 2003; Little 2001; Smyth 2001). It seems that beyond a certain point, calls for higher levels of documentation of teachers' professional learning can have an adverse impact on the morale of the teaching profession (as shown in the UK – see Goodwyn, 2003; Ball, 1997), and thus on teachers' willingness and ability to learn.

2.4 RECENT SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN AUSTRALIA

Grundy and Robinson (2004) cite research into a number of nation-wide and state-based professional development projects in Australia over a ten year period extending from the early 1990s to the early 2000s. All projects that they report on have been supported by some level of government funding. Some of this funding has been focused on the earlier stages of development of a project (such as First Steps and The Learning Federation), while some projects continued to receive funding through the life of their implementation. To some extent, these projects constitute a systemic approach to organising professional development. However, they differ in significant ways from the more centrally controlled 'professional development approaches' attempted in the Eisenhower project in the US. And they differ from other systemic approaches to professional learning in Australia in that teachers are not learning the same content at the same time across the country. There is scope for both pre-determined and unexpected learning to occur.

- **The National Schools Network (NSN); and the National Professional Development Program (NPDP): 1993 – 1996**

These programs were funded by the Australian federal government between 1993 and 1996. They brought together teachers, schools, and professional associations to investigate problems that teachers identified, in association with university partners or colleagues in other schools. Having identified the nature of the problem in the particular setting, the teachers then developed and planned professional learning projects. These projects fostered teachers' learning through creative, often innovative approaches for teachers to renew their discipline knowledge and 'competencies' (Grundy and Robinson, 2004; Sachs, 2003). The process involved teacher groups in schools – often in collaborative networks between schools – submitting applications for funding for their professional learning and/or curriculum development projects. Their applications had to explain how their learning would have a positive impact on student learning in their settings. There was scope for teachers and professional groups to develop projects at the local (school) level and more widely (across regions or national professional associations). Teachers built ideas and projects 'from the ground up,' rather than merely complying with particular targets set by government. One interesting aspect of these projects was the ways in which teachers and researchers were encouraged to imagine different ways to report on, and account for, the teachers' professional learning experiences.

- **Innovative Links Between Universities and Schools for Teacher Professional Development: 1994-1996**

This grew out of the NPDP project. In this project, school-based teachers teamed with university-based colleagues in professional partnerships. The process was similar, involving applications and development of plans over time and in collaboration with governments. Through negotiations involving all parties, action-research based projects were developed to address issues raised by the school teachers in their particular professional settings (e.g., Doecke, Lee and Reid, 1998; Morgan, Lankshear, Williams, Gilbert, and Werba, 1996; Perry, 2000; Phelps and Kean, 1996). The partnerships were perceived as mutually beneficial for the professional learning of both school teachers and university-based educators / researchers (Grundy and Robinson, 2004).

- **First Steps: 1980s onwards**

This project is particularly noteworthy because of its ability to *sustain* professional interest and currency in different educational settings and contexts in Australia and throughout the world. It began with research in the late 1980s by a team of academics at Edith Cowan University, supported by the Western Australian Ministry of Education, into ways of improving students' literacy and numeracy learning in primary schools. First Steps programs integrate a variety of approaches to diagnosing, teaching and assessing students' development in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use some established frameworks of identified literacy and numeracy behaviours to assess student phases of development within their class. Each phase of development is linked to a range of teaching and learning resources that teachers can access and apply in different ways according to student needs in their particular settings. Yet, the principles

in 'First Steps' argue that it is important to make the variety of approaches taken by different teachers broadly consistent across any one school. Teachers supplement their knowledge of 'First Steps' ideas and the resources through professional development short courses delivered by commercially registered First Steps consultants. (See ACER, 1993.)

- **The Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP): 2000 onwards**
In some respects, the AGQTP was and is built upon similar principles to those underpinning NPDP and Innovative Links. It involves substantial funding from the federal government to support multi-levelled project work with state-based authorities to 'support the updating and improvement of the knowledge and skills of teachers' (DEETYA, 2000). (See Dixon and Dixon 2003; DEST and NSWDE&T, 2007) Grundy and Robinson point out (2004) that there is a stronger component in recent iterations of the AGQTP of focusing on the individual teacher rather than the communities of learners as seen in the NPDP. Individual teachers document the specific effects of their learning upon their teaching and their students' learning outcomes. They are required to collect and use data from, during and immediately after their professional learning.
- **The Le@rning Federation: 2001 onwards**
This is less a project or a program, in the conventional sense (as in the previous four examples). The Le@rning Federation represented a coordinated initiative involving school teachers and government bodies working together to enhance teachers' professional learning. The Le@rning Federation initiative grew initially from an agreement by all education Ministers in Australia and New Zealand to collaborate in developing online curriculum content for all Australian and New Zealand schools and to deliver it electronically to all jurisdictions for the period 2001-2006. Its purpose is described by the Federation as to provide a 'kick-start' for schools and teachers with regard to ICT learning possibilities (The Le@rning Federation Schools Online Curriculum Content Initiative). It provides online materials and opportunities for school communities to use as a focus for their locally based professional learning initiatives, and for 'capacity building' in those schools. In May 2005, MCEETYA endorsed a proposal by Australian Education System Official Committee (AESOC) to further invest in The Le@rning Federation for the period 2006-2008.

2.5 PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The strategies and practices embedded within these particular five projects outlined above are reflected in professional learning programs and practices across Australia in recent years. The key findings underpinning these strategies and practices can be summarised in the following ways:

- The collaborative nature of teacher knowledge and teacher learning is fundamental. Planning for professional learning usually focuses on the needs of the community, and how the community's collaborative learning can be improved. The details of an individual teacher's needs within the larger group or community are addressed through planning that takes place in smaller groups.
- Much professional knowledge is anchored in the specific contexts in which teachers operate. This statement implies that teachers' professional knowledge is provisional and is likely to change significantly as teachers move into different teaching contexts. It recognises that teachers cannot simply apply knowledge they have developed in one context when they enter a new or different context.

- Knowledge of teachers and teaching develops from, and involves, sustained inquiry into teaching and learning by teachers themselves. Professional learning programs are often built up in particular local settings, with guidance or input from other settings, and teachers *develop* deeper knowledge in these local settings.
- The findings of research into the knowledge of teachers and teaching are often not simple or certain. Much of the research needs to be considered as provisional. This is especially true with regard to how those findings might be applied to a range of settings. Such findings provide an invaluable frame of reference for reviewing current teaching practice in any setting, but they also need to be scrutinized from the point of view of local knowledge and practice.
- Teachers draw on a range of evidence to evaluate and review their existing practices. Standardised testing can provide some insight into the learning of students, but it is best combined with teachers' professional judgments, developed through their ongoing interactions with students. The richest and most reliable measures of educational outcomes require something more than can be measured by standardised tests.
- Teachers engaged in rich professional learning tend to work together with other teachers to build more dynamic and rigorous learning communities, in which everyone – teachers, students, and parents – can participate. Teachers in these communities are mindful of the need to be accountable. They demonstrate their accountability through a broad range of indicators, some of which are not easily measured – e.g. teachers' commitment to the welfare of the students in their care.

To a large extent, the professional learning projects mentioned in the previous section, and the understandings mentioned above, are driven by similar principles or beliefs. There is some agreement about:

- the positive effect that engagement in collaborative professional learning (including partnerships with universities) can have on teachers' own personal professional attitudes to their professional learning and on their sense of professional identity;
- the beneficial effect of positive professional learning on professional morale and the robustness of the professional learning community; and
- the need for research to further investigate the benefits of professional learning across a wide range of teachers' knowledge, skills and work (see Siniscalco 2005; Meiers and Ingvarson 2005). This research should include teachers' professional practices in the classroom, their work with students and with professional colleagues and organisations beyond the classroom and even the school setting (e.g. in leadership positions in other professional contexts), and the broadest evidence base of students' learning outcomes.

Recently, federal government funded research (e.g. Meiers and Ingvarson, 2005), state government policy statements (e.g. DE&T, 2005) and professional association statements (e.g. AATE, 2007) have sought to articulate their own principles of professional learning in order to assist in the development of a more coherent culture of professional learning. The idea seems to be that the principles can allow for some diversity in professional learning practices within a particular jurisdiction, and yet still address the concerns in the literature (e.g. Wilson and Berne, 1999; The US Department of Education, 2000; Ingvarson, 2002; Fenstermacher, 1994) that professional learning cultures not be too fragmentary and 'patchwork.'

The 'Principles' articulated by the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE) are one example of a professional association taking the initiative in this area. These principles address conceptual, pragmatic and moral dimensions of teacher professional learning. They include the following two statements of principle:

1. The professional learning of English teachers should be based on an understanding of the importance of:

- high standards in teaching and learning;
- generative and aspirational professional standards, such as the Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy in Australia (STELLA);
- opportunities to reflect on, analyse and articulate aspects of professional practice;
- professional collaboration and mentoring;
- research;
- strategic partnerships;
- innovative practice; and
- creativity.

2. Effective professional learning involves active participation in a range of professional communities. Professional subject associations can support the professional learning of teachers through:

- promoting active engagement with standards frameworks, such as STELLA, as an opportunity for professional learning;
- publishing journals, books, and electronic resources;
- running conferences and workshops; and
- conducting and sponsoring research.

Figure 2.1 Extract from AATE's forthcoming 'Principles of English teaching and learning'

There is appreciation, here, of the wide range of possibilities in teachers' professional learning lives, but there is also recognition of the role of standards in teacher professional learning.

The 'Principles for the design of effective professional development' included in the DEST report (Meiers and Ingvarson, 2005), *Investigating the Links between Teacher Professional Development and Student Learning Outcomes*, share some of AATE's core values and yet there are differences.

1. The content of professional development (PD) focuses on what students are to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning the material.
2. Professional development should be based on analyses of the differences between actual student performance and goals and standards for student learning.
3. Professional development should involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences in which they will be involved.
4. Professional development should be primarily school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching.
5. Professional development should be organised around collaborative problem solving.
6. Professional development should be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning—including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and new perspectives.
7. Professional development should incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on learning outcomes for students and the instruction and other processes that are involved in implementing the lessons learned through professional development.
8. Professional development should provide opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned.
9. Professional development should be connected to a comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning.

Figure 2.2: Principles for the design of effective professional development (Meiers and Ingvarson, 2005)

The two sets of principles (i.e., AATE's and those in the DEST report) both argue that teachers' learning should be collaborative, but the notion of collaboration implied in the two sets of principles is not the same. AATE's principles encourage collaboration *and* strategic partnerships and 'active participation in a range of professional communities' – an approach recommended by Mayer (2003) and in another DEST (2002) report (*An ethic of care*) – whereas the emphasis in the DEST report's principles is on collaboration that is 'primarily school-based.' The two sets of principles also recognise the value of professional learning that is based on professional standards. But whereas the AATE principles speak of 'generative and aspirational standards' (such as STELLA), DEST principles urge the focus of professional learning to be informed by 'analyses of *actual* student performance and goals and standards of student learning' (emphasis added). AATE and Meiers and Ingvarson agree on the importance of striving for high standards. However, there is much more emphasis on pinning down the content of what teachers are to learn in the DEST report's principles, when compared with AATE's focus on generating, promoting and sustaining *conditions* and *cultures* for teachers to engage in learning.

Significantly, these DEST report's principles seem to be informed by a definition of 'professional development' that is similar to the one proposed by Gordon (2004) (see page 19 of this Literature Review chapter). That is, professional learning should be directly relatable to student learning outcomes. The corollary of this is that outcomes of professional learning need to be directly measurable in terms of student learning outcomes for the teachers' involvement in the activity to be validated

as ‘professional learning.’ As discussed earlier, this begs the question of whether some professional learning that is not directly relatable to students’ learning outcomes has value for the individual, for the students he/she teachers and for the school community of which they are all a part.⁴

The foregoing discussion of research into professional learning principles has indicated that there are always concerns about generalisable lists of knowledge or wisdom about professional learning that might be easily applied in different contexts. Nevertheless, such lists can focus and generate discussion and dialogue amongst teachers, researchers and policymakers. In that respect, they can be seen to have some value in reports of this kind. Indeed, such discussions may be highly generative for professional learning policy-making and planning.

It is with an awareness of both the limitations and the positive potential of such lists, that this Literature Review includes below a summary of some broad consensus (from the literature cited above) of what constitutes best practice professional learning across Australia. In settings where teachers describe their professional learning in positive terms, the practices and conditions tend to include learning that is:

- multi-dimensional, including on the one hand inquiry-based, ongoing learning projects and activities (where outcomes are not always known in advance), and on the other hand activities whose ‘targets’ are set according to school or government priorities;
- sometimes focused around particular ‘events’ – e.g. workshops, conferences, briefing sessions etc. These events are supported by ongoing and active professional networks that allow teachers to build their own knowledge and skills;
- a combination of school-based learning activities and projects *and* projects that involve interaction with industry and or professional partnerships (where teachers learn with and from each other and from other professional colleagues). These learning activities are often planned or implemented with involvement from and/or partnerships with academic, community or industry partners;
- extended over longer periods of time (e.g. action research projects, focused school networks). This is in preference to stand-alone ‘delivery’ of professional development in single events or sessions that are not always supported by meaningful and ongoing follow-up;
- collaborative with respect to professional colleagues (in schools, between schools and in partnerships with university colleagues or with professionals in other institutions). This collaboration involves more than merely reaffirming existing or habitual practices;
- supported by strong and flexible leadership, both within school settings and at the systems level.

2.6 THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN FRAMING POLICY AND POSSIBILITIES

As explained earlier, there is little agreement amongst researchers or practitioners as to the preferred term to describe teachers’ learning or even the definition of words such as ‘professional development’ or ‘professional learning.’ This variety at the level of nomenclature has allowed a proliferation of discourses to describe teachers’ learning and to inform policy in this area. It may well be that this is one of the contributing factors to the observations of the likes of Wilson and Berne (1999), The US Department of Education (2000), Ingvarson (2002) and Fenstermacher (1994) that professional learning practices and policy seem chaotic and

⁴ Interestingly, DE&T’s (2005) *The seven principles of highly effective professional learning* seem to provide an explicit answer to this question. The first principle in this set states that ‘Professional learning is focused on student outcomes (*not just individual teacher needs*)’ [emphasis added].

fragmentary. This Literature Review does not seek to resolve debates about nomenclature or definitions. Nevertheless, it would seem appropriate to identify here some areas of ongoing debate.

The very language used to describe teachers' learning is crucial for many reasons. It can:

- Influence the nature of the learning activities that teachers participate in at their schools;
- Influence teachers' attitudes to those activities;
- Influence the ways in which policy-making 'levers' seek to guide and /or control teachers' professional learning across the country;
- Colour the way teachers are 'told' what they should know and be able to do;
- Encourage and assist teachers to understand the nature of their professional development / learning needs;
- Help teachers to develop some priorities as individuals or groups, or tell them what their needs should be; and/or
- Suggest some strategies or mandate professional development programs.

The following outlines some of the key conversations about professional learning policy and practice which are acutely influenced by the language used to express them:

- **The extent to which professional learning is immediately relevant to teachers**
One strand of this conversation stresses the need for teachers' professional learning programs or events to build on teachers' existing knowledge bases. If the learning is not seen by individual teachers as connecting with their existing knowledge, it is argued, then those teachers will not see the relevance of it to their professional practices, and they are less likely to engage deeply in that learning. (See Baird and Mitchell, 1997; CRTTE, 2005; Loughran, 1999.) A very different strand of this conversation begins with the assumption that teachers' learning must be directly connected to the learning that their students are engaged in; otherwise it may be just self-serving learning not in the best interests of students. (See DE&T, 2005; Ingvarson, 2002; Supovitz, 2001; Du Four and Eaker, 1998.)
- **The nature of 'relevance' in teachers' learning: practical and theoretical conceptions of teachers' learning**
Much literature critiques professional development programs that seek to separate theoretical from practical knowledge of teaching. Such programs are often 'sold' – literally, as in commercially available professional development packages, or rhetorically, as in persuading teachers to be involved – in order to make the learning seem more immediately relevant to teachers. Practical knowledge can be subtly or overtly privileged over what is perceived as irrelevant theoretical knowledge. The argument is that 'practical knowledge' on its own tends to be limited to highly specific settings and contexts only, and a focus on practical knowledge only encourages teachers to consider their teaching in more limited and limiting ways. (See Apple, 1981, 1986/1995; Ball, 1995; Cochran-Smith, 2003, 1991; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2001, 1993.)
- **The value of top-down professional development and the value of bottom-up (or inquiry-based) professional learning**
In notions of top-down professional development, knowledge and skills tend to be spoken about as 'imported' from an external source and 'transmitted' to teachers. In 'bottom-up' professional learning (often termed inquiry-based professional learning); teachers are seen as generating knowledge at the local level *in association with* information and research from external sources. Conversations around this issue often explore how issues of teacher professional identity

and teacher autonomy are affected in different conceptions of learning. The case is sometimes made that teachers whose existing professional knowledge is not valued, or who have little decision-making input into their professional learning, are less likely to engage deeply in professional learning in the first place (Siniscalco, 2005). Or if they do engage in some professional learning, it is less likely to be sustained over time. (See Fullan, 1999; Hargreaves 1994; Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996.) And yet it is often argued that some top-down dynamics are necessary in order to prompt some rethinking or change in the first instance (Fullan, 1999).

- **The extent to which there is a direct cause-and-effect relationship between teachers' learning (and teaching) and students' learning**
Shulman (1986) critiques the notion of teaching having a direct cause-and-effect relationship to students' learning. He calls it a 'process-product' conception. He is particularly critical of approaches to professional development that set aside considerations of the socio-cultural context of any teaching. Much research that identifies itself as School Effectiveness Research (SER) or School Improvement Research (SIR) is premised on a form of cause-and-effect logic. (See Slee and Weiner, 1998; Bottery, 2005.) Some 'process-product' notions of teaching and learning appear to be primarily concerned with measuring how much value is added to a teacher's teaching by engagement in a particular professional development activity or program (Meiers and Ingvarson, 2005; NITL, 2005; Supovitz, 2001; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung, 2007). Such conceptions of professional learning contrast with the 'messiness' (Schon, 1983, 1987) of professional learning, as other researchers see it. Research that explicitly rejects the process-product, cause-and-effect dynamic, seeks to problematise any attempt to quantify (in simple terms) improvements to a teacher's teaching skills or knowledge. (See Hoban, 2002; Shulman and Sherin, 2004; Wyatt-Smith and Gunn, 2007.)
- **The value of socio-cultural or critical perspectives in teachers' professional learning**
This body of literature contests approaches to professional development that focus on the individual – that is, conceptions of professional learning that are concerned with individual, cognitivist notions of knowledge and learning. Contributors to this conversation often emphasise the ways in which professional learning is social in nature, and they consequently advocate that professional learning should be a social, distributive process, enlivened by imaginative as much as analytical approaches. Researchers and teacher researchers represented in this literature investigate the complex and manifold ways in which teachers' biographies, the professional settings in which they teach and learn, and the socio-cultural contexts in which they learn strongly influence the ways they learn and the knowledge that is generated through that learning. They suggest on the one hand that any teacher knowledge that is supposedly 'acquired' through simple transmission is limited in its application, in that there is a very narrow set of circumstances in which such knowledge might be meaningful or applicable. Further, they argue that teachers who are positioned as mere receivers of others' knowledge are discouraged from developing their capacity to make critical judgements as to the appropriateness of particular knowledge in particular places at particular times with particular students or colleagues. Researchers who pursue this argument can be identified in a strand of professional learning literature that promotes *participation* in professional learning. They urge teachers to see the richest professional learning outcomes deriving from the richest social conditions for that learning. This strand advocates professional learning that engages teachers' critical faculties and encourages them to build their capabilities to make autonomous decisions in different professional contexts. (See Borko, 2004; Cochran and Lytle, 2001, Engeström, Miettinen, and Punamäki, 1999; Florio-Ruane, 2001; Kemmis, 2005; Lieberman and Miller, 2001; Little, 2001; Locke, 2001; Sergioivanni, 2005; Smyt,h 1999; Wells, 2001; Wenger, 1998.)
- **The relationship between discipline knowledge and more generic teaching knowledge**

Often conversations about teaching can be animated by a hypothetical question such as: Is it better for a teacher to be strong on pedagogy and generic classroom practices or strong in discipline knowledge? The literature suggests the need for both. Debates around this issue consider the ways in which teachers' understanding and learning of discipline-based knowledge influence their understanding and learning of broader considerations of pedagogy, learning, curriculum and assessment. Notions such as pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) are often invoked here, in an effort to show how particular discipline-based knowledge must be taught in particular ways. Interestingly, this discourse is more often invoked in science-teaching contexts than elsewhere. (See Shulman, 1986; Shulman and Sherin, 2004; Sockett, 1987; Loughran, 1996.) Critical opinion of pedagogical content knowledge investigates the ways in which this thinking encourages teachers to see discipline knowledge as a discrete body of knowledge that exists separate from the socio-cultural contexts of teaching and learning environments. The implication is that such an approach encourages teacher learning to be focused on a narrow set of pre-existing content, which might itself be contested by others in the discipline field. (See Sockett, 1987.)

- **Professional Learning Communities of teachers (PLCs) of teachers**

As Grossman, Wineburg and Woolworth (2001) point out, 'community' is one of those terms in teaching that is often seen as inevitably positive. Some literature promotes the value of communities of teachers and professional staff in schools working and learning together in PLCs. Teaching and learning in these communities is enhanced by teachers 'sharing and interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning oriented, growth promoting way' (Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas and Wallace, 2005, p. 5; see also Du Four and Eaker, 1998; Hord, 2004; Tool and Louis, 2002). Grossman et al. (2001) explain how in professional communities 'teachers come to recognize the interrelationship of teacher and student learning and are able to use their own learning as a resource to delve more deeply into issues of student learning, curriculum, and teaching' (p. 989). In these communities, collaborative learning is fundamental to all discussions of teachers' work, from the level of national networks, to state-based or regional committees, to local or school-based groups of teachers. There is, however, a considerable body of literature that critically evaluates different forms of collaboration or so-called 'community.' This literature shows how some insular forms of collaboration can discourage the development of new ideas and thus meaningful professional learning. (See Bolam et al., 2005; Fullan, 1999; Goodson, 2003; Grossman et al., 2001; Little, 2001; Raphael, Florio-Ruane, Kehus, and George, 2001.)

- **The role of leadership in developing and sustaining professional learning cultures in schools**

Senge (1990) discusses, in *The fifth discipline*, the relationship between a healthy learning organisation and the potential of that organisation to deal with change and unexpected challenges. He draws attention to the need for sophisticated leadership to manage and 'drive' professional learning. Much literature has pointed to the relevance of this literature to schools (e.g., Retallick and Groundwater-Smith, 1996) and the way leadership is crucial to developing and sustaining dynamic professional learning cultures (CRTTE, 2003). Some recent literature has developed the metaphor of schools as corporate learning organisations where the school itself is learning, along with the individuals who are a part of it (Beveridge et al., 2003). Sergiovanni's (2005) research and advocacy for leadership in professional learning communities show effective leaders to be first and foremost learners. His work has been used in government funded projects to enhance the capability of school leaders to support and manage ongoing professional learning communities in their schools. (See *Leading Professional Learning Project*, DEECD, 2007.)

- **The role of teaching standards in teachers' professional learning**

For the last ten years in Australia and overseas, calls for professional teaching standards have been closely associated with attempts to facilitate sustained professional learning and growth by teachers (Ingvarson, 1998; MCEETYA, 2005; National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, 2006; Wilson and

Berne, 1999). Much literature has explored the ways in which standards have the potential to provide guidance and different levels of accountability for teachers' professional learning. This literature often comments on the tension between standards that can be a focus for professional renewal and ongoing growth, and standards that are perceived negatively by teachers as impinging on their professional autonomy (see Bishop, Clarke, Doecke and Prince, 2004; Mayer, Mitchell, Macdonald, Land and Luke, 2003). Some literature reports on the unintended consequences of professional standards in some settings. When professional standards are not supported by adequate resourcing and time for teacher reflection (and documentation of their practice), they can be seen to inhibit teachers' engagement in sustained professional learning. (See Darling-Hammond, 2004; Delandshere and Petrosky, 2001; Doecke, 2006; Doecke and Gill, 2001; Kleinhenz and Ingvarson, 2004; Sachs 2003, 2005.)

There is no sense in which the issues outlined above are separate or discrete. Many of the debates that continue to impact on professional learning policy and practice in Australia draw on language and discourses that characterize several of these issues at once. While it remains the case that there is little consensus on a definition of professional learning, it is arguably crucial for participants in the debates to develop an awareness of the different language and discourses that contribute to the national conversation about professional learning. Such awareness is crucial for interpreting these debates and for forming judgements.

2.7 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The rhetoric of standards-based reforms of education in the US throughout the 1990s and early into the twenty-first century was that the imposition of professional teaching standards would have positive effects on teachers' learning and professional identity. In Australia, too, centrally devised sets of standards were being promoted as a means of unifying and strengthening the teaching profession. It was felt they may help to generate more rigorous structures for teachers' learning to take place and be documented (Mayer et al., 2003). Since the 1990s in the US and Australia, conversations about professional standards for teachers have drawn a strong link between standards and teachers' professional learning (see National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996; Petrosky, 1998; Doecke and Gill, 2000). But there is some disagreement about the nature of this link.

Around the turn of the century, momentum developed across the Western world (e.g. Centre for Applied Educational Research [CAER], 2002; Du Four and Eaker, 1998; Supovitz, 2001; Hawley and Valli, 1999; Ingvarson, 2002) for 'effective' teacher professional development to be more tightly controlled. This control would come from linking teachers' professional learning to three documented elements:

- (i) The knowledge that students need to know;
- (ii) Student learning outcomes as outlined in curriculum documents; and
- (iii) A set of centrally mandated, professional standards.

By tying professional development programs to prescribed content of what students 'need to know' and to pre-existing outcomes and professional standards, it was felt this would make it possible to identify and measure the effectiveness of an individual teacher's engagement in a particular episode of professional development. There would be agreed and clearly demarcated inputs, and the expected outcomes could thus be identified. In this way, an individual teacher could be held directly accountable for any investment (input) made by a school or government in his/her professional learning. One unintended consequence of this was that individual

teachers seemed to be discouraged from being creative, from taking some professional risks and from challenging dominant practices in their professional learning (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Delandshere and Petrosky, 2004,).

Also around the turn of the century, significant voices in the teaching profession in Australia were developing subject specific standards, such as *Standards for the Teaching of English Language and Literacy in Australia (STELLA)* (AATE and ALEA, 2002; Green, Cormack and Reid, 2000; Doecke and Gill, 2001) and *Standards for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics in Australian Schools (Standards)* (AAMT, 2006), *National professional standards for highly accomplished teachers of science* (Australian Science Teachers' Association, 2002). Some practices associated with these standards involved Barnes's (1992) notion of negotiating the curriculum in terms of both student learning and teacher learning. This was to advocate teachers' learning that included inquiry-based, ongoing and collaborative learning. The idea was that this learning could valuably be distributed across larger networks of teachers and across professional organisations as well as between school colleagues at the local level.

Accountability was acknowledged as an important element in this whole dynamic, but it was more complex than calculations of outputs against inputs, or mapping of practice and knowledge against centrally prescribed standards or pre-existing student learning outcomes. Just as for student learning in the most dynamic classrooms, so too for teacher learning: some of the most valuable professional learning that took place would often turn out to be in unexpected areas. The value of teachers' professional learning in this approach to professional learning, for individuals and for groups of teachers, could not easily be captured or articulated in any model of teacher learning input and outputs. (See Sachs, 2003, 2005; Parr, 2004.)

Implicit in the logic of an input-output model of professional development is the assumption that the important knowledge to be learned by teachers involves input from outside the teacher or input from outside the institutional context where the teacher works. This contrasts with the notion that teacher knowledge can be generated in and through teachers reflecting collaboratively and critically on their practice. This model also assumes that:

- There is a direct linear causality between teachers' learning and the quality of their teaching;
- Any professional learning will *directly* and *measurably* impact upon the teaching which follows that learning; and
- The particular impact of the professional learning upon the teacher's teaching can be readily observed and measured by student performance on bounded and contained activities, such as tests, 'at the end of the line.' (See Figure 2.3 below.)

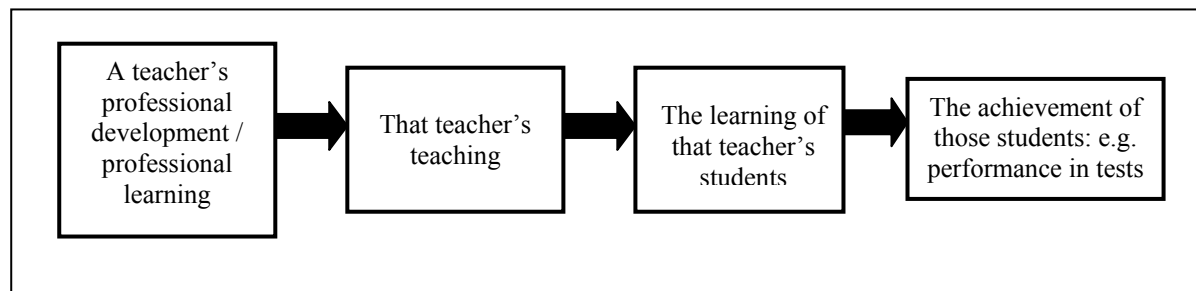


Figure 2.3: An input-output model of professional learning and student performance
(Derived from Supovitz, 2001)

A professional learning model that relies on the inputs of knowledge from *outside* teachers' local settings tends to discount the professional knowledge and practices which teachers have developed *inside* those local settings, and which they may develop in those settings (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993). Such a model frequently positions teachers as lacking the knowledge or skills necessary to bring about educational improvements or change.

Occasionally in Australia, and increasingly in the US, research involves measuring whether, and to what extent, teachers are able to 'fill the gaps' in their knowledge or 'convert' their professional learning into quality teaching (see NITL, 2005). This is done by focusing on the last stage in this linear process: i.e. by measuring improvements in student learning outcomes. In Australia, a two-year long federal government-sponsored project led to a report titled, *Investigating the links between teacher professional development and student learning outcomes* (Meiers and Ingvarson, 2005). This project was established to identify and measure the impact of 'best-practice' professional development programs upon student learning outcomes, consistent with the research of Supovitz (2001) (see Figure 1). The research focused on what was called 'research-based evidence' to demonstrate this direct causal link. This research-based evidence came from selecting 'PD [professional development programs] most likely to have an impact on teacher practices and student learning' (p. 1), PD programs 'designed to lead to changes in teaching practices that are likely to improve student learning, and to *generate measurable outcomes* [emphasis added]' (Meiers and Ingvarson, 2005, p. 1). That is, the research did not focus on professional learning that may have produced less direct or less immediate impacts on student learning.

In their report, Meiers and Ingvarson conclude that there are 'difficulties in finding evidence about how teacher learning is linked to student learning.' They point to 'many difficulties in researching the impact of teacher professional development on student learning outcomes' (Meiers and Ingvarson 2005, p. 3). Their first major recommendation for subsequent research is highly significant for future policy making in the area of professional learning in Australia. They argue that 'it is essential, in investigating links between teacher learning and student learning ... to avoid narrowing outcomes to those that can be easily measured' (p. 4). Two major research projects in the US and the UK published around this time, also state this. These reports are *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education* (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005), and *Watching and learning 3: Final report of the external evaluation of England's 'National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies'* (Earl, Watson, Levin, Leithwood, Fullan and Torrance, 2003). (See also OECD, 2005b; Luke, 2004; Weiner, 2003.)

This recommendation by Meiers and Ingvarson is consistent with a growing body of literature that discusses the need for considering a broad range of evidence of teachers' learning when evaluating the outcomes of that learning. Elmore (2000), Locke (2004) and Petrosky (2003) talk about the dangers of using a smaller range of evidence, such as students' test scores, to measure the outcomes of teachers' professional learning. They argue that students' test scores rarely reflect the multifarious ways in which teachers develop and improve through their learning. In addition, the literature points to a negative consequence of planning for professional learning that is primarily focused on raising students' test scores. Such learning is likely to be limited and inflexible and may, as a consequence, encourage teachers to be limited and inflexible in their practice (CRRTE, 2003).

2.8 A NOTE ABOUT 'EVIDENCE' OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Debates in the literature concerned with appropriate and reliable evidence of teachers' professional learning or professional development have intensified in the years since *PD 2000 Australia* was published. As seen above, some research argues the validity of its findings by invoking the discourse of scientific validity or claims that its methodology and/or epistemological framework are totally objective or scientifically evidence-based (see Freebody, 2003; Lather and Moss, 2005). Research in education and the social sciences has maintained a lively but often adversarial conversation about the value of different forms of 'evidence.' Such conversations are of profound importance when particular forms of 'evidence' are claimed as irrefutable proof of the value of one model or paradigm of professional learning by teachers, while other evidence is dismissed on the basis of it being 'unscientific.'

The OECD report, *Education Policy Analysis 2004* (OECD, 2005b), has urged researchers and policy makers throughout the world to 'look at a wider range of outcomes of education, not only cognitive abilities' (p. 12). It points to the OECD's Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo) project, and stresses that these competencies cannot always be accurately measured in traditional scientific terms. At around the same time, a large-scale investigative study in the United States investigated what constitutes scientific evidence of learning in education. The final report *Scientific research in education* (SRI) presented many different viewpoints about what constitutes evidence of quality learning for students and for teachers. The highly ranked *Teachers College Record* subsequently devoted a whole issue to this question. (See Volume 107, Number 1 of that journal.) In their introduction to that issue, editors Patti Lather and Pamela Moss (2005) explain the situation whereby certain sorts of scientific research (and evidence) has been privileged in public debates about learning, while other research that is scientific in different ways is dismissed. They say: 'We were concerned about the kinds of research that appeared to be ignored or relegated to the margins of the debate as not scientific and about the effects of these choices' (p. 2).

In line with the recommendations of these major studies to consider a wider range of evidence of teachers' learning, the last part of this Literature Review will consider the ways in which teachers' writing, in its varied forms, formats and modes, has been seen to constitute evidence of teachers' learning. Further, it will explore how some of the ways in which the literature understands teachers' very engagement in the process of writing might serve to focus and deepen those teachers' professional learning.

2.9 TEACHER WRITING: DOCUMENTING AND FOCUSING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

One strong tendency in teachers' professional learning in Australia (and internationally) is for teachers to use writing as both a focus of, and 'tool' for, their professional learning. A large body of writing that teachers have produced, both formally and informally, is accessible through public forums. This includes books, journals, newsletters, even teacher blogs. There is a substantial body of other writing that teachers engage in – e.g. professional portfolios, online discussion groups or reflective texts shared within smaller networks of teachers – which is not published in the public domain, but which is highly significant for these teachers' learning.

Researchers, policy makers and school administrators need to be mindful of the increasing imperative for specific and demonstrable evidence that will account for teachers' professional learning. Some are concerned to avoid narrowing the range of evidence that represents or accounts for that professional learning (Burroughs, 2001; Serafini, 2002). This has prompted interest in a variety of forms of teachers' writing, in the broadest sense of this word – i.e. writing that incorporates the written word, but also writing in the form of visual texts and digitally-based multimedia texts (see Jewitt and Kress, 2003).

Much professional learning literature has recently focused on the professional possibilities of teachers' writing. This has emerged at the same time as literature relating to students' has considered assessment *of* student learning, assessment *for* student learning and assessment *as* student learning (e.g. Earl, 2003). Similar arguments underpin discussion of teachers' professional learning: that is,

- Writing *about* teacher learning (i.e., writing that documents teacher learning that has taken place);
- Writing *for* teacher learning (i.e., writing that can prompt or focus teacher professional learning); and
- Writing *as* teacher learning (i.e., writing that is a part of teachers' work; writing that documents, focuses and even encourages teacher learning) (Doecke and Parr, 2005).

It is possible to break down the different traditions and forms of teachers' writing *about*, *for* and *as* professional learning into the following categories:

- *Teachers as researchers and learners* (e.g., Stenhouse, 1975; see also Ayers and Schubert, 1994) Since the 1970s, university researchers have sought to position teachers as significant contributors to research into education even as they (i.e. the teachers) learn. These researchers have provided opportunities and spaces – such as in research projects – for teachers to write and publish stories about their work as teachers. Teachers have found they generate purposeful learning through this writing, and the dissemination of the writing ensures the learning is shared with others. This heritage continues to be very strong to the present day (e.g., Mitchell 2005);
- *Teacher bloggers* (see Bellis, Bulfin and McLeay, 2005) The online medium tends to encourage a sense of immediacy in teachers' writing. The communal and democratic character of this grouping is distinctive, but the diversity of bloggers' texts makes it problematic to generalise about the value of the writing in terms of the professional learning of these teachers.
- *Teachers writing/generating professional portfolios* (e.g., Kleinhenz and Ingaverson, 2004; NBPTS, 2006; Wolf, 1996) From as early as the 1980s, teachers had begun to construct professional portfolios as a means of 'capturing' the breadth and complexity of their professional knowledge and practices. This 'capturing' was for various purposes including appraisal and evaluation, and to assist teachers in applying for jobs. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in America (see NBPTS, 2006) initially took the lead by introducing a voluntary option for teachers to generate portfolios in order to gain promotion and/or pay rises. Governments and regulatory bodies in Australia (e.g., VIT, 2006; NSWIT, 2006) soon after began to explore ways in which professional portfolios might address the needs of regulatory bodies (who were concerned with certification or registration of teachers) and professional associations (who were interested in exploring ways to use professional portfolios as a focus for teachers' professional learning). There was considerable support for professional portfolios throughout the 1990s. In recent years, a significant body of research has emerged that challenges the value of portfolios and the practices involved in generating them. One line of critique has suggested that portfolios tend to be unreliable indicators of teachers' knowledge and practice (Avis, 2003; MacLure, 2003). Another line has questioned the increasing size and scope (and sometimes the rigid framing) of portfolios. Despite their size and scope, they are sometimes seen as limiting rather than enabling teachers' growth and learning (Burroughs, Schwartz and Henricks-Lee, 2000; Delandshere and Petrosky, 2000, 2004; Sachs, 2005).
- *The 'self-study movement'* (e.g., Loughran and Russell, 2002)

This is a loose community of university-researcher and teacher-researcher partnerships, following in the footsteps of Donald Schön (1983/1991). These partnerships base their writing around teaching and learning ‘cases’ (generally less than 1000 words each) as a focus for focused professional learning conversations in schools. (See also Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001; Loughran and Berry, 2006.)

- *Critically reflective narrative writers* (e.g., AATE/ALEA, 2002; Florio-Ruane, 2001; Goodson, 1992; Kamler, 2001; Richardson, 2000; Wells, 2001)
These writers tend to build a solid and explicit theoretical element into accounts of their teaching practice. They emphasise the need to situate or locate any professional writing within the socio-political contexts and environments of schooling. They do not see their writing as discovering ‘their true self’ as teachers; rather, the writing is often felt to focus and inspire current and future professional learning.
- *Writing as part of formal postgraduate study*
Writing in postgraduate degrees or diplomas can incorporate all of the above forms and traditions. This writing is widely recognised as contributing in significant ways to teachers’ strong appreciation of their learning in their particular professional contexts.

While there is widespread enthusiasm for the value of writing for teachers’ learning, Goodson (2003) calls for careful critical scrutiny of this writing.

[Teachers’ writing about their practice is] not an unquestioned good.... Individual and practical stories [can] reduce, seduce and reproduce particular teaching mentalities, and lead us away from broader patterns of understanding.... [They can] be as easily employed for closure as exposure. (Goodson, 2003, pp. 26, 30, 48)

In particular, Goodson points out the dangers of writing that romanticizes or sentimentalises teaching and teachers’ work. The effect of such writing, Goodson warns, may be to turn a teacher’s attention inward upon him/herself. When this happens, it is likely to limit the potential of the teacher to learn from others and from professional contexts outside his/her own workplace.

Several other critics caution against the uncritical embracing of romantic notions of teachers learning through writing (e.g., Doecke et al., 2000; Ritchie and Wilson, 2000). Deborah Britzman (2003) takes this note of caution further. She is deeply critical of the ‘glorification of firsthand experience’ in teachers’ writing. This is a concern for many researchers, especially if the writing that teachers produce does not encourage them to grow and learn through the writing process (see Cochran-Smyth and Lytle, 2001; Cochran-Smith and Fries, 2001; Doecke, Locke and Petrosky, 2004; Goodson, 2003).

Beyond these concerns, the literature cited in the above discussion has shown how there is still much support from teachers, from professional associations, and from regulatory authorities for teachers’ writing to be considered as a valuable activity for professional learning. This support is expressed with the following recommendations:

- There should be adequate resourcing of this writing (with allowances for writing time built into teachers’ workloads, at particular times of the year);
- Writer/s should reflect on the importance of the context from which the writing is generated; and
- The value of the writing should be seen as both *documenting* and *focusing* teachers’ professional learning.

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CHAPTER THREE: SURVEY FINDINGS (A): SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

This chapter presents and discusses the results from a national survey of the professional development programs of Australian schools. This survey was conducted in conjunction with a national survey of teachers working in these schools. The results from the teacher survey are discussed in the next chapter.

The surveys mostly replicate the school and teacher surveys conducted as part of the *PD 2000* project. Revisiting these earlier surveys was both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, the results from the present survey can be compared with results from the previous survey to examine changes in the professional development programs and activities of schools and teachers over the last eight years. On the other hand, however, the need to make comparisons with the earlier surveys at times constrained the present survey in terms of the wording and content of the questionnaire. While this was rarely problematic, it meant, for instance, that the questionnaires for the present survey follow the wording of the questionnaires for the previous survey in asking about professional development (PD) rather than professional learning.

3.1 SURVEY PROCESS

A questionnaire was sent to 2,000 school principals across Australia asking about their professional development programs. The survey asked for information on the following areas:

- Whether the school has a professional development program
- Who makes the decisions about what will be in the program and what/who influences these decisions
- How the professional development program is planned
- The time allocated to professional development
- What activities are included in professional development programs
- Who provides these activities and who participates
- What topics are covered
- How providers of professional development activities are located
- How professional development activities are evaluated
- Information on school budgets for professional development programs

Information was also collected about the type of the school (primary, secondary, combined or special school), the sector (government, Catholic, independent), the location (state/territory and size of town/city), the number of students enrolments, and the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students at the school. The questionnaire is Appendix 3 in this report.

3.1.1 *The Sample*

A sample of 2,000 schools was selected, which is about one in every five Australian schools. Schools were randomly selected from a stratified sample, with the strata consisting of state/territory and school sector as part of the explicit sampling frame, and school type implicit in the sample selection. Results from the achieved sample were weighted by state, sector and type. Further information on the sampling procedure for both surveys is detailed in Appendix 2. The response rate for the school survey was 42.2 per cent.

Although the term ‘national’ is used in this report to describe both the school and teacher surveys, Northern Territory government schools and schools in one Catholic diocese were unable to participate. Schools in these two jurisdictions are less than 2 per cent of schools nationally and have less than 1 per cent of teachers nationally.

Of the 833 schools that responded to the survey, 16 did not have a professional development program. Most of the tables in this chapter are necessarily based on the remaining 817 schools that reported having a professional development program. Of the total responses, 98.1 per cent of schools do have a professional development program.

Responses from each state and territory were as follows:

Table 3.1
Distribution of sample of schools with professional development programs across states and territories

| <i>State/ Territory</i> | no. | % of sample (unweighted) | % of sample (weighted) | no. of all schools in states/territories 2007 | % of all schools in states/territories 2007 |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| NSW | 222 | 27.3 | 33.2 | 3107 | 32.4 |
| VIC | 184 | 22.6 | 24.4 | 2292 | 23.9 |
| QLD | 161 | 19.8 | 18.1 | 1715 | 17.9 |
| SA | 87 | 10.7 | 8.6 | 803 | 8.4 |
| WA | 119 | 14.6 | 11.3 | 1068 | 11.1 |
| TAS | 24 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 279 | 2.9 |
| NT | 2 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 185 | 1.9 |
| ACT | 14 | 1.7 | 1.4 | 132 | 1.4 |
| TOTAL | 813 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 9581 | 100.0 |

Notes

1. Four respondents did not supply information about the state or territory in which their school was located.
2. Schools without information about their state or territory were given a weight of one.
3. Population values were derived from ABS, *Schools Australia, 2007*, 4220.0.
4. Government schools in the Northern Territory and Catholic schools in one diocese did not participate in the survey

When making comments in this chapter about survey results from schools when cross-referenced with state, it is important to note that there were too few responses from the ACT and Tasmanian schools to be able to draw meaningful conclusions. The distribution of weighted responses from each state and territory correspond to the actual distribution of schools, except for the Northern Territory.

School sector was another characteristic asked of the schools in the sample.

Table 3.2
Distribution of sample of schools with professional development programs across school sectors

| <i>'Affiliation'</i> | no. | % of sample (unweighted) | % of sample (weighted) | % of all schools in states/territories 2007 |
|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Government | 535 | 66.0 | 71.7 | 71.5 |
| Catholic | 176 | 21.7 | 18.1 | 17.8 |
| Independent | 100 | 12.3 | 10.2 | 10.7 |

[n=811]

Notes

1. Six respondents did not supply information about the sector in which their school was located.
2. Schools without information about their sector were given a weight of one.
3. Population values are derived from ABS, *Schools Australia, 2007*, 4220.0.
4. Government schools in the Northern Territory and Catholic schools in one diocese did not participate in the survey.

Catholic and Independent schools were a little over-represented in the survey responses, but weighting the sample has made it fairly representative.

School principals who completed the survey were also asked their schools' type, shown below.

Table 3.3
Distribution of sample of schools with professional development programs across school types

| <i>Type</i> | no. | % of sample (unweighted) | % of sample (weighted) | no. of all schools in states/territories 2007 | % of all schools in states/territories 2007 |
|-------------|-----|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| Primary | 524 | 64.2 | 68.8 | 6517 | 68.0 |
| Secondary | 134 | 16.4 | 15.5 | 1487 | 15.5 |
| Combined | 116 | 14.2 | 11.8 | 1199 | 12.5 |
| Special | 42 | 5.1 | 3.9 | 379 | 4.0 |
| [n=816] | | | | | |

Notes

1. One respondent did not supply information about the type of school.
2. Schools without information about their type were given a weight of one.
3. Population values were derived from ABS, *Schools Australia, 2007*, 4220.0.
4. Government schools in the Northern Territory and Catholic schools in diocese did not participate in the survey.
5. Of the 116 combined schools, 63 (55 per cent) were from the independent sector

As there are too few special schools in the sample from which to be able to draw reliable conclusions, and the percentage of combined schools that are part of the independent sector was disproportionate to the population, analysis of school type in this chapter will use data from primary and secondary schools in the sample. After weighting, school types are representative of the total population

The size of the student population is another factor that can affect the budget, occurrence and type of professional development activities in schools. The responses from the schools in our survey are listed here.

Table 3.4
Distribution of sample of schools with professional development programs across school sizes

| <i>Enrolment</i> | no. | % of sample (unweighted) | % of sample (weighted) |
|------------------|-----|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| less than 50 | 92 | 11.3 | 11.8 |
| 50-199 | 196 | 24.1 | 23.6 |
| 200-449 | 248 | 30.5 | 31.9 |
| 450-699 | 134 | 16.5 | 15.7 |
| 700 or more | 143 | 17.6 | 16.9 |
| [n=813] | | | |

Our sample had schools of all sizes well represented.

3.2 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.2.1 Schools without a PD Program

Of the 833 schools in the survey, 16 indicated they have no professional development program. This is proportional to 1.9 per cent of the schools sampled. *PD 2000* found that 3.6 per cent of schools did not have a PD program. From 2000 to 2008, there has been a decline in schools that do not have a PD program. In both cases, the proportion of schools without a PD program is small and too few for meaningful analysis.

The 16 schools that indicated they did not have a professional development program were from every state except Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory. There are very few schools without a professional development program. The *PD 2000* report suggested that some principals may have indicated that their school had no PD program in order to avoid completing the rest of the questionnaire. The 16 schools that indicated that they had no PD program in the 2008 survey, however, did fill out the first seven questions. *PD 2000* suggested that although each sector and every school type and enrolment size category had schools with no professional development program, a disproportionate number had enrolments of Indigenous students, and this accords with the pattern for 2008, but again any differences or patterns should not be over-interpreted because there are so few schools without a PD program.

3.2.2 Who Decides On A Program?

Decision-making about professional development can be broadly located across four areas – outside the school, the school administration, peers or with the individual staff member – and these are clearly not mutually exclusive. Each area has its own value. Schools located within broader systems (mainly government and Catholic) may need to address broader system-level goals and can draw on central expertise for their PD. The school administration may have school specific concerns, while peers can perhaps balance school, professional and individual needs and the individual staff member is well placed to know their immediate and career needs.

Principals were asked who made decisions about the nature of the professional development program in their schools and were provided with alternatives that covered the four broad decision-making areas. Survey results suggest that the school administration is the most frequently cited source of decision-making about PD followed by peers, the individual staff member and the employing authority. Table 3.5 shows that the school administration was involved in decisions about PD in half (50 per cent) the schools and was the single most cited site of decision-making. Some possibly mixed school- and discipline-level decision-making is delegated to faculty or team heads (21 per cent). Staff elected or appointed committees or individuals also frequently have a role in decision-making (42 per cent). Individual staff members have a role in decision making about PD in about one in every three schools. Employing authorities (20 per cent) are the least frequently mentioned site of decision-making.

Table 3.5

Percentage of schools reporting who makes decisions about professional development programs within the school

| <i>Decisions about the nature of the school's professional</i> | 2008 % | % responses by sector | | | 2000 % |
|--|--------|-----------------------|------|------|--------|
| | | Govt | Cath | Ind. | |

development program are made by —

| | | | | | |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| school administration | 49.6 | 43.6% | 62.6% | 65.1% | 49.6 |
| individual members of staff | 33.0 | 33.0% | 32.2% | 33.7% | 29.1 |
| a staff committee elected or appointed for that purpose | 31.6 | 36.7% | 20.5% | 15.7% | 46.7 |
| faculty or team heads | 20.8 | 19.8% | 17.0% | 33.7% | 25.7 |
| employing authority | 20.3 | 18.6% | 36.7% | 4.8% | 14.3 |
| a staff member elected or appointed for that purpose | 10.6 | 10.0% | 8.2% | 18.3% | 16.7 |
| other | 15.5 | 15.7% | 17.0% | 12.0% | na |

[n=817]

Notes:

1. From Question 8 in Survey of Schools – see Appendix 3
2. *PD 2000* did not have ‘other’, so response patterns may have changed.
3. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 122.
4. The results are weighted.

Between 2000 and 2008 the site of decision-making about professional development has changed:

- School administration is unchanged at 50 per cent, although decisions delegated to faculty or team heads has declined (26 per cent to 21 per cent);
- The role of employing authorities has increased (14 per cent to 20 per cent);
- The role of individual staff members in decision about their own PD has increased (from 29 per cent to 33 per cent); and
- Staff committees (47 per cent to 32 per cent) and elected staff representatives (17 per cent to 11 per cent) are now less frequently involved in PD decision-making.

Although the frequency with which individual staff members are involved in decisions about PD is similar in all three sectors – about one in three – there is considerable variation in the frequency with which other sources are involved in the decisions:

- Decisions about PD in government schools are more likely to be made by a staff committee elected for that purpose (37 per cent) than in Catholic (20 per cent) or independent (16 per cent) schools;
- School administration was more frequently involved in decisions about PD in Catholic (63 per cent) and independent (65 per cent) schools than in government schools (44 per cent);
- The employing authority in Catholic schools (37 per cent) plays a stronger role in decisions about PD than in either government (19 per cent) or independent (5 per cent) schools. In most independent schools, however, the employing authority may be difficult to distinguish from the school’s administration.

3.2.3 Basis of Choices about the Nature of the Program

‘Current school priorities’ are the most frequently mentioned basis for choices about the nature of a school’s professional development program and is nearly universal (95 per cent). It is not, however, the only basis and most schools mentioned more than one basis. Surveys of staff wishes and needs (52 per cent), recent issues (presumably unplanned and outside recognised school priorities) (40 per cent), organisation reviews (34 per cent) and staff reviews (30 per cent) also provide a basis for PD in many schools.

Answers to these questions do not necessarily reflect the relative importance of drivers of teacher professional development. All schools may have some PD driven by their own priorities, but whether this is the majority of PD is difficult to determine. The choice is determined by employing authorities for one in three schools (34 per cent) but for independent schools at least it may be difficult to distinguish the school from employing authorities.

The previous question’s results show that decisions about professional development programs come from administration or administration in collaboration with individual staff. When it comes to the basis of these program choices, the table below shows that collaboration is often the case.

Table 3.6
Percentages of schools reporting how choices are made about the nature of professional development programs

| <i>Choices about the nature of the program are based on —</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|---|--------|--------|
| current school priorities | 94.7 | 92.2 |
| surveys of staff wishes and needs | 52.5 | 61.9 |
| issues which have arisen recently in the school | 39.6 | 46.7 |
| reviews of the work of components of the school | 38.7 | 38.3 |
| employing authority or other externally-generated priorities | 33.5 | 37.4 |
| appraisals of the work of individual staff members | 30.4 | 24.3 |
| the availability of particular providers | 19.3 | 17.2 |
| the popularity /past effectiveness of particular providers | 8.8 | 9.1 |
| other | 2.3 | na |

[n=817]

Notes:

1. From Question 10 in Survey of Schools
2. *PD 2000* did not have ‘other’, so response patterns may have changed.
3. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 123.
4. The results are weighted.

The order of importance of choices has not changed since the *PD 2000* survey although the proportion of those choosing the options has changed:

- Choices based on surveys of staff wishes has decreased (62 per cent to 52 per cent);

- Choices based on issues which have arisen recently in the school has decreased (47 per cent to 40 per cent);
- An employing authority or other externally generated priority has less influence on the choices about the nature of a PD program (37 per cent to 33 per cent);
- Appraisals of the work of individual staff members has increased (24 per cent to 30 per cent).

When the data is looked at according to school sector, there are differences evident:

- ‘Current school priorities’ was more important to government (97 per cent) and Catholic schools (94 per cent) than it was to independent schools (77 per cent);
- Independent schools’ PD choices are significantly more dependent on appraisals of staff work (42 per cent) than for government (28 per cent) or Catholic schools (31 per cent).

The schools from states with a larger geographical area are more likely to say that PD program choices are made on the basis of availability (WA 28 per cent, Queensland 24 per cent). External priorities take greater precedence in Queensland (50 per cent) and are of least importance to schools in Victoria (24 per cent) when it comes to PD program choices.

3.2.4 Planning for a PD Program

Half of the respondents indicated that PD programs were planned a term ahead and nearly 60 per cent said they were planned a year ahead (of which a quarter could include those who also said they plan a term ahead). Forty-two per cent said they plan PD as issues arise, and 14 per cent stated yes to all three options. This question allowed for multiple answers, and although 59 per cent of respondents gave only one answer, 40 per cent gave either two or three answers.

The response rate to this question for *PD 2000* was low, and it seems respondents were asked to give only one answer, making comparisons with the 2008 results problematic.

Table 3.7

Percentage of schools reporting how far ahead decisions are made concerning professional development activities within the school

| <i>The program consists of activities which are planned:</i> | 2008 % | % responses by sector | | |
|--|--------|-----------------------|------|------|
| | | Govt | Cath | Ind. |
| a term or so ahead | 50.2 | 51.6 | 42.2 | 54.2 |
| to cover a full-year or longer period | 59.7 | 57.0 | 72.8 | 56.6 |
| as issues arise | 42.5 | 43.7 | 33.3 | 51.8 |

[n=817]

Notes:

1. From Question 9 in Survey of Schools – see Appendix 3
2. *PD 2000* response rate to this question was less than 60 per cent.
3. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 123-4.

4. The results are weighted.

When looked at by sector:

- Catholic schools were significantly more likely to say that their PD was planned to cover a full year or more (73 per cent) compared to the other two sectors (57 per cent);
- Independent schools were more likely to say that PD was planned as issues arise (52 per cent) compared to government (43 per cent) and Catholic schools (33 per cent).

School responses to the time allocated for PD activities showed that in the last year (2007), the majority of schools have between two to five days of PD in-school hours and up to three days out of school hours (51 per cent in both cases).

Government schools are more likely than schools from other sectors to have more than ten days per year allocated to PD out of school hours, although this is still a small portion at 10 per cent.

Of the ACT schools who completed the survey, over half stated that PD in school hours was 2-3 days per year which is less than the overall mean (which was 4-5 days). All other states had their largest percentage of time allocation as 4-5 days, with Tasmania having almost a third of schools stating the PD time allocation was more than ten days per year.

Both Victoria and NSW have a fifth of schools stating no time is allocated to PD out of school hours, and nearly all states had their largest percentage of time allocation for PD out of hours as two to three days except for South Australia and Tasmania, where four to five days had the largest percentage of responses.

3.2.5 Budget for Professional Development

School responses indicated that budgets for professional development in schools were almost universal (95 per cent of respondents stated this). The survey did not have the scope to ask for the kinds of professional development activities that were included in school budgets, and this should be kept in mind when interpreting these results. Activities such as formal training will require a greater portion of the budget than will more informal PD such as focussed professional discussion.

Although the majority of schools in all sectors stated they do have a defined budget for PD, government schools were significantly more likely to have this than schools from the other two sectors (97 per cent of government schools, 89 per cent of Catholic schools and 90 per cent of independent schools).

When looked at in relation to states, Victoria had the lowest percentage of schools with a defined budget for PD, although this was still high at 92 per cent.

The budget size for schools is listed below.

Table 3.8
Percentages of schools across budget categories

| Budget 'size' (per year per staff member) | 2008 % | % responses by sector | | | 2000 % |
|---|--------|-----------------------|------|------|--------|
| | | Govt | Cath | Ind | |
| less than \$30 | 1.5 | 1.1 | 3.8 | 0 | 3.1 |
| between \$30 and \$70 | 5.4 | 5.3 | 5.4 | 5.5 | 14.1 |
| between \$70 and \$150 | 15.5 | 14.6 | 21.5 | 12.3 | 16.6 |
| between \$150 and \$350 | 29.7 | 31.1 | 29.2 | 17.8 | 34.4 |
| more than \$350 | 47.9 | 47.9 | 40.0 | 64.4 | 31.9 |

[n=757]

Notes:

1. From Question 24 in Survey of Schools
2. Although the budget size categories were less for *PD 2000*, 2008 and 2000 are comparable because the categories are equivalent in real terms
3. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 124.
4. The results are weighted.

Nearly half of all schools responding to the survey stated that budgets for PD were more than \$350 per year per staff member. This was a relative increase in spending on PD for staff since the 2000 survey. In 2000 just under a third of schools stated they were spending in the maximum category per head of staff.

- There was a decrease in the percentage of schools in the two lowest budget categories from 2000-2008, with the second lowest category having less than five per cent of schools in this funding category – a reduction of nearly a third over eight years.

There were significant differences when the data was cross-referenced with school sector:

- Independent schools were more likely to fund PD for staff in the over \$350 category (64 per cent), with government schools (48 per cent) and Catholic schools (40 per cent) being significantly less;
- In the funding category \$70-150, there were more Catholic schools (21 per cent) than government (14 per cent) or independent schools (12 per cent).

Differences that emerged when the data was cross-referenced with school type (primary or secondary) were:

- More than half of primary schools (51 per cent) had a budget of over \$350 per staff member, whereas only just over a third of secondary schools had this (37 per cent);
- Over a third of secondary schools (36 per cent) had a staff budget of between \$150 -350, whereas in primary schools it was 28 per cent.

3.2.6 Professional Development Activity Groupings

Activities in professional development programs in schools can be directed towards different sizes of groups, from whole school involvement to individual teachers. Over half of the respondents (52 per cent) stated they use all types of groupings in their schools

Table 3.9
Percentages of schools reporting group sizes for professional development activities

| <i>In 2007 the program consisted mostly of:</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|--|--------|--------|
| whole school activities | 33.3 | 29.5 |
| activities chosen by/designed for sub-groups within the school | 11.7 | 14.8 |
| activities chosen by/designed for individual staff members | 12.8 | 23.3 |
| a combination the first two of these | 18.2 | 23.3 |
| a combination of the first three of these | 52.5 | 48.3 |

[n=817]

Notes:

1. From Question 11 in Survey of Schools
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 124.
3. The results are weighted.

This was similar to the responses for *PD 2000* in terms of the ranking of choices for the different sized groups, but small differences were evident:

- The popularity of PD directed at individual staff members had nearly halved over the time, from 23 per cent in 2000 to 13 per cent in 2008;
- More schools were using a combination of all three groupings (whole school, groups and individuals) in 2008 (52 per cent) than they were in 2000 (48 per cent);
- Less schools were using a combination of the two larger groupings (whole school and groups) in 2008 (18 per cent) and they were in 2000 (23 per cent).

3.2.7 Professional Development Activity Providers

The survey was interested to find out who schools use as providers of activities for professional development. Respondents stated that the most common provider of PD activities is staff from their school. This was reflected right across school sectors, types and location, and was also the most common choice for the *PD 2000* survey.

Tables 3.10 and 3.11 below show the list of providers given in the survey. While not exhaustive, these lists take into account the various resources to which schools have access in terms of education for staff. This can range from staff within the school with expertise in a particular area, to outside private providers, public providers for a local area, or state-wide providers.

The number of responses to the question about in-school activities indicates that schools are making use of several of these options rather than drawing from one type only. Percentages are shown for sector and type in the table below when there is a significant difference from the overall percentage for an item.

Table 3.10

Percentages of schools reporting on in-school activity providers

| <i>In-school activities were provided by staff from ...</i> | 2008 % (ranked) | % responses by Sector | | | % responses by type | | 2000 % |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|------|------|---------------------|------|--------|
| | | Govt | Cath | Ind | Prim | Sec | |
| your school | 91.7 | | | | | | 92.8 |
| District/Regional/Area Office | 60.7 | 75.0 | 32.0 | 14.5 | | | 51.3 |
| a cluster or grouping of schools | 58.4 | 62.7 | 56.5 | 33.7 | 63.6 | 47.6 | 40.5 |
| a private provider | 48.8 | 47.2 | 48.3 | 62.7 | | | 41.8 |
| Central Office | 38.1 | 32.9 | 74.1 | 12.0 | | | 30.4 |
| a subject or other professional association | 21.3 | 19.4 | 16.3 | 41.0 | 14.4 | 34.9 | 20.2 |
| another central agency (eg a Board of Studies) | 19.1 | 17.0 | 17.7 | 34.9 | 12.1 | 38.1 | 17.8 |
| a higher education institution | 12.8 | 9.6 | 22.6 | 15.7 | 9.8 | 23.0 | 14.3 |
| a teacher union | 10.4 | 11.5 | 7.5 | 6.0 | 7.7 | 17.5 | 8.5 |
| a Teacher/Education Centre | 7.1 | 6.5 | 7.5 | 10.8 | 6.1 | 10.3 | 7.2 |

[respondents=817; responses=3,021]

Notes:

1. From Question 18 in Survey of Schools
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 125.
3. The results are weighted.

Differences between the 2008 and the *PD 2000* survey were:

- The biggest change is the increase of staff from a cluster of schools providing PD, which went from 40 per cent in 2000 to 58 per cent in 2008;
- District or regional offices are providing more PD activities in 2008 (61 per cent) than they were in 2000 (51 per cent);
- There has been an increase in the use of private providers from 2000 (42 per cent) to 2008 (49 per cent), and in the use of central offices (30 per cent in 2000, 38 per cent in 2008).

Sectoral differences were as follows:

- The district or regional office was stated as important in providing staff for PD in government schools (75 per cent), but not as important in Catholic schools (32 per cent) or independent schools (14 per cent);

- Catholic schools were more likely to choose a central office as a provider of PD activities (74 per cent) than were schools from the government sector (33 per cent) or independent sector (12 per cent), and more likely to use a higher education institution (23 per cent) than government schools (10 per cent) or independent schools (16 per cent);
- Independent schools were significantly more likely to have PD provided by a subject or other professional association (41 per cent), or by a private provider (63 per cent) than government schools (19 per cent and 47 per cent) or Catholic schools (16 per cent and 48 per cent);
- Independent schools were less likely to use staff from a cluster or grouping of schools for activities (34 per cent) than government schools (63 per cent) or Catholic schools (56 per cent).

The main differences by school type were:

- Primary schools were more likely to have PD provided by a cluster of schools (64 per cent) than secondary schools (48 per cent);
- Secondary schools were more likely to have PD provided by a central agency (38 per cent compared to 12 per cent), a subject or professional organisation (35 per cent compared to 14 per cent), a higher education institution (23 per cent compared to 10 per cent) or by a teacher union (17 per cent compared to 8 per cent).

For out-of-school activities, the most common response was staff from a cluster of schools providing PD activities. As with the table above, percentages are shown for sector and type when there is a significant difference from the overall percentage for an item.

Table 3.11
Percentages of schools reporting on out-of-school activity providers

| <i>Out-of-school activities were provided by staff from ...</i> | 2008 % (ranked) | % responses by Sector | | | % responses by type | | 2000 % |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|------|------|---------------------|------|--------|
| | | Govt | Cath | Ind | Prim | Sec | |
| a cluster or grouping of schools | 60.2 | 64.4 | 51.7 | 47.0 | 65.2 | 45.2 | 48.9 |
| District/Regional/Area Office | 54.8 | 68.7 | 25.2 | 13.3 | | | 50.0 |
| a private provider | 40.0 | 37.6 | 40.1 | 54.2 | | | 38.8 |
| Central Office | 34.1 | 28.9 | 63.9 | 15.7 | 34.2 | 42.9 | 29.3 |
| a subject or other professional association | 30.0 | 27.5 | 26.5 | 54.2 | 22.3 | 53.2 | 33.2 |
| another central agency (eg a Board of Studies) | 15.8 | 14.1 | 12.9 | 30.1 | 9.8 | 33.3 | 20.6 |
| a higher education institution | 11.6 | 8.4 | 18.4 | 18.3 | 7.5 | 22.2 | 18.8 |
| a teacher union | 11.5 | 13.9 | 5.4 | 4.8 | 9.1 | 20.6 | 8.9 |
| a Teacher/Education Centre | 7.7 | 7.6 | 5.5 | 13.3 | 5.9 | 11.8 | 10.5 |

[respondents=817; responses=2,174]

Notes:

1. From Question 19 in Survey of Schools
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 125.
3. The results are weighted

Changes from *PD 2000* include:

- The importance of a cluster of schools for providing staff for PD had increased since the *PD 2000* survey from 49 per cent to 60 per cent;
- District or regional offices provided less PD activities in 2000 (50 per cent of responses stated this) than in 2008 (which is now 55 per cent), as did central offices (which went from 29 per cent to 34 per cent).

There was a difference between all school sectors in the most common provider of out-of-school activities:

- The government sector showed staff from district or regional offices to be the most common providers (68 per cent) where Catholic schools showed 25 per cent, and independent schools showed 13 per cent. Staff from a cluster of schools was the second most common provider for government schools (64 per cent) and for Catholic schools (52 per cent), but third for independent schools (47 per cent);
- Catholic schools had a majority that stated central offices as the most common provider of out-of-school activities (64 per cent), whilst for government schools this was 29 per cent and for independent schools, 16 per cent;
- Independent schools chose private providers and a subject or other professional association as the equal most common providers of activities out of school (54 per cent), whereas for government schools these were 38 and 27 per cent, and for Catholic schools, 40 and 26 per cent respectively;
- Both Catholic and independent schools are more likely than government schools to use staff from a higher education institution for out-of-school PD activities (18 per cent compared to 8 per cent);
- Government schools are more than twice as likely (14 per cent) than schools from other two sectors (5 per cent) to use staff from a teacher union for PD activities.

Some differences across school types included:

- Primary schools (65 per cent) were more likely to have PD provided by staff from a cluster of schools than were secondary schools (45 per cent);
- Secondary schools made more use of staff from a subject or other professional association (53 per cent) than did primary schools (22 per cent), and from another central agency such as a Board of Studies (33 per cent) than did primary schools (10 per cent).

Out-of-school providers have an important role in bringing new and up-to-date knowledge into schools. Schools locate these providers in numerous ways, a range of which were asked about in the survey. If out-of-school providers were used for professional development activities, the most common method of locating them is word of mouth (72 per cent of respondents indicated this), and the next most common way was responding to brochures or notices (66 per cent).

Table 3.12
Percentages of schools reporting on how out-of-school providers are located

| <i>Out-of-school providers are located by ...</i> | 2008 % (ranked) | 2000 % |
|---|--------------------|--------|
| word of mouth | 72.3 | 69.6 |
| responding to brochures or notices | 66.4 | 71.0 |
| past contact | 63.2 | 59.2 |
| accessing a web-based index of activities and options | 32.9 | 32.5 |
| consulting printed calendars of events | 31.4 | 16.2 |

[n=817]

Notes:

1. From Question 20 in Survey of Schools
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 126.
3. The results are weighted

The two most common options for 2008 were also the two most popular choices in the *PD 2000* survey but in reverse order.

- The biggest difference from *PD 2000* was the increase in use of consulting a printed calendar of events (from 16 per cent to 31 per cent for 2008).

There were no significant sectoral differences in how out-of-school providers are located.

For school type, the differences were:

- Secondary schools were more likely than primary schools to consult a calendar of events (43 per cent compared to 27 per cent), and to access a web-based index (41 per cent compared to 29 per cent).

3.2.8 Three Year Priorities

The topics covered in professional development offerings were asked in two sets of questions. The first set included topics that are current government priorities (see AGQTP); taking into account the priority topics listed in the *PD 2000* survey. These questions asked whether the listed topics had been covered at school in the last three years (2005-2007). These priority topics cover eight areas and the results are listed in Table 3.13. ‘Students’ literacy skills’ was the most commonly covered topic (92 per cent of respondents chose this). The next most common was students’ numeracy skills (76 per cent), and then IT skills for personal (72 per cent) and classroom use (68 per cent). As well as being the top four choices, these areas were also the four areas chosen by a majority of respondents. Nearly a quarter of responses stated other areas were covered as PD topics and these areas included: students with special needs, religious education, behaviour management, child protection, health and well-being, curriculum planning and development, students learning habits and good teaching practices. Most of these topics were asked about in the second set of questions relating to professional development offerings (see Table 3.15).

Table 3.13
Percentages of schools covering priority area topics in the last three years (2005-7)

| <i>Priority areas covered as PD topics:</i> | 2008 % (ranked) | % responses by sector | | | 2000 % |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|------|------|--------|
| | | Govt | Cath | Ind | |
| students' literacy skills | 92.0 | 93.6 | 92.1 | 81.9 | 88.6 |
| students' numeracy skills | 76.5 | 78.3 | 72.8 | 69.9 | 54.0 |
| teachers' IT skills | 71.7 | 71.6 | 77.6 | 62.7 | 89.3 |
| use of IT in the classroom | 67.9 | 67.6 | 74.0 | 57.8 | 76.8 |
| teaching of mathematics | 42.9 | 43.7 | 40.1 | 42.2 | 34.1 |
| teaching of science | 29.9 | 31.7 | 23.1 | 27.7 | 32.5 |
| education of Indigenous students | 20.9 | 25.1 | 10.9 | 8.4 | na |
| VET in schools | 12.4 | 13.1 | 8.8 | 13.3 | 19.3 |
| other | 24.9 | 22.4 | 28.6 | 37.3 | na |

[n=817]

Notes:

1. From Question 14 in Survey of Schools
2. *PD 2000* did not have 'other', so response patterns may have changed.
3. Education of Indigenous students is included in *PD 2000*, but discussed in a later section only
4. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 126.
5. The results are weighted.

The main differences between this survey and *PD 2000* were:

- A decrease in emphasis on teachers' IT skills (89 per cent to 72 per cent), although it was still a priority area of importance as the 2008 result shows;
- An increase for 2008 in the focus on students' numeracy skills (54 per cent in 2000 to 76 per cent);
- VET in schools was being chosen by fewer schools as a PD topic in 2008 (12 per cent) than in 2000 (19 per cent).

Differences between sectors in the priority areas were:

- Government and Catholic schools were significantly more likely (94 and 92 per cent) than independent schools (82 per cent) to have included students' literacy skills in their PD programs over the last three years;
- Independent schools were less likely to have teachers' IT skills (63 per cent) on their PD agenda or the use of IT in the classroom (58 per cent) than were government schools (72 and 68 per cent) or Catholic schools (78 and 74 per cent);
- Government schools were more likely to have Indigenous students' education on their PD agenda (25 per cent) than Catholic (11 per cent) or independent schools (8 per cent);

- Independent schools were more likely to state that their PD programs focused on something ‘other’ than the topics listed (37 per cent) than were government schools (22 per cent) or Catholic schools (29 per cent).

The biggest differences between primary and secondary schools in conducting PD in priority areas were in student literacy and numeracy skills:

- Primary schools were significantly more likely to have had these topics on their agendas over the past three years – literacy skills at 97 per cent, and numeracy skills at 83 per cent – whereas for secondary schools, although both are still chosen by a majority, literacy skills was chosen by 83 per cent and numeracy skills, 60 per cent;
- Secondary schools were significantly more likely to have PD in the areas of teachers’ IT skills (84 per cent) and IT use in the classroom (76 per cent) than were primary schools (70 and 68 per cent respectively);
- Secondary schools were more likely to have covered the education of Indigenous students in the past three years (32 per cent) than were primary schools (20 per cent).

As well as differences over sectors and school types, cross-referencing by state and territory also showed some significant differences:

- Schools in NSW and Victoria focused less than other states on the teaching of science in their PD programs (20 per cent compared with 35 per cent to 54 per cent for the other states);
- The take-up of IT in the classroom in the last three years also differed across the jurisdictions. Over 90 per cent of ACT schools reported this; at the other extreme, only 53 per cent of Western Australian schools said they focussed on this.

3.2.9 Education for Indigenous Students

For *PD 2000*, analysis of professional development in Indigenous education was dealt with separately from the other priority areas. This data was cross-referenced with a question on whether or not there were Indigenous enrolments in the school. This showed a majority of schools had not had Indigenous education as a topic covered in the previous three years. Further analysis of the responses was curtailed because the question did not ask for the proportion of Indigenous students in a school population.

For the 2008 survey, this question was refined to ‘Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students as a proportion of enrolments are ...’ The answer categories for 2000, of ‘yes’ and ‘no’, were replaced with 0%, 1-5%, 6-10% and ‘more than 10%’. Without these categories of answers, the results for 2008 are the same as for 2000: schools with Indigenous enrolments had a 27 per cent uptake of PD in Indigenous education; schools without Indigenous enrolments had a 3 per cent uptake of PD in this area. The results with the new categories for responses on the proportion of Indigenous enrolments in a school are presented in Table 3.14 below.

Table 3.14

Percentage of schools covering Indigenous education as a PD topic in the last three years i.e. 2005-7

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Indigenous education as topic covered</i> | Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students as a proportion of enrolments are: |
|--|--|

| | 0% | 1-5% | 6-10% | more than 10% |
|-----|------|------|-------|---------------|
| no | 97.4 | 84.3 | 51.6 | 35.6 |
| yes | 2.6 | 15.7 | 48.4 | 64.4 |

Notes:

1. From Question 14 in Survey of Schools
2. Number of schools with Indigenous students enrolled is 585
3. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 126-7.
4. The results are weighted.

As Table 3.13 shows, the uptake of PD in Indigenous education across the whole sample of schools was 21 per cent, but when this is broken down, as in Table 3.14, it shows that in schools where there is a larger proportion of Indigenous students, there is also a greater proportion of schools that cover the education of Indigenous students in professional development programs. When the proportion of Indigenous students is more than ten per cent of total enrolments, 64 per cent of schools stated they had covered education of Indigenous students in PD in the last three years.

The two states with the highest enrolments of Indigenous students (Queensland and Western Australia) both had more schools say their PD focused on education of Indigenous students (38 per cent) than other states (6-19 per cent) – keeping in mind that Northern Territory government schools were not included in this survey.

3.2.10 Other Professional Development Topics Covered in 2007

Responses to the second set of questions concerning topics covered in professional development activities are listed below. Topics are categorised around general themes, and responses are ranked in each theme. The themes correspond to those in *PD 2000* – ‘teaching practice, institutional maintenance, equity issues, ‘personal’ skills or issues and another set containing a mixed bag of topical issues’ (McRae et al., 2001, p. 141) – with three additions (student behaviour management, the use of information technology, and the use of CD-ROM material). For ease of reading, the cross-referencing of this data with school sector and type is only shown when statistically significant. All omitted data is similar to the overall result for that item.

Table 3.15
Percentages of schools covering topics in professional development in 2007

| <i>Topics covered in school programs 2007</i> | 2008 % (ranked) | % responses by sector | | | % responses by type | | 2000 % |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------|------|------|------------------------|------|--------|
| | | Govt | Cath | Ind | Prim | Sec | |
| assessment and reporting issues | 75.0 | | | | 79.0 | 67.7 | 63.5 |
| teaching processes | 72.9 | | | | | | 65.9 |
| curriculum/syllabus changes | 66.3 | | | | 64.2 | 76.2 | 75.9 |
| assessment and reporting changes | 58.8 | 60.8 | 63.3 | 41.0 | | | 43.2 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| student behaviour management | 48.2 | 50.9 | 42.2 | 38.6 | 42.4 | 60.3 | na |
| subject matter | 38.7 | 34.8 | 41.1 | 60.2 | 35.8 | 46.5 | 37.5 |
| student management/pastoral care | 30.4 | 26.0 | 38.8 | 43.4 | 24.6 | 42.1 | 38.6 |
| school planning | 55.9 | 58.9 | 55.1 | 38.6 | 58.2 | 50.8 | 51.8 |
| child protection issues | 52.3 | | | | | | 46.3 |
| Leadership | 47.9 | 51.6 | 38.8 | 37.3 | | | 33.4 |
| workplace health and safety | 45.1 | 43.5 | 42.9 | 59.0 | | | 35.7 |
| school or program evaluation | 36.3 | | | | | | 28.7 |
| legal issues and obligations | 20.9 | 17.0 | 25.9 | 39.8 | 18.5 | 23.8 | 22.3 |
| budget and financial management | 18.7 | 22.2 | 9.5 | 10.8 | | | 23.0 |
| facilities management | 7.8 | | | | | | 5.5 |
| the use of information technology | 64.5 | | | | | | na |
| school quality and effectiveness | 43.1 | 43.1 | 50.3 | 32.5 | | | 29.1 |
| parent and community involvement | 21.4 | | | | 22.1 | 13.5 | 17.5 |
| drug/alcohol education | 18.3 | | | | | | 27.4 |
| civics and citizenship education | 10.4 | | | | | | 13.8 |
| school governance | 10.0 | 8.6 | 9.5 | 18.1 | | | 9.8 |
| students with disabilities | 41.4 | | | | | | 34.4 |
| gifted and talented students | 28.0 | | | | | | 33.9 |
| students of disadvantaged background | 16.2 | 19.8 | 9.5 | 2.4 | | | 11.6 |
| gender issues | 14.8 | | | | | | 17.8 |
| multicultural education | 9.8 | 11.4 | 6.1 | 4.8 | | | 7.2 |
| isolated students | 3.2 | | | | | | 1.1 |
| team building | 43.4 | | | | 40.8 | 52.0 | 38.1 |
| interpersonal skills | 20.2 | | | | | | 16.6 |
| stress management | 12.3 | | | | 10.5 | 18.3 | 16.2 |
| career planning | 9.7 | 12.0 | 2.0 | 7.2 | 7.5 | 17.3 | 6.7 |
| time management | 6.8 | | | | | | 8.5 |
| use of CD-ROM material | 6.5 | | | | | | na |

[n=817]

Notes:

1. From Question 15 in Survey of Schools
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 127.
3. The results are weighted.

The most common PD topic covered in 2007 for Australian schools was ‘assessment and reporting issues’.

The areas most covered in the first group were to do with teacher performance – assessment and reporting (75 per cent), teaching processes (73 per cent), and curriculum and syllabus changes (66 per cent). This differs from *PD 2000* where the most common topic was stated to be ‘curriculum/syllabus changes’ The 2000 results may have been a reflection of the impact of new ICTs in schools at that stage.

Differences in relation to sector were:

- Independent schools were significantly more likely to place an emphasis on subject matter (60 per cent) in their teacher PD than were government (35 per cent) or Catholic schools (41 per cent);
- Independent schools were significantly more likely to include PD on pastoral care in their programs (43 per cent) than were government (26 per cent) or Catholic schools (39 per cent);
- ‘Assessment and reporting changes’ was a topic more likely to be covered by Catholic (63 per cent) and government schools (61 per cent) than by independent schools (41 per cent);
- Government schools were more likely to have covered student behaviour management as a topic (51 per cent) than were Catholic (42 per cent) or independent schools (37 per cent).

Differences between school types (primary and secondary) were:

- Primary schools were more likely to have covered assessment and reporting issues (79 per cent) than were secondary schools (68 per cent);
- Secondary schools were more likely to have covered the issues of curriculum/syllabus changes (76 per cent) and subject matter (46 per cent) than were primary schools (64 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively);
- Student behaviour management and student management/pastoral care were more likely to be covered as PD topics in secondary schools (60 per cent and 42 per cent) than in primary schools (42 per cent and 25 per cent).

State differences in the data showed:

- NSW schools were less likely to have covered curriculum/syllabus changes (43 per cent) than schools from other states (62-92 per cent);
- Significant differences exist between states in covering ‘teaching processes’ as a PD topic, from Queensland schools at 63 per cent to South Australian schools at 81 per cent;
- ‘Arrangements for student management and pastoral care’ was a topic with varied coverage between states, from South Australian schools at 20 per cent to Victorian schools at 40 per cent.

In the next group that looks at institutional management issues, school planning (56 per cent) and child protection (52 per cent) were the most covered topics for 2007, and this is consistent with the data from *PD 2000*.

Differences in relation to sector were:

- Government schools were more likely to provide PD on school planning (59 per cent) and leadership (52 per cent) than were Catholic (55 per cent and 39 per cent) or independent schools (39 per cent and 37 per cent);
- Budget and financial management was a topic twice as likely to be covered by government schools (22 per cent) as it was by independent schools (11 per cent) or Catholic schools (9 per cent);
- Independent schools were more likely to cover workplace health and safety (59 per cent) than were government or Catholic schools (both 43 per cent);
- Independent schools were more likely to have PD on legal issues and obligations (40 per cent) than were Catholic (26 per cent) or government schools (17 per cent).

Differences between school types (primary and secondary) were:

- Primary schools were more likely to state they had covered school planning for PD (58 per cent) than were secondary schools (51 per cent);
- Secondary schools were more likely to state they had covered legal issues and obligations (24 per cent) than were primary schools (18 per cent);

State differences in the data showed:

- Leadership was more widely covered in Victorian schools (59 per cent) and less so in South Australian and Western Australian schools (at around 37 per cent);
- Queensland was the state with the most schools covering 'budget and financial management' (29 per cent), NSW was one of the lowest (11 per cent) [Note the ACT and Tasmania were lower but they have insufficient numbers to draw meaningful conclusions];
- 'Child protection issues' were covered least by Victorian schools (21 per cent), and most by South Australian schools (79 per cent);
- Western Australian schools were less likely to cover 'workplace health and safety' (26 per cent) than schools in other states, and South Australian schools were the most likely to cover this (54 per cent).

In the third group containing a mixture of topical issues, PD coverage of the use of IT had a much higher response rate than any other topic (64 per cent). This item was not included in the *PD 2000* survey.

Differences in relation to sector were:

- Catholic schools were more likely than schools from the other two sectors to have PD on school quality and effectiveness (50 per cent compared to government 43 per cent, and independent schools 32 per cent);
- School governance was a topic more likely to be covered by independent schools (18 per cent) than government or Catholic schools (both 9 per cent).

Differences between school types (primary and secondary) were:

- Primary schools were more likely to cover parent and community involvement (22 per cent) than were secondary schools (13 per cent).

State differences in the results for this group showed:

- Queensland schools lag behind schools in other states on the coverage of PD in ‘school quality and effectiveness’ (29 per cent, with Victorian schools showing the greatest coverage at 49 per cent), ‘civics and citizenship education’ (5 per cent, with NSW schools showing the most coverage at 13 per cent), and ‘drug/alcohol education’ (9 per cent, with Victorian schools showing the most coverage at 25 per cent).

The fourth group, addressing equity issues, showed the greatest coverage of PD in the past year to be in education for students with disabilities (41 per cent). The next most popular topic covered in schools was the education of gifted and talented students (28 per cent). This was consistent with *PD 2000* survey results.

Sectoral differences included:

- Government schools were six times more likely to have PD on education for disadvantaged students than schools in the independent sector (20 per cent compared to 2.4 per cent) and twice as likely to have PD on multicultural education;
- Catholic schools were six times less likely to have career planning on their PD agenda as government schools (2 per cent compared to 12 per cent).

There were no significant differences between primary and secondary schools on PD topics dealing with equity issues.

State comparisons included:

- A significant difference in coverage of PD on the education of students with disabilities, with NSW schools at the lower end (30 per cent) and South Australian schools at the other (52 per cent);
- ‘Education of gifted and talented students’ was covered least by schools in Victoria and South Australia (17 per cent), and most by schools in NSW (40 per cent).

In the final group of topics, which focused on teacher relationships and well-being, the most commonly chosen topic was team building (43 per cent), again consistent with *PD 2000* results.

The only sectoral difference of significance was government schools were more likely to have covered PD on career planning (12 per cent) than were independent schools (7 per cent) or Catholic schools (2 per cent).

Differences between school types (primary and secondary) were:

- Secondary schools were more likely than primary schools to have covered PD on ‘team building’ (52 per cent compared to 41 per cent), ‘stress management’ (18 per cent compared to 10 per cent), and ‘career planning’ (17 per cent compared to 7 per cent).

State differences in the results for this group showed:

- NSW schools lag behind schools in other states on the coverage of ‘team building’ (30 per cent, with Victorian schools showing the greatest coverage at 59 per cent), ‘interpersonal skills’ (11 per cent, with Victorian schools showing the most coverage at 30 per cent), and ‘stress management’ (8 per cent, with South Australian schools significantly higher than any other state at 23 per cent).

3.2.11 *How Professional Development Activities are Conducted*

Another issue the survey analysed was the type of activities organised for professional development in the topics listed above. The list in Table 3.16 below is not exhaustive nor is it mutually exclusive, but sets out to capture the broad range of activities that schools are offering, from group to more individual work, and from discussion to acquiring new skills. The survey asked: ‘In the last year (2007), the activities in your program included ...’ Survey results suggest that group discussion is the most commonly reported activity followed by listening and observation. Table 3.16 shows that over three quarters of schools in the sample participated in workshop discussions with school colleagues and this was the single most cited activity in schools for 2007 (78 per cent). A majority of schools also participated in conference attendance (72 per cent), a speaker from elsewhere followed by discussion (70 per cent), observation and discussion of teaching practice (57 per cent, and workshop discussion with colleagues from a range of schools (53 per cent).

Table 3.16
Percentages of schools reporting participation in professional development activities

| <i>In 2007 program activities</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|---|--------|--------|
| <i>Included</i> | | |
| workshop discussion with school colleagues | 78.2 | 76.3 |
| Conference attendance | 72.0 | 65.1 |
| a speaker from elsewhere followed by discussion | 69.8 | 72.4 |
| Observation and discussion of teaching practice | 57.5 | 44.0 |
| workshop discussion with colleagues from a range of schools | 52.7 | 44.5 |
| directed training sessions to develop new skills | 48.4 | 54.7 |
| individual coaching/mentoring | 40.1 | 30.5 |
| use of on-line electronic materials | 34.1 | 21.2 |
| action research | 28.5 | 18.0 |
| use of a package or kit of text/video materials | 19.8 | 29.4 |
| an organised program of visiting and discussion | 18.8 | 16.3 |
| an interstate or overseas study tour | 10.4 | 8.5 |
| [n=817] | | |

Notes:

1. From Question 16 in Survey of Schools
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 128.
3. The results are weighted.

The most common activity, a workshop discussion with school colleagues, was consistent with the *PD 2000* results. Differences from *PD 2000* include:

- An increase in ‘observation and discussion of teaching practice’ (from 44 per cent, to 57 per cent in 2008), and in ‘the use of on-line electronic materials’ (from 21 to 34 per cent);
- A decrease in ‘the use of a package or kit of text/video materials’ from the 2000 survey (29 per cent) to 2008 (20 per cent).

Differences in activities by sector included:

- Action research was more likely to be used by government schools (31 per cent) than by Catholic (24 per cent) or independent schools (17 per cent);
- Government schools were more likely to use on-line electronic materials (38 per cent) than were Catholic schools (24 per cent) or independent schools (28 per cent);
- Catholic schools were more likely to state they had a speaker from elsewhere followed by discussion (81 per cent) than were government or independent schools (67 per cent for these two sectors);
- Government schools were half as likely as schools from the other two sectors to have an interstate or overseas study tour (8 per cent compared to 16 per cent).

Primary and secondary schools did not have any significant differences in the types of professional development activities for 2007, except for conference attendance, which was chosen by 83 per cent of secondary schools and 69 per cent of primary schools.

State differences included:

- ‘Observation and discussion of teaching practice’ was an activity more common to Victorian schools (71 per cent) than schools in other states (between 51-56 per cent);
- South Australian schools had the least PD activities using ‘workshop discussion with colleagues from a range of schools’ (41 per cent) and Queensland schools had the most (63 per cent);
- ‘Individual coaching/mentoring’ was an activity more common to Victorian schools (59 per cent) than schools in other states (between 31-39 per cent);
- The use of ‘action research’ as a PD activity ranged from 16 per cent in Queensland schools to 38 per cent in Victorian schools;
- Western Australian schools had the least activities ‘using a package or kit of text/video materials’ (10 per cent), and NSW schools had the most (24 per cent);
- The use of ‘an organised program of visiting and discussion’ ranges from 11 per cent in Queensland schools to 29 per cent in Victorian schools;
- ‘An interstate or overseas study tour’ is least commonly used by schools in NSW (6 per cent), and most commonly by schools in Victoria (19 per cent).

3.2.12 Accreditation for Professional Development

The majority of professional development activities do not provide credit towards an academic credential. There has been minimal change from 2000 to 2008 in the proportion of those gaining credit from doing PD activities.

Table 3.17
Percentages of schools reporting professional development activities that provide academic credentials

| <i>School program activities provide credit ...</i> | no. | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|---|-----|--------|--------|
| Always | 5 | 0.7 | 0.4 |
| Mostly | 14 | 2.0 | 0.7 |

| | | | |
|------------|-----|------|------|
| Sometimes | 258 | 37.6 | 39.2 |
| not at all | 410 | 59.6 | 59.7 |
| [n=687] | | | |

Notes:

1. From Question 17 in Survey of Schools
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 129.
3. This item also had a lower response rate than any other item in the survey (84 per cent).
4. The results are weighted.

The only significant difference after cross-referencing this data was that Catholic schools were more likely to ‘sometimes’ get an academic credential from their PD activities (47 per cent) than were government schools (34 per cent).

3.2.13 Evaluation of Professional Development Activities

Identifying the success or failure of PD activities is an ongoing and important task for schools in evaluating their professional learning programs. The survey asked: ‘You evaluate your professional development activities by ...’ and the results are listed in the table below.

Table 3.18
Percentages of schools reporting the evaluation process of professional development activities

| <i>You evaluate your professional development activities by ...</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|--|--------|--------|
| checking reactions from participants verbally | 64.5 | 64.3 |
| reviewing relevant changes made to professional practice as a result of the activity | 59.8 | 51.7 |
| participant response sheets | 52.2 | 63.8 |
| we don't particularly | 6.4 | 6.4 |
| [n=817] | | |

Notes:

1. From Question 21 in Survey of Schools
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 129.
3. The results are weighted.

‘Checking reactions from participants verbally’ was the most common way of evaluating a PD activity (64 per cent). ‘Reviewing relevant changes made to professional practice as a result of the activity’ was the second most common form of evaluation (60 per cent). This was consistent with earlier responses on common PD activities in the past year which show the importance of teacher performance in schools’ agendas.

Changes from the *PD 2000* survey were:

- ‘Participant response sheets’ had decreased as an evaluative tool since 2000, from 64 per cent to 52 per cent;
- The percentage of schools that do not use any form of evaluation for their PD activities has remained constant since 2000 (6 per cent).

Differences across sectors were:

- Independent schools were more likely to state they check reactions from participants verbally (76 per cent) than were government (64 per cent) or Catholic schools (60 per cent);
- ‘Participant response sheets’ were an evaluative tool for 58 per cent of Catholic schools, 53 per cent of government schools, and 39 per cent of independent schools;
- Independent schools were more likely to have no evaluation of their PD activities (13 per cent) than were Catholic (7 per cent) or government schools (5 per cent).

Differences between primary and secondary school types were:

- ‘Checking reactions from participants verbally’ was used more for evaluation in primary schools (65 per cent) than in secondary schools (53 per cent);
- Primary schools were more likely to evaluate by reviewing relevant changes made to professional practice as a result of the activity (63 per cent) than were secondary schools (48 per cent).

There were no significant differences between states and/or territories.

The success of a professional development activity can be measured in several ways. A range of measurements are listed in Table 3.19 which encompass different success outcomes. These outcomes are demonstrated in four ways: changes in teachers’ and/or students’ practice; enjoyment of activity; achieving previously set goals; and fulfilling outside obligations.

Table 3.19
Percentages of schools reporting criteria for evaluating the success of PD activities

| <i>You evaluate the success of your activities in terms of ...</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|--|--------|--------|
|--|--------|--------|

| | | |
|--|------|------|
| the demonstrated impact on participant practice | 67.8 | 59.9 |
| the level of enthusiasm of participant response | 58.7 | 60.7 |
| the demonstrated impact on student learning | 58.6 | 52.1 |
| the goals set for the particular activity | 48.4 | 54.1 |
| the goals set for the overall professional development program | 33.1 | 33.4 |
| the meeting of requirements from outside the school | 16.7 | 10.7 |

[n=817]

Notes:

1. From Question 22 in Survey of Schools
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p. 129.
3. The results are weighted.

The success of a PD activity was most commonly evaluated through the demonstrated impact on teacher practice (68 per cent). This method of evaluation has increased from the *PD 2000* survey by more than seven per cent.

The only sectoral difference of significance was the demonstrated impact on participant practice, which was 71 per cent for government schools, 64 per cent for independent schools and 60 per cent for Catholic schools.

Differences by school type included:

- Primary schools were more likely to chose ‘demonstrated impact on participant practice’ (73 per cent) than were secondary schools (52 per cent);
- ‘Demonstrated impact on student learning’ was more important for evaluating success in primary schools (62 per cent) than in secondary schools (48 per cent).

There were no significant differences between states and/or territories.

3.3 REFERENCES

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CHAPTER FOUR: SURVEY FINDINGS (B): SURVEY OF TEACHERS

4.1 SURVEY PROCESS

Surveys were sent to 20,000 teachers across Australia, asking them about their involvement in, and experiences of, professional development activities in their work. The survey asked questions in the following areas:

- Topics covered by professional development programs in schools
- Teachers' self-defined areas of need within these topics
- Time spent on professional development, both in and out of school hours
- How participation in activities is determined
- Formats for professional development activities
- Organisation for and planning of activities
- Personal expenditure on professional development
- Professional development activities' contribution towards academic credentials
- Impact of professional development on the personal practice of teachers
- Hindrances to participation in professional development
- Preferred activities and formats for professional development
- Priority that teachers give to professional development in their work
- Preference for activities to be held off or on site, and in or out of school hours

Demographic data was gathered about the teachers and the schools in which they taught in order to highlight differences to responses in the above areas. The personal data collected asked about gender, general student level taught (primary or secondary), length of teaching career, full-time or part-time and type of employment (ongoing, contract or sessional), and the main duties at school (teaching or administration). Information about the school included school sector (government, Catholic, independent), school type (primary, secondary, combined, senior college, special school), student enrolment, state/territory and location (urban or regional), and the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students.

4.1.1 *The Sample*

As with *PD 2000*, this survey set out to sample approximately 3 per cent of the teacher population in order to receive enough data from sub groups to describe trends with a degree of reliability. These sub groups, discussed in the analyses below, are gender, sectoral affiliation, school level (primary or secondary), and state/territory. Investigation of other sub groups (when response numbers were sufficient) has also been included to clarify particular issues and for comparison with *PD 2000*, and can be found at the end of this chapter. These other variables are major roles (administration or teaching), location (city or town), length of professional service, and full-time and part-time employment.

Available data showed the population of teachers in Australia for 2006 to be 239,639 (ABS 2006). A sample size of just under 10 per cent of the population was randomly selected, stratified for state/territory, school sector and type. Survey responses were received from 4,574 teachers, which is a 23.1 per cent response rate and represents 1.9 per cent of the total teacher population. Too few teachers from the Northern Territory responded to be able to make claims about trends in any sector or school type from there (this was mostly due to government schools from the Northern Territory not participating in the surveys). It should also be noted that although teachers in the ACT and Tasmania were over sampled the response rates were too low to be able to make claims about trends in these states/territories either. The sample was weighted for state/territory, school sector, the student level (whether primary or secondary), and teachers' gender.

The *PD 2000* report did not state how the 2000 survey sample was selected in relation to multi-campus schools. With the 2008 survey, we combined all campuses of a school when selections were made in order to ensure that teachers on all campuses had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the survey.

The proportion of female and male teachers in the survey is set out below in Table 4.1. The weighted sample is a little over-representative of males and under-representative of female teachers. When making comparisons to *PD 2000*, this needs to be kept in mind.

Table 4.1
Percentage of teachers by gender

| <i>Gender</i> | no. | % of respondents (unweighted) | % of respondents (weighted) | % of all teachers in 2007 |
|---------------|------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Female | 3236 | 71.1 | 68.4 | 70.6 |
| Male | 1318 | 28.9 | 31.6 | 29.4 |

[n=4,554]

Notes

1. Twenty respondents did not supply information about their gender.
2. Teachers without information about their gender were given a weight of one.
3. Population values were derived from ABS, *Schools Australia, 2007*, 4220.0.

The proportion of teachers of primary and secondary age students was equivalent to the ABS data on schools for 2007, but was slightly lower for primary age students and slightly higher for secondary age students than the *PD 2000* survey.

Table 4.2
Percentage of teachers across age level of students (primary or secondary)

| <i>Students taught</i> | no. | % of respondents | % of respondents | % of all teachers in |
|------------------------|-----|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
|------------------------|-----|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|------|--------------|------------|------|
| | | (unweighted) | (weighted) | 2007 |
| primary age | 2119 | 47.0 | 50.3 | 50.6 |
| secondary age [n=4,504] | 2387 | 53.0 | 49.7 | 49.4 |

Notes

1. Sixty-eight respondents did not supply information about the age level of students they taught.
2. Teachers without information about their age level of students were given a weight of one.
3. Population values were derived from ABS, *Schools Australia, 2007*, 4220.0.

The proportion of respondents in each category for the length of their teaching experience reflects the general trend of an ageing workforce. The proportion of teachers with the longest time in the profession answering the current survey is consistent with the proportion in this category for the 2000 survey (46 per cent). There has been an increase in teachers with four to ten years experience (from 16 up to 21 per cent), and a doubling of teachers with less than four years experience responding to the survey (from 5 up to 10 per cent).

Table 4.3
Percentage of teachers across length of time in the profession

| <i>Length of teaching experience</i> | no | % of respondents (unweighted) | % of respondents (weighted) | 2000 % |
|--------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| less than 4 years | 499 | 10.9 | 10.5 | 5.4 |
| 4-10 years | 976 | 21.4 | 21.0 | 15.7 |
| 11-20 years | 1018 | 22.3 | 22.5 | 32.0 |
| more than 20 years [n=4,560] | 2067 | 45.3 | 46.0 | 46.8 |

Notes

1. Fourteen respondents did not supply information about their length of teaching experience.

The proportion of responses from each state/territory has been weighted in order to produce a representative sample of the teacher population. Note that the Northern Territory government schools were not involved in the survey so there are no teacher responses from this sector in this territory. With teachers from Catholic and independent schools only, numbers were insufficient for drawing any conclusions regarding state cross-referencing from the Northern Territory.

All state/territories were represented proportionally to the population (apart from the Northern Territory), as shown in the ABS statistics on schools for 2007. When making comparisons to *PD 2000*, it is worth noting that the survey then was over-representative for Victorian teachers and under-representative for NSW and Queensland, so issues that affected these states particularly may show up differently in this survey.

Table 4.4
Percentage of teachers across states and territories

| <i>State/ Territory</i> | no. | % of respondents (unweighted) | % of respondents (weighted) | 2000 % | % of all teachers in 2007 |
|-------------------------|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|---------------------------|
| NSW | 985 | 21.7 | 32.7 | 26.0 | 31.0 |
| VIC | 1209 | 26.6 | 25.7 | 35.2 | 25.4 |
| QLD | 985 | 21.7 | 19.4 | 11.0 | 20.5 |
| SA | 527 | 11.6 | 7.7 | 10.5 | 7.2 |
| WA | 492 | 10.8 | 9.9 | 10.0 | 10.4 |
| TAS | 182 | 4.0 | 2.5 | 3.6 | 2.5 |
| NT | 14 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 1.7 | 1.2 |
| ACT | 154 | 3.4 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 1.7 |

[n=4,548]

Notes

1. Twenty-six respondents did not supply information about their state/territory.
2. Teachers without information about their state/territory were given a weight of one.
3. Population values are derived from ABS, *Schools Australia, 2007*, 4220.0.
4. Government schools in the Northern Territory and Catholic schools in one Queensland diocese did not participate in the survey

The weighted sectoral representation of the sample is proportional to the population, but is a slight increase in government school teachers and a decrease in Catholic school teachers from *PD 2000*.

Table 4.5
Percentage of teachers across school sectors

| <i>Sector</i> | no. | % of respondents (unweighted) | % of respondents (weighted) | 2000 % | % of all teachers in 2007 |
|---------------|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|---------------------------|
| Government | 2614 | 57.6 | 65.5 | 63.2 | 65.8 |
| Catholic | 1001 | 22.0 | 19.0 | 22.6 | 18.8 |
| Independent | 927 | 20.4 | 15.6 | 14.1 | 15.4 |

[n=4542]

Notes

1. Thirty-two respondents did not supply information about their school sector.
2. Teachers without information about their school sector were given a weight of one.
3. Population values are derived from ABS, *Schools Australia, 2007*, 4220.0.
4. Government schools in the Northern Territory and Catholic schools in one Queensland diocese did not participate in the survey

The sample of teachers is reflective of number of teachers in each density location, and has remained fairly stable over time from the *PD 2000* survey.

Table 4.6
Percentage of teachers across urban and rural locations

| <i>Location</i> | no. | % of respondents (unweighted) | % of respondents (weighted) | 2000 % |
|-----------------|------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| capital city | 2319 | 51.4 | 49.1 | 50.7 |
| >15000 | 1233 | 27.3 | 28.6 | 23.8 |
| 3000-15000 | 427 | 9.5 | 10.0 | 11.4 |
| 500-3000 | 418 | 9.3 | 9.5 | 10.7 |
| <500 | 117 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 3.4 |
| [n=4,514] | | | | |

Notes

1. Sixty respondents did not supply information about their location.

As well as location of school, we also asked teachers for the student population of their school. This was also reflective of school populations in Australia. The biggest difference from the *PD 2000* survey is the increase in the number of teachers from large schools who answered the 2008 survey (from 34 to 41 per cent), and a decrease in teachers from medium-sized school (from 31 to 25 per cent).

Table 4.7
Percentage of teachers by the number of student enrolments per school

| <i>Enrolment</i> | no. | % of respondents (unweighted) | % of respondents (weighted) | 2000 % |
|------------------|------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| less than 50 | 100 | 2.2 | 2.5 | 2.2 |
| 50-199 | 427 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 10.9 |
| 200-449 | 1123 | 24.7 | 25.3 | 30.7 |

| | | | | |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| 450-699 | 993 | 21.9 | 21.6 | 21.9 |
| 700 or more | 1900 | 41.8 | 41.2 | 34.4 |
| [n=4,541] | | | | |

Notes

1. Thirty-one respondents did not supply information about the number of student enrolments.

4.1.2 Teacher Qualifications

In the eight years since *PD 2000* there has been a decrease in the percentage of teachers who have a certificate/diploma (from 19 to 12 per cent) and an increase in those who have a bachelor degree (from 43 to 49 per cent) or a masters degree (from 9 per cent to 13 per cent).

Table 4.8
Percentage of teachers by their highest qualification

| <i>Highest qualification</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % | Sector | | | Students taught | |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|------|------|-----------------|------|
| | | | Gov | Cath | Ind | Prim | Sec |
| Cert/Diploma | 11.7 | 19.2 | 14.0 | 7.7 | 7.2 | 16.7 | 6.2 |
| Bachelor degree | 49.4 | 42.9 | 51.8 | 47.0 | 43.1 | 58.8 | 40.4 |
| Post-grad diploma | 25.4 | 28.1 | 24.3 | 25.7 | 29.4 | 16.1 | 35.0 |
| Masters degree | 12.7 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 19.4 | 18.5 | 8.3 | 17.1 |
| Doctorate | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 1.7 | 0.1 | 1.3 |
| [n=4,460] | | | | | | | |

Notes

1. From Question 7 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.133.
3. The results are weighted.

When looked at by sector:

- Teachers in the government sector are more likely than those in the other two sectors to have a certificate/diploma (14 per cent compared to 8 and 7 per cent);
- Teachers in the government sector are half as likely to have a Masters degree as those in the Catholic or independent sectors (9 per cent compared to 19 and 18 per cent).

The main differences by school type were:

- Teachers of primary aged students were significantly more likely to have a certificate/diploma (17 per cent) or a bachelor degree (59 per cent) than teachers of secondary aged students (6 per cent and 40 per cent);
- Secondary teachers were more likely to have a post-graduate diploma (35 per cent) or a masters degree (17 per cent) than primary teachers (16 per cent and 8 per cent).

The responses per category for the length of time teachers have held their qualifications were similar to the responses received for the 2000 survey. The majority of teachers have had their qualifications for more than ten years.

Table 4.9
Percentage of teachers by the length of time they have had their highest qualification

| <i>Highest qualification was gained ...</i> | 2008 % | Sector | | | Students taught | | 2000 % |
|---|--------|--------|------|------|-----------------|------|--------|
| | | Gov | Cath | Ind | Prim | Sec | |
| in the last 3 years | 11.1 | 9.7 | 15.5 | 12.1 | 11.4 | 11.0 | 10.8 |
| 3-10 years ago | 29.3 | 27.5 | 34.2 | 30.0 | 30.1 | 28.5 | 29.3 |
| > 10 years ago | 59.6 | 62.8 | 50.3 | 57.9 | 58.5 | 60.6 | 60.0 |

[n=4,537]

Notes

1. From Question 8 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.134.
3. The results are weighted.

There is little difference between teachers of primary and secondary students in the length of time they have held qualifications, but teachers from the Catholic sector were more likely to have recent qualifications (15 per cent) than those from the government sector (10 per cent).

Of those teachers who responded to the survey, 10 per cent were currently enrolled in a formal course of study. This is nearly a 3 per cent decrease in enrolments from the responses to the 2000 survey. There were more teachers from the Catholic sector enrolled in formal courses (19 per cent), with government sector teachers the least likely to be enrolled (7 per cent). There were no significant differences between teachers of primary or secondary aged students.

Table 4.10
Percentage of teachers by current enrolment in a formal course

| <i>Currently enrolled in</i> | 2008 % | Sector | | | Students taught | | 2000 % |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|------|-----|-----------------|-----|--------|
| | | Gov | Cath | Ind | Prim | Sec | |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----------------|
| <i>another formal course</i> | 9.6 (n=431) | 6.7 | 19.0 | 10.0 | 9.3 | 9.9 | 12.8 (n=722) |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----------------|

[n=4,499]

Notes

1. From Question 9 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.134.
3. The results are weighted.

The sectoral differences and school level similarities for these results show the same trends as was evident in *PD 2000*. The 2000 results showed a marked decrease in the amount of teachers enrolled in further formal courses over ten years prior to that survey. This decrease has levelled out since *PD 2000*.

4.2 FINDINGS BY TOPIC

4.2.1 *The Priority Teachers Accord to Professional Development*

The survey asked if teachers gave a very high priority to professional development in their work. Following on from *PD 2000*, the wording for this question purposefully included ‘very high’ priority in order to gauge teachers’ values about this area of their work.

Table 4.11
Percentage of teachers by the priority they give to professional development

| <i>In my work, formal professional development has a very high priority</i> | 2008 % | Students taught | | 2000 % |
|---|-----------|-----------------|------|-----------|
| | | Prim | Sec | |
| Yes | 63.6 | 69.5 | 57.4 | 56.8 |
| No | 19.2 | 14.7 | 23.7 | 24.3 |
| Unsure | 17.2 | 15.7 | 19.0 | 18.9 |

[n=4,480]

Notes

1. From Question 34 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.135.
3. The results are weighted.

The majority of teachers accord PD a very high priority (64 per cent); just under 20 per cent do not. This shows an increase in PD as a high priority for teachers from the *PD 2000* survey (up from 57 per cent).

There was a significant difference between teachers of primary aged students and those of secondary aged students:

- More primary teachers accord high priority to PD (69 per cent) than do secondary teachers (57 per cent)

Professional development activities were also more likely to have a very high priority for female teachers (67 per cent) than for male teachers (57 per cent).

4.2.2 *Favourite Activities*

The following survey item was designed to find out about teachers' preferences for types of activities. The question was 'The professional development activities I like best...' The activities listed were not meant to be exhaustive but broad enough to encompass the range of activities in which teachers participate. More than one response could be provided so they are ranked according to the response per item.

Table 4.12
Percentage of teachers across preferred professional development activities

| <i>The professional development activities I like best ...</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|--|--------|--------|
| provide ideas I can incorporate into teaching | 89.7 | 87.0 |
| latest trends in educational thinking | 44.7 | 45.1 |
| challenge my thinking with 'big' ideas | 42.8 | 40.4 |
| talk about my work to other teachers | 41.8 | 43.1 |
| new content knowledge | 38.9 | 40.3 |
| implement requirements | 30.1 | 29.6 |
| 'place' my work re that of other teachers | 17.6 | 20.0 |

[respondents n=4,572, responses n=13,976]

Notes

1. From Question 32 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.136.
3. The results are weighted.

A large majority of teachers who answered the survey like to take away from PD ideas they can incorporate into their own teaching (90 per cent). This was by far the most attractive factor about professional development, and is consistent with responses from the *PD 2000* survey. The majority of teachers chose three activities, showing that both practical and theoretical knowledge is important to them.

What teachers chose least was ‘help me to ‘place’ my own work in relation to that of other teachers’, and this was also the case in *PD 2000*. It is unclear how teachers may have interpreted this item but the low response indicates it was in a negative light, such as an activity that would pronounce judgement on their work. If so, what is communicated here is that teachers value professional development activities as a resource, but not as a measure of their own value.

4.2.3 Influences that Determine Activities

The survey included an item asking about what influences teachers when choosing professional development activities. Was activity choice personal, directed from the school, from government initiatives, or a combination of these? The item allowed for more than one answer and the results are reported as percentages for each sub item.

Table 4.13
Percentage of teachers across influences of choice on professional development activity

| | | |
|---|--------|--------|
| <i>My participation in these activities was mostly determined by ...</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
| personal choice from a range of options | 55.2 | 52.2 |
| decision of — | | |
| the school administration | 34.8 | 29.0 |
| the school administration influenced by other external priorities | 24.0 | 22.1 |
| a school-based staff committee | 21.7 | 22.1 |
| personal choice influenced by a formal appraisal | 15.7 | 10.9 |
| [respondents n=4572; responses n= 6924] | | |

Notes

1. From Question 23 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.136.
3. The results are weighted.

The majority of teachers stated that their participation in PD activities was determined by personal choice from a range of options (55 per cent). School administration was the second most chosen item (35 per cent). These responses are consistent with the responses to the 2000 survey.

When looked at by school type, the data showed:

- Primary teachers were more likely to say that decisions are made by ‘a school-based staff committee’ (27 per cent) and by ‘the school administration influenced by external priorities’ (27 per cent) than are secondary teachers (17 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively).

Looking at the data according to sectoral affiliation:

- Teachers from independent schools were more likely to state their activities are determined by personal choice (65 per cent) compared to Catholic (49 per cent) and government schools (54 per cent);
- Government sector teachers were more likely to have activities determined by personal choice after a formal appraisal of needs (18 per cent) than were teachers from Catholic or independent schools (both 12 per cent);
- Independent sector teachers were less likely than teachers from the other two sectors to have PD activities determined by a school-based staff committee (16 per cent compared to 23 per cent for the other two sectors);
- System-wide priorities had the biggest impact on PD activity choice for teachers in the government sector (27 per cent) and the least impact on choice for teachers in the independent sector (12 per cent).

4.2.4 Organisation of Activity

Building on the picture of providers of profession development activities in the school survey, this question asked teachers about their professional development activities in relation to their local community and/or institutions further afield. Different sectors have different organising structures and different age groups of students have different demands, and both these factors influence who organises profession development for teachers.

PD 2000 indicated that organising activities ‘myself’ could be misinterpreted to mean as little an input as enrolling in a PD activity so it was left out of their results. The response to this item in this survey was 49 per cent (45 per cent for *PD 2000*), which shows it may have been interpreted in this way too. It has also been omitted from the results of this survey.

Table 4.14
Percentage of teachers across who organises professional development activities

| <i>The professional development activities I participated in were organised by ...</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| my school | 83.1 | 77.6 |
| a cluster or grouping of schools | 32.1 | 28.6 |
| District/Regional/Area Office | 29.4 | 28.5 |
| a subject or other professional association | 18.7 | 28.3 |
| Central Office | 15.5 | 17.3 |
| a private provider | 10.7 | 12.9 |
| another central agency | 10.1 | 17.1 |
| a higher education institution | 5.9 | 11.3 |
| my teacher union | 5.5 | 6.3 |
| a Teacher/Education Centre | 4.2 | 5.2 |
| the Australian Government | 3.7 | na |

[respondents n=4,572; responses n= 12,255]

Notes

1. From Question 26 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.137.
3. The results are weighted.

The majority of PD activity is organised by teachers’ schools (83 per cent). The results suggest that the closer the relationship (in terms of physical proximity and/or common goals) between the school and the provider, the more it will be used as an organiser of activities.

Sectoral differences were as follows:

- Teachers from government schools were more likely to have PD activities organised by a cluster of schools (37 per cent) than were those from Catholic (27 per cent) or independent schools (17 per cent), and also by a district office (39 per cent compared to 14 and 8 per cent);
- Catholic school teachers were more likely to have a central office organise their PD (29 per cent compared to 14 per cent for government and 4 per cent for independent schools);
- A subject or other professional association was more likely to be organised for teachers from an independent school (30 per cent) than for teachers from a government (16 per cent) or Catholic school (17 per cent).

The main differences by school type were:

- Primary school teachers were more likely to have a cluster of schools organise their PD (42 per cent) compared to 22 per cent for secondary teachers;
- Secondary teachers were more likely to have PD organised by a subject or other professional association (27 per cent compared to 10 per cent for primary teachers).

4.2.5 *The Nature of the Program*

This question in the survey was to gauge the forethought and planning into PD activities and also the importance of inside and outside influences on activity planning.

Table 4.15
Percentage of teachers across how professional development activities are planned

| <i>My school's PD activity is ...</i> | 2008 | 2000 |
|--|------|------|
| | % | % |
| planned to directly relate to the goals of the school | 50.4 | 27.0 |
| planned to relate to goals of school and individual teachers' needs | 47.4 | 35.0 |
| planned just before it happens, on the basis of availability/relevance | 21.0 | 16.2 |
| framed by system/employing authority priorities | 19.0 | 11.1 |
| embedded in everything we do | 8.6 | 5.5 |
| Unplanned | 3.3 | 4.3 |

[respondents n=4,572, responses n=6,842]

Notes

1. From Question 31 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.139.
3. The results are weighted.

The majority of PD activity is planned to directly relate to the goals set by schools (50 per cent), whilst also taking into account the needs of the teachers (47 per cent). It seems, from the results, that teachers in the *PD 2000* survey only gave one response so it is not possible to make comparisons from then to now for this

question. In the 2008 survey, teachers were asked to give more than one answer. Proportionally, though, it does show a smaller proportion of respondents state that PD is unplanned than was the case in *PD 2000* (from 4 per cent to 3 per cent).

Differences in responses due to sectoral affiliation include:

- Teachers from government schools were more likely to state activities are planned to directly relate to the goals of the school (52 per cent) than were teachers from Catholic (46 per cent) or independent schools (47 per cent);
- Activities framed by system/employing authority priorities were significantly more likely to be chosen by teachers from schools that are part of a system (government at 21 per cent and Catholic schools at 20 per cent) than teachers from independent schools (9 per cent).

The factor producing the most varied responses was school type (teaching students of primary or secondary school age):

- ‘Planned activities directly related to the goals of the school’ was more likely to be chosen by primary school teachers (54 per cent) than by secondary school teachers (46 per cent);
- Primary teachers were more likely to state that activities are planned to relate to goals of school and individual teachers’ needs (52 per cent) than were teachers from secondary schools (42 per cent);
- ‘PD activities embedded in everything we do’ is more likely to be stated by teachers of primary students (11 per cent) than by secondary teachers (6 per cent);
- Teachers from both types of schools had a very low response to activities being unplanned, but secondary teachers were more likely to state this (4 per cent) than primary teachers (2 per cent); and
- Teachers from secondary schools were more likely to have an activity that is planned just before it happens, on the basis of availability/relevance (23 per cent) than primary teachers (19 per cent).

State and territory differences were as follows:

- An activity planned just before it happens, on the basis of availability/relevance is less likely to be chosen by teachers in Victoria (13 per cent) and more likely to be chosen by teachers from Queensland (27 per cent), with the other state and territory teacher responses somewhere in between.
- Tasmanian teachers were more likely to state that PD activities are planned to directly relate to the goals of the school (60 per cent) and teachers from Queensland the least likely (40 per cent);
- Victorian teachers were the most likely to state a PD activity is planned to relate to goals of school and individual teachers’ needs (56 per cent) and Western Australian teachers were the least likely to state this (41 per cent);
- ‘Activities framed by system/employing authority priorities’ was most likely to be chosen by Western Australian teachers (27 per cent) and least likely by Victorian teachers (13 per cent); and
- ‘PD is embedded in everything’ was more likely to be chosen by Victorian teachers (11 per cent) and least likely by Queensland teachers (5 per cent).

Activities ‘planned to relate to goals of school and individual teachers’ needs’ was chosen by more females (50 per cent) than male teachers (43 per cent).

4.2.6 Time Spent on Professional Development Activities

The proportion of respondents stating that they spent between 6 to 10 days on PD in school hours in 2007 had increased from the 2000 survey, although the largest proportion spent 2 to 3 days over the previous year, which was also the most selected time frame for *PD 2000*. There was a decrease in the number of teachers stating they spend no time or less than a day (under 10 per cent, down from 17 per cent in 2000).

Table 4.16
Percentage of teachers across time spent in school hours on professional development activities

| <i>In 2007, the total amount of time spent on professional development in school hours was</i> | 2008 % | Sector | | | Students taught | | 2000 % |
|--|-----------|--------|------|------|-----------------|------|-----------|
| | | Gov | Cath | Ind | Prim | Sec | |
| None | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.2 | 3.4 | 2.5 | 3.7 | 7.8 |
| less than 1 day | 6.7 | 7.3 | 3.9 | 7.8 | 5.8 | 7.7 | 9.7 |
| 2-3 days | 29.8 | 29.9 | 27.7 | 32.0 | 25.8 | 33.7 | 32.3 |
| 4-5 days | 27.3 | 26.3 | 29.7 | 29.0 | 26.3 | 28.5 | 25.7 |
| 6-10 days | 22.3 | 21.9 | 25.5 | 20.1 | 25.9 | 18.9 | 16.7 |
| more than 10 days | 10.7 | 11.5 | 10.0 | 7.7 | 13.7 | 7.5 | 7.7 |

[n=4,515]

Notes

1. From Question 19 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.140.
3. The results are weighted.

Sectoral differences included:

- Teachers in government schools were more likely than those in independent schools to spend more than ten days on PD in schools hours (11 per cent compared to 8 per cent);
- Teachers in Catholic schools were more likely than others to do between 6-10 days (25 per cent); and
- Teachers in independent schools were more likely to do 2-3 days (32 per cent).

When looked at by school type:

- Teachers of primary aged students were more likely than those of secondary aged students to have spent more than ten days on PD in the past year; and
- A third of secondary teachers spent between 2-3 days on PD in 2007 but only a quarter of primary teachers spent this amount of time.

State differences were:

- Teachers in the ACT were more likely to state they had no PD in school hours (6 per cent) than those in other states (ranging from 2-3 per cent); and

- Teachers in Victorian schools were more likely to state they had more than 10 days of PD per year in schools hours (13 per cent) than those in other states (between 9-11 per cent).

The time spent in PD out of school hours was not as much as is spent in school hours, with 2 to 3 days having more responses than any of the other time frames. Over 30 per cent of teachers either do no PD or less than one day outside school hours. This has increased from the 2000 survey, which had 25 per cent of teacher responses in this category. In 2000, nearly half of all teachers stated they did 4 days or more of PD out of school hours. For 2008, just over a third of teachers stated this.

Table 4.17
Percentage of teachers across time spent out of school hours on professional development activities

| <i>In 2007, the total amount of time spent on professional development out of school hours was</i> | 2008 % | Sector | | | Students taught | | 2000 % |
|--|-----------|--------|------|------|-----------------|------|-----------|
| | | Gov | Cath | Ind | Prim | Sec | |
| None | 12.7 | 12.1 | 13.9 | 14.3 | 13.7 | 7.5 | 9.9 |
| less than 1 day | 18.7 | 17.6 | 21.2 | 19.9 | 18.0 | 19.2 | 14.7 |
| 2-3 days | 32.2 | 31.6 | 35.4 | 31.6 | 31.9 | 32.7 | 28.6 |
| 4-5 days | 14.2 | 15.2 | 10.9 | 14.0 | 15.3 | 13.1 | 19.3 |
| 6-10 days | 11.1 | 12.1 | 8.2 | 10.6 | 13.4 | 8.8 | 12.8 |
| more than 10 days | 11.1 | 11.4 | 10.4 | 9.7 | 11.0 | 11.3 | 14.7 |

[n=4,534]

- Notes
1. From Question 20 in the Survey of Teachers.
 2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.140.
 3. The results are weighted.

When the data was cross-referenced with school sector:

- Teachers in Catholic schools were less likely to have spent 4 days or more in the past year on PD out of school hours (30 per cent) than teachers from the government sector (39 per cent), and
- Those in government schools were less likely than teachers from the other two sectors to do either no PD or less than one day of PD in a year (30 per cent compared to 35 per cent for the other two sectors).

For teachers of primary and secondary aged students, primary teachers were more likely to do between 6-10 days (13 per cent) or no PD out of school hours (14 per cent) than were secondary teachers (9 per cent and 7 per cent respectively).

State/territory differences included:

- NSW and Queensland teachers were more likely to state they had no PD out of schools hours (19 and 15 per cent respectively) than were teachers from the other states (ranging from 5-8 per cent); and
- South Australian and ACT teachers were more likely to state they had more than 10 days PD out of school hours (21 per cent and 20 per cent respectively) than were teachers from other states (between 10-11 per cent).

Male teachers were significantly more likely to spend no time on PD out of school hours (16 per cent) than were female teachers (11 per cent), whereas in schools hours the number of responses to each time category is similar for female and male teachers.

4.2.7 Location of Activities

The majority of teachers stated they do not mind if PD is held off site (61 per cent), and only just under 8 per cent would preferred PD to happen at their school. This is similar to the results obtained in the 2000 survey.

Table 4.18
Percentage of teachers by preference for location of PD activities

| <i>I prefer PD activities which are held off site</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|---|--------|--------|
| Yes | 30.9 | 30.8 |
| No | 7.7 | 7.5 |
| don't mind | 61.4 | 61.7 |

[n=4,468]

Notes

1. From Question 35 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.150.
3. The results are weighted.

There were no significant differences between teachers from different sectoral affiliations or between teachers from different states and territories.

Secondary teachers were significantly more likely to state they like PD activities to be held off site (36 per cent) than were primary teachers (26 per cent).

Male teachers were significantly more likely than female teachers to state they like PD activities to be held off site (37 per cent compared to 28 per cent).

4.2.8 Timing of Activities

The majority of teachers stated they did not like PD to be held out of schools hours, just over 40 per cent did not mind and 6 per cent prefer out of schools hours for PD activities. These are fairly similar results to *PD 2000*.

Table 4.19
Percentage of teachers by preference for PD activities out-of-hours

| <i>I prefer PD activities which are held out of school hours</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|--|--------|--------|
| Yes | 6.5 | 8.0 |
| No | 52.1 | 48.3 |
| don't mind | 41.4 | 43.8 |

[n=4,470]

Notes

1. From Question 36 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.141.
3. The results are weighted.

Teachers in government and Catholic schools were more likely to want PD to be held in schools hours (53 per cent and 54 per cent) than were teachers in independent schools (46 per cent).

There were no significant differences between primary and secondary teachers in preference of time for PD activities.

The largest difference in preferences is between states, with teachers in South Australian teachers being significantly more likely to say they prefer PD out of hours (13 per cent) than the rest of the states/territories (between 4-7 per cent).

Male teachers were significantly more likely than female teachers to state they did not like PD to be held out of school hours (57 per cent compared to 50 per cent).

4.2.9 Topics from Priority Areas

As with *PD 2000*, two sets of questions concerning topics covered in professional development were asked, one set in relation to government priorities, and the second set of more general areas, roughly divided into five sections: 'teaching practice, institutional maintenance, equity issues, 'personal' skills or issues and another set containing a mixed bag of topical issues' (McRae et al., 2001, p.141).

The questions set out to find out whether teachers were participating in PD in these areas, how much time they were devoting to these areas, and whether they felt they needed more PD in these areas. As with *PD 2000*, the survey did not ask for the exact time allocated to each area because of the already complicated nature of the survey, but it did ask whether teachers spent up to a day or more than a day on each item.

Two extra items were added to the list for the current survey, and these are ‘education of students with challenging behaviour’ and ‘education of students with disabilities’.

Following the analysis of the survey in *PD 2000*, Indigenous education has also been dealt with separately.

Table 4.20
Percentage of teachers across time spent on PD in priority areas

In the last three years (2005 – 2007)

I have participated in professional development activities directly related to:

| | 2008 % | | 2000 % | |
|--|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | up to 1 day | 1 day plus | up to 1 day | 1 day plus |
| the development of students’ literacy skills | 22.4 | 46.7 | 20.0 | 47.6 |
| the development of my own IT skills | 25.4 | 35.4 | 21.3 | 50.4 |
| the use of information technology in the classroom | 25.6 | 32.1 | 22.1 | 36.3 |
| the development of students’ numeracy skills | 20.5 | 31.4 | 18.9 | 19.5 |
| the education of students with challenging behaviour | 23.7 | 21.5 | na | na |
| the teaching of mathematics | 15.4 | 22.5 | 13.9 | 15.4 |
| the education of students with disabilities | 18.5 | 14.5 | na | na |
| the teaching of science | 13.5 | 11.1 | 12.0 | 11.2 |
| education of Indigenous students | 13.1 | 5.8 | | |
| delivery of VET courses in schools | 7.6 | 6.9 | 5.6 | 9.0 |

[n=4,572]

Notes

1. From Question 21 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.141.
3. The results are weighted.

‘Literacy skills’ received the most focus in PD activities over the last three years (combined 69 per cent), followed by skills in, and use of, information technologies (61 per cent and 58 per cent, respectively). The ranked order of responses to items has not changed from the *PD 2000* survey except for a decrease in time spent on

teachers' own information technology skills (from a combined 72 per cent to a combined 61 per cent). The largest response rate change from 2000 is in the development of students' numeracy skills, which rose from 38 per cent to 52 per cent.

When this data was looked at more closely in terms of demographic influences, a number of differences emerged, especially between teachers of primary and secondary aged students (dealt with in Table 4.22 below).

Differences between states and territories were as follows:

- Literacy skills was not a PD topic in the last three years for 39 per cent of teachers from the ACT, 24 per cent of teachers from South Australia, and the other states/territories somewhere in between;
- The teaching of mathematics was not a PD topic for 69 per cent of teachers from the ACT, 57 per cent of teachers from Western Australia and the others in between;
- The teaching of science was not a PD topic for 84 per cent of teachers from the ACT, 66 per cent of teachers from Western Australia and the others in between; and
- The use of IT in the classroom was not a PD topic for 52 per cent of teachers from Western Australia, 37 per cent of teachers from Victoria, and the other states/territories in between.

Gender differences in PD participation in priority areas showed the following:

- Literacy skills were not a part of PD in the last three years for 40 per cent of male teachers and 26 per cent of female teachers';
- Numeracy skills were not a part of PD in the last three years for 53 per cent of male teachers and 46 per cent of female teachers';
- The teaching of mathematics was not a part of PD in the last three years for 66 per cent of male teachers and 60 per cent of female teachers'; and
- VET skills were not a part of PD in the last three years for 87 per cent of female teachers and 82 per cent of male teachers.

For all other priority areas, there were no significant differences between female and male teachers.

The other big difference is time allocated to PD in the priority areas of literacy and numeracy skills according to sectoral affiliation.

Table 4.21
Percentage of teachers participating in literacy and numeracy PD across school sectors

| <i>Topic</i> | Govt | Cath | Ind |
|---|------|------|------|
| <i>development of students' literacy skills</i> | | | |
| None | 25.8 | 34.3 | 46.7 |
| up to 1 day | 23.3 | 19.9 | 21.6 |
| 1 day plus | 50.9 | 45.8 | 31.7 |

development of students' numeracy skills

| | | | |
|-------------|------|------|------|
| None | 41.9 | 53.5 | 65.8 |
| up to 1 day | 23.0 | 17.8 | 14.3 |
| 1 day plus | 35.1 | 28.7 | 19.9 |

Notes

1. From Question 21 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. The results are weighted.

Student literacy and numeracy skills were the two areas of PD that showed the biggest sectoral differences. Nearly half of the teachers from independent schools (47 per cent) had no PD in literacy skills, whereas for teachers from government schools this was 26 per cent and for Catholic school teachers this was 34 per cent. When time allocation was looked at, all three sectors had similar figures for the percentage who spent up to day on PD in this area, but for spending more than one day on PD in literacy skills there was a large difference between government (52 per cent) and independent sector teachers (32 per cent).

PD on the development of students' numeracy skills had even more marked differences in terms of time allocation across the sectors.

- Overall, fewer teachers stated they did PD in this area than in literacy skills but two-thirds of teachers from independent schools had no PD in this area, just over half of Catholic teachers (53 per cent), and 42 per cent of government teachers;
- Over a third (35 per cent) of teachers from government schools stated they did more than one day of PD per the three year period, whereas a fifth of teachers from independent schools stated this; and
- Government sector teachers were also more likely to state they had done up to a day of PD in numeracy skills (23 per cent) than those from the other two sectors (18 per cent for Catholic teacher, 14 per cent for independent teachers).

Table 4.22
Percentage of teachers spending time on PD in priority areas by level of students taught

| <i>Topic covered</i> | 2008 % | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | Primary | | Secondary | |
| | up to 1 day | 1 day plus | up to 1 day | 1 day plus |
| students' literacy skills | 20.8 | 66.0 | 23.9 | 27.8 |
| students' numeracy skills | 25.5 | 49.2 | 15.8 | 13.7 |
| teaching of mathematics | 23.4 | 33.2 | 31.1* | 68.9* |
| teaching of science | 19.8 | 12.1 | 34.2* | 65.8* |
| development of my own IT skills | 25.1 | 37.9 | 25.9 | 33.3 |
| use of IT in the classroom | 25.1 | 33.5 | 26.2 | 31.0 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| education of Indigenous students | 14.7 | 6.8 | 11.7 | 4.8 |
| delivery of VET in schools | 6.4 | 2.4 | 8.8 | 11.3 |
| students with challenging behaviour | 25.4 | 22.1 | 21.9 | 21.1 |
| students with disabilities | 20.3 | 17.6 | 16.4 | 11.1 |

[n=4,572]

Notes

1. From Question 21 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.142.
3. The results are weighted.
4. * These figures relate to the proportions of self-identified secondary mathematics [n=471] and science [n=434] teachers responding

Primary teachers were more than twice as likely as secondary teachers to have spent more than a day on PD for literacy skills (66 per cent compared to 28 per cent). They are also more than three times as likely to have spent more than a day on PD for numeracy skills (49 per cent compared to 14 per cent). The only area where secondary teachers indicate they had spent more than a day on PD, and which exceeds the percentage of primary teachers in this area, was in the delivery of VET in schools (11 per cent compared to 2 per cent).

4.2.10 Government Priorities as Areas of Need

The commonwealth priority seen as the greatest area of need for professional development is the education of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students (25 per cent of teachers stated this). This area of PD is discussed in greater detail below, but it is interesting to note here its prominence in teachers' concerns, and when looked at in relation to the age of students taught, how important this issue is for teachers of primary aged students (32 per cent).

Table 4.23

Percentage of teachers by government priority areas as an area of need for PD

| Areas of need, self-defined | 2008 % | Students taught | | | Sector | | | 2000 % |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------------|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|
| | | Prim | Sec | Govt | Cath | Ind | | |
| education of Indigenous students | 25.5 | 32.5 | 18.7 | 26.5 | 28.0 | 18.8 | | |
| students with challenging behaviour | 25.4 | 27.8 | 23.2 | 27.3 | 25.7 | 16.6 | na | |
| the use of IT in the classroom | 25.0 | 26.7 | 23.7 | 26.2 | 24.2 | 21.9 | 31.7 | |
| development of my own IT skills | 24.9 | 26.1 | 23.8 | 25.5 | 24.8 | 23.1 | 30.3 | |
| students with disabilities | 24.5 | 28.7 | 20.6 | 25.7 | 25.3 | 18.2 | na | |
| teaching of science | 22.8 | 33.1 | 12.6 | 23.6 | 24.5 | 17.5 | 17.7 | |
| delivery of VET courses in schools | 20.9 | 26.8 | 15.2 | 22.4 | 21.3 | 14.4 | 15.1 | |
| numeracy skills | 16.1 | 16.3 | 16.2 | 17.0 | 15.7 | 13.6 | 15.6 | |
| teaching of mathematics | 15.4 | 17.0 | 13.9 | 16.3 | 14.7 | 12.6 | 13.5 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| literacy skills [n respondents=4,572] | 13.6 | 11.4 | 16.0 | 13.9 | 13.1 | 13.3 | 12.7 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

Notes

1. From Question 21 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.143.
3. The results are weighted.

There are a number of changes in relation to the ranking of priority areas as an area of need compared to an area in which PD was undertaken. Student literacy skills went from the top of the list in Table 4.20 to the bottom on the list in Table 4.23. This also occurred in the *PD 2000* survey, where it was surmised that teachers may have had enough PD in this area. Another explanation could be that the high level of uptake of PD means that teachers are having their needs met in this area and they are happy with the status quo.

The other area of change in terms of needs versus participation in PD is the area of education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which is second last on the list of PD activities that are ranked according to participation but is first on the list ranked according to teachers' perceived area of need. The education of students with challenging behaviour was also an important area of perceived need, and has moved from middle of the list in terms of participation to second on the list of needs.

4.2.11 Indigenous Education

As mentioned above, Indigenous education is a government priority and this survey asked teachers whether they had done PD in this area in the past three years and/or felt they needed more PD in this area. The analysis of the responses looks at the percentage of teachers who have not done PD in this area, and of those who have, there are two groups: PD of up to one day, and PD of more than one day in the past three years. The results also show the percentage of teachers who feel they need more PD in the area of education of Indigenous students.

Table 4.24
Percentage of teachers participating in PD on education of Indigenous students

| <i>Indigenous education as topic covered</i> | 2008 Indigenous students as a proportion of enrolments | | | | 2000 % | |
|--|--|------|-------|---------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | 0% | 1-5% | 6-10% | More than 10% | with Indigenous students enrolled | without Indigenous students enrolled |
| No | 91.5 | 82.8 | 64.9 | 51.3 | 79.3 | 93.7 |
| up to a day | 6.4 | 12.9 | 23.0 | 23.2 | 12.9 | 4.7 |
| more than a day | 2.0 | 4.2 | 12.3 | 23.9 | 7.8 | 1.6 |

as an area of need 23.5 26.6 26.4 23.2 18.6 13.1
[n=4,383]

Notes

1. From Question 21 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.143.
3. The results are weighted.

In terms of the teachers from schools with no Indigenous students, there was not much change since the survey of 2000. Nearly all teachers (91 per cent) from these schools had not done PD in this area (94 per cent in 2000). There was a significant increase in the number of teachers from schools with no Indigenous students who stated Indigenous education as an area of need. This rose from 13 percent in the 2000 survey to 23 per cent in 2008.

Over half of the teachers in schools with more than ten per cent Indigenous students had not done PD in this area. Nearly a quarter of them had done up to one day, and nearly a quarter had done more than one day in the past three years.

The number of teachers who state they see Indigenous education as an area of need is about a quarter of teachers from all categories. This is a significant change from the *PD 2000* results.

4.2.12 Other Topics

These topics have been broken up into five main areas, as mentioned above. As with *PD 2000*, the time frame for this question was the year prior to the survey – in this case, 2007.

Table 4.25
Percentage of teachers by time spent on PD in other topic areas

| <i>Last year (2007) the professional development activities I participated in related to:</i> | up to 1 day* | 2008 % 1 day plus* | area of need** |
|---|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| subject matter | 25.0 | 41.4 | 8.0 |
| issues related to assessment and reporting | 33.8 | 32.1 | 10.2 |
| curriculum/syllabus changes | 27.5 | 36.5 | 11.0 |
| teaching processes | 25.6 | 31.4 | 9.2 |
| changes to assessment and reporting arrangements | 29.7 | 26.1 | 9.8 |
| student behaviour management | 27.0 | 16.5 | 16.8 |
| arrangements for student management/pastoral care | 20.0 | 12.1 | 16.3 |
| school planning | 22.6 | 22.3 | 12.2 |
| child protection issues | 32.7 | 10.0 | 12.1 |
| school or program evaluation | 20.8 | 17.3 | 12.8 |
| workplace health and safety | 27.5 | 7.5 | 13.6 |
| leadership | 14.7 | 16.1 | 20.2 |
| other legal issues and obligations | 16.6 | 4.3 | 16.6 |
| budgeting and financial management | 10.2 | 3.0 | 21.4 |
| industrial relations | 8.4 | 2.6 | 19.0 |
| facilities management | 7.1 | 2.0 | 20.0 |
| the use of information technology | 26.0 | 23.7 | 16.5 |
| school quality and effectiveness | 19.0 | 11.5 | 14.0 |
| drug/alcohol education (values education) | 16.4 | 5.9 | 15.9 |
| parent and community involvement | 12.8 | 9.1 | 82.1 |
| civics and citizenship education | 9.6 | 3.5 | 18.4 |
| school governance | 8.3 | 3.0 | 18.4 |
| education for students with disabilities | 16.2 | 8.9 | 20.1 |
| education of gifted and talented students | 14.9 | 6.7 | 25.1 |

| | | | |
|---|------|------|------|
| gender issues | 12.0 | 4.7 | 19.2 |
| education for students of socio-econ. disadvantag. background | 9.8 | 4.4 | 20.6 |
| multicultural education | 9.8 | 3.4 | 19.4 |
| education for isolated students | 4.2 | 0.9 | 20.5 |
| team building | 20.9 | 12.0 | 15.6 |
| interpersonal skills | 13.9 | 8.0 | 16.0 |
| stress management | 11.9 | 2.8 | 27.8 |
| time management | 8.9 | 2.7 | 23.9 |
| career planning | 7.8 | 3.4 | 22.9 |
| [n=4,558] | | | |

Notes

1. From Question 22 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.144.
3. The results are weighted.
4. * Percentage of total responses within sub-item (ranked by incidence within cluster)
5. ** Percentage of total
6. Figures in bold mean an increase from the *PD 2000* results; figures in italics mean a decrease from the *PD 2000* results; figures in normal font are either no change or item was not included in *PD 2000*

The main issues that these topic choices highlight are:

- The importance to teachers of being current in subject matter and curriculum changes;
- The continuing need for training related to student behaviour management;
- The importance of whole school involvement in school planning;
- Knowledge of safety issues concerning students and staff (child protection, OHS);
- The importance of information technology across the board;
- The overwhelming need for improved relationships between schools and their communities;
- The high need for training in issues of equity. Of the training that has taken place, education for students with disabilities is at the top of the list; and
- There is a relatively small percentage of teachers who have done PD in the area of personal and interpersonal skills but this is an area that shows the greatest amount of need for training;

When comparing these results with those from *PD 2000*, the main issues were:

- The large increase in the percentage of teachers indicating they need PD in the area of parent and community involvement (82 per cent for this survey). This item had such a large proportion of responses; it outweighs its closest 'rival' (the need for PD in the area of education of gifted and talented students) by nearly 60 per cent. This area has recently been addressed by the Federal government with funding for a Family-School and Community Partnership Bureau. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five (specifically section 5.4.1).

- Stress management and time management were two of the top four areas of need, which is fairly consistent with *PD 2000* and shows that even though the percentage of teachers participating in PD in these areas has increased to a small degree, there needs to be more PD to meet the needs of teachers.
- Apart from the first set of items, all others had an increased as an area of need as well as increased in percentage rates of participation. The first set of topics had a general decrease in the amount of teachers who felt they needed more PD in these areas, except for managing student behaviour, which increased. All other areas had increased in need to between 12 to 20 percent of teachers saying they needed PD in these topics – an overall increase in need from *PD 2000*, where the average was 8 to 14 per cent. Given that some respondents to the survey may have indiscriminately gone through and ticked every item as an area of need, this only accounts for an extra 0.2 per cent, so these responses suggest that teachers are increasingly feeling inadequate in keeping up with the skills required of them.

Differences in participation and areas of need for these topics, when looked at by school type were:

- Teacher practice, represented in the first cluster of items, was fairly evenly participated in across the two school types except for ‘teaching processes’ and ‘changes to assessment and reporting’, where primary teachers were more likely to have participated in more than one day of PD in this area. The greatest areas of need within this cluster were student behaviour management and pastoral care, with primary teachers having a slightly higher need (19 per cent compared to 15 per cent for secondary teachers).
- In the second cluster of items, which dealt with institutional maintenance, participation in ‘school planning’ for multiple days was higher for primary teachers, as was ‘school and program evaluation’. More primary teachers participated in up to one day of PD in child protection issues.
- In the following three clusters, participation rates were fairly similar for primary and secondary teachers. Overall, there was a higher percentage of primary teachers who saw these items as an area of need, except for ‘parent and community involvement’ which was the only item to score a higher need for secondary than for primary teachers (although both were over 80 per cent).

The results by state showed the following:

- Teachers in South Australia were one-third as likely to feel the need for PD on child protection as teachers in Tasmania or Victoria, and the least likely to choose this as an area of need. A possible reason may be because 43 per cent of South Australian teachers had done more than one day of PD in this area in the 2007. In the past year, teachers from Victorian schools were half as likely as those from NSW schools to have participated in PD related to child protection issues and nearly a third as likely as those from South Australia. This is a clear example of where PD in a concentrated area has positively affected teachers in relation to their perceived needs in this area.
- ACT, NSW and Queensland teachers were significantly more likely to state they need PD in the area of team building than teachers from other states.
- Nearly a third of teachers responding from NSW stated they felt they needed PD related to stress management. The state with the lowest stated need for stress management PD was South Australia.

4.2.13 Types of Professional Development Activities

The next set of questions in the survey asked teachers about the types of formats in which PD was presented. It was not meant to be exhaustive or represent all formats but was selected for its representability of a broad range of professional development formats.

Table 4.26

Percentage of teachers across participation in particular PD formats

| <i>The formats for the professional development activities in which I participated included:</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|--|--------|--------|
| workshop discussion with colleagues from a range of schools | 68.1 | 53.7 |
| a speaker from elsewhere followed by discussion | 67.8 | 67.5 |
| workshop discussion with colleagues from my school | 60.3 | 60.7 |
| Conference attendance | 48.5 | 52.8 |
| directed training session to develop new skills | 36.1 | 38.6 |
| Observation and discussion of teaching practice | 30.5 | 21.0 |
| the use of on-line information technology resources | 21.7 | 14.3 |
| coaching/mentoring or being coached/mentored | 15.0 | 9.5 |
| the use of a package or kit of text and/or video materials | 12.8 | 18.5 |
| lectures/discussion as part of a formal course of study | 12.6 | 18.1 |
| the use of CD-ROM materials | 11.9 | 14.8 |
| action research | 11.4 | 7.3 |
| an organised program of visiting and discussion | 9.5 | 8.2 |
| an interstate or overseas study tour | 3.5 | 3.4 |

[n respondents=4,572 ; n responses =18,730]

Notes

1. From Question 24 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.147.
3. The results are weighted.

The four most common formats for PD were workshop discussions with teaching colleagues (68 per cent ‘from a range of schools’; 60 per cent ‘from my school’), an invited speaker (68 per cent) and attending conferences (48 per cent). These types of activities have remained the top four choices over time from the survey of 2000.

The most common format for PD was ‘a workshop discussion with colleagues from a range of schools’ which had risen from the third most common format in the survey of 2000. The only other changes in terms of order of responses were the rise of ‘the use of on-line information technology resources’ which rose from 14 per cent to 22 per cent, and ‘coaching/mentoring or being coached/mentored’ which went from 9 per cent to 15 per cent.

Teachers from Victorian schools were twice as likely as those from other states/territories to participate in observation and discussion of teaching practice.

4.2.14 Follow up on Professional Development Activities

Part of the success of PD activities can be gauged from follow-up activities, whether this is in the form of reviewing the outcomes from PD or extending the work from a PD activity.

Table 4.27
Percentage of teachers who have professional development activities followed up

| <i>Work done in professional development activities was subsequently followed up</i> | 2008 % | Students taught | | 2000 % |
|--|-----------|-----------------|------|-----------|
| | | Prim | Sec | |
| Yes | 26.4 | 31.0 | 21.4 | 23.9 |
| Sometimes | 47.3 | 48.9 | 46.0 | 46.2 |
| Rarely | 17.9 | 15.0 | 21.1 | 19.2 |
| No | 8.3 | 5.1 | 11.5 | 10.8 |

[n=4,464]

Notes

1. From Question 25 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.148.
3. The results are weighted.

The results showed a majority of teachers stated that some follow up was happening around PD, with just over a quarter of all teachers stating a definite ‘yes’. There were small increases in follow-up since the *PD 2000* survey but a gap is still evident in the occurrence of follow-up in secondary schools compared to primary schools.

4.2.15 Preferred Formats for Professional Development

The survey asked teachers about their preferred format for professional development activities.

Table 4.28
Percentage of teachers across their preferred format for professional development

| <i>The format/s for professional development activities I like best is/are...</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|---|--------|--------|
| 'workshopping' with colleagues | 62.7 | 63.3 |
| listening to speakers who are expert in my subject field | 61.8 | 58.1 |
| listening to other teachers speak about their work and ideas | 51.8 | 53.7 |
| visiting other schools or educational settings | 44.8 | 44.0 |
| coaching/mentoring or being coached/mentored | 21.4 | 15.5 |
| taking on a project and making something new happen | 21.3 | 21.1 |
| working through kits/packages with a facilitator | 18.3 | 17.4 |

| | | |
|---|------|------|
| watching and discussing teaching practice | 17.3 | 15.0 |
| use of on-line information technology resources | 17.3 | 12.5 |
| reading books and articles on my own | 17.0 | 18.0 |
| formal courses of study | 14.1 | 16.7 |
| use of CD-ROM material | 7.1 | 8.3 |

[n respondents=4,572 ; n responses =16,228]

Notes

1. From Question 33 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.149.
3. The results are weighted.

The four most popular formats have remained so since the *PD 2000* survey. They were workshopping (63 per cent), listening to experts (62 per cent) and to other teachers (52 per cent) and visiting education settings (45 per cent). The top three, which a majority of respondents chose, involve listening and talking – fairly accessible formats that teachers indicate meet their needs in terms of format preferences.

Sectoral differences are evident amongst the lesser chosen formats:

- Government sector teachers were more likely than others to choose ‘taking on a project and making something new happen’ and ‘working through kits/packages with a facilitator’; and
- Teachers from Catholic schools were more likely than others to choose ‘formal courses of study’ and less likely than others to choose ‘coaching/mentoring or being coached/mentored’.

Differences between primary and secondary teachers showed:

- Primary teachers were more likely to prefer ‘workshopping with colleagues’ (66 per cent compared to 60 per cent), ‘working through kits/packages with a facilitator’ (21 per cent compared to 15 per cent), and ‘visiting other schools or educational settings’ (52 per cent compared to 38 per cent); and
- Secondary teachers were more likely to choose ‘formal courses of study’ (16 per cent compared to 12 per cent).

Some state/territory differences included:

- Just over a quarter of South Australian teachers stated their preferred format as ‘reading books and articles on my own’, which was a significantly larger percentage than in any other state, NSW being the lowest with only 13 per cent stating this; and
- Tasmanian teachers were the least likely to state they liked the ‘use of on-line information technology resources’ with only 10 per cent stating this.

There were a few differences with relation to gender choices:

- Female teachers were more likely to prefer PD activities that involve discussion with colleagues (65 per cent compared to 58 per cent for male teachers) and activities that provide information on trends in education; and
- Female teachers were significantly more likely to like PD formats where they are listening to experts or other teachers about ideas than were male teachers.

There were some differences that showed up when this data was looked at using different demographic criteria. Teachers with less than 4 year experience were less likely than those with more than 20 years experience to like best ‘listening to experts in their field’ (although both groups were over 50 per cent), and also less likely than more experienced teachers to like ‘taking on a project and making something new happen’ (less than 4 years 14 per cent, more than 20 years 24 per cent).

4.2.16 Impact of Activity

Areas that teachers may look to in terms of gauging the impact of professional development activities include student outcomes, teacher-student relationships, teachers own morale, and their approach to pedagogy.

Although this item was self-reported (and there are limitations to the accuracy of self-reporting), this does show the value teachers place on the professional development they do.

Table 4.29
Percentage of teachers by the degree of perceived impact of professional development

| <i>As a result of the professional development activities I have engaged in during the past year, my professional practice has changed.</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|---|--------|--------|
| significantly | 23.2 | 22.8 |
| a bit | 62.6 | 60.7 |
| not really | 12.5 | 14.6 |
| not sure | 1.6 | 2.0 |
| [n=4,486] | | |

Notes

1. From Question 29 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.133.
3. The results are weighted.

The majority of teachers do see a degree of change, assuming this is for the better, and there was a slight move, since the 2000 results, to seeing a change rather than no change.

There were no significant differences between sectoral affiliations. State/territory differences included:

- The state where teachers were most likely to say personal practice had changed significantly was Victoria (29 per cent), and the least likely was Queensland (18 per cent); and

- Queensland teachers were more likely to state their practice had not really changed (16 per cent) and teachers in the ACT were the least likely to state this (6 per cent).

There were significant differences according to gender, with female teachers more likely than males to report a significant change (26 per cent compared to 17 per cent) and males more likely to say ‘a bit’ (66 per cent compared to 61 per cent for females).

This same difference occurs when looking at school type:

- Primary teachers were more likely than secondary teachers to state ‘significantly’ (28 per cent compared to 18 per cent) and secondary teachers ‘a bit’ (66 per cent compared to 61 per cent for primary teachers).

4.2.17 Accreditation

One survey item asked teachers if the PD activities they were involved in provided credit towards an academic credential.

Table 4.30
Percentage of teachers who gain academic credentials from participation in PD activities

| <i>Professional development activities I participated in last year (2007) provided credit towards an academic credential.</i> | 2008 % | 2000 % |
|---|--------|--------|
| All | 1.8 | 1.0 |
| Most | 2.9 | 3.1 |
| Some | 17.4 | 17.3 |
| None | 77.9 | 78.6 |
| [n=4,471] | | |

Notes

1. From Question 28 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.151.
3. The results are weighted.

Over three-quarters of respondents (78 per cent) stated that activities did not provide any credit and this was similar to the results from *PD 2000*.

Sectoral differences were significant, with Catholic school teachers more likely to say some PD provided credit towards an academic credential (23 per cent) than were teachers from government or independent schools (both 16 per cent).

There were also differences in the reporting of this across states, with Western Australian teachers the least likely to say PD provided no credit (66 per cent) and NSW teachers the most likely to say this (81 per cent).

There was a significant difference in reporting for this item between those with less than 4 years teaching experience and those with more than 20 years teaching. Of the former group, 65 per cent stated that PD activities provided no credit whereas 83 per cent of the latter group stated this. These differences according to demographic variables were not reported in the *PD 2000* survey, so these data suggest there may have been small changes or differences among groups.

4.2.18 Spending on Professional Development

The item asking the level of spending by teachers on their own professional development shows that the majority of teachers either spent nothing or less than \$100 in the past year (58 per cent).

Table 4.31
Percentage of teachers by level of expenditure on PD activities

| <i>Level of personal expenditure</i> | 2008 % | Sector | | | 2000 % |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|------|------|--------|
| | | Govt | Cath | Ind | |
| Nil | 29.7 | 29.2 | 29.7 | 31.7 | 24.3 |
| less than \$100 | 28.9 | 28.3 | 29.5 | 31.7 | 31.6 |
| between \$100 and \$300 | 22.4 | 23.8 | 20.6 | 17.6 | 25.0 |
| between \$300 and \$1000 | 13.3 | 13.5 | 12.9 | 12.9 | 13.2 |
| more than \$1000 | 5.7 | 5.1 | 7.3 | 6.0 | 6.0 |

[n=4,498]

Notes

1. From Question 27 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.152.
3. The results are weighted.

The biggest change in expenditure from the survey of 2000 was the increase in the percentage of teachers reporting that they did not have any personal expenditure on PD for the previous year (from 24 per cent to 30 per cent), and there was a slightly smaller percentage who indicated they spent between \$100 and \$300 (from 25 per cent to 22 per cent).

The significance difference by school sector was teachers in government schools are more likely than others to spend in the \$100 to \$300 range (24 per cent compared to 21 per cent for Catholic and 18 per cent for independent school teachers), which might indicate they attend more short courses or events than do teachers from other sectors.

Differences between states were also evident in the data, with a significant difference in the \$300 to \$1,000 category by teachers in South Australia (21 per cent) compared to all other states (between 9 to 15 percent).

4.2.19 Hindrance to Participation

The survey also asked about the barriers teachers saw to their participation in professional development activities.

Table 4.32
Percentage of teachers across hindrances to participation in PD activities

| <i>My participation in professional development activities was hindered by ...</i> | 2008 % responses within sub-item | 2008 % of total responses | 2000 % responses within sub-item | 2000 % of total responses |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| other work priorities taking precedence | 42.0 | 29.4 | 49.9 | 31.2 |
| Cost | 28.6 | 20.0 | 43.6 | 21.7 |
| distance issues | 23.5 | 16.4 | 25.6 | 16.0 |
| unavailability of activities suitable to my needs | 18.6 | 13.0 | 19.3 | 12.1 |
| limited opportunity to make my own choices | 8.5 | 5.9 | 9.9 | 6.2 |
| failure to gain permission from administration | 8.2 | 5.7 | 9.3 | 5.8 |
| Prospective quality of the offerings | 6.1 | 4.2 | 8.4 | 5.2 |
| by lack of interest | 2.9 | 2.1 | 2.7 | 1.7 |
| Other | 4.6 | 3.2 | na | na |
| [respondents n=3,462; responses n=6,537] | | | | |
| participation not hindered at all [n=1,110] | 24.3 | | 18.3 | |

Notes

1. From Question 30 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.152.
3. PD 2000 did not have 'other', so response patterns may have changed.
4. The results are weighted.

The most common response was time - 'other work priorities taking precedence in the time available' (42 per cent). The next two most common responses, with about a quarter of teachers stating these, were cost (29 per cent) and distance issues (23 per cent). In the 'other' responses, the three most mentioned are family commitments outside schools hours, lack of available relief/casual teachers inside schools hours, and time (which would fit in with 'other work priorities taking precedence in the time available').

When comparing these responses to *PD 2000*, their ranked order has not changed, but there were changes in the amount of responses some items elicited:

- Cost was a factor that had decreased, from 44 per cent to 29 per cent;
- There were still 134 teachers who stated 'lack of interest' as a hindrance to participation in PD activities, which as a percentage of total respondents remained stable from *PD 2000*. Although this was disappointing, it is representative of the broad range of attitudes that could be expected in any population; and
- The other change from *PD 2000* was in the increase in teachers reporting there were no hindrances to their participation (from 18 per cent to 24 per cent).

Sectoral differences were:

- 32 per cent of government teachers stated cost was a hindrance, whereas 24 per cent of Catholic teachers and 21 per cent of independent teachers stated this; and
- Teachers from the government sector were also significantly more likely to state their participation in PD was hindered by 'unavailability of activities suitable to my needs' (20 per cent compared to 15 per cent for independent school teachers).

Primary school teachers were significantly more likely to state they had no hindrances to PD participation (29 per cent compared to 20 per cent for secondary teachers), and were less likely than secondary teachers to state time is an issue (37 per cent compared to 48 per cent).

State/territory differences included:

- Teachers from South Australia and Victoria were more likely to state their participation was hindered by cost (34 per cent) than those in other states (24-30 per cent); and
- Distance was more of an issue for South Australian teachers (30 per cent) than for those from other states (12-26 per cent).

4.3 FINDINGS BY TEACHER ATTRIBUTES

4.3.1 Administration versus Teaching

Of the teachers who answered the survey, 3935 of them stated their main school duty was teaching, 501 stated administration, and there were 138 who did not answer or who gave unidentifiable answers. This equates to 88.7 per cent whose main duty was teaching, and 11.3 per cent with a main duty as administration.

With regard to in-school hours spent on PD, there were significantly more administrators than teachers who had spent more than 10 days in past year (24 per cent compared to 9 per cent). For out-of-hours, more teachers had spent no time or up to one day on PD (33 per cent) than had administrators (17 per cent), and more administrators had spent more than 10 days on PD (17 per cent) than had teachers (10 per cent).

Administrators were significantly more likely than classroom teachers to state that formal PD activities had a very high priority in their work (79 per cent compared to 62 per cent).

Of the topics covered in PD in the last three years (2005-7), the only one where participation of teachers was greater than administrators was in the teaching of mathematics (39 per cent compared to 29 per cent). A greater proportion of administrators than teachers had participated in education for Indigenous students (27 per cent compared to 18 per cent), VET in schools (25 per cent compared to 13 per cent), education for students with challenging behaviour (52 per cent compared to 45 per cent), and education for students with a disability (39 per cent compared to 32 per cent).

Significantly more administrators than teachers had done PD of more than one day in:

- the use of IT in the classroom (65 per cent compared to 54 per cent);
- education of students with challenging behaviour (58 per cent compared to 46 per cent); and
- students with a disability (51 per cent compared to 43 per cent).

All PD topics listed in the government priority areas, except for student numeracy skills, were significantly more likely to be stated as an area of need for teachers than for administrators.

‘Subject matter’ was the only PD topic covered in 2007 where a larger proportion of teachers completed this than did administrators (68 per cent compared to 49 per cent). Of the five PD areas asked about, the area of institutional maintenance had eight out of nine items where administrators were significantly more likely than teachers to have done PD.

Of the areas of need, teachers were significantly more likely than administrators to state they needed PD in equity issues:

- gender, 20 per cent compared to 12 per cent;
- education of socio-economic disadvantaged students, 22 per cent compared to 13 per cent;
- education of students with disabilities, 22 per cent compared to 11 per cent;
- gifted and talented students, 26 per cent compared to 19 per cent;
- multicultural education, 21 per cent compared to 12 per cent; and
- isolated students, 22 per cent compared to 14 per cent.

Administrators were significantly more likely to state their participation in PD activities was determined by personal choice (64 per cent) or school administration influenced by system-wide priorities (42 per cent) than were teachers (54 and 22 per cent, respectively). Teachers were more likely than administrators to state their participation was determined by the decision of a school-based staff committee (23 per cent compared to 11 per cent).

The format of action research was significantly more likely to be used by administrators (22 per cent) than teachers (10 per cent), as well as ‘a speaker followed by discussion’ (75 per cent compared to 67 per cent), and ‘conference attendance’ (71 per cent compared to 46 per cent).

Administrators were significantly more likely to state that PD activities were organised by a central or district office than were teachers (31 and 46 per cent compared to 14 and 28 per cent).

Thirty-eight per cent of administrators spent more than \$300 in 2007 on their own professional development, whereas 17 per cent of teachers spent in this bracket.

Administrators were significantly more likely than classroom teachers to see a significant change in their professional practice due to participation in professional development activities (32 compared to 22 per cent), but also more likely to state their participation in PD was hindered by other work priorities taking precedence (52 per cent compared to 41 per cent).

Schools' goals alone, and combined with individual teachers' needs, were what administrators were significantly more likely to point to than teachers as being the framework for professional development activities (58 per cent in both cases for administrators compared to 49 and 46 per cent, respectively, for teachers).

Table 4.33
Preferred professional development activities by main school duties

| <i>The professional development activities I like best ...</i> | Classroom Teachers | Administrators |
|--|--------------------|----------------|
| provide ideas I can incorporate into teaching | 92.5 | 68.9 |
| latest trends in educational thinking | 42.6 | 61.6 |
| challenge my thinking with 'big' ideas | 40.6 | 57.9 |
| talk about my work to other teachers | 40.6 | 51.1 |
| new content knowledge | 39.6 | 34.1 |
| implement requirements | 28.7 | 43.6 |
| 'place' my work re that of other teachers | 17.3 | 21.8 |

[respondents n=4,572, responses n=13,976]

Notes

1. From Question 32 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD2000*, p.136.
3. The results are weighted.

Administrators were significantly more likely than teachers to state they like PD activities that:

- o provide them with information about the latest trends in educational thinking (62 per cent compared to 43 per cent);

- challenge their thinking and practice with ideas and theories that help explain underlying ideas about society and education (58 per cent compared to 41 per cent);
- enable them to talk about their work to other teachers (51 per cent compared to 41 per cent); and
- enable them to implement what is required by their employer/other authority (44 per cent compared to 29 per cent).

Teachers were significantly more likely to state they prefer PD activities that provide ideas they can incorporate into teaching (92 per cent compared to 69 per cent for administrators).

When it comes to preferred formats for PD activities, administrators were significantly more likely than teachers to state they like taking on a project and making something new happen (38 per cent compared to 19 per cent). Teachers were significantly more likely than administrators to state they did not prefer PD activities to be held out of school hours (54 per cent compared to 38 per cent).

4.3.2 Location

Following on from the classifications given in *PD 2000*, we used the term ‘small town’ to indicate living in a population area of less than 500 people. This group (124 in total) comprised only 2.7 per cent of the sample. Those living in a capital city (2217) comprised 49 per cent of the sample.

Table 4.34
Percentage of teachers across hindrances to participation in PD activities by location of school

| <i>My participation in professional development activities was hindered by ...</i> | Small town | Capital city |
|--|------------|--------------|
| distance issues | 71.8 | 8.2 |
| other work priorities taking precedence | 48.4 | 43.8 |
| Cost | 34.7 | 26.4 |
| unavailability of activities suitable to my needs | 18.5 | 17.0 |
| Prospective quality of the offerings | 4.0 | 6.5 |
| limited opportunity to make my own choices | 3.2 | 8.6 |
| no hindrance | 10.5 | 27.2 |

[respondents n=4,572; responses n=7,647]

Notes

1. From Question 30 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD2000*, p.155.
3. The results are weighted.

The most important factor to teachers in small towns was distance (72 per cent), and this has increased as a hindrance from the survey of 2000 (61 per cent). Cost (35 per cent) was more of a hindrance to those in small towns than to those in capital cities (26 per cent). Nearly three times as many teachers in capital cities stated they have no hindrances as did those who live in small towns (27 per cent compared to 10 per cent).

Table 4.35
Percentage of teachers across time spent in school hours on PD by location of school

| <i>time spent in school hours</i> 2007 | Small town | Capital city |
|--|------------|--------------|
| None | 0 | 3.7 |
| less than 1 day | 5.7 | 6.5 |
| 2-3 days | 23.0 | 30.6 |
| 4-5 days | 20.5 | 27.3 |
| 6-10 days | 36.9 | 20.8 |
| more than 10 days | 13.9 | 11.2 |
| [n=4,515] | | |

Notes

1. From Question 19 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.140.
3. The results are weighted.

There were significant differences between teachers in small towns and those in capital cities on the amount of PD time during schools hours. All teachers in small towns stated they had done some PD during school hours in 2007 whereas 4 per cent of teachers from capital cities had not. Capital city teachers were more likely to have spent 2-3 days last year (31 per cent compared to 23 per cent for small town teachers); whereas small town teachers had their largest category as 6-10 days (37 per cent compared to 21 per cent for capital city teachers).

Table 4.36
Percentage of teachers reporting on time spent out of hours on PD by location of school

| <i>Time spent out of school hours</i> 2007 | Small town | Capital city |
|---|------------|--------------|
| None | 5.7 | 11.9 |
| less than 1 day | 17.2 | 17.9 |
| 2-3 days | 33.6 | 30.8 |

| | | |
|-------------------|------|------|
| 4-5 days | 17.2 | 14.9 |
| 6-10 days | 15.6 | 11.6 |
| more than 10 days | 10.7 | 12.9 |
| [n=4,534] | | |

Notes

1. From Question 20 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.140.
3. The results are weighted.

Fewer teachers in small towns stated they did no PD out of schools hours (6 per cent) than did teachers from capital cities (12 per cent) and more of them had done between 6 to 10 days of PD out of school hours (16 per cent) than had capital city teachers (12 per cent). The other time categories were fairly similar, with the most common time spent on PD out of school hours for both groups being 2-3 days in the last year.

Table 4.37
Percentage of teachers across participation and areas of need in PD priority topics by location of school

| <i>In the last three years (2005 – 2007)</i> <i>I have participated in professional development activities directly related to:</i> | Small town | | | Capital city | | |
|--|-------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| | up to 1 day | 1day plus | area of need* | up to 1 day | 1day plus | area of need* |
| the development of students' literacy skills | 12.1 | 73.4 | 13.7 | 22.6 | 43.9 | 12.7 |
| the development of students' numeracy skills | 27.4 | 47.6 | 16.9 | 20.0 | 29.6 | 15.0 |
| the teaching of mathematics | 20.2 | 33.1 | 15.3 | 15.2 | 21.5 | 14.2 |
| the teaching of science | 21.0 | 15.3 | 26.6 | 13.5 | 11.1 | 22.3 |
| the development of my own information technology skills | 26.6 | 36.3 | 25.8 | 25.7 | 35.3 | 24.9 |
| the use of information technology in the classroom | 27.4 | 31.5 | 25.8 | 25.3 | 33.4 | 23.4 |
| the education of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students | 12.9 | 11.3 | 29.8 | 12.1 | 4.0 | 26.0 |
| delivery of vocational education and training courses in schools | 4.8 | 6.4 | 18.5 | 7.5 | 6.8 | 20.8 |
| the education of students with challenging | 18.5 | 13.7 | 25.8 | 22.7 | 21.2 | 24.4 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| behaviour the education of students with disabilities [n=4,572] | 20.2 | 16.9 | 16.9 | 18.5 | 12.4 | 25.3 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|

Notes

1. From Question 21 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.141.
3. * Self-defined area of need
4. The results are weighted.

There were significant differences between the two groups in what PD they had participated in over the last three years. Nearly three-quarters of small town teachers had done more than one day of PD in development of literacy skills (73 per cent) whereas only 44 per cent of capital city teachers stated this. More small town teachers had also spent multiple days on the development of numeracy skills (48 per cent) and on the teaching of mathematics (33 per cent) than have capital city teachers (30 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively). More capital city teachers had spent multiple days on the education of students with challenging behaviour (21 per cent) than had small town teachers (14 per cent).

The areas of perceived need were fairly similar between the two groups, with both small town and capital city teachers stating IT, teaching of science, education of Indigenous students and of students with challenging behaviour as the four main areas.

Table 4.38
Percentage of teachers across the organiser of PD activities by location of school

| <i>The professional development activities I participated in were organised by</i> | Small town | Capital city |
|--|------------|--------------|
| my school | 81.5 | 85.6 |
| a cluster of schools | 60.5 | 28.9 |
| District etc Office | 60.5 | 24.4 |
| subject/professional assoc. | 10.5 | 21.8 |
| higher education institution | 4.0 | 7.2 |

[respondents n=4,572; responses n= 12,255]

Notes

1. From Question 26 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.137.
3. The results are weighted.

Teachers from small towns were significantly more likely to participate in PD activities organised by a cluster of schools or a district office (60 per cent) than were teachers from capital cities (29 per cent and 24 per cent respectively). Although the majority of teachers from capital cities also chose their school as an organiser (86 per cent), they did have a broader range of institutions that organised their PD.

4.3.3 Length of Teaching Experience

Table 4.39

Percentage of teachers across time spent in school hours on PD by years in the profession

| <i>Time spent in school hours 2007</i> | up to 4 yrs exp. | 20+ yrs |
|--|---------------------|---------|
| None | 7.3 | 2.4 |
| less than 1 day | 7.1 | 6.7 |
| 2-3 days | 31.0 | 28.1 |
| 4-5 days | 26.7 | 27.6 |
| 6-10 days | 21.9 | 22.5 |
| more than 10 days | 6.0 | 12.8 |
| [n=4,515] | | |

Notes

1. From Question 19 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.138.
3. The results are weighted.

Teachers with more teaching experience were more likely to have had more than 10 days of PD per year in school hours (13 per cent) than those with less than 4 years teaching experience (6 per cent), and were less likely to have no or one day PD per year (9 per cent) than the less experienced group (14 per cent).

Although both groups preferred professional development to be held in school hours, teachers with more than 20 years experience were more likely to state they liked PD held out of school hours (8 per cent) compared those with less than 4 years experience (5 per cent).

Table 4.40

Percentage of teachers across time spent out of hours on PD by years in the profession

| <i>Time spent out of school hours 2007</i> | up to 4 yrs exp. | 20+ yrs |
|--|---------------------|---------|
| None | 16.6 | 10.4 |
| less than 1 day | 23.1 | 16.2 |
| 2-3 days | 32.1 | 33.5 |
| 4-5 days | 12.8 | 13.9 |
| 6-10 days | 8.4 | 12.6 |
| more than 10 days | 6.9 | 13.4 |
| [n=4,534] | | |

Notes

1. From Question 20 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.138.
3. The results are weighted.

As with in school hours, teachers with more than 20 years experience were significantly more likely to have had more than 10 day of PD in 2007 (13 per cent) than teachers with up to 4 years experience (7 per cent). There was also a difference in the percentage who had no PD, but this is not as marked as PD in school hours (17 per cent for the less experienced group compared to 10 per cent for more experienced teachers).

Teachers of less than 4 years were significantly more likely to state they had no personal expenditure in relation to PD activities (42 per cent compared to 25 per cent). This could be accounted for the data in Tables 4.39 and 4.40, which shows that teachers of less than 4 years were less likely to participate in PD than more experienced teachers.

Table 4.41
Percentage of teachers across areas of need for PD by years in the profession

| <i>Areas of need, in priority areas (self-defined)</i> | % of responses within sub-item | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------|
| | up to 4 yrs exp. | 20+ yrs |
| literacy skills | 26.6 | 9.4 |
| numeracy skills | 26.6 | 11.7 |
| Science | 36.5 | 15.8 |
| mathematics | 28.5 | 10.1 |
| development of personal IT skills | 27.5 | 25.0 |
| use of IT in the classroom | 31.4 | 23.5 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|------|------|
| Indigenous students | 41.9 | 16.3 |
| VET in schools | 36.5 | 11.2 |
| challenging behaviour | 40.0 | 18.7 |
| students with disabilities | 41.1 | 17.4 |

[n=4,572]

Notes

1. From Question 21 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.141.
3. The results are weighted.

In every area of commonwealth priorities except for ‘development of own IT skills’, a greater percentage of teachers with less than 4 years experience stated they needed more PD than did those with more than 20 years experience. The survey results also suggest that except for PD on the teaching of science, in all other areas there was a higher percentage of teachers with more than 20 years experience getting more than one day of PD in each area. Both groups show similar participation rates in all areas for professional development of up to one day. This may be of concern as less experienced teachers are stating they need PD in these areas but the PD is going to the more experienced teachers.

Table 4.42

Percentage of teachers reporting on a preference for PD in or out of schools hours by years in the profession

| <i>I prefer PD activities which are held out of school hours</i> | up to 4 yrs exp. | 20+ yrs |
|--|------------------|---------|
| yes | 5.4 | 8.1 |
| No | 57.6 | 48.1 |
| don't mind | 37.0 | 43.8 |

[n=4,470]

Notes

1. From Question 36 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.141.
3. The results are weighted.

This data shows that teachers with less experience do not prefer PD out of school hours (58 per cent compared to 48 per cent for more experienced teachers). This may be because of the extra time they need out of hours for preparation.

4.3.4 Employment type

Table 4.43
Percentage of teachers across time spent on PD activities by level of employment

| <i>Time spent in school hours 2007</i> | Part-time | Full-time | <i>Time spent out of school hours 2007</i> | Part-time | Full-time |
|--|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|
| none | 6.3 | 2.8 | None | 17.5 | 12.1 |
| less than 1 day | 10.5 | 6.2 | less than 1 day | 20.5 | 18.4 |
| 2-3 days | 31.6 | 29.6 | 2-3 days | 32.4 | 32.2 |
| 4-5 days | 29.1 | 27.0 | 4-5 days | 13.9 | 14.2 |
| 6-10 days | 17.9 | 22.9 | 6-10 days | 8.7 | 11.4 |
| more than 10 days | 4.8 | 11.5 | more than 10 days | 7.0 | 11.6 |

Notes

1. From Questions 19 and 20 in the Survey of Teachers.
2. 2000 results from *PD 2000*, p.138.
3. The results are weighted.

Twice as many part-time as full-time teachers did no PD in school hours in 2007 (6 per cent compared to 3 per cent), and twice as many full-time as part-time teachers had more than 10 days of PD in 2007 (11 per cent compared to 5 per cent).

The differences for PD out of school hours, although not so marked, were still significant, with the same trends as for PD in school hours.

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CHAPTER FIVE: CONSULTATION FINDINGS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LANDSCAPE IN AUSTRALIA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 is to present cases about professional learning from each of the jurisdictions in Australia.

Chapter 5 sketches out an overview of the professional learning landscape in Australia with respect to standards-based reforms. In this chapter, we synthesize the work reported to us by (1) selected state government departments and statutory authorities about standards-based reforms and (2) national professional associations that have formulated standards for professional learning. In a separate section (3), we consider the work of national organisations, such as the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), the Australian Education Union (AEU) and the Australian Council of Educators (ACE), and the Australian Council of Educational Leaders (ACEL), which advocate specific forms of professional learning on behalf of their members.

Chapter 6 comprises cases about professional learning in each jurisdiction. These cases have been constructed on the basis of interviews which members of the research team conducted with key stakeholders in each state. Our intention has not been primarily to triangulate the results of the surveys (though cross referencing of this kind obviously provides valuable insights into the current state of play with respect to professional learning) or to interview a representative sample of people in each state, covering all sectors and types of schooling. The purpose of the interviews was quite distinct. We approached representatives of systems in each state, including people who are active in the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP), to nominate significant examples of professional learning. We thereby refrained from imposing our own preconceptions of what might constitute quality professional learning and attempted to access the range of viewpoints available. But interviewees gave us far more than a sense of their views and values – they also conveyed their visions of the potential of professional learning to bring about significant educational change. Whereas the surveys provide a rich picture of the current state of play of professional learning in Australia, the interviews offer compelling accounts of what might be.

We have limited the amount of cross referencing between individual cases and between jurisdictions when we offer examples of professional learning, although some level of comparison was helpful in initially framing the particular sets of cases for each state. More extensive cross-references are found in the concluding chapter, in which we draw the surveys and the cases together to identify trends in professional learning across the country. In Chapter 6, we have chosen instead to provide a series of small windows on professional learning in each state. Our aim was to capture the distinctive ways in which discourses about professional learning are being enacted in each state, the initiatives that are being taken and the kinds of debates that are occurring. We are doing more than identifying themes or issues that the states and territories have in common. Rather, we are conducting an analysis which preserves a sense of the richly specific nature of each jurisdiction (and of the sectors and schools within those jurisdictions) while acknowledging ways in which they might fit within a larger trend or pattern.

5.2 STANDARDS-BASED REFORMS

5.2.1 *Contrasting State Jurisdictions*

Standards-based reforms are the subject of considerable debate (cf. Darling-Hammond, 2004), and we do not intend to detain ourselves too long in reflecting on the wave of such reforms that have occurred in Australia over the past fifteen years, still less to argue a certain viewpoint vis-à-vis those developments. Standards are

significant because of the ways they mediate thinking about professional learning. This is arguably what makes the present moment distinct in comparison with the professional landscape described in *PD 2000*. Standards-based reforms had occurred prior to *PD 2000* – e.g., the language of ‘outcomes’ had been given currency by the National Profiles and Statements in 1994 – but there is no evidence in the report that those reforms were mediating understandings of professional learning in quite the same way that occurs in this study.

Much of what interviewees had to say was shaped by a discourse about standards. This discourse sometimes took the form of an emphasis on student learning outcomes as a means of assessing the value of any professional learning that teachers experience. Material provided to us by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (‘Professional Learning in Effective Schools: Seven Principles for Highly Effective Professional Learning’), for example, begins by contending that ‘student outcomes data provides (sic) the focus of professional learning and is used to evaluate the impact of that learning on teacher practice and student achievement’ (DE&T, 2005, p.4). Teachers need to feel that their ‘school has a performance and development culture’, which has ‘agreed expectations and coherence around the quality of teaching required to impact on student performance’ (pp.6-7).

An interesting contrast to this approach is provided by ‘*Learning to Learn*’, a significant initiative implemented by the South Australian Department of Education and Children’s Services. This document takes what it describes as ‘an expanded view of outcomes’, arguing the need to ‘reinvent our notions of achievement’ (DECS, 2004, p.12). While, like the DE&T document, it offers a rationale for the development of state-wide structures for professional learning with a particular focus on school leadership, these assume a markedly different character from the structures established in Victoria. This difference is perhaps captured by what in Victoria is called a ‘Performance and Development Culture’ (DE&T, 2005, p.6) as distinct from ‘a culture of inquiry’ (DECS, 2004, pp.1, 6, 15) or ‘communities of learning’ (p.22) with a ‘praxis focus’ (p.16) of the South Australian initiative. Whereas the Victorian framework posits pre-defined learning outcomes (which it assumes are generally accepted by all stakeholders), the South Australian text takes a more tentative and exploratory stance with respect to outcomes. Indeed, it describes a ‘praxis focus’ as something which ‘generates powerful crises of meaning for many teachers, which allows the consideration of new possibilities for classroom pedagogy and relationships. Teachers become engaged with a range of learning theories and models to critically reflect on their practice in a challenging, but supportive environment’ (p.16)

The point here is not to argue the value of one initiative against the other – they are both complex policy responses to the felt need to bring about educational change that will enable teachers and schools to equip their students with the dispositions and skills necessary to become active citizens in the 21st century. Despite the apparent differences between these initiatives, they are recognizably part of a wave of educational change designed to meet the challenges of the future. And even though these documents are arguably informed by contrasting understandings of ‘outcomes’, they are both products of policy environments where outcomes are deemed to be important, and – what is more – where it is felt that systemic interventions need to occur in order to provide teachers with frameworks for continuing professional learning and enhancing their professional practice. The Victorian text explicitly takes issue with the ‘common belief’ that ‘professional development is an individual and self-improvement task, removed from the school context and not explicitly linked to the improvement of student learning’ (DE&T, 2005, p.4). We suspect that this is not something with which the teachers participating in ‘*Learning to Learn*’ would disagree. For all the differences between these documents, they each reflect a view that professional learning has larger significance than individual self-improvement, requiring teachers to acknowledge their accountability to their students and the communities they serve, and to explicitly situate their professional learning within the context of school and system-wide initiatives. Professional Learning is being coordinated at a system-wide level, whatever the precise form that learning might take.

Other significant standards-based reforms are the initiatives that have been taken by states – most notably New South Wales and Victoria – to develop professional standards for teachers. These are typically the responsibility of statutory authorities which take responsibility for a range of matters, including the accreditation of teacher education programs in tertiary institutions, standards for entry into the profession, and standards for excellent or accomplished teachers. We shall limit ourselves here to the New South Wales and Victorian examples.

5.2.1.1 *New South Wales Institute of Teachers (NSW IT)*

The New South Wales Institute of Teachers, established in 2004 with seed funding from the State Government, is the statutory body for teachers and schools from all sectors across NSW. Now almost totally self-funded through teachers' mandatory registration fees, the Institute aims to support quality teaching in all NSW schools. Its charter is to 'advance the status and standing of the teaching profession'. One approach to achieving this is through a system of accreditation and recognition of a teacher's 'professional capacity'. It also provides a process for the profession to influence 'the quality of teacher training and continuing professional development' (see the Institute website: <http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/>).

Our interview was with Mr Paul Martin (Manager, Initial teacher Education and Professional Learning) and Ms Sue Gazis (Senior Policy Officer). For them, as for NSWIT policy and practice, teachers' professional learning and professional development does not finish with formal teacher preparation courses. NSWIT sees ongoing professional learning as essential for teachers to keep engaged with the constantly changing nature of their work (including curriculum changes). This engagement involves individual teachers keeping pace with the continually evolving and expanding knowledge base of teaching, and developing themselves as professionals throughout their careers. At one level, NSWIT feels a strong obligation to provide advice and guidance about what is quality teaching and what is quality professional learning. And yet, as Mr Martin says, this is an iterative process. The Institute develops certain understandings and approaches, but it also learns from teachers and it learns from experience. Like the teachers it seeks to support and guide, the Institute is continually learning. Ultimately, NSWIT aims to help develop a more 'critical intellectual culture' for teachers so that they are better able to identify and plan for quality professional learning and quality teaching, thus enabling teachers and schools to improve student learning opportunities for all their students.

Most of our conversation with Mr Martin and Ms Gazis was focused on the role of NSWIT's *Framework for Professional Teaching Standards* in guiding and supporting teachers' learning. This *Framework* comprises four key stages in teachers' career progression: (i) Graduate Teacher, (ii) Professional Competence, (iii) Professional Accomplishment, and (iv) Professional leadership. Consistent with most iterations of professional standards in Australia, the nature of teachers' work is described in this *Framework* in three domains: Professional knowledge, Professional practice and Professional commitment. For each stage there are 7 Elements, which articulate more specific areas within the domains for the different stages. Our conversation focused on the ways in which Element 6 of this *Framework* ('Teachers continually improve their professional knowledge and practice') helps to provide support and advice, and also on the ways in which the Institute seeks to maintain quality assurance in teacher professional learning across NSW.

At present, all teachers in NSW who entered the profession since October 2004 are required to be accredited at Stage 2 ('Professional Competence') of the *Teaching Standards*. Accreditation for each new teacher is mandatory and occurs over a five year period. Beyond this time, teachers will be required to undergo a re-accreditation process to maintain their accreditation at the Professional Competence stage. (See the Institute's *Continuing professional development policy – supporting the*

maintenance of accreditation at professional

competence, <http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/IgnitionSuite/uploads/docs/continuing%20professional%20development%20policy.pdf>) This approach means that the Institute is necessarily working more closely with newer teachers to the profession in what Mr Martin and Ms Gazis called a ‘grandfathering process’ – that is, establishing professional learning cultures and relationships with teachers early in their careers, and gradually building on these over time. Nevertheless, the Institute is developing plans to offer voluntary accreditation for teachers at two further Stages of the *Standards*, ‘Professional Accomplishment’ and ‘Professional Leadership’ in the near future.

As part of Element 6 of accreditation at the stage of Professional Competence, teachers in NSW will be required to show evidence of having engaged in 100 hours of ‘quality professional learning’ (both school-based and external) over five years. These 100 hours are divided into two categories: (i) *Institute Registered Professional Development*. Through a range of research conducted by the Institute, and in association with the Institute’s Professional Learning Endorsement and Advisory Committee (PLEAC), the Institute makes judgments about which programs and activities it endorses as ‘quality professional learning’. While there are tensions, invariably, between and even within proposed professional development programs – e.g. conceptual tensions about the nature of professional learning – the Institute sees the process of making judgments about what constitutes quality professional learning as central to its responsibilities. The full range of endorsed providers, and the Institute approved programs/activities they offer, is published free of charge on the Institute’s website. (Providers include DET, AISV, CEC, professional teaching associations, universities, commercial professional development providers, and industry partners such as the Bell Shakespeare Company and NIDA. In this respect, the Institute seeks to exercise rigorous quality assurance of these programs and providers.) (ii) *Teacher identified professional development*. As this title of this category implies, teachers are also required to engage in professional learning, usually within their school, and this is not necessarily endorsed by the Institute. The Principal of the school is considered by the Institute as an ‘online manager’ who takes responsibility for quality assurance protocols in this category.

As part of the process of accreditation for Professional Competence, teachers are required to submit a collection of 6-7 annotated teaching artefacts (such as lesson plans, new resources, curriculum development documents, etc.) which are framed by the seven ‘Elements’ of the Teaching Standards. This is intended to represent a range of evidence of their practices and their professional learning. On completion of the accreditation process, each teacher is provided with an ‘accreditation report’, which reports on their work vis-à-vis all seven Elements. These individual reports are continually monitored and analysed to establish trends in relation to the types of professional learning in which teachers are engaging, and areas where there seem to be ‘gaps’ in teachers’ learning in NSW. The results of this monitoring and analysis are used to inform future policy. For instance, if a particular ‘gap’ is apparent in a particular area of learning, the Institute may seek out new providers and/or new programs for their pool of registered professional development published on the website.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Paul Martin, Manager, Initial teacher Education and Professional Learning, and Ms Sue Gazis, Senior Policy Officer)

5.2.1.2 *The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)*

The main focus of the Victorian Institute of Teaching over the past three years has been on the implementation of the provisionally registered teachers’ program. This has been a major initiative in response to the influx of new teachers in Victorian schools after a period when teacher education graduates found it very difficult to gain employment. The professional standards for provisionally registered teachers developed by the Victorian Institute of Teaching provide the framework for this program. Provisionally registered teachers are expected to develop their practice in order to meet the standards. Although this is a regulatory requirement, with a compliance element, the program also reflects a commitment to meeting the needs of early career teachers, and providing them with the foundations for their

continuing professional practice, learning and engagement (i.e. the three dimensions of the VIT's professional standards). The standards framework exposes teachers to what they need to know as they begin their careers. Through meeting the requirements for continuing registration, they are also familiarised with the concept of 'evidence' and continuing reflective and collegial practice as components of professional learning.

Through implementing the provisionally registered teachers' program, the Victorian Institute of Teaching has also been obliged to address other aspects of professional learning. The program has required the VIT to embark on a process of inducting school principals and mentor teachers into the protocols for assessing early career teachers and generally giving them the support they need in order to succeed. This has provided the VIT insights into the quality of the professional cultures in schools. Where the process of induction has worked most successfully, schools appear to have an integrated school culture, a culture of 'integrated professional learning' (Fitzroy High School was named as an example). Where schools do not reflect a professional learning culture, beginning teachers appear to have received less support.

The provisionally registered teachers' program is one stage in an overall plan for professional renewal that now embraces the re-registration of practising teachers. This will happen in a five year cycle, and requires teachers to show evidence of professional learning over that period. The VIT has recently developed guidelines for professional development activities, requiring teachers to undertake activities that embrace both knowledge from outside the immediate school or work environment and less formal, individual, school based activities which contribute to their professional learning. This information can be obtained on the VIT website, namely the Pdi: http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=833. The VIT is promoting the value of 'a broad range of professional development activities', although the reference point for all activities remains – crucially – the professional standards which it has developed.

The VIT is especially mindful of the ways in which school cultures shape the professional learning of teachers. While it affirms the need for teachers to engage in learning that connects with their local settings, it also emphasizes the importance for teachers to look beyond their school and to access other sources of professional learning. The VIT is working towards a situation where teachers are able to share what they are doing in their classrooms, making connections between what happens in class and the professional development opportunities available to them. Such teachers are always mindful of how their professional learning translates into classroom practice. This is not to say that this is a straightforward process, as though professional development automatically produces improved student learning outcomes. Rather, professional learning might best be described as a 'recursive process', whereby teachers are continually monitoring their professional practice in the light of what they have learned, and revisiting what they have learned in the light of their professional practice.

There has been a significant shift from the centralised provision of professional development to a recognition that professional learning occurs at a local level, requiring school leaders to take responsibility for the management of resources. This obviously has its positive aspects, but there is also a danger that such professional learning will not look beyond what is happening in local contexts. Teachers obviously need to ground their learning in their local settings, but they also need to develop a capacity to look beyond those settings, and thereby develop a perspective on what is happening in their schools. For all the VIT's focus on the importance of teachers having the autonomy to identify their professional learning needs, it is also important that the standards provide a common language and framework that enables teachers to articulate aspects of their professional practice that have wider currency. The VIT has a vision of teachers working collegially, using the language of standards to ask what makes a teacher effective. The structures and processes that the VIT provides enable individual teachers to see themselves as professionals while grappling with the demands of state-wide reforms or mandates.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Fran Cosgrove, Manager of Professional Learning, and Mr John Mildren, Manager of Professional Development)

5.2.1.3 Queensland College of Teachers (QCT)

With its origins in the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration (BTR), the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) commenced operations on 1 January 2006, having been established by an Act of the Queensland Parliament as an independent government body with State authority to approve pre-service teacher education programs and register school teachers. The latter includes requiring teachers to engage in professional development/learning as a condition of their registration (e.g. moving from provisional to full registration, 5 year demonstrations of continual professional development [or CPD]), relevant to a set of QCT-developed *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers (PSQT)* that are regarded by the College as a resource to guide teachers' reflective practice and in planning teachers' professional development as well as benchmark standards for the full registration of teachers (see <http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/standards/teachers/index.html>). The QCT itself does not offer teacher professional development as such but is very interested and active in promoting teachers' engagement in PD that enables them to comply with PSQT and hence meet its registration requirements.

For example, the QCT is currently promoting requirements for structured professional development for the induction and ongoing support of beginning teachers during their period of provisional registration (the first area that the QCT has targeted to embed its standards in registration processes) with school systems and principals of schools. This promotion includes interactions with systems and principals clarifying for them what the registration process in Queensland involves and how this is related to the QCT standards, and modelling how to use the PSQT as a resource for reflective practice for individual and teams of teachers and for planning professional development. One form of interaction involves seeking out opportunities to provide briefings at principals' meetings. (In the Queensland system, progressing from provisional to full registration is based on the recommendation of a teacher's principal, justified on the basis of meeting the QCT standards.) These sessions are also delivered by the QCT in ways that model what it recommends with respect to how induction programs could be run with provisionally registered teachers. The QCT is currently conducting a State-wide program of workshops for provisionally registered teachers, inviting them to also bring a support person from their school (which could be the Principal, Deputy Principal or a fully registered peer), as a forum for informing them of the PSQT and registration requirements. These workshops are supported by a range of information and supplementary optional tools for recording on the QCT's website. Further, to complement the support provided by the Queensland Department of Education Training and the Arts (DETA) (through a trained cohort of principals and deputy principals) to help its teachers gain an understanding of DETA's own set of teacher professional standards, the QCT is currently offering this same level of support regarding its standards to the Queensland Catholic education systems and ultimately to the independent sector. The aim is to support teachers and Principals to be able to integrate QCT requirements with the existing processes and requirements for their school or system and to encourage viewing the PSQT as a lens for understanding all teachers' work rather than regarding them as an add-on.

The QCT is also exploring ways in which teachers are able to identify what professional development opportunities are available to them, as a way of assisting teachers to meet CPD requirements. A number of models have been explored but no definitive approach has been adopted as yet, in part because of the QCT's desire to avoid replication of work undertaken by the various school systems (including DETA's recently established Professional Development and Leadership Institute). One way forward may be for the QCT to provide links on its web page to relevant pages on employer web pages. It has also considered whether it could recognise the alignment of PD programs from the range of providers with the QCT standards. This is distinct from certifying the *delivery* of PD over which the QCT has no control. No definitive decision has been taken on these matters as yet, although in the future the QCT will be involved in approving and possibly delivering part of a 'returning to teaching in schools' program as part of the renewal process (guided by the principles of 'recency' and CPD) to be implemented from 2010. In its policy development, in regard to CPD, the QCT will also consider how to address the implications of CPL requirements for teachers who move between employer systems and for casual teachers

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Ros Bell, Assistant Director, Professional Standards)

5.3 STANDARDS DEVELOPED BY PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Professional standards have not been developed by statutory authorities only for regulatory purposes, such as entry into the profession, continuing registration, and so on. The foregoing examples show that such authorities view professional standards as providing necessary frameworks for professional learning. They reflect relatively sophisticated understandings of professional learning that acknowledge the importance of both local communities of practice and larger social contexts. The standards are designed to enable teachers to discuss and reflect on their professional practice, providing them with a language that has currency both within their local settings and beyond.

Nor are professional standards exclusively the products of such authorities. Key professional associations in Australia – most notably the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE), the Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA), the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) and the Australian Science Teachers' Association (ASTA) – have developed their own subject specific professional standards, providing accounts of what teachers within their respective disciplinary fields 'should know and be able to do'. This is in contrast to the generic standards which have been developed by statutory authorities. (It is also interesting to note, however, that the VIT standards draw heavily on the work done by the AATE/ALEA, AAMT, and ASTA, which predates the establishment of the Victorian Institute of Teaching).

The professional associations which have just been mentioned were the recipients of funding through the Australian Research Council in 1999-2001, and since then other associations have followed their lead and developed their own standards. It is not, however, as though they have all marched to the same drum. The standards developed by AATE/ALEA, AAMT and ASTA reflect contrasting approaches to the task of formulating the domains of teachers' knowledge and practice, possibly due to differences between the disciplinary fields out of which they emerge. Terry Hayes, in a report written for Teaching Australia, which has played a key role in showcasing and to some extent coordinating these developments, provides a reasonably comprehensive account of the standards which have thus far been developed, and the differences between them (Hayes, 2006). According to Hayes, a 'creative tension' runs through much of this work, 'between standards for professional learning and standards for measurement of teacher performance' (Hayes, 2006, p.2). The various associations which have been involved in developing professional standards have grappled with this tension in different ways. Their contrasting approaches mean that their statements about professional learning are inflected somewhat differently. The Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy in Australia (STELLA), for example, emphasize the locally specific character of professional learning, and the need for teachers to engage in inquiry or research into their professional practice in their local settings. The standards are conceived as providing a framework for such inquiry. By contrast, the standards developed by the AAMT emphasize the need for teachers to engage in professional development to match the standards – a subtle difference from STELLA but nonetheless a significant one.

For the purposes of this report, representatives of key national professional associations were interviewed about their attitudes towards professional learning, when it became clear that some were exploring the value of a standards framework for professional learning in different ways. Some of these initiatives reflect quite sophisticated understandings of professional learning. The Australian Literacy Educators' Association, for example, after a period of significant collaboration with the Australian Association for the Teaching of English on the development of the Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy in Australia (STELLA),

has since embarked on a separate project which explores the way early career teachers can use the standards framework in dialogue with mentors to inquire into aspects of their professional practice (see Meiers, 2006).

5.3.1 The ALEA STELLA Professional Learning Project

In 2005 some ALEA members were given an opportunity to work with a mentor to explore the STELLA professional standards, to develop their own professional learning, and to share their stories with other professionals. A major outcome of this initiative has been the publication of *Teachers' stories: professional standards, professional learning*.

ALEA National Council decided in 2004 to focus on ways of broadening the knowledge of ALEA members about the STELLA professional standards. The STELLA professional learning project was set up to explore ways of using STELLA as a framework for teachers' professional learning. A key question for the project concerned the ways in which primary school teachers might use STELLA. It was intended that the project should build on the work that had been done in developing standards for English and literacy teachers, and should contribute new insights into how STELLA could support teachers' work. The project was also designed to explore and evaluate a mentoring process, and to investigate ways of using the STELLA materials as a tool for professional learning.

Three Local Council areas in Australia were identified, and invitations issued to ALEA members to apply for a 'scholarship' that would provide time for them to work with a mentor. After a review of the applications, STELLA scholarships were awarded to eighteen ALEA members who were classroom teachers in the mentors' Local Council areas. The mentors were experienced and expert ALEA members. The groups worked throughout Term 2 and Term 3 in 2005. The project was coordinated and monitored by a project team with support from the ALEA National Office. A researcher was engaged to evaluate the project and provide a written report by December 2005.

A strong professional learning model underpinned the design of the project. Key features of the design were ongoing work with an experienced mentor; participation in a collaborative group of teachers; classroom-based research; and the use of the STELLA standards as a framework for professional learning. The mentors assisted the scholars to identify an aspect of their current practice to investigate and to select one or more of the STELLA standards as a focus for the investigation. The scholars carried out these investigations in the context of their own classroom, or current professional role, and documented what happened. Their rich and reflective accounts of these investigations were then published in *Teachers stories; professional standards, professional learning* (Meiers, 2006).

An evaluation report of the project noted that 'all scholars found the STELLA framework useful and all believed that they benefited from their involvement in the project. In addition, all scholars believed that their work in the project impacted positively on their students'. Key factors contributing to the success of the project identified by the evaluation included the value of the STELLA materials as a framework to guide their thinking and to promote reflection; the high quality support of the mentors; and the collaboration with a team of colleagues. The provision of funding for teacher release was recognised as a critical aspect of the project, as it provided dedicated time for teachers' professional learning.

5.3.1.1 The STELLA scholars' stories.

The STELLA scholars' stories collected in *Teachers' stories; professional standards, professional learning* provide stimulating accounts of the different professional journeys that the participants undertook in this project. There are many common themes in their stories: the gradually unfolding understandings of the depth and range of the STELLA materials; the immense value of the support and feedback from the mentors; the rewards of being part of an ongoing professional discussion with colleagues; and the ways in which opportunities to reflect on one's teaching opened up new possibilities for improving students' learning.

The stories in *Teachers' stories: professional standards, professional learning* has been loosely clustered around the STELLA standards. All scholars took one or more of the standards as a starting point for their investigations, using them as point of departure that inevitably led them towards other standards. The strong interconnections between the standards are revealed in most stories. The stories illustrate the ways in which consideration of one standard pushes teachers towards a broader consideration of all aspects of STELLA.

The stories from the mentors present a broader picture of the work of groups of teachers, and of the mentoring process. Standard 3.3, *Teachers are active members of the professional and wider community*, encapsulates the work done by the three mentors, demonstrating how membership of the professional community extends beyond the classroom, and in the case of two of the mentors, into the retirement years.

(Based on an introduction written by Ms Marion Meiers to *Teachers' stories: professional standards, professional learning*. This text was provided by Ms Robyn Cations, Secretary/Manager of ALEA)

5.3.2 The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations AFMLTA

The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) is taking another type of initiative. Their standards were developed in the wake of the standards work completed by ASTA, AAMT, AATE and ALEA. Having formulated their own *Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures* (2005), AFMLTA is now working on a professional development program within this framework, using a train-the-trainer model that should produce an extensive network of teachers who are working with the standards framework.

The AFMLTA is currently engaged in a very large professional learning project with government funding, namely the implementation of a set of professional standards for teachers of Languages. This is in line with similar initiatives taken by the AATE, ALEA, AAMT and ASTA. Ms Lia Tedesco, President of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations (AFMLTA), especially commended STELLA (the Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy developed jointly by AATE and ALEA) as providing an excellent model of how professional standards might be used to renew the teaching profession. The development of the Standards, which was made possible by a grant from the Department of Education, Science and Training, predates Ms Tedesco's period as President. These standards have been published – see *Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures*, Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations, 2005 – and Ms Tedesco is now actively involve, through DEEWR's School Languages Program funding, in developing a professional development program within this framework. To do this, AFMLTA has subcontracted researchers at the University of South Australia. The model they are using is a train the-trainer one. The materials are presently in draft form, and are available on the project website at: www.pspl.unisa.edu.au.

The aim of the project is to encourage teachers to engage with the professional standards, using the standards as a framework for their professional learning. The funding obtained from DEEWR has enabled them to organise time release for teachers across the states in order to engage in the project. Over 400 teachers are

participating in the project throughout 2008. Once the funding comes to an end, AFMLTA hopes that it can sustain continuing engagement with the Standards, through the online materials that it is currently developing. There are two streams to the project, one which is a general awareness raising stream, and a second stream that involves, according to Ms Tedesco, fairly ‘heavy duty, deep analytical work about what language teaching is all about, including classroom observations’. A small number of teachers will participate in this part of the project. They will be required to reflect on an aspect of their work – it could be any dimension of their teaching, such as the use of digital resources, or their assessment practices – and some of their classroom observations will be published on the web to guide the professional learning of other teachers.

This project involves teachers engaging in deep reflection about their teaching, in relation to the 8 domains contained in the Standards: educational theory and practice, language and culture, language pedagogy, ethics and responsibility, professional relationships, awareness of wider context, advocacy, and personal characteristics. (See *Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures* – http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/curric/files/links/prof_standards.pdf.)

In addition, through the project, language specific annotations of the Standards have been developed for Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Spanish – these are also on the project website.

It is hoped that as teachers of other languages engage with the project, that further annotations will be developed.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Lia Tedesco, President of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers’ Associations AFMLTA)

5.4 OTHER NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

5.4.1 *Teaching Australia – Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership*

Teaching Australia, previously known as the National Institute Quality Teaching and School Leadership (NIQTSL), is a national body established by the Federal Government in 2005. Its website outlines its roles as follows:

- To support and advance the quality of teaching and leadership;
- To strengthen and advance the standing of the profession; and
- To develop as the national body for the teaching profession (<http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/go/home>)

Promoting and supporting the professional learning of individual teachers, groups of teachers, schools, and professional organisations, is one way in which Teaching Australia addresses these roles and objectives. Much of this work begins with researching for, and subsequently preparing, strategic plans for professional learning in schools across the country. All plans are subject to the approval of the Teaching Australia Board, whose members make decisions with respect to key strategic goals. These strategic goals include: (i) to develop a coherent national perspective on teachers and teaching; (ii) to develop and/or sustain professional learning strategies and practices that engage the profession; (iii) to promote ‘catalytic and comprehensive action’ (the facility to generate policy and structures that will stimulate and

guide professional learning cultures and communities across Australia into the future); and (iv) to develop an evidence/research base for quality teaching, leadership and professional learning.

Teaching Australia does not generally provide PD events or activities; rather, it facilitates, supports and funds professional development and learning through a range of targeted programs and research initiatives. The Institute is funded by a core grant from the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Examples of Teaching Australia activities concerned with professional learning include:

1. Leading Australia's Schools, an extended leadership program for school principals, including workshops and activities in a series of two residential programs;
2. Promoting teachers' professional learning – provision of funding to the Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations to support PL of members;
3. School leaders' international professional development – funding provided to principals' associations to support international exchange and study tours;
4. Masterclasses – such as when recipients of National Awards for Quality Teaching deliver masterclasses. Classes have covered a range of content and are presented in a range of locations, including regional locations;
5. University/school partnerships – Teaching Australia commissioned Victoria University to conduct research in this area in order to identify 'effective and sustainable partnerships'. This research is due to be completed in mid 2008;
6. Review and synthesis of research on quality teaching and school leadership. A review of recent research was conducted by the University of Western Sydney and published in 2007 (see <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/webdav/site/tasite/shared/Teaching%20and%20Leading%20for%20Quality%20Australian%20Schools>); and
7. Feasibility studies into a national centre for pedagogy and a national research clearinghouse. These studies are examining ways of building tighter links between research, teaching practice and professional learning.

In our conversation with Ms Fran Hinton, Chief Executive of Teaching Australia, Ms Hinton spoke at some length about one of these programs, Leading Australia's Schools. The first iteration of Leading Australia's Schools was implemented in 2006; it has since been offered in 2007 and again in 2008. The program was conceived through collaboration across sectors and professional associations, including the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA), the Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA), Catholic Secondary Principals Australia (CaSPA), and the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA). All were involved in the design and development of the program and a committee including these stakeholders plays a major role in selecting participants for the program each year. The project is delivered through a partnership with management consultants, Hay Group, and the University of Melbourne.

The program, which has operated twice per year in the last three years with 40 participants per course, is open to principals from all sectors and systems. Activities in the early part of the program are focused around a five-day residential workshop, but principals are already engaged in professional learning through a set of pre-program activities that are intended to prepare them for the collaborative activity and reflection in the workshops. A key component of the learning is the design of, and critical reflection upon, a project that is intended to be enacted within the context of the principal's own school. Later in the course, there is follow-up two-day

residential ‘recall’ session, which both encourages principals to draw together their learning and experiences during the course of the program, but also to build professional relationships and networks with other principals that will be the basis for ongoing learning communities beyond the life of Leading Australia’s Schools. The program has been evaluated externally by Atelier Learning Solutions (see their report at: <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/webdav/site/tasite/shared/Evaluation%20of%20the%20Leading%20Australia's%20Schools%20Program.pdf>) (Based on notes from an interview with Ms Fran Hinton, Chief Executive of Teaching Australia)

5.4.2 Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO)

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) represents the parents and school communities in Australia’s public schools. Established in 1946, ACSSO is a federal body governed by its affiliates in each state and territory. While ACSSO has an educative and lobbying role on behalf of its members (primarily parents), it also has an interest in fostering practices that enable productive partnerships and lines of communication between parents and school leaders/teachers, as well as between a broad range of stakeholders within the education sector. Fundamental to ACSSO’s mission is the need to assist the teaching profession to reach the highest level of professionalism and to build respect for the profession and for state education.

We spoke with Hon. Terry Aulich, Executive Director of ACSSO, about the role of ACSSO in teacher professional learning in Australia. He explained that while ACSSO is not a typical provider of professional learning, there are components of its operation that have an educative function for teachers and school leaders. He identified the following: (1) ACSSO conferences (the two-day annual national conference is attended by a range of stakeholders. The most recent conference has been concerned with family-school partnerships); (2) the ACSSO website: <http://www.acsso.org.au/> (a repository of ideas, documents, resources, links and perspectives related to current ACSSO initiatives); (3) training and workshops (on a needs basis); and (4) brochures and pamphlets provided to state schools across the country.

ACSSO has a number of key interests that it promotes through its website, conferences and other activities. Examples of key interests relevant to professional learning among teachers and school leaders include:

- Family-school partnerships;
- Values and their relationship to school organisation and management; and
- School communication strategies/audits relating to parents and community

ACSSO reports that teachers have identified a shortage of professional learning opportunities with respect to their relationships with parents and the community at large. One of the main concerns of teachers, and a critical factor in successful education, is, in short, missing from the professional learning curricula, and ACSSO is committed to seeing this gap filled. It is keen to develop substantive study modules related to family-school communication through partnerships with universities and greater engagement with research.

With the Australian Parents’ Council, it will also own and manage the recently announced Family-School and Community Partnership Bureau. The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education has signed off on four year funding for the Bureau. Its main role will be to conduct action research and promote greater communication

and links between schools, families and communities. Part of its strategy will be to provide models and training to teachers and parents about building these partnerships. The work of ACSSO will align with some of the research and development to be conducted by the Bureau.

ACSSO has found that its professional and research offerings have been well received because well managed parent organisations can bring valuable perspectives to the learning table and help to minimize the dangers of teachers talking only to teachers. ACSSO is also mindful of how what it perceives to be ‘fads’ have driven professional learning, and thus seeks to promote ongoing professional learning that (1) is practical, useful and relevant (2) supports bridge-building between schools, families and communities, and (3) is intellectually challenging and academically rigorous.

(Based on notes from an interview with Hon. Terry Aulich, Executive Director, ACSSO, as well as material supplied by ACSSO)

5.4.3 Australian Education Union (AEU)

Mr Angelo Gavrielatos is the Federal President of the Australian Education Union. Mr Gavrielatos indicated that the AEU and its state affiliates run a raft of professional development programs, from trade union training sessions through to support for early career teachers. These programs embrace both professional and industrial issues, which – in the AEU’s view – are inextricably linked. Mr Gavrielatos gave as an example the way standards frameworks are currently being developed at a state and national level, with some states setting up institutes which require early career teachers to satisfy certain criteria before they are given continuing employment. The fact that continuing employment is dependent on satisfying criteria relating to professional standards for early career teachers means that the AEU needs to take an active interest in the development of standards, in order to advocate on behalf of its members. The same applies to the situation of experienced teachers and any attempt to establish performance standards which may relate to the identification of teachers exhibiting qualities of ‘professional accomplishment’ and ‘professional leadership.’

Registration and Accreditation bodies at a state level are currently moving towards requiring teachers to show that they have engaged in professional learning in order to maintain their accreditation. As an advocate on behalf of teachers, the AEU needs to ensure that professional development is available to all teachers and that it is of appropriate quality in order that no teacher is disadvantaged by this development. Mr Gavrielatos instanced his own work as a member of the Quality Teaching Council of the NSW Institute of Teachers, which has recently been involved in establishing guidelines for beginning teachers to satisfy criteria for continuing employment, as well as accrediting professional development providers. It was vital that the NSW branch of the AEU was an active player in these developments, just as it is desirable for the AEU to participate in similar bodies elsewhere in Australia. Vis-à-vis the development of standards, the AEU needs to ensure that sufficient funding is provided for teachers to access quality professional development.

Professional development is an increasingly important issue in the current climate. The requirement to engage in professional development in order to satisfy registration / accreditation requirements impacts directly on the working conditions of AEU members. Teachers are being put in a position where they will need to

engage in professional learning, not simply for its own sake, but in order to guarantee continuing employment. This also raises the question of employers' responsibilities to ensure adequate provision of and access to professional learning for their employees.

With respect to the nature of the professional learning provided, the AEU believes that professional learning must be relevant to the needs identified by the profession. Teachers are best placed to gauge their professional learning needs, although these must be balanced against system requirements, e.g. the new national curriculum. What is required is a blending of what teachers consider relevant with what systems consider to be a priority. However, even with system wide initiatives, it is important for governments to ensure that any reform they introduce is adequately resourced in the form of professional development for teachers. For any reform to be successful, it must have the support of the profession, and this can only be obtained by involving teachers in decision making and then providing the profession as a whole with support in order to implement change. Teachers must be committed to the change. On the other hand, it is also important for Governments to acknowledge the hard work that teachers already do, and not to burden them with yet another wave of reforms with little result.

Mr Gavrielatos cited the work of Mr Tony Vinson published in the *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW*: <http://www.plutoaustralia.com/pl/default.asp?pageId=317>. Vinson argues that teaching has at its heart 'an irreducible core of progressive refinement'. Teachers are constantly seeking to refine their craft. This is distinct from the professional development teachers are required to do in response to the system wide reforms. In the final analysis, there is something invaluable about the way teachers carve out the time and space to get together in order to engage in the 'progressive refinement' of their teaching. We have gone well past the notion of the external expert who flies in and flies out without having to walk in their shoes. But in order for teachers to engage in reflective conversations of this kind, systems clearly need to provide resourcing to support it. Our public schools are cash strapped, and there is a lot of teacher stress and cynicism out there, which will be only made worse if systems continue to impose demands without providing teachers the opportunity to reflect. The mooted national curriculum is a case in point. Unless efforts are made to win the hearts and minds of teachers, it will fail. Any initiative which does not recognise the centrality of teachers will fail.

Mr Gavrielatos then focused on the professional learning which teachers experience specifically through their trade union involvement. The union provides training for delegates and representatives, when they are able to learn more about the work of the union and their role within it. Such forums provide them with an opportunity to access relevant information, most notably policy as it impacts on education. For people to be fully engaged in their profession, they need to be fully aware of government policy and its implications Teachers should be very well informed. Once governments announce particular policies, then it is necessary for teachers to reflect on their implications and their likely impact on their work. This is what AEU forums enable teachers to do.

Once governments take particular initiatives, they need to provide teachers with opportunities to engage in the professional learning necessary to deliver them. Governments need to be very mindful of what they impose on schools. According to Mr Gavrielatos, we have just seen a decade of some serious political interference in the lives of our school, when educational issues have been sacrificed for political imperatives as a result of the so-called 'culture wars'. Politicians should stay out of the classroom, and recognise the knowledge and skills of the teaching profession. Teachers are the ones who have the capacity to develop and implement curriculum. They do not need to be micro-managed, or reduced to the level of mere technicians who deliver material developed by outside 'experts'. In this respect, the symbolism of naming a national Curriculum Board of 'experts' is very telling.

Teachers want to engage in high quality professional development. There will always be tensions between what governments think is important and what teachers consider ought to be given priority. Such tensions can be productive – they do not have to be viewed negatively – but at the core of debates and reform initiatives should be a respect for the views of teachers and their capacity to engage in a ‘progressive refinement’ of their professional practice.

At the end of the discussion Mr Gavrielatos stressed that Australia is a vast country, and that the AEU is very concerned to ensure that teachers who work in remote and isolated places are able to experience quality professional learning.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Gavrielatos, Federal President of the Australian Education Union)

5.4.4 Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations (AJCPTA)

The AJCPTA is a federated organization of every Australian state and territory joint council of professional teaching associations, each representative of a number of professional teaching associations within their jurisdiction. For example, in Western Australia there are about 50 professional teaching associations that are members of the ‘umbrella’ group of the Professional Teaching Council of WA (PTCWA). As President of this Council, Anne represents the PTCWA at the national level (at the AJCPTA, of which she is also President). The aims of state and territory councils are to support and promote the work of the professional teaching associations and to speak on their behalf to government and other organizations. The associations themselves are of teachers (broadly understood; i.e. not just school teachers) grouped together around common interests in a specific subject (e.g., Geography), specific sector (e.g., Primary) or a special interest (e.g., disabilities) while others are state specific (e.g., association of Level 3 classroom teachers in WA, association of beginning and returning teachers in QLD, etc).

Throughout Australia there are about 120,000 individuals represented within these associations and joint councils. There is a general downward trend in terms of membership, participation in professional development activities and in committees, which reflects the increasing time and other employer demands (e.g., specific employer-initiated and registration-required professional development) placed on the nation’s teachers. In particular, employer requirements for teachers to engage after hours in professional development as a whole-school and the associated assumption that teachers are not already engaged in self-initiated professional development (organised by associations, universities, etc) and therefore have no other commitments, are having a significant impact on professional teaching association numbers and activities. Many teachers feel so overwhelmed by the amount of professional development they are required to attend that association professional development workshops are not as well attended as they have been. Further, while younger teachers are willing to participate in and pay for professional development activities organised by these associations, they seem less willing to become members and be involved in their committees. Again, this may be explained by increased professional development requirements (particularly for beginning teachers) by employers and registration authorities.

The association of Geography teachers provides an example of the kinds of professional learning offered by professional teachers associations. In WA it provides its members with: a regular newsletter, a web site, a 2-3 day annual conference (including geography-related fieldwork), sessions for beginning and returning teachers of geography, resources (workbooks, textbooks) for students, social events (e.g., solstice dinners and geography-related speaker, etc.), introductions to experienced geography teachers as resources, and so on. Beginning and returning teacher sessions include curriculum-related information and advice on designing course tasks, with follow-up sessions and, where possible, the appointment of mentors as an ongoing resource between sessions.

While most professional development activities are organised by individual associations, a few are organised by a joint state Council. These tend to be one-off workshops for association office bearers, which involve the sharing of information and opportunities to learn from office bearers in other associations. However, Councils sometimes offer professional development focused on issues (e.g., values education) that are relevant across sectors (e.g., primary, secondary, etc.) and for a whole system (e.g., WA). These system-wide initiatives are also about securing time and space for addressing professional teaching association professional development interests and are sometimes organised in partnership with other organizations (such as a teacher union or a department of education) as a way of enhancing their claim on a system's professional development agenda and maximising their collective resources. For example, in partnership with the State's teacher union, the Professional Teaching Council of WA recently organised a professional development forum on values education, funding an academic from Hawaii to run the sessions that were attended by a diversity of members from both organizations and multiple sectors. The PTCWA also has a relationship with the Curriculum Corporation that involves its members in ongoing discussions regarding values education in the curriculum and requires participants to engage in between-session activities.

While not a member of the PTCWA – the Northern Territory's teachers' union is the only such union that is a professional teachers' association member – the WA teachers union is regularly involved in organising professional development for the State's teachers and was instrumental in establishing DET's Professional Learning Institute, negotiated through the last enterprise bargaining agreement with the WA Government.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Anne Tumak, President of AJCPTA)

5.4.5 *The Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE)*

The ACDE is the peak association of the deans of faculties of education and heads of schools of education in Australian universities and other higher education institutions. It advocates for teaching and research and scholarship in the broad discipline of Education. Faculties and Schools of Education produce the majority of educational research and scholarship in Australia. They are responsible for initial and post-initial teacher education for learners of all ages (early childhood, primary, secondary and adult) and provide further professional learning for those concerned with human and organisational development and learning. Their graduates work in formal and informal education settings in a wide range of occupations. (See ACDE's website <http://www.acde.edu.au/>.)

We spoke with Professor Sue Willis, President of ACDE about the role of ACDE in professional learning policy and practice across Australia. Professor Willis began by stating that Australian higher education schools and faculties would undoubtedly agree that professional learning or professional development is a crucial part of teachers' work and of teacher professional identity. In relation to school teachers, she sees it as fundamental to the contract entered into with teacher registration bodies in their different jurisdictions (in effect, a 'license to teach') that teachers have a responsibility and a willingness to be lifelong learners. And yet, school teachers also have a right to be supported in terms of time and resources in their initial and post initial professional learning and professional development. She also pointed out that Education faculties and schools in Australia have an interest in providing and supporting professional learning opportunities for teachers in a wide range of professional and industrial contexts. These contexts include the police, the armed forces, and national organizations ranging from CARE Australia to VISY, and mining companies.

Despite broad agreement amongst ACDE members about the importance of professional learning, there is considerable variation around the country, at the institutional level, with respect to practice and policy. Professor Willis explained this variation as emerging from different understandings of the nature of the

relationships between universities and practitioners in schools. Any professional learning program, activity, course, network or activity with which a Faculty of Education is involved operates with a particular understanding of the university in relation to one or a combination of the following: the individual teacher, the school or cluster of schools, the organisation or system, and/or the professional association. And from the perspective of the Faculty of Education, any professional learning program, activity, course, network or activity operates with a particular understanding of the university as a set of programs, structures, networks, courses and a grouping of individual teacher educators.

Professor Willis said that more traditional understanding of these relationships resulted in more ‘academy facing’ professional learning, and other understandings could be characterized more as ‘community facing’. More traditional ‘academy facing’ views would see the role of the education faculty as providing pre-service preparation, in the form of degrees, diplomas and certificates, and then a range of post-graduate courses, catering for the professional interests and perhaps the career aspirations of individual teachers and school leaders. In these views, there would be little systemic planning for the needs or wishes of clusters of groups of teachers or for partnerships with other organisations or systems. Nevertheless, individual teacher educators might still be allowed to, or encouraged to, work with schools and other organizations as part of their professional identity and perhaps even their professional obligation. They may be encouraged and even supported, in terms of recognition in workload, to go out and develop their own relationships with schools, professional associations or other bodies.

Alternative ‘community facing views’ would tend to operate with a range of explicit structures that reflect a number of ‘organisational relationships’ with schools and stakeholders in teacher professional learning. Such a view would drive strategic development of structures, partnerships and networks with these schools and stakeholders. It might involve offering a suite of smaller courses (usually negotiated, with governments or with other stakeholder input), and these might be targeted at whole schools or at individual teachers or groups of teachers working in particular curriculum or professional settings. Examples of this would be a cohort of teachers in a school enrolling in a MEd, a cohort of principals or school leaders from a number of schools enrolled in a negotiated higher degree program (at masters or PhD levels), or more school-based project-focused work (such as action learning projects) involving teams of teacher educators from university working as critical friends with teachers in schools.

Professor Willis emphasized that it was not a matter of a faculty or school of education being labeled as either ‘academy facing’ or ‘community facing.’ Most would work with a combination of these orientations, although it was apparent that there was an increasing recognition that more work needed to be done to develop ‘community facing’ programs, structures and cultures. She also pointed out that involvement of schools and faculties of education in teacher professional learning in both orientations involved both teaching and research that is intended, ultimately, to contribute to improving student learning.

ACDE is in dialogue with the Federal Government (through DEEWR and via various non-government organizations) in the development of teacher professional learning policy and practice, in an attempt to support what may be described as the ongoing ‘professionalization of the workforce.’ One example is ACDE’s work with Early Childhood Australia as they seek to identify the professional learning needs of early childhood teachers. Similar conversations are underway in relation to the federal governments’ ‘Digital Education Revolution’, where ACDE is helping DEEWR to develop agendas for supporting and driving this ‘revolution.’ And there are discussions with groups working on the development of a future National Curriculum and a new Indigenous Education policy, that impinge on teacher professional learning and teacher professional identity.

(Based on notes from an interview with Professor Sue Willis, President of ACDE)

5.4.6 Australian College of Educators (ACE)

The Australian College of Educators (ACE) is a professional association with approximately 6000 members drawn from across sectors and systems. The broad purpose of the Australian College of Educators is to ‘advance the education profession nationally across all sectors’ (www.austcolled.com.au). In achieving this mission ACE has a number of goals, strategies and practices that are specific to professional learning. It believes that ongoing professional learning:

- Is a professional obligation;
- Is critical to the quality of professional practice;
- Must be relevant, contextual, affordable;
- Should provide opportunities for exchange of knowledge and practice;
- Should be linked to credentials or satisfy teacher registration requirements;
- Must be linked to research; and
- Must be of high quality.

ACE has a national office that works with state branches and regional groups to develop professional learning strategies and activities. The national office has a critical communication, networking and coordination role with respect to developing programs, working with stakeholders, and producing resources, etc.

Currently ACE has over 120 programs of professional learning running across the country. These programs cover a range of areas, including the following:

- ACE on the Road – program designed to build professional esteem through workshops organised in regional groups;
- National, branch and regional conferences, seminars, forums;
- ACE website – provides a repository of resources, links, research;
- ACE publications – encompassing both on-line refereed research papers, occasional papers and school-based practical activities (*Ed Ventures, College Yearbook, Professional Educator, ACE Perspectives, College Conversations*);
- ACE research reports related to teaching and professional learning;
- Workshops for skills development – partnerships with VET and TAFE organisations;
- Training programs for leaders of professional learning; and
- Professional Learning study modules (in collaboration with the University of Wollongong).

We shall dwell on the last example as a way of illustrating some of the work which the ACE does.

ACE and the University of Wollongong have collaborated to provide a set of six study modules focussing on professional learning in the areas of educational leadership and quality teaching. Modules were developed in response to members’ felt needs, namely that they provide opportunity for extended professional learning; that they be flexibly delivered; that they give opportunities for networking and are linked to practical issues; and that they integrate research and practice.

Underpinning the development of this program was a goal to increase opportunities for credentialing attached to professional learning. The study modules are delivered via intensive workshops and online study modes. Participants complete assignments. Module completion can be used as credit toward programs of post-graduate study at the University of Wollongong. Program participants include ACE members and non-members from government and non-government school sectors; some are self-funded, while others are funded by their employers. Most participants are school leaders or aspiring leaders. The University of Wollongong academics develop the learning modules and identify academic and education professionals who are recognised experts in relevant fields to present the modules and to contribute to online learning by students. ACE sources participants, provides completion certificates, and manages enrolments as well as finances. Module content areas include: Leadership for Quality Teaching and Learning; Improving Classroom Management; Improving Teaching and Learning in the Classroom; Working with People; Using Technology for Quality Teaching and Learning; Career Planning and Management. Study modules are designed to assist participants with promotion as well as classroom practices and supervision. They also provide a demonstration of ways in which participants are prepared to invest in their professional learning.

In conclusion, ACE notes that there are barriers in the way of effective professional learning and first amongst these is the work pressures teachers experience and which make it difficult for them to find the time to access professional learning programs that really make a difference. These are not usually one or two day courses. ACE is also concerned that educators in regional and remote areas do not have the same levels of access or opportunity as their colleagues in metropolitan areas. Definitely, teachers need more credentialed programs and more leading edge programs that enable them to understand and be confident about emerging directions in education and research that underpins these. They must have access to appropriate professional learning before being required to implement new curriculum or pedagogy. ACE is also concerned that there should be increased professional learning linkages across disciplinary and curriculum boundaries, as well as more opportunity for cross-cultural exchange, especially with the rising expectations about engaging students more appropriately with their Asian neighbours. Lastly ACE would like to see professional opportunities that encourage and allow teachers' passions in relation to their work to be fully harnessed in the interests of students and the profession at large.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Cheryl O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer, ACE)

5.4.7 Australian Council of Educational Leaders

ACEL provides professional learning experiences through a range of programs and events, and readings and discussion forums via on-line and hardcopy publications. Some professional learning activities and resources are accessible by subscribers only, but many are open to all interested school leaders. ACEL aims to engage leaders in professional learning that prepares them for the future – in Jenny Lewis's words, to make tomorrow's leaders 'future proof.' In that respect, the notion of 'innovation' (the capability both to create innovative programs / curriculums / forms of assessment etc *and* to apply others' innovative ideas in productive ways in a particular setting) is key to the work of ACEL. The website of ACEL describes itself as follows:

The Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) is the major professional association for educational leaders and our views are sought and respected by government and policy makers. ACEL draws its membership from all sectors of education in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the rest of the world. ACEL is a leader in professional development and offers the opportunity [for school leaders] to participate in leadership programs, topical seminars and workshops hosted at the national, local affiliate and association level. (see <http://www.acel.org.au/>)

While there are ways in which ACEL connects with government policy making and programs, there is also a concern that leaders in schools are often being encouraged (through a range of factors) to become more like technical managers and this identity is increasingly at odds with the way ACEL feels is required for school leaders of today and tomorrow. The ACEL aims to help school leaders move beyond what it sees as a proliferation of narrowly standards-based rhetoric about education, which are to a large degree underpinned by compliance models of leadership – i.e., how to be compliant with decision-making that is done by others, and also how to create compliance in your own community.

In our interview with Ms Jenny Lewis, Chief Executive Officer of ACEL, Ms Lewis described ACEL as a ‘member-driven’ professional group, with membership from government and non-government schools and some from the tertiary sector. She acknowledged that the term ‘leader’ is a highly contested one, and one that is regularly a focus for debate among ACEL membership. For the moment, ACEL deems a leader in schools to be ‘any professional educator who has a positive influence over another professional educator’, and there are understood to be different levels of leaders in schools which suggest different ‘spheres of influence.’

ACEL publishes a wide-ranging suite of publications – both online and in hardcopy newsletter formats – which address current and emerging issues and practices in schools throughout Australia. They range in format from a fully refereed academic journal, published twice a year, to a fortnightly newsletter that reports on, and provides different opinions about, current policy issues and developments. There is also a ‘Leadership Links’ page on the website, for members only, that offers ‘Step-by-step solutions to your everyday school management problems: How to mediate in a staff dispute, How to gain staff commitment, How to handle an angry parent, How to conduct a successful meeting, How to improve your chances of getting promoted...’

Contributions are sought from leaders in schools, universities and related organisations, and these are managed by ACEL’s team of editors. The ACEL Board sets out broad strategies and more specific issues that it believes are important and about which the membership should be informed, in the hope that they can more effectively contribute to the dialogue. The ACEL website and other forums provide opportunities for members to suggest issues for discussion and for distribution of relevant and provocative readings.

A key activity for ACEL is the ‘Travelling Scholar Program’. Every year, two or three very significant figures in education and/or leadership (with an international profile) are invited to present lectures and or workshops in every state and territory, to inform and provoke professional conversation amongst members and others. It is expected that the ‘travelling scholar’ also produces a white paper for the journal, *Leading and Managing* and/or *The Australian Educational Leaders*, ACEL’s quarterly journal. It is expected that this travelling scholar program, in various forms, connects with 4,000 to 5,000 leaders across the country each year.

ACEL also organises an annual international conference which attracts significant figures in education or education related fields. The 2008 conference attracted 1,450 delegates from across Australia and overseas.

There is a new ‘ACEL Leadership Academy’ that is opening in 2008, which will work more closely with universities and postgraduate programs. ACEL describes this initiative as ‘moving to another level of capability development for and with the profession’ (see ACEL Leadership Academy: <http://www.ancel.org.au/index.php?id=55>). This is something that members and systems have requested, and is congruent with ACEL’s aims to help leaders develop in ways that are not constrained by the rhetoric of standards and compliance. The specific intentions behind the initiative are explained on the website:

A key focus [of the Academy] will be on identifying, sourcing and offering robust, innovative and relevant leader formation programs that meet the identified needs of educational leaders at system, group, school or individual levels, and possibly offer special recognition, accreditation and qualifications.

The Academy will have multiple roles that include:

- Service provision
- Consultancy
- Marketing
- Brokering
- Business and contract management
- Advocacy
- Publishing
- Research

ACEL collects feedback data from all of its programs, conferences, forums and the website continuously calls for feedback from members and non-members. Evaluation forms are now primarily online, and tend to include open-ended items such as ‘What will you take away from [this event or session or experience]? What do you know you will be able to apply to your professional setting? What else would you have liked to see/hear/do? What ideas do you have for future sessions/events/forums/programs? What opportunities for professional learning do you currently not have access to?’ This data is continuously fed back to managers of different programs and, in summarized reports, to the National Board for future policy planning.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Jenny Lewis, CEO of ACEL)

5.4.8 Australian Teacher Education Association (ATEA)

ATEA is the peak professional association for teacher educators in Australia. Its mission, as stated in its website, is to promote: (i) initial and continuing teacher education in all forms and contexts; (ii) teacher education as central in the educational enterprise of the nation; and (iii) research on teacher education (in all possible manifestations of the term research) as a core endeavour for teachers, teacher educators and those engaged with teaching and schooling. (See ATEA website: <http://www.atea.edu.au/>.) ATEA understands teacher learning (both formal and non-formal) as a continuum beginning with pre-service studies and practicum experiences, building through the process of induction into the profession, and continuing on through a teacher’s career.

A current key strategy for ATEA, in working with this mission statement, is ‘to improve the nature, quality and availability’ of professional development and professional learning for teachers and teacher educators across Australia. This is being achieved through a number of strategies and initiatives. For instance, ATEA encourages its members to form and support collaborative links between university and site-based teacher educators – that is, teacher educators who are working with schools in an ongoing capacity. ATEA not only encourages teacher educators to form such ongoing relationships with schools, it works to enable teacher educators to form stronger links between universities, schools, school systems, relevant unions, and professional organisations or industries involved in educational change.

One of the core ways that ATEA achieves its mission is by promoting and publishing research related to professional learning through its annual conference, and its related research journal, the *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*. The journal is published four times a year and has a strong reputation for its quality among education journals. Through a quick review of publications in the journal over the last few years, as well as a consideration of papers presented at the annual conference, it is clear that professional learning in schools has been the focus of considerable research across the country. Many papers have been concerned with the design, implementation and evaluation of professional learning strategies. In this respect the conference and the journal provide important forums for the development and dissemination of research and practice related to professional learning.

ATEA is keen to improve the relationship between quality research and quality teaching and learning, both in schools and in teacher education institutions. To this end, ATEA actively recommends that universities promote both teaching and research, rather than supporting the two endeavours as separate entities. It encourages universities to engage pre-service teachers in research-based inquiry during their teacher preparation courses, and it creates opportunities (such as in their national conference and in *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*) for early career and experienced teachers to see themselves as jointly building knowledge through research into their teaching. This is one important way in which ATEA seeks to build capacity for newer generations of teachers to develop their knowledge of teaching and learning and to build networks with the wider community of educators. In addition, ATEA makes annual awards for ‘Teacher Educator of the Year’, ‘Teaching Development’ (for an individual or a group who develop innovative curriculum and/or materials that contribute to improved teacher education), and there is an award for ‘Early Career Researchers’ in education.

ATEA recognises that research undertaken by teacher educators and teachers is now more than ever mediated by explicit policies, at national and local levels, which emphasise targeted funding and accountability for any investment in teacher education and teacher professional learning. In striving to link educational research by individual researchers and collaborative teams of researchers to national goals, ATEA encourages teacher educators to develop a stronger presence for their research endeavours within universities and in the wider education community. In this respect, ATEA is committed to working collaboratively with other professional associations and national bodies such as Teaching Australia to help establish this presence and to build more inclusive educational communities through participatory research. And ATEA seeks to work collaboratively to develop and promote policy that supports professional learning among teachers. Here, as in so many other areas of ATEA’s work, the association is keen to make connections between universities, professional associations, commercial providers and schools/school systems in order to negotiate improved programs and opportunities for professional learning and to evaluate these programs and this learning.

(Based on notes from an interview with Associate Professor Jane Mitchell, President Elect, ATEA, as well as material supplied by ATEA)

5.4.9 Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE) & Australian Literacy Educators’ Association (ALEA)

An interview was held with Ms Robyn Cations at English House in Adelaide, where both AATE and ALEA have their national Headquarters. Ms Cations is the Executive Officer of AATE and the Secretary/Manager of ALEA. This is of benefit to both associations, as they collaborate on many fronts, including the holding of joint national conferences, as well as other projects. The most significant example of their collaboration over the past decade has arguably been the development of the Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy in Australia (STELLA), which provide a framework for teachers of English literacy in both primary and secondary schools to engage in continuing professional learning. The associations are in fairly regular dialogue with one another, although it is also important to recognise that they are quite distinct entities, and their modes of operation differ in significant ways

ALEA is a national body, constituted by 20 local councils throughout Australia, each of which is involved in a range of professional development activities in which the national association takes an active interest. AATE, on the other hand, is a federal body, constituted by English Teaching Associations (or ETAs) from each state and territory. With AATE, the ETAs have traditionally played a more prominent role in providing professional development to teachers that is largely tailored to the curriculum in each state. AATE itself is at a remove from these activities, and largely focuses on advocacy at a national level. ALEA also plays this kind of role, but combines this with active involvement in professional development, as has just been indicated.

This difference between the associations is reflected in the publications they produce. AATE's flagship is *English in Australia*, a national journal which publishes articles by both academics and teachers. Although it comprises many contributions with a strong focus on the classroom, it seems fair to say that it is primarily an academic journal, which plays a significant role in showcasing research on the teaching of English. It is left up to the ETAs to publish journals with a stronger focus on curriculum material and classroom strategies. ALEA also publishes a journal which comprises largely articles by leading literacy researchers, namely *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* (or *AJLL*). However, it also publishes two journals with a strong focus on classroom teaching in primary school and the middle years, namely *Practically Primary* and *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years*.

Both associations are very conscious of the need to work at the interface between the academy and schooling. They are committed to facilitating dialogue between the two sectors. This sometimes involves tension, but by and large they manage to produce materials that bridge the two sectors. A case in point is AATE's successful Interface series – this is not used hugely in classrooms, but contains writing by both teachers and academics, presenting cutting edge thinking about the teaching of English.

AATE and ALEA both play a significant role at a national level, often in conjunction with Federal Government initiatives, and their support is often solicited. They were both involved in the 2008 Summer schools, though in different ways. Both are seen as active associations involving significant professional networks, and they have repeatedly been invited to be part of national policy forums and initiatives. They provide a national voice for English literacy teachers. Vis-à-vis their respective memberships, they accept responsibility for advocacy on behalf of the profession, resisting negative media constructions of English literacy teachers, and ensuring that teachers do not feel totally disenfranchised. They also recognise, however, that they cannot simply assume this role, and that they need to work hard to remind members of their continuing importance. Much of their work depends on committed individuals who work on a voluntary basis, both at a grass roots and national level.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Robyn Cations, Executive Officer of AATE and Secretary/Manager of ALEA)

5.4.10 Australian Foreign and Modern Language Teachers' Associations (AFMLTA)

The AFMLTA is currently engaged in a very large professional learning project with government funding, namely the implementation of a set of professional standards for teachers of Languages. This is in line with similar initiatives taken by the AATE, ALEA, AAMT and ASTA. Lia Tedesco, President of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations (AFMLTA), especially commended STELLA (the Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy developed jointly by AATE and ALEA) as providing an excellent model of how professional standards might be used to renew the teaching profession. The development of the Standards, which was made possible by a grant from the Department of Education, Science and Training, predates Ms Tedesco's period as

President. These standards have been published – see Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures, Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations, 2005 – and Ms Tedesco is now actively involved, through DEEWR's School Languages Program funding, in developing a professional development program within this framework. To do this, AFMLTA has subcontracted researchers at the University of South Australia. The model they are using is a train-the-trainer one. The materials are presently in draft form, and are available on the project website at www.pspl.unisa.edu.au.

The aim of the project is to encourage teachers to engage with the professional standards, using the standards as a framework for their professional learning. The funding obtained from DEEWR has enabled them to organise time release for teachers across the states in order to engage in the project. Over 400 teachers are participating in the project throughout 2008. Once the funding comes to an end, AFMLTA hopes that it can sustain continuing engagement with the Standards, through the online materials that it is currently developing. There are two streams to the project, one which is a general awareness raising stream, and a second stream that involves, according to Ms Tedesco, fairly 'heavy duty, deep analytical work about what language teaching is all about, including classroom observations.' A small number of teachers will participate in this part of the project. They will be required to reflect on an aspect of their work – it could be any dimension of their teaching, such as the use of digital resources, or their assessment practices – and some of their classroom observations will be published on the web to guide the professional learning of other teachers.

This project involves teachers engaging in deep reflection about their teaching, in relation to the eight domains contained in the Standards: educational theory and practice, language and culture, language pedagogy, ethics and responsibility, professional relationships, awareness of wider context, advocacy, and personal characteristics (see the *Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures*).

In addition, through the project, language specific annotations of the Standards have been developed for Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Spanish – these are also on the project website. It is hoped that, as teachers of other languages engage with the project, further annotations will be developed.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Lia Tedesco, President of AFMLTA)

5.4.11 Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT)

Mr Will Morony is Executive Officer of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT). For the last couple of years the Mathematics Association has been involved in a significant initiative as part of the Science ICT and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (an organisation based at UNE which has Commonwealth funding). By participating in this initiative, AAMT has sought to increase the capacity of its state and territory affiliates to provide professional development to rural and regional teachers. Professional associations are typically city-based, and Mr Morony sees this as a significant development with the learning from it likely to have implications for all subject associations, not just the mathematics associations. The nature of the initiative has been such that it has generated quite diverse models of professional learning arising out of local situations. These do not necessarily provide models that might be applied elsewhere – the point is that they have emerged within specific locations in response to identified needs.

Another example of a significant initiative which Mr Morony provided was the AAMTE listserv. This is 12 years old, and originally arose out of seeding funds made available through the NPDP. It regularly gets quoted by people who access this facility. Some people have a filing cabinet full of the different topics that have been

explored in this forum. A contributor may raise a question – e.g., how do you introduce kids to fractions? – whereupon others will respond with suggestions. This also reflects the association’s desire to go beyond its city base and to reach out to members in rural and regional locations.

In Mr Morony’s view, they have not yet exploited web tools fully. They were cutting edge in the 1990s, but this activity has largely fallen off largely because of lack of funds, most notably government support that previously provided ‘seed’ funding (as in the example above).

In addition to these activities, Mr Morony mentioned the AAMT national conference as a flagship event. He also pointed to the professional standards which the AAMT developed as reflecting ‘a vision about what good teaching looks like. ‘We’ve written it down and teachers can use the standards as a reference point.’

Like other professional associations, the AAMT is heavily dependent on voluntary work by people who see participation in their professional association as an integral part of their professional role. However, it also needs to run an office, and this requires financial support in the form of membership fees and the income generated through other activities such as journals, resource sales, conferences and involvement in government projects. People who become active in AAMT see themselves as mathematics teachers. This creates a problem with respect to membership, in that there are a number of people who teach mathematics who don’t identify as mathematics teachers and who therefore do not access what AAMT has to offer. Mr Morony expressed concern that a commitment to one’s profession as evidenced by engagement in a professional association is not really recognised for career advancement.

Mr Morony spent some time considering the importance of the interface between the Association’s work and government policies. The Association was pleased, for example, to receive government funding in order to achieve worthwhile outcomes. Members are working within a professional landscape that is decisively shaped by government policies, and it would be remiss of the Association not to give them support in order to implement those policies – although this job probably falls to the state associations which constitute AAMT, rather than on the national body itself. This does not mean that they eschew a critical stance. The key thing, as far as the interface between profession and government policy is concerned, is to trust teachers. The members of AAMT are committed professionals, and it would be a positive step if governments recognised their capacity to develop and implement curriculum that is to the benefit of students.

Mr Morony sees that a key challenge for professional associations like AAMT is to move beyond the focus on individual teachers and to focus on the whole school. This is in line with initiatives taken by systems which typically focus on whole school change. The associations run the risk of being marginalised if they cannot move beyond their traditional understanding of professional development as an individual matter to one that dovetails with steps currently being taken by systems to promote whole school change.

Mr Morony wants to challenge the view that ‘pd’ is just another thing that teachers have to do. The clever thinking needs to be about: how is professional learning demonstrably part of the job? We need structures that capture the professional learning potential that inheres within the everyday, within what teachers do on a day to day basis. This means providing support for reflection and the sharing of experiences. Crucially, however, it means starting from a position of trusting teachers and the knowledge they have developed, as well as their sense of what they need to learn.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Will Morony, Executive Officer of AAMT)

5.4.12 Australian Science Teachers' Association (ASTA)

The HTAA is the peak national body for history teachers in Australia. The NSW branch has approximately 1200 registered members, from government and non-government sectors, and the reach of the association is such that approximately three times this number of teachers would participate in HTAA activities or access HTAA resources in the course of a year. There would be similar numbers in Victoria. HTAA, managed primarily through its different state branches, is committed to engaging history teachers' learning through a rigorous focus on the particular curriculums they are teaching in and to broadening and enriching their knowledge of their subject. Put simply, the HTAA sees its role as coordinating the sharing of history teaching expertise between and across schools and school systems.

We interviewed Mr Paul Kiem, Australian President of HTAA. In discussing the vision of professional learning offerings of HTAA, Mr Kiem began by expressing some concerns about the way that commercial publishers had contributed to a narrowing down of the curriculum, and thus 'transforming a subject' that on paper seemed rich in possibilities. These publications, he believes, with their generic and prescriptive lesson plans etc, limit possibilities for history teachers by producing textbooks that show little engagement with the complexities or nuances of the subject as presented in NSW syllabuses. The HTAA works to provide alternative resources and spaces for developing curriculum than these commercial publishing agencies.

There is some focus in HTAA professional development offerings on pedagogy-related issues, such as ICT, but Mr Kiem does not see this as the prime focus of HTAA teacher professional learning programs and offerings. As well as generating alternatives to commercial resources, the HTAA sees its professional development offerings as an alternative to what is felt to be increasingly 'bureaucratised' opportunities and systems provided by other groups in Australia.

In our conversation, Mr Kiem discussed a range of HTAA professional learning offerings in NSW:

- *Professional learning days*
Traditionally, three per year are offered. Usually these are in Sydney and they are scheduled on a Saturday. These days consist of workshops and presentations by history practitioners – with occasionally an invited speaker from outside the school system – and usually the workshops focus on particular aspects of the NSW syllabus. A recent example was the 'Historiography Day' for teachers of senior history. Presenters included a combination of secondary practitioners and university based academics. These presenters are often invited because they are well-known and popular contributors to such events, but there is also a strategic effort to include new teachers and country-based teachers sometimes to provide affirmation for (recognition of) their developing professional profile and also to keep a flow of new voices and perceptions into the conversations among history teachers.
- *State conferences*
Usually, these are scheduled to run over two days, once every two years, with about 300-500 teachers attending these conferences. Workshop leaders and presenters tend to be practitioners, who are paid a nominal fee for presenting. Once again, outside speakers may be engaged when appropriate.
- *Lectures and workshops in rural centres of NSW*
The HTAA is acutely conscious of the disadvantage under which teacher in rural and remote locations operate: they often miss out on the opportunity to attend city-based professional development and they are rarely able to participate in HSC marking, which is seen as an opportunity for rich professional

learning in itself. These sessions in rural and remote NSW are expected to run at a loss – i.e., they are subsidised by Sydney-based activities and by certain publications - but the HTAA feels a strong sense of obligation in this regard.

- *Publications*

HTAA publishes a range of journals at state level (e.g., NSW's *Teaching History & HTAV's Agora*) and the and books such as the very popular *HTA Ancient History Study Guide* and *HTA Modern History Study Guide*, which history teachers across the country clearly buy and appreciate.

- *HSC study days*

In NSW there is an extremely well attended range of HSC lectures, held at Sydney University, which are valued not just by secondary students but also by teachers of secondary history as a source of information and a prompt for their professional learning. Traditionally, there would be approximately 3,000 students attending these lectures, and up to 300 teachers from across the state. Once again, there is recognition that students and teachers from rural and remote centres are disadvantaged by these lectures being held in Sydney, so there are generous subsidies for these people to attend. Schools are invited to apply for these subsidies, and applications are judged on the basis of merit and a range of socio-cultural and geographical considerations.

- HTAA website (<http://www.historyteacher.org.au/index.html>)

The national body and various state branches use their websites as a source of information with respect to latest publications, upcoming professional development offerings, related professional development opportunities (such as by NSW IT), and current issues of interest to history teachers.

Evaluation of HTAA professional development offerings tends to be through surveys, completed by participants at the end of the session. These surveys cover a range of ranking items, with participants encouraged to provide details that explain or expand upon their ranking for each item. Teachers are also asked for suggestions as to improvements and perhaps ideas for future professional development events. These are fed back to individual presenters/workshop leaders and then passed on to organising committees and groups who set directions for future programs.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Paul Kliem, President of HTAA)

5.4.13 *History Teachers' Association of Australia (HTAA)*

ASTA is a national body, but each of the state organisations is an organisation in its own right. Membership cuts across all the education providers – schools, universities, TAFE. It is a voluntary not for profit organisation and is not funded by government. It supports teachers of science and advances science education. It relies on a great deal of goodwill and voluntary work. The organisation is a very strong supporter of professional learning. For example, when issues come up in terms of skills shortages or engaging children in science, the organisation plays an important role. The organisation views professional learning as something which should be ongoing.

The organisation would like to continue the relationship with the new government in terms of issues related to science education. Advocacy is one of the organisation's strategic directions. They also view themselves as providing services to their members by being an advisory body in terms of what professional learning might look like, as well as being involved in the delivery of Professional Learning.

Regular events include an annual conference (CONASTA) which rotates around the various states. The last one was held in Perth. It went for 4 and half days and had approximately 1200 delegates with representation from 60 different countries. Approximately 50per cent of conference delegates would be classroom teachers. This year the conference will be held in July on the Gold Coast. Each of the state bodies also has their own conferences.

ASTA is involved in a range of projects where they collaborate with other organisations. These projects are important as they are a ‘not for profit’ organisation and these assist in attracting funding. A recent project in which they have been involved is called SiMERR. Science, ICT and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR) is a national project funded by the Department of Transport and Regional Services, and administered through selected universities in different states. Through a combination of strategic research, network building and practical support, SiMERR Australia aims to identify the needs of geographically and professionally isolated teachers, and enhance their efforts to assist students to realise their academic potential in these subject areas (see <http://simerr.une.edu.au/>). ASTA had a direct relationship with the SiMMER hub in the University of New England Armidale (see <http://simerr.une.edu.au/hubs/hubs.html>). They undertook regional and rural professional learning for teachers as part of this project in various states.

ASTA is involved with the running of National Science Week. This involves producing a school resource kit that goes to all schools in Australian. They also have some limited funding available for school grants as part of Science week which are administered through ASTA. . DEEWR funds this initiative.

ASTA believes that professional associations have an important role to play on national bodies such as Teaching Australia and in the development of national curriculum. ASTA is committed to finding better ways to engage children in science learning.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Peter Turnbull)

5.4.14 Education Network Australia (EdNA)

EdNA provides services and professional learning to support educators in using ICT to enhance learning. The organisation was originally established as a collaboration between the states, territories and the Department of Education, Science and Training to provide services in the areas where it was more efficient to do it nationally. It is funded about 80per cent by the Federal Government and supplemented by the individual states and territories according to population.

It provides services and tools to support professional learning in different areas, as well as supporting educators to use ICT to enhance learning. EdNA also provides on line lists and groups, a data base of resources, a directory of professional learning opportunities. If, for example, a school came to them and said they were interested in doing a professional development session on reading comprehension, they can check their data base to see what is available. Schools can also put professional development events they are offering into EdNA’s data base. This service is provided free to educators. They operate almost like a yahoo or google for education. There are 23 staff based in the EdNA team (not FTE). Education Australia is the overarching organisation that manages EdNA. There is roughly a core of 6 people who are conducting the road show and workshops this year. They tend to get ICT coordinators and teacher librarians as participants, although they are not entirely sure. They do have information about participation according to sector and role.

They offer weekend workshops in SA because teachers need to do their professional development out of school hours. It is a requirement from DECS that teachers in SA clock up 37.5 hours of professional development each year.

EdNA covers all sectors – schools (government, Catholic and independent), TAFE, and higher education. Schools would be their largest audience. Each year they run a national workshop program with an ICT focus. This is like a road show, and they visit every state and territory. The funding base for this program is fairly limited. They currently hold a mini conference in each state and territory, which amounts to one or two days in each capital city. They will also conduct customised workshops if people request them. Numbers in the road show are limited to 80 for each venue because the workshop is very hands on. It is also difficult to get venues that will offer two computer labs. In Canberra, Tasmania and Darwin they tend to get around 50 participants. In some states they might need to run two mini conferences. For example this year they are running two in Brisbane and two in Perth.

In the larger states where the education departments provide more professional learning, they probably get a higher proportion of the Catholic and independent sectors. For example Queensland Catholic schools use a lot of their services.

The mini conference 'Road Show' partly provides information to participants about their services and partly about other issues to do with ICT. For example this year they have a session on digital literacy. They have another session called 'Learning without borders', which is about globalisation and education. The mini conference has an invited keynote speaker. This year the keynote will talk about social networking.

A new initiative this year is an online workshop day. They have a facility called live classroom where they can see/hear the speaker, view power points, and type in questions. They feel that most would prefer face to face professional development, but recognise that not everyone is in a position to do that. They also feel it is more difficult to present in an online environment. It requires one to talk more and explain more fully. This also poses similar challenges for learners, in that they are grappling with the technology and trying to learn at the same time. The EdNA team is currently doing internal professional development to learn more about how to do effective professional delivery in an online environment. It is important to have a good reason to deliver professional development in an online environment.

They use an online survey tool which they ask participants to do in order to get their certificates of participation. Teachers are generally positive towards the professional development they offer. They are voluntary and low cost. They used to deliver this at 'no cost' to the user, but found that they did not get as many participants and that it was almost as though teachers did not value the professional development because it was 'free'. They explained that this year and last they have gone for a whole day as they found half day sessions are not attractive due to the difficulties teachers face getting out of school for a half day (it is much easier to employ an Emergency Relief Teachers for a whole day). They charge \$50 which basically covers the catering and they have found participation has improved in all cities except for Melbourne.

Their work intersects with some of the Professional Associations, such as Computer Educators. They tend to work quite closely with these organisations. They feel their service is unique in that it delivers nationally, and that what they offer is very practical and 'hands on'.

They value face to face environments. Professional development needs to be at the point of responding to 'needs'. The continuum of teacher's knowledge and skills in this area is very broad. For example, there are many teachers who are 'cutting edge' in technology and are pushing the boundaries, and then there are teachers who still have difficulty with email. Each state has ICT capability assessment tools that teachers can use to plot where they are. Some of these surveys were locked behind a 'log in' so they can't actually get in to find where teachers are in terms of ICT but some states make this freely available.

(Based on notes taken in an interview with Ms Lynley Clark, Ms Pru Mitchell, Ms Cecily Wright and Ms Katrina Venning)

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CHAPTER SIX: CONSULTATION FINDINGS (B): CASES OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING POLICY AND PRACTICE IN STATE AND TERRITORY JURISDICTIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

None of the case studies presented here covers the full range of professional learning opportunities available in each state. The aim of our visits to each jurisdiction was to gain insight into what stakeholders believed were significant examples of professional learning. As a result, although each case assumes a certain unity, this simply reflects the coherence of views of those interviewed. It should not be taken to imply that we are offering a comprehensive account of professional learning in that jurisdiction. No doubt there are significant voices which we have not heard, some of which represent markedly different viewpoints from those reported here. At the very least, the emphasis which we have given to certain themes or issues may not entirely match the experiences of those stakeholders whom we were unable to interview. We nonetheless believe that each case accomplishes what it sets out to do, namely to capture a number of significant professional learning initiatives that are currently taking place.

The order in which the cases are presented is not intended to privilege any jurisdiction over the others. We begin with the largest states, New South Wales and Victoria, and move anti-clockwise around the nation, beginning with South Australia, then Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, Northern Territory, and finally Western Australia.

6.2 NEW SOUTH WALES

As the largest of the state jurisdictions, New South Wales might reasonably be expected to be enacting the widest variety of professional learning strategies and programs. And because of its size and geographic spread, one might also expect that these strategies and programs would be supported by somewhat disparate and fragmented structures and systems. Our interviews with teachers, principals, and stakeholders suggest that there is indeed as much, if not more, diversity in approaches to professional learning in schools and in partnerships between schools, universities, professional associations, industry and community groups. Notwithstanding this diversity, some principles and trends are clearly apparent.

One trend, which is consistent with most other jurisdictions, is the move toward more situated, collaborative and ongoing professional learning, in preference to more traditional models of professional development for individuals provided through one-off events or offerings. Another, which is again congruent with developments in other states, is the increasing prevalence of professional learning activities and evaluation regimes that are mediated by professional learning standards, such as *The Professional Teaching Standards* developed by the NSW Institute of Teachers, and (less often) those developed by various professional associations. A third trend, and one that is quite distinctive to New South Wales, is the way in which collaborative models of teachers working in teams to enact their professional learning in schools are being supported and to some extent coordinated by systems collaborating with each other. The net effect of this is that more coherent conceptions of professionalism are emerging through cross-sectoral professional partnerships and systems at the highest levels, such as through the NSW division of The Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (NSW AGQTP).

This was evident in the interviews conducted with key leaders in the bodies serving each of the three main schooling sectors in NSW, Frances Plummer (in The Department of Education and Training [DET]), Paul Rodney (in The Catholic Education Commission), and Estelle Lewis (in The NSW Association of Independent Schools). The different groups that these people represent provide leadership and direction for their particular communities, as well as responding to policy generated at the federal level and in other states. NSW DET, in particular, is quite proactive in initiating and supporting research in key policy areas in relation to professional learning, such as the discussion paper written in 2007 for the AGQTP project, *Taking professional standards into practice*. All three groups oversee the development and/or implementation of 'sector specific' programs and activities, as well as engaging in collaborative cross-sectoral projects and initiatives. Each of these groups is represented on the very active Cross-sectoral Management Committee for NSW AGQTP, and so it seemed appropriate to ask Ms Plummer, Mr Rodney and Ms Lewis about their roles in these cross-sectoral AGQTP programs and projects.

6.2.1 NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) and Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP)

Frances Plummer is, amongst her other roles, Manager of the AGQTP program in NSW, and she is part of the Strategic Initiatives Directorate within DET. The cross sectoral central administrative team for AGQTP at DET includes (1) a team leader (administrative and consultancy leadership, coordinating and managing NSW part of the program); (2) a project officer (managing cross-sectoral communications strategy⁵); and a finance officer. The DET has its own Reference Group, with representation from a wide range of educational, parent, and community bodies. This group considers input from these bodies and provides advice to the DET that relate to priorities of both NSW DET and AGQTP.

Common phrases that emerged from our conversation with Ms Plummer, with respect to DET and AGQTP were 'consultation,' 'collaboration,' and 'influence.' The importance of 'consultation' is evident in the cross-sectoral approach to policy making for, and implementation of, professional learning projects. This approach is taken, for instance, in the preparation and publication of discussion papers (such as the 2007 Discussion Paper, 'Lesson study as a framework for professional learning' developed for the AGQTP project, *Taking professional standards into practice* on the role of teaching standards). One of the perceived outcomes of work with a paper like this, according to Ms Plummer, is that it provides 'a framework to talk with schools'. A culture of consultation operates in the network of representative cross-sectoral committees which inform and respond to policy developments and the emergence of initiatives in professional practice. It is apparent in the ongoing strategy to 'align' NSW state teacher professional learning needs (as emerged from the conversation on the discussion paper mentioned above) with AGQTP priority areas.

'Collaboration', as well as describing the way administrative bodies within and across sectors work with each other, is a feature of the move toward more collegial models as the preferred approach to professional learning in schools – i.e. action learning models, collegial lesson study. NSW DET has moved significantly toward these models in the last 2 years, a point emphasised in the *AGQTP NSW Strategic Plan 2006-2009*. Ms Plummer spoke of a decisive shift in the way DET and AGQTP conceptualise professional learning in recent years. She identifies this shift as away from a 'culture of dependency', where professional learning needs were framed by outsiders and delivered to teachers, toward a culture of proactive participation. She spoke of the sense in which professional learning is not always

⁵ The 'public face' of AGQTP. The focus of communication is descriptive, targeted at a wide range of teachers, schools, professional associations, various stakeholders and the media, and involves the publication of three newsletters per year and the management of a website (with internet and intranet levels) and a cold-fusion database.

glowing and unproblematic, but that teachers, academic partners and stakeholders are involved in a ‘collective struggle’ to build capacity in schools and individuals. She wanted to emphasise that the approach to this struggle was one of enhancing and enriching professional knowledge and practice, and that this was most definitely not about fixing or filling a deficit in the teacher. DET sees itself as offering a much higher level of ongoing support for teachers and schools over time than in previous years.

‘Influence’ is the way Ms Plummer speaks about the way NSW DET professional learning initiatives and programs affect professional learning practices, systems and structures in NSW. In some cases, the influence can be acute and readily demonstrable (such as when a school which is deemed to be ‘underperforming’ in an area, such as numeracy, can embark on a series of action learning projects, with lesson study embedded within this, and improve its ‘performance’ in statistical terms after only one year). More often, the influence emerges over longer periods of time as professional learning practices and cultures develop, in response to involvement in an AGQTP project, with all of the support and connections with other schools that this entails. According to Ms Plummer, schools are becoming more experienced and more sophisticated in designing professional learning action plans when applying for AGQTP grants. She believes that even where schools have been unsuccessful in their application for funding, the time spent applying for funding has been well spent. DET and the AGQTP systems have provided the conceptual and administrative scaffolding for schools to embark on the process of developing their own action learning plans.⁶

In some instances, the funding of AGQTP NSW projects is initially shared equally between DET and AGQTP. However, where possible action plans for such projects look to create synergies and financial efficiencies through sharing of resources and infrastructure with community, regional and/or professional partners who are also involved. Schools usually make decisions to devote some of their own funding to projects. Occasionally, a particular project that has been identified as addressing a particular priority area for NSWDET, such as Middle Years Numeracy Project, will receive additional funding from DET. In recent years, AGQTP funding is not made available for one-off conferences or for one-off events where an external consultant shares his/her expertise.

One interesting aspect of cross-sectoral projects is the role of the project officer for schools undertaking initiatives such as cross-school action learning projects. It seems that teachers most want the support they receive to be provided by an experienced ‘someone who will sit shoulder to shoulder with them, someone who will work *with* them, but not tell them what to do.’ In some cases a project officer from DET fulfils this role. At other times, he/she is needed to mediate, negotiate and/or problem-solve in schools, when a crisis emerges or when progress (or even conversation) seems stymied by a particular problem or set of problems. Sometimes, an external mediator can more effectively help out than other teachers (or the executive) in the school/s. Ms Plummer spoke of the value of ‘dedicated’ project officers: those who are designated a dedicated/finite number of projects and schools within those projects to work with (and where possible these officers do not change over the course of a project), and those who are dedicated/committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for the schools and teachers with whom they are involved.

Another significant aspect is the strategic move to increasingly involve university-based academics (who need to learn to work *with* teachers rather than *on* them). Ms Plummer drew a distinction between ‘action learning projects’ and ‘action research’, because of the perception that action research still tends to position teachers

⁶ We found this to be the case for several schools in which we conducted interviews. However, there was also a perception, from some few individuals, that the mechanisms by which AGQTP funding is made available could be reviewed. Some people described the process of applying for funding as extremely labour-intensive, with little guarantee that time spent applying will be rewarded with grants later. One educator recommended a shift in the way funding is made available so that instead of recognising and rewarding particular projects or initiatives, organisations could be rewarded through a more holistic evaluation of their contribution to teacher learning and development and to student learning. Those who gained funding would then be invested with the responsibility to apportion funding to parts of their operation and their community in ways they deem to be appropriate.

as the object of inquiry, rather than as the generators of knowledge. There are now over 100 academics from across New South Wales, who are engaged in school-university partnerships as part of action learning projects. In all cases, the precise role of the academic partner is decided by the school team.

Evaluation of AGQTP and DET professional learning projects operates on a number of different levels. At one level, the fact that DET and AGQTP receive more applications to participate in projects than they can fund might suggest that teachers ‘trust in the process’ and that the AGQTP is building credibility among schools and teachers in the three sectors. Since 2001, all schools and teachers involved in AGQTP projects are required to complete a standardised questionnaire, comprising quantitative and qualitative items that draw on the *NSW framework of professional teaching standards* (2004). In addition, DET is committed to five in-depth research projects that evaluate various projects. For example, the University of Western Sydney is conducting a longitudinal (i.e. three year) evaluation of the K-6 Curriculum Planning Framework project. A synthesis of the various evaluations is published in DET’s annual report, which is then used to guide policy making and strategic planning.

Individual participants in the more locally based projects – such as lesson study and action learning – enjoy the flexibility that these projects offer. The most positive responses to these projects come from teachers who feel their existing knowledge and professionalism have been affirmed. Such teachers feel they are better able to ‘identify their problems’ and to take action to address them. They appreciate the role of active decision makers in their learning, and they report being more confident to take risks in improving their practice.

6.2.2 Catholic Education Commission (CEC) and AGQTP

Paul Rodney is State Coordinator of Teacher Development and VET for the CEC NSW, and is a member of the NSW AGQTP Cross-Sectoral Management Committee. He sees his overarching role as ‘combining the energies and capacities of the CEC system and the 11 dioceses’, in partnership with other education sectors and professional groups/agencies. There are many sector-specific programs that he oversees and helps to implement. He also represents the CEC in the development of cross-sectoral professional development projects and policies (i.e. in association with DOE, AIS, and NSW DE&T).

The Catholic Education Commission has developed, and helps to implement, a wide range of sector specific programs. Indeed, Mr Rodney himself plays an active role in a particularly innovative project he helped to develop for early-career teachers, in partnerships with the National Institute for Dramatic Art (NIDA). The CEC especially values cross-sectoral projects in schools (and TAFEs), and projects that involve partnerships with industry and universities. There is a strong belief in CEC that the greatest priority in policy needs to be in facilitating professional development communities to work together for the common good of education, irrespective of sector or context. There is also a strategic awareness of the need to share infrastructure and resources and to maximize economies of scale in teachers’ professional development.

This is evident in projects developed and implemented with the aid of funding from AGQTP and with other education partners (e.g., in VET Consortium collaborative relationships). It is significant that one ongoing cross-sectoral project developed through AGQTP funding is called ‘School Ownership and Active Professionalism’ (colloquially known as the SOAP project). Typically, such projects have nested within them a number of smaller projects, developed by schools themselves using the AGQTP Action Learning Plan process. The SOAP larger project involves 45 schools, and approximately 1200 teachers. These 45 schools, across widely contrasting settings, are supported in developing and implementing their own projects within the larger SOAP framework.

There are also projects such as the one for early-career teachers, mentioned above, developed in collaboration with NIDA. This professional learning partnership emerged from two main concerns of CEC administrators and teachers:

1. *professional competence*: i.e. how to help beginning teachers develop a richer range of communication practices for face-to-face contact with students; and
2. *evidence to satisfy accountability demands*, as set out in Professional Teaching Standards for graduate teachers by the NSW Institute of Teachers (regulatory body for full accreditation of teachers in NSW): i.e. how to provide evidence of growth, professional learning and competence in an area of practice that is characteristically difficult to ‘prove’ competence, classroom management.

Feedback from teachers who have participated in the programs indicates that they share these concerns, and that in this particular program they have appreciated:

1. the need to ‘open up professional possibilities’. This applies to many aspects of professional knowledge, but especially with respect to the ways they are now thinking or conceptualising classroom management. Also important are the ways they might now, as a result of participating in the program, be more likely to seek out opportunities for their own professional learning (i.e. in relationships developed with other early career teachers and with professionals with related expertise in outside ‘agencies’).
2. the opportunity to ‘make sense’ of the language of standards, such as in the NSW IT document, *The professional teaching standards*. On one level, participation in a course like this helps to build confidence that in some ways helps to alleviate the anxiety about achieving full accreditation as teachers. Beyond this, though, early career teachers report that their participation has helped them to build some an understanding of (perhaps a ‘framework’ for) their future professional learning options as their career unfolds. Additionally, the knowledge and discourses that they develop through this sort of program can be seen to ‘liberate’ early career teachers to make the best use of other professional learning opportunities they may have in the future.

The program provides funding (including teacher release, travel allowance, access to filming resources in NIDA and CEC) for a small cohort (30) of graduate teachers. Through their participation in the program, teachers develop artefacts, such as a journal and a portfolio of work. The portfolio includes a film created and produced by the students in association with NIDA tutors. These artefacts provide both a focus and motivation for their learning but also demonstrable evidence of their learning such as required by NSW Institute of Teachers for full accreditation of early career teachers. For CEC schools, this usually happens at the end of 2 years of teaching. Interestingly, teachers are generally encouraged to submit for full accreditation at the end of their 2nd year of teaching (and not at the end of their first year, as is the usual practice for teachers employed by DET NSW and in Victoria).

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Paul Rodney, State Coordinator of Teacher Development and VET for the CEC NSW, and is a member of the NSW AGQTP Cross-Sectoral Management Committee)

6.2.3 Association of Independent Schools (AIS) and AGQTP

AIS runs in excess of 200 sector-specific programs, such as: (i) conferences (organised by AIS ‘individual consultants’, and involving more dissemination of information and ideas and less active participation by teachers); (ii) dedicated courses (whole day courses, or courses extending over several days, focused on particular curriculum, pedagogical and/or assessment issues that members have requested); and school-based consultancies (involving a consultant who is contracted to work in a school with a particular purpose to help teachers prepare to undertake formal accreditation processes; often this consultant works with existing leaders /

supervisors / mentors in schools in order to best facilitate this process). Participation in these programs is usually on the basis of ‘user pays.’

AIS also supports and helps to coordinate a number of action learning projects in schools, most of which are run in association with AGQTP grants to schools. AIS’s ‘team of consultants’ characteristically meet with teachers from schools who ‘register’ for these programs – and/or or who have gained funding – three times during the course of a project (in the development period of the project, mid-term as the project is being implemented, and then at the end to help with reflection and evaluation). The role of these consultants includes working with schools: to identify the needs of the school; to act as project officers if that is appropriate; to provide professional learning workshops and/or ongoing mentoring, as required; and to collaborate on the development of evaluation schedules etc.

AIS member schools who wish to embark on action learning projects must provide some outline and scoping of the project envisaged in their initial application. Selections are made by an AIS panel, including representatives of the ‘pool’ of consultants who will be working with schools. (AIS has representatives on the cross-sectoral Reference Group for AGQTP, which helps administer and set policy directions.) Schools are selected from these applications primarily on the basis of the quality of application. Other considerations that the AIS panel consider include: (i) the value of the project in enhancing leadership capacity in the school; (ii) the extent to which the project seems to be making the most of synergies with existing initiatives or projects – e.g., if a project is ICT related, is there evidence that the school is making use of resources and programs already widely available such as The Le@rning Federation? There is clear preference here for applications that seek to build or develop collaborative relationships from or within existing programs and resources.

In our interview with Ms Estelle Lewis, the Director of Teacher Accreditation in AIS, she explained that the strongest and most consistently positive evaluation by AIS teachers and schools who participate in professional development programs comes from those who engage in ongoing action learning projects. Such projects, according to Ms Lewis, invariably engage teachers in crucial decision-making, they are grounded within the day-to-day work of these teachers (often focused on particular curriculum issues, problems or dilemmas), and they are perceived by participating teachers as ‘a high priority for my own learning.’ This is in contrast to projects or events whose learning priorities or ‘outcomes’ are articulated by others. It is interesting to hear that there continue to be some more traditional professional development courses offered by AIS, which continue to attract large numbers of teachers whenever they are offered. Just as interesting is Ms Lewis’s observation that teachers who attend these courses tend to report that they feel less of a sense of ownership over their learning. This would seem to reflect the abiding preference of some leading teachers or administrators in some schools (perhaps also the preference of many teachers themselves) for professional learning activities that do not require them to engage in crucial decision-making and assume some ownership in their learning. Ms Lewis also pointed out that the success of action learning projects is significantly influenced by the quality of the consultant/s working on these projects with the school and/or teachers. More precisely, it is the quality of the *relationship* developed between the school/teachers and the consultant that matters.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Estelle Lewis, Director of Teacher Accreditation in AIS)

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Much of the collaborative energy and vision that drive these cross-sectoral partnerships is also evident in the ongoing partnerships in NSW between universities and schools, and between academic mentors and teachers. We spoke with academics in one metropolitan and one regional university – University of Sydney (Camperdown, just minutes from the CBD of Sydney) and Charles Sturt University (in Wagga, four hours west of Sydney).

6.2.4 Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney

The Division of Professional Learning (DPL) at the University of Sydney, now fundamentally embedded within the Faculty of Education and Social Work, was first created in 2002. A number of factors contributed toward its creation, but one significant purpose was to bring greater coherence to the range of teaching and learning and research activities that the faculty was involved in with respect to pre-service and in-service teacher professional learning. The Division sees professional learning for teachers as a continuum operating from pre-service preparation of teachers, through early-career, mid-career and late-career stages of a teacher's professional life.

A significant part of the work of DPL is done by members of the faculty engaged in sustained, long-term mentoring relationships with schools. These are often, but not always, formalised through AGQTP project involvement and funding. Since the establishment of the fully embedded version of DPL within the faculty, faculty members are encouraged to initiate and/or sustain these partnerships.

The DLP's brochure (see www.proflern.edsw.usyd.edu.au) outlines a wide range of ways in it seeks to 'initiate, develop and extend partnerships' for teachers' professional learning. Professor Robyn Ewing, Acting Dean of the Faculty, began our conversation by speaking about this range in terms of 'Purpose-designed professional learning' and 'Partnerships and mentoring'. These broad terms cover a range of 'offerings' which are negotiated with schools, sectors, non-school organisations (such as the NSW teachers' Federation) and cross-sectoral clusters of principals. The principles of the professional learning work with schools are informed by the NSW Quality Teaching Framework model. Schools generally approach the faculty with particular or broad requests for ongoing partnerships, usually seeking a university academic to act as mentor/critical friend or a partner in teachers' learning. It is apparent to Professor Ewing that approaches from schools are increasingly constructed in ways that are consciously symbiotic for the university and school partners. It is characteristic of these projects that tertiary and secondary participants all feel they learn *from* each other, *with* each other and *through* the dialogic work they are engaged in.

Increasingly the mentoring work of teacher educators/academics in schools is over extended periods of time, and increasingly it requires a deeper knowledge of the context of the school and stronger relationships with the teachers. Professor Ewing observed that there seems to be a wider appreciation amongst teachers and schools in NSW of the importance of academics as mentors. Schools themselves are recognising the value of mentoring within their own community. The Faculty of Education at Sydney University offers mentors for teachers in their own professional learning – whether this be in school-based programs or in EdD degrees. The EdD doctorates have a higher coursework component and are generally more practically based, grounded in the particular school setting of the teacher. There is a strong belief that teachers who enrol in university short courses or more sustained higher degree study are directly enhancing their leadership profile and capacity in schools.

The university also sees a role for professional learning courses in contributing to and enriching the professional learning of those who are already recognised as high profile leaders in their school. One of the more innovative developments recently involves plans for a cohort of principals to begin an EdD course through DPL. The faculty also offers PL courses – which may be credited toward a post-graduate award of degree – for teachers in developing their own mentoring knowledge and skills.

(Based on notes from an interview with Professor Robyn Ewing, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Education)

6.2.5 Faculty of Education, Charles Sturt University (CSU)

Professor Toni Downes, Dean of the Faculty of Education, sees a key role for the Faculty in developing professional learning programs that contribute to or constitute various university qualifications. She nominated the following: post-graduate degrees – MEd, EdD and PhD); specialist post-graduate programs (through formal agreements negotiated with school systems (including Graduate Certificates of Education, Graduate Diplomas of Education, and various Master’s Programs); the CSU ‘Remote Telescope project (which helps to generate specialist resources for teachers and students); academics as critical friends for teachers in schools engaged in projects such as those funded by AGQTP. Central to this role is making connections between teaching (usually in schools), research (mediated by some associations with universities, but enacted in vary different ways and dynamics) and professional engagement (which suggests connecting with some bigger picture notion of teaching, whether this is played out in a particular school, in cross-school networks, and/or in professional associations). The role is underpinned by a broad Faculty and University mission related to service to the professions. Associated with the faculty is the Research Institute for Professional Practice, Learning and Education (RIPPLE) (see <http://www.csu.edu.au/research/ripple/>). RIPPLE is a multi-disciplinary research centre that conducts high-quality applied research and consultation in the field of professional practice and implications for professional learning and education.

The majority of our conversation with Professor Downes concentrated on post graduate programs developed for employers. Postgraduate programs concerned with Inclusive Education, TESOL and Librarianship have been initiated by, and negotiated with, employing authorities. CSU won tenders to deliver these programs to NSWDET. Some programs have been operating for over ten years with contract renewal every 4-5 years. About 40-50 teachers participate in the program every year. These participants (selected by NSW DET) are teachers who see such programs as a way to develop specialist knowledge and skill.

From the university’s perspective, the purpose of programs is to provide specialist qualifications for specific roles and staffing needs within school systems. Invariably, specific aspects of the program are linked to state government priorities, and which elements or specialism areas in the NSW teaching workforce are deemed to be ‘areas of need.’ Funding for the programs is provided, in the first instance, at the systems level through tender arrangements. Beyond that the university uses some existing infrastructure within other programs to support teachers through their course of study, and there are some additional administrative positions that can be dedicated to coordinate and support participating schools and teachers. Programs are offered through ‘Distance Education’ mode and may be coupled with some intensive face-to-face study sessions. The content and pedagogy of the programs are generally designed by CSU academics, although they are significantly mediated by the details of the tender requirements. Completion of the program is intended to provide participants with pathways to specialist and/or leadership roles within schools and systems.

(Based on notes from an interview with Professor Toni Downes, Dean of the Faculty of Education)

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In NSW, as we interviewed representatives from systems and faculties of education, it was evident that a certain culture of collaboration, collegiality and conversation was driving the developments in professional learning opportunities for teachers in and beyond schools. While it is apparent that this notion of a single ‘culture’ cannot capture all professional learning structures constructed by schools and systems, we are also conscious that it can not speak for action by teachers in all settings and contexts. As in our interviews in South Australia, where it was possible to see the values informing the state supported project of ‘*Learning to Learn*’ project played out across universities and schools, so too in NSW we found similar values of collaboration, collegiality and conversation enacted in various networks of schools and within some schools.

6.2.6 A network of state high schools in regional NSW: 'The Orange Group of Schools'

'E²' is a curriculum reform project that was devised through a partnership between five secondary schools from the central west of NSW, who became known as 'The Orange Group,' with funding support from NSW DET. The schools are: Blayney High School, Canobolas High School, Orange High School, Molong Central and Anson Street SSP, and they have been working in partnership with the local TAFE since 2007. The fundamental purpose of the initiative is to extend curriculum options for senior students across the different school sites through 'mixed delivery' mode. This has been achieved through a combination of: face-to-face learning and teaching at the different campuses, with some students travelling across campuses on 'Super Wednesday'; some classes where the students remain in their own school but the teachers travel across campuses; and some classes which are videolinked to all schools from the teacher's home base.

One important feature of the program for the five schools 'signing up' to the curriculum reform project was the assurance that each school would be able to maintain its own identity, dynamics and structures, as a comprehensive, central or SSP school. The participating schools have developed a 'common line structure' grounded within the NSW Stage 6 curriculum documents. Notwithstanding the differences in the schools' culture and settings, it was critical for each school to have a dedicated technology studio, with video conference and electronic whiteboard facilities, in order to take part in the project. Clearly, this is an initiative which would not have been possible without considerable investment in ICT technology resources.

Another crucial aspect to resourcing has been funding to enable those teachers participating in the project to engage in substantial amounts of professional learning. This included some 'creative' application of existing structures, injections of funding from government bodies, and keying into professional learning programs and infrastructure already operating via various agencies. Specifically, it involved the following: existing school PD days devoted to E² planning and problem solving; regional curriculum development days devoted to E² initiatives; grant money for teacher release; strategic appointments of staff (with relevant expertise in both application of technology and staff training); IT training support provided by NSW Department of Education and Training at regional and state level; time-release for specific development ideas; and exchange with Centre for Learning and Innovation networks. While this level of resourcing for the more 'formal' aspects of teacher professional learning has been essential for the project to move from planning to implementation stages, the professional learning of the teachers does not stop there. Much of the professional learning for those working in the E2 program has come from 'learning in the job', that is learning through the development and implementation of the E2 model. As the leaders of the E2 program have learned through the evolution of the project – through a combination of experience and more formal evaluation processes – they have used their knowledge to design targeted professional development opportunities and resources for teachers currently working in the program.

In 2007, the project has begun with 11 HSC subjects offered across the schools. It has been possible to run a common Physics class across three high schools with a video conference lesson and a block class on 'Super Wednesday.' Chemistry, Geography and Engineering Studies are shared by video conferencing. Software and Design, Hospitality, Textiles, Building and Construction, Primary Industries, Music 2, Dance and Drama all form part of the shared curriculum as 'Super Wednesday' block classes. Finally Extension English, Extension Maths and Extension History are also offered in one and a half hour blocks within the 'Super Wednesday' school day. The Orange TAFE has expanded its offerings and incorporated the 'Super Wednesday' concept to offer some classes on Wednesday morning and others Wednesday afternoon.

E2 has emerged as a multifaceted and complex cross-school innovation. Its success relies on four key factors: (i) the professionalism, goodwill and collegiality of teachers from different school settings; (ii) a number of strategic partnerships with government, TAFE and various education agencies; (iii) a comprehensive

commitment to varied forms of professional learning embedded in all aspects of its design and implementation – this professional learning has been both formal and informal, it has taken place both within-the-schools and outside-of-the-schools; and it has drawn on ‘in-house’ as well as ‘outside’ expertise; and (iv) a substantial amount of investment into ICT resources and infrastructure. Those with responsibility for E2 establishment have been on a learning journey. Part of this journey has required taking leadership responsibility for the design of professional learning for staff in the school, and beyond through conference presentations, etc. This case demonstrates the ways in which comprehensive and varied professional learning has underpinned a major curriculum and pedagogical reform. Crucially, it has also demonstrated how rich and rewarding professional learning is often prompted by curriculum change when this change is *substantively supported* by a comprehensive strategy of resourcing – such as for time release, dedicated professional learning times, and ongoing conversations within schools, across schools and with various educational partners.

(Based on notes from an interview with a number of teachers in ‘The Orange Group of Schools’)

6.2.7 Sir Joseph Banks High School

Sir Joseph Banks High School has 551 students, who come from a rich range of cultural backgrounds in the southern suburbs of Sydney. In the last decade the school has worked strategically to increase and enrich professional learning and professional development opportunities for all of its teachers. A key encouragement for this greater emphasis on professional learning came from the school being recognised as satisfying the requirements of the Priority Schools Program (PSP) (NSW DET). A recent DET ‘Memorandum to principals’ describes the PSP in the following way:

From 2006, programs within the NSW Department of Education and Training that support schools serving high concentrations of low socio-economic status (SES) families were incorporated into Priority Schools Programs (PSP). These programs include the Priority Schools Funding Program and the Priority Action Schools Program. Schools are identified for PSP from a voluntary survey of school communities conducted every four years. (See http://www.psfps.nsw.edu.au/pspsurvey/docs/memo_principals.pdf)

The school’s participation in this program both reflects and informs the team-based and collaborative professional learning cultures at the school. The structures and dynamics in PSP, like those in Sir Joseph Banks High School, provide numerous spaces and opportunities for sharing and drawing on professional knowledge, ideas and experiences of teachers and schools in different contexts and settings. This is more than a process of ‘transferring’ good ideas or practices from one teacher to the next or from one group (or school) to the next. It involves teachers and schools using focused professional learning spaces and opportunities for generating ‘new’ knowledge, understandings and practices.

For the past few years, professional learning teams have operated throughout Sir Joseph Banks High School. Teachers are *invited* to form these teams – participation is not mandated, but there is a high level of participation amongst teachers. Currently, the formation of these teams is according to curriculum groups in years 7-10 – in NSW the Stage 4 syllabus pertains to years 7-8, Stage 5 to years 9-10, and Stage 6 to years 11-12. This has some advantages in that the professional learning is more likely to be grounded firmly within particular classroom practices; however, there are some members of the staff who do not fit neatly into these structures, and so there has been some effort recently to create more fluid structures. There is a tiered structure for each stage: a small team of coordinators works with a larger number of team leaders, and each team consists of teachers who have been invited to participate. Teams tend to meet once per cycle (i.e. per fortnight), and minutes of each meeting are public documents – these minutes must, amongst other things, report on the professional activities and ongoing feedback about these activities.

Classroom observation, feedback and focused reflection are common approaches to these teams' learning. Often, the classroom observation elements of the team activities utilise the DET/AGQTP 'lesson study' guidelines.

There is no space in this report to document the full range of professional learning activities in the professional learning program at Sir Joseph Banks. However, a brief summary of a selection of these activities gives some indication of the scope of the program and the need for strategic planning to resource and support it.

Other professional learning initiatives in the school have included:

- *Classmates Program* – a program running association with University of Western Sydney and DET, including the appointment of an academic to work over extended periods of time with pre-service (and early career?) teachers. (see http://www.ansn.edu.au/the_classmates_program_in_2006)
- *Executive Leadership Development Program*
This enables leaders in the school to participate in a formal learning program and also to develop a close collaborative relationship with leaders in two neighbouring schools. (see <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/areas/sld/programs/eldp.htm>)
It was through participation in the above programs that a member of DET, Frances Plummer, worked in an ongoing capacity with the school to review existing student learning and professional learning offerings at the school. She worked collaboratively with the school in developing new professional learning programs and structures, and then took a significant role in evaluating these initiatives. She subsequently submitted a formal evaluation report that became a significant in policy development in the school;
- *Links/relationships with local businesses*
The school has sought out and developed links with local businesses to help mentor and develop leaders within the school. The links are funded and supported through an initiative of the Australian Business Community Network. Some leaders in the school are currently participating in an ongoing leadership mentoring program with executive mentors arranged through ABCN. The program is called 'Partners in Learning' (see <http://www.abcn.com.au/what-we-do/109/>).

Some of the above programs use the Quality Teaching framework generated through the NSW DET as the basis for developing and implement activities and projects and for evaluating them. Additionally, coherence of the professional learning programs school-wide is enhanced through a strategic focus on four 'targets' that are articulated in the school 'plan' (re-written every 2 years). At the time of our interview, these targets apply to:

- Student welfare;
- Academic improvement (particularly literacy, numeracy and ICT in Years 7-10);
- Improved senior student outcomes; and
- Coherence in literacy, numeracy and ICT programs across the school

The professional learning programs, and in particular the teams that operate in curriculum specific groupings, are seen by the leadership of the school as a means for identifying leadership aspirants and for facilitating the development of their careers. Several leadership positions within the school are rotated to allow a wider range of teachers to experience, and to learn through, the challenges that leadership provides.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Stephen Waser, Ms Vicky Phipps, and Ms Julie Parker, Deputy Principals at Sir Joseph Banks HS)

6.2.8 *South Coogee Primary School*

There are 35 full-time teachers in South Coogee Primary School. One of three assistant principals in the school, Ms Nicole Molloy divides her time between classroom teaching, administrative responsibilities and approximately two days per week in her role as Coordinator of Professional Learning. She is able to carry out this latter role when student enrolments in the school are sufficiently high to be able to fund it.

Ms Molloy explained to us that the professional learning programs and practices in South Coogee Primary School begin with an assumption that good teachers are necessarily good learners. The key idea underpinning the many professional learning foci in the school can be best summarised as facilitating and supporting professional relationship building – between teachers, and between teachers and leadership in the school. Professional learning at this school builds on what teachers already know about the importance of relationship building in primary primary classrooms. The school seeks to use this knowledge and to transfer some key learning practices from primary classrooms into adult learning environments.

There are four broad components to the school's professional learning program:

- *Self-directed professional learning – based on TARS framework* (Teacher Assessment Review Schedule. TARS is based on the NSW Quality Teacher Framework.) Within this component there are three dynamics that help inform the coordinator of professional learning learn about the needs of teachers in the school:
 - i. Focus groups held once or twice in the year with selected participants to gauge individual learning needs. (Sometimes, a group may be made up of early career or graduate teachers, so that their concerns are more readily expressed and heard.) These groups as a whole help to determine school priorities with respect to their charter and to the DET Quality Teaching framework
 - ii. Ongoing mentoring pairings, especially for graduate teachers. This element seeks to capitalise on, and to some extent to systematise, the unplanned professional learning that often takes place in informal settings;
 - iii. Development of professional portfolios by graduate teachers. This is a requirement of NSW Institute of Teachers, and the school sees its role as guiding and mentoring this process for individual teachers.
- *School improvement targets*

There are a number of professional learning programs that emerge from the yearly articulation of these targets. This year, after literacy being the main focus of attention for several years, the targets are in the areas of Numeracy and the incorporation of ICTs into Key Learning Areas (KLAs). One of the important spaces in which professional learning targets these areas is whole-staff meetings, which occur once a week after school – they are referred to as ‘professional learning meetings.’ They involve teachers sharing best practice, teachers leading workshop activities, and the development of (and reporting about) action learning projects in small teams. Occasionally, there will be reports from projects that have received funding through AGQTP or some regional initiative.
- *Learning team meetings.*

The Assistant Principals select teachers who will lead these teams, and these teams meet in their own time (usually before or after school). They are required to report back to the coordinator of professional learning.

- *Needs-based professional learning.*

These include activities and relationships that are set up for an individual teacher, on the basis of a report by the coordinator of professional learning, or one of the school's executive (or a mentor), that a particular teacher needs support of one sort or another.

South Coogee Primary School recently gained funding in the form of an AGQTP grant that operated for 18 months. The money provided opportunities for experienced teachers (those most likely to be providing mentoring to early career teachers) and for early career teachers (those most likely to be mentored) to attend external professional development sessions outside the school, and for the leadership group, in association with these early career teachers to develop an action learning project within the school. Embedded within the action learning project was the provision of funding to release teachers to observe their colleagues' classrooms, and to use these observations as a basis of a professional conversation about both teachers' practices. When there has not been dedicated funding to release teachers for collegial observation and conversation, it has become the challenge of one of the Assistant Principals to creatively timetable teachers to be released from their usual classroom obligations. There is little opportunity to build in observations or networks with teachers in other schools, since this would require more 'creative timetabling' than can be currently achieved with the current funding constraints. However, efforts are continue to be made to enact and support collaborative classroom observations and conversations in the school, particularly for early career teachers.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Nicole Molloy, Assistant Principal at South Coogee PS)

6.2.9 Mercy Catholic College (Girls 7-12)

Mercy Catholic College, situated on the North Shore of Sydney, has 430 students, 43 FTE teachers and approximately 10 support staff. The school has just celebrated its centenary. During these 100 years the school has expanded in numbers of students and in the number and scope of buildings and teaching spaces. The school currently has a number of professional learning projects underway, most of which involve long term, sustained involvement by individuals and teams. Many of the programs are nested within, or have grown from, a professional learning project that began as The Enhancing Learning Project. This project has grown and evolved in a number of different ways – to date, there have been 19 phases of the project as it enters its seventh year. The central thrust of the project operates through teachers volunteering to be part of professional learning teams. These teams are committed to improving and enhancing students' capacity to be more motivated, and more independent learners through a richer understanding and appreciation of the ways they learn. Since its inception, this project has been a central pillar in the school's strategic planning in 2003.

Embedded within this whole-school professional learning project, there are a number of other professional learning activities that Mercy Catholic College directly facilitates and encourages teachers to be involved in. These include:

- *Ongoing relationships and formal partnerships with Sydney University.*

These begin at the level of the practicum, when Mercy teachers are mentoring pre-service teachers on extended internships. Universities such as Sydney University provide opportunities for school-based mentors to attend professional development sessions that focus on NSW DET's Quality Teaching framework. Associated with this is a series of whole day professional development courses run by the universities (more than one) that are focused around subjects in the NSW HSC;

- *Faculty-based (including, but not only, Technology and Applied Studies) professional development projects.*
The focus for this project has been on developing particular ICT skills within the school and applying them to different curriculum contexts.
- *Support for professional learning of individual teachers.*
This support can be in the form of release for attendance at after school seminars and lectures targeted for senior secondary teachers; they are held at various universities around Sydney.
- *Professional learning focused around ‘values identification and development’.*
The school has invested time and resources into applying for grants and funding for programs offered through DET and Curriculum Corporation, and involving a combination of school-based learning and external professional development ‘events.’ Applying for this funding is a significant part of the school’s strategic plan.

The Enhancing Learning Project (ELP) has involved numerous phases of data gathering and research into existing practice and structures within the school. This data gathering has often involved employing an external consultant or academic, with proactive leadership from the principal. The external consultant or academic characteristically plays a key role in the development of the future directions and particular stages of the ELP. The titles of these phases over time give an indication of the scope and continually evolving nature of this project:

- Phase 2: Action research and data collection
- Phase 3: Staff Development Day
- Phase 4: Establishment of Learning Teams
- Phase 5: Development of Belief Statement
- Phases 6 & 7: Implementation and then Evaluation of Co-operative Learning Strategies
- Phase 8: Exploring enrichment models
- Phase 14: Creation of new Learning Spaces (a substantial building program, informed by the ongoing ELP, and by consultant architects and educators)

The ELP was initiated when the current principal was in his second year as principal. It was a key strategy in his plan to improve both academic performance and pastoral care in the College. The principal, Mr Ray Paxton, has always seen these two areas as complementary, and indeed profoundly connected. Over the years that the ELP has existed, there is always negotiation with government policy, both state and federal, and with CEC policy. This negotiation happens through the agency of the school executive and the school council, in association also with diocese policy. In some areas, the college continues to chart its own course – e.g., with respect to the Quality Teaching Framework model. Of course, there are some areas requiring compliance with DET, such as four yearly reviews. The College sees these requirements as not conflicting with its overall vision. In reporting to the college council and to DET, the College continues to ‘map’ its progress with respect to the QT framework.

The executive in the College, and in particular the principal, has been largely responsible both for initiating the project and for maintaining its profile at the levels of the Strategic Plan and in the day-to-day implementing and direction of the project itself. Interestingly, the ELP plays a significant role in enhancing and identifying leadership potential in the staff of the College. One of the characteristics that the principal seeks in potential leaders in the school is a ‘bigger picture understanding

of teachers' work'. Past experience has indicated that teachers who engage successfully in the ELP have that sort of understanding initially, but their 'bigger picture understanding' is significantly enhanced through their involvement in this part of the school's professional learning offerings. Beyond the clear evidence that this has helped identify and develop potential leaders in the school, it is believed that professional learning programs such as this have a cumulatively positive effect on the professional culture of the school/staffroom. While most programs are voluntary, there is a sense that the benefits invariably 'filter through' to the practices and beliefs of even those who choose not to participate in them – although the principal did want to suggest that this means everyone in the school is invariably enthusiastic and supportive of all the different initiatives!

Projects such as ELP derive funding from a number of sources, including significant allocations by College Council, to be used by the executive as they see fit. There are several forums where the school must demonstrate the progress and the value (in different ways) of the College Council's investment in professional learning. Successful applications for special grants continue to support some programs, but the ways in which the funding is used is usually open to the school to decide exactly how the funds will be used.

The value of professional learning projects at Mercy College is celebrated in many ways and evaluated on various levels. This is done, for example, by:

- Learning teams sharing their stories at staff meetings;
- Leaders communicating to parents through live presentations and reports in various publications;
- The principal giving formal reports to College Council and DET audits; and
- Various members of staff (including the principal) presenting to other schools and principals (representatives from other schools also visit Mercy College to see how the project works).

Those professional learning projects that have been supported by funding from governments or external bodies are always gathering data to satisfy accountability demands of these agencies. Formal and rigorous evaluation of professional learning projects is felt to be very costly. In the past, where external consultants have worked with the school, they have also played a valuable role in designing and implementing rigorous evaluation tools. Recently, there have been more systematic efforts to gather data on a more 'scientific' basis. For instance, a pre-testing and post-testing schedule has been negotiated with the local Diocese to evaluate the latest development in the Metacognition project.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Ray Paxton, Principal, and Ms Heather Reid, classroom teacher)

6.2.10 *St Catherine's School*

St Catherine's is an independent Anglican girls' school (K-12) with approximately 900 students and 100 teachers. It celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2006. The professional learning opportunities open to teachers in the school are sometimes focused on primary or secondary teachers separately, and sometimes learning occurs across primary and secondary parts of the school. The philosophy of the professional learning in the school is one of 'feeding and spreading' knowledge, ideas and practices, rather than 'imposing' these things on teachers. Ms Lynne Stone, Headmistress of St Catherine's, spoke of her desire to 'empower staff', to provide opportunities for teachers to raise their confidence and competence levels, and in so doing to help them raise their professional profiles both within and beyond the school.

The emphasis is on differentiating professional learning opportunities, so that activities will better cater for teachers' needs at any one moment in their careers and with respect to a particular curriculum context (i.e. what subjects and which levels teachers are teaching). One important goal of the program is that, just as the students are working to become more independent and autonomous learners with leadership potential, so too teachers are always working toward being more capable of 'self-managing' learners, in effect potential leaders within the community of learning in St Catherine's at least.

In our conversation, Ms Stone referred to a number of aspects of the professional learning at St Catherine's:

- *Professional learning which happens in the course of teachers undertaking a major challenge in the school community:*

(i) *Celebrations of school's 150th anniversary*

History teachers in particular engaged in authentic professional learning as part of the History e-learning project for this anniversary. They needed to further develop, and in some cases acquire for the first time, certain skills and knowledge to carry out (and/or lead others in) this project. The school appreciated that the learning these teachers was engaged in was building capacity, skills and knowledge that would be valuable to the individual teachers and to the school well beyond the year of celebrations, and so they were given resources and support with the understanding that they were *learning*, as much as they were generating a 'product.'

(ii) *Members of the English department re-writing and renewing their curriculum*

On one level, the teachers were engaged in an extended process of deliberating and collaborating on a significant curriculum document. This in itself prompted valuable reflection, re-evaluation and professional learning, particularly in the area of differentiation. In addition they demonstrated a framework for describing students' learning outcomes in terms of Core – Mastery – Modified outcomes. This was then discussed with the rest of the school as a framework for use in other departments.

(iii) *Creation of a Gifted Education handbook for St Catherine's*

Here, as in the above projects, teachers were occasionally offered time release (albeit limited time) to create this important curriculum document, but all staff were involved in setting the priorities for the next steps in their own professional development in this area and several follow up events, chosen by them, built on their understandings.

- *Information technology programs*

Individuals and/or teams of teachers within the school are identified, through sharing of classroom practices and projects (and sharing of professional knowledge), as having knowledge and skills that could be shared with others. These individuals and/or teams are invited to present and/or lead workshops at after-school meetings – sometimes this is within a particular department; at other times there may be a whole school focus. Occasionally, an external consultant will be brought in to be a sort of provocateur of teachers' current thinking and practices.

- *After school 'policy meetings' (formerly the school just had staff or faculty meetings)*

Twice a term, a particular theme (usually chosen by the school's executive or informed by current concerns or school initiatives) provides a focus for active, team-based professional learning activities. Topics in recent times have included: Positive Psychology, What does it mean to be an Anglican school, NetAlert, Mal Levine's Misunderstood Minds, and Differentiating the Curriculum. Individuals and groups of teachers are invited to lead a session, and the individual/team will negotiate with the Principal/Executive about approaches, dynamics and resources required for the session/s.

The broad direction and particular details of the school's professional learning program emerge partly as a result of ongoing conversations with teachers and executive. On the one hand, these conversations consider changes in curriculum – initiated by the school or by other agencies such as DET – and on the other hand they must be responsive to policy making from the NSW Institute of Teaching (e.g., accreditation of graduate teachers and re-accreditation of experienced teachers; the development of a 'Framework for professional standards for teachers')

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Lynne Stone, Headmistress of St Catherine's)

6.2.11 Sydney Church of English Grammar School (Shore School)

Shore is a well-resourced independent Anglican boys' school, with approximately 140 full-time teachers on staff. Since the appointment of Dr Wright as principal, just a few years ago, the Council has agreed to make teacher professional development one of the priorities in the school. Dr Wright sees one of his most important roles as 'promoting a culture of professional learning' in the school. As he says, 'If we are expecting students to develop as learners, then the least we can do is demonstrate that their teachers are learners.' Dr Wright and two other teachers – whom we interviewed together – agreed that a major goal of the range of professional development activities in the school was to generate professional conversations among teachers. They described Shore's approach to professional learning as a 'collegial model' of professional conversation. This conversation facilitates the building of relationships and friendships, but these relationships operate professionally with a level of openness and mutual respect. Dr Wright believes that teachers, as groups and as individuals, should recognise the importance of professional development as a fundamental part of their work as teachers.

Written into the teachers' 'Collective Agreement' is a requirement that teachers will engage in 4 – 5 days per year of professional development/learning outside of the school-wide PD offerings provided by the school in the usual course of their school year. If/when this PD requires teachers to be absent from their face-to-face classroom teaching roles, these teachers are replaced by teachers who are engaged in addition to the school's own teachers (i.e. the school pays for additional teachers – rather than have their classes 'covered' by teachers within the school – when teachers must miss classes because they are engaged in approved professional learning activities). There is a substantial funding allocated to every individual teacher for their professional development, and there are certain requirements that are tied to this funding.

The range of professional learning activities that the school supports in terms of systems, infrastructure, personnel and funding includes the following:

- Professional development events or sessions (sometimes relating to compliance with dissemination of information such as for OHS, but also including programs offered by AIS or other authorities from outside the school);
- Mentoring and induction program (for new teachers to the school, both experienced and at graduate level) operated within the school;
- Various classroom observation protocols that are attached to programs such as mentoring and induction. These incorporate the school's '2 plus 2' protocols: this is a structured approach to generating collegial conversation, which builds from teachers affirming (two) strengths in their colleagues, then moves to offer (two) suggestions, and subsequently ask questions about elements of their colleagues classroom practice;
- Teachers engaging in sustained tertiary study, generally at postgraduate level;
- 2 -3 teachers per year get the opportunity to study abroad for some period of time (under the auspices of the Shore Foundation);
- Supervising student teachers is considered an important element of more experienced teachers' professional development;

- ‘Professional development and review’ program set up within the school for the school. A large component of this is focused around individual teachers’ interviews with the Headmaster; and
- The Headmaster (usually at the start of the year) distributes some reading material – perhaps a book – to all staff and this provides a focus for collegial conversation in succeeding months.

Shore has for many years run an induction and mentoring program for graduate teachers and teachers new to the school. Following the winning of AGQPT funding, the school re-visited this program, making changes in a number of approaches, systems and evaluating protocols. The mentoring program is for teachers who are new to the profession (minimum of 12 months on the program) and those who are experienced teachers but new to the school (usually 6 months on the program). One of the teachers, Emma, was invited by the Headmaster to be part of the team leading the renewal of the program. Beyond the AGQTP grant, a portion of the funding for this program comes from a substantial commitment by the Council in terms of budget allocation. When funding such as from AGQTP is received, this has been used to provide space and time for evaluation and re-structuring of the program. Some in the conversation were quite emphatic that the drive for the program does not come from AGQTP funding. It was also expressed that NSW IT requirements do not figure prominently in the planning or implementation. A major resource of the program is the investment by committed teachers – meeting during school, during weekends, sometimes at each other’s houses – in planning the program and implementing it.

Through the initial 3-day induction program, mentees are introduced to their mentors and there are several opportunities for getting to know each other in informal contexts. One of the first formal elements at this early stage is the collaborative process of goal setting for the first year. A key part of the mentoring program is a series of six observation visits to classrooms, where the new teacher visits and is visited by his/her mentor, the Head of Department and another colleague. These visits are the basis for some professional conversations, some of them mediated by a particular protocol of question asking. This, in itself, is intended to promote the mentee teacher’s reflection about his/her classroom practice, and it is hoped that it also helps to develop a collegial relationship which promotes and facilitates such conversations into the future.

Those who are mentors are considered to be part of a team, and this team meets at various times throughout the year. Mentors are given ‘some emoluments’ and the sum paid for mentoring has been increased in recent times. Some teachers in the interview, who had been mentors, spoke of their own experience of mentoring being one where they were as much the learner as the mentee with whom they were working. Dr Wright, though, wished to reiterate his sense of the importance of significant classroom expertise in the teacher chosen to be mentor. The headmaster spoke of his agenda to use the appointment of mentors (a mentor is considered a leadership position in the school) to help recognise and reward their work, and to facilitate their personal career building in some way.

The success of the program is evaluated primarily in open-ended interviews that the headmaster holds with individual teachers, usually held at the completion of their participation in the program. He also holds at least one meeting with the whole mentoring team to discuss the effectiveness of the program for each year.

Programs such as ‘Induction and Mentoring’ are seen by the Headmaster as ways in which he can help advance career prospects of individual teachers in the school, facilitate the development of their leadership potential/qualities in the school (and beyond), and help build the capacity of the school’s leaders overall.

Another aspect of the school's commitment to professional development, which was spoken about briefly, is the conferences that the school holds (off campus, in a 'more attractive setting'). These are one-day conferences, focusing on a pre-determined 'theme.' They comprise a series of presentations and workshops given by selected members of the school community, and someone else with particular expertise from outside the school community. The conferences are for the whole school, or for Housemasters, or for Heads of Departments. Since the first conference, in 2004, the culture of these conferences has become more open and collegial after some initial scepticism from teachers. As well as providing opportunities for conversation and learning amongst teachers, the conferences are a forum for recognising professionals within the school (i.e. they are invited to present a workshop) and for sharing expertise with colleagues.

(Based on notes from an interview with Dr Tim Wright, Headmaster, Terry Devine, Administrator of PD, and Ms Helen Rhodes and Ms Emma Campbell classroom teachers)

6.3 VICTORIA

Victoria is one of the two largest, in terms of numbers of schools and stakeholder bodies, of the state jurisdictions in Australia. We interviewed representatives from eight schools (including one grouping of teachers, drawn from a number of schools), two universities and six key stakeholders in this state. In many ways, the diversity of practices and structures that we found in New South Wales was again evident in Victoria, and there appeared to be some professional learning principles that seemed consistent with the principles informing policy and practice in New South Wales. For instance, there was widespread recognition amongst our interviewees that professional learning is most effective when it is:

- Grounded in, and related to, teachers' classroom practices;
- Embedded within teachers' everyday professional lives, if not routines;
- Ongoing rather than occurring in one-off events or special occasions of professional learning;
- Supported by allocations of funding and/or time which allow teachers some space to learn
- Mediated by professional standards in one form or another; elements of these standards are often drawn on for teachers to develop professional learning goals in order to provide a focus for their professional learning; and
- supported and facilitated by strong leadership at all levels, especially at the school level. But even here the emphasis is not just on principal class or heads of department. The most successful teacher learning cultures we saw were ones where professional learning activities and initiatives were a means to identify potential leaders, to affirm the leadership work done by teachers in schools, and such activities or initiatives are often the focus for re-energising or renewal of leadership in a school.

Just as in New South Wales, there were lively tensions with respect to:

- The need for professional learning to have a 'rigorous' focus on content (often expressed in terms of what the students are being taught), as opposed to learning that is more open ended or driven by teachers' perceived needs;
- The importance of developing a 'common understanding' of a concept or idea in a school community, as opposed to encouraging teachers to generate their own understandings through proactive engagement with, and inquiry into, some proposed concept or idea; and
- Providing periods of time in a weekly timetable that are set aside for teachers' professional learning in the form of collaborative planning, regular professional learning meetings, as opposed to schools or institutions requiring teachers to engage in professional learning in their own time.

Several teachers, representatives from universities and other stakeholders often spoke about the great value of active learning, or active research projects, as they often did in New South. However, there appears to be some crucial differences. Notwithstanding the impact of federal systems level projects, such as AGQTP (which nevertheless is less prominent in Victoria) and occasional exceptions where particular schools have used their own funding to set up partnerships, it is apparent that consultants or university-based researchers are less often involved in the planning for, implementing or evaluation of these school-based projects. On so many levels, there is still much evidence of richly collaborative dynamics operating in professional learning activities in schools. Interviewees in Victoria also frequently spoke about collaborative mentoring, coaching, co-mentoring or train-the-trainer approaches to teacher learning, and it was commonplace for the models of professional learning in these instances to be developed from within the school, rather than taking an already existing model and implementing this.

Taken as a whole – and, here again, it is important to point out that there were some significant exceptions to the sense of a Victorian professional learning ‘culture’ – there were some distinctive ways in which professional learning policy, practices and structures was somehow different from those most often seen and spoken about in NSW. These include:

- Much less evidence in Victoria of a systematic approach to school and university partnerships⁷ (although there is considerable evidence of system-school partnerships within each of the respective state, Catholic and independent sectors);
- Much less evidence in Victoria of cross-sectoral partnerships, both at the systems level and at the level of school networks, although (as mentioned above) there are some systems that operate federally (such as AGQTP, such as some subject-based teacher professional associations, and the Australian Teacher Educator Association (ATEA). The Project for Enhancing Effective Learning (PEEL) based in Victoria is another significant exception;
- A stronger emphasis on professional learning connected to notions of teacher ‘performance’ (in terms of individual teachers and professional cultures within schools);
- A somewhat narrower focus on ‘evidence-based’ professional learning – i.e. learning policy and practices that are driven and mediated by the collection of what is sometimes referred to in schools as ‘hard data’ (such as students’ performance in a range of mandated student tests or performance indicators for the teachers) in preference to (if not ignoring altogether) what is referred to in some schools; and
- The methodical use of this ‘hard data’ to develop or modify school priorities, and to ensure that professional learning practices are sharply focused on these priorities. Teachers are thought to be rendered more accountable through various measurements of this hard data

A significant factor in the interviewees’ discussion of their sense of professional learning seemed to be the state government’s policy document, *Blueprint for government schooling in Victoria*, first published in 2004. Although clearly this was speaking to and for government schools, we got the impression that it is having a strong mediating effect on the ways in which many schools and organisations are framing policy and enacting practices. One aspect of the document that was specifically invoked by teachers in state schools, but whose discourse was clearly evident in other places was the notion of ‘a performance and development culture’ as explained in Flagship Strategy 4 (DE&T, 2004). In this part of the *Blueprint* the Government’s policy direction was outlined as follows. It says, in part:

Research shows that a good performance and development system in schools improves student learning outcomes by identifying the specific areas where a teacher’s performance can be improved and by providing targeted professional development to do so.

In 2004 the Government will introduce an *accreditation scheme for performance and development culture schools*, with the objective of having all schools accredited by 2008. Schools with a focus on a performance and development culture will improve teacher effectiveness and therefore student outcomes by emphasising better performance management and creating an environment of continuous improvement.

⁷ One academic who transferred from a Victorian University to a university in another state remarked that in her experience there was a much stronger culture of partnerships between universities and schools in her new state: ‘Schools, teachers in schools and even adult workplaces see universities as a rich source of knowledge and expertise’ that they can draw on and work with in different ways. This was much rarer, in her experience, in Victoria.

Accreditation for a performance and development culture will be a key performance objective for all principals. The proportion of schools in their region that have achieved accreditation will be a key performance measure for Regional Directors and Senior Education Officers. The accreditation criteria will include:

- Multiple sources of feedback for teachers, including feedback from parents and students on the quality of the teaching–learning relationship;
- Customised plans to meet individual teacher development needs;
- Quality professional development to address those needs; and
- Induction and mentoring for beginning teachers.

The accreditation process will be largely internal and then be externally verified by teams or panels of expert educational practitioners.

In the thirteen interviews we conducted in Victoria, there were schools and organisations whose professional learning practices, structures and discourses were strongly informed by this approach. Much importance was placed on individual teachers setting personal goals, working on achieving these goals, and then seeking evidence to prove that these goals had been achieved. ‘Component mapping’ is one strategy for teachers to self-evaluate their classroom practice. It involves collecting quantitative data from a range of sources and is perceived by teachers as both an important part of from DE&T/DEECD’s *Blueprint* policy⁸. Approaches to professional accountability such as these are felt to be necessary in some schools both for accreditation as a performance and development culture school and for individual teachers within the school to satisfy the accreditation requirements of the state’s statutory body, the VIT. Needless to say, this has a significant influence on the ways in which professional learning is enacted, evaluated, funded and supported in those schools.

We also spoke with educators or administrators whose practices and beliefs were not closely aligned with some of the above, especially the notion of teaching as ‘performance’ and the approach to professional learning that ‘identify[ies] the specific areas where a teacher’s performance can be improved and ...provide[s] targeted professional development’ in order to improve that area. For instance, the impressive and rapidly expanding Ithaka project (a network of teachers from independent schools and consultants) strongly challenges the notions of teacher performance, rigorously seeks a wider range of qualitative data or ‘evidence’ from which to evaluate teaching and professional learning, and is much less reliant on accountability frameworks for the success of its ongoing work. Dr Julie Landvogt, who helped to formally establish the Ithaka project in 2005, works both as consultant/critical friend with teachers engaged in action research-based projects in school and liaises with Heads of professional learning at independent schools to integrate such projects within the schools’ respective priorities. She says of Ithaka:

Much of the professional learning of teachers and consultants in Ithaka are involved in re-envisaging what teachers’ work and teachers’ professional learning is and can be. It is important I think for leaders in schools and in other bodies, as well as teachers in schools, to see, acknowledge and experience what it is like when teachers are having a real conversation ... how *that* is learning ... and what teachers need to support that conversation on so many levels, rather than what a highly visible first-day-at-school professional development person or a large-scale one off event can bring to the school’s professional learning life.

⁸ See specifically the initiative called *Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLTs)*, part of the *Blueprint for Government Schools: Future Directions for Victorian Government Schools* (DE&T, 2004).

It may also be related to the existence of a ‘performance and development culture’ in Victoria that some representatives from schools were willing to be interviewed for this project, but requested that their identity or the identity of the school remain confidential. For this reason, in this part of the Interim Report the reporting of professional learning attitudes, practices, and structures within schools in Victoria maintains the anonymity of these schools.

* * * * *

The preceding overview of professional learning policy and practice in Victoria draws on all of the interviews conducted by members of the research team and written up as individual reports for each interview. The following section reports on some of these interviews, although unlike the section on New South Wales, it is more selective in terms of the schools and stakeholders referred to. Several schools and representatives from organisations were not comfortable to be identified with the level of detail we have presented in other states. Rather than making explicit in this interim report (by way of omission) who these schools are, we have chosen to report on just a selection of schools that we believe represent much of the range of perspectives, practices, structures and beliefs. The reports are organised around particular headings which highlight an aspect of professional learning practice and beliefs that are significant in that school or organisation.

6.3.1 Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)

Ms Raylene Dodds, Assistant General Manager Leadership and Teacher Development Branch in the Teacher and School Capacity Building Division Office for Government School Education, has carriage of school leadership programs. These programs constitute a comprehensive set of initiatives relating to school leaders that sits alongside other professional learning programs specifically targeted at teachers. The Government’s *Blueprint for Government Schools: Future Directions for Education in the Victorian Government School System* (DE&T, 2004), like the more recent *Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform* (DEECD, 2008), is a key document for understanding the Education Department’s priorities, including the emphasis on continuous professional learning in order to improve student outcomes. Significant resources have been put into implementing a range of strategies and programs within the framework provided by the *Blueprint*.

The Leadership and Teacher Development Branch (since renamed School Workforce Reform Branch) is, in fact, a product of the *Blueprint*. The work of this entire branch is focused on building the capacity of teachers, school support staff and school leaders. This reflects the flagship strategies enunciated in the *Blueprint*, most notably the emphasis on developing leadership capacity, teacher development and the creation of a performance and development culture in schools, involving agreement about what is important and how it might be delivered.

The *Blueprint* outlines four strategies for school leadership, and since its inception 19 leadership programs have been funded by this division, including individualised professional learning for high performing principals and programs for aspirants to leadership positions. The focus is on principal class performance and development. This is not just a matter of ticking boxes. Principals need to focus on what they are trying to achieve in their schools and what they need to do in order to realise those goals. Performance planning in every school needs to be aligned with school priorities.

In addition to its focus on leadership, the Department has a range of strategies in place, including literacy specialist program that enables people with high skills to coach people within classroom settings. Overall, there is a strong emphasis on the need for professional learning to be located within schools (i.e. not as something which is imported from the outside). In this respect, *Professional learning in effective schools: The seven principles of highly effective professional learning* (DE&T,

2005: <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/teacher/ProfLearningInEffectiveSchools.pdf>) provides a key reference point. This document outlines a range of ways in which teachers can engage in continuous inquiry into their teaching, including professional learning teams, action research, examination of student work, study groups, case discussions, peer observation and lesson study. The focus is on improving students' learning through strategies that enable people to transfer their knowledge into practice. School leaders and teachers are encouraged to work collaboratively, identifying local needs and seeking ways to address them. This is as distinct from traditional models of professional development in the form of one off workshops, etc.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Raylene Dodds, Assistant General Manager Leadership & Teacher Development Branch in the Teacher and School Capacity Building Division Office for Government School Education in DEECD)

6.3.2 *The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)*

The main focus of the Victorian Institute of Teaching over the past three years has been on the implementation of the provisionally registered teachers' program. This has been a major initiative in response to the influx of new teachers in Victorian schools after a period when teacher education graduates found it very difficult to gain employment. The professional standards for provisionally registered teachers developed by the Victorian Institute of Teaching provide the framework for this program. Provisionally registered teachers are expected to develop their practice in order to meet the standards. Although this is a regulatory requirement, with a compliance element, the program also reflects a commitment to meeting the needs of early career teachers, and providing them with the foundations for their continuing professional practice, learning and engagement (i.e. the three dimensions of the VIT's professional standards). The standards framework exposes teachers to what they need to know as they begin their careers. Through meeting the requirements for continuing registration, they are also familiarised with the concept of 'evidence' and continuing reflective and collegial practice as components of professional learning.

Through implementing the provisionally registered teachers' program, the Victorian Institute of Teaching has also been obliged to address other aspects of professional learning. The program has required the VIT to embark on a process of inducting school principals and mentor teachers into the protocols for assessing early career teachers and generally giving them the support they need in order to succeed. This has provided the VIT a small window on the quality of the professional cultures in schools. Where the process of induction has worked most successfully, schools appear to have an integrated school culture, a culture of 'integrated professional learning' (Fitzroy High School was named as an example). Where schools do not reflect a professional learning culture, beginning teachers appear to have received less support.

The provisionally registered teachers' program is one stage in an overall plan for professional renewal that now embraces the re-registration of practising teachers. This will happen in a five year cycle, and requires teachers to show evidence of professional learning over that period. The VIT has recently developed guidelines for professional development activities, requiring teachers to undertake activities that embrace both knowledge from outside the immediate school or work environment and less formal, individual, school based activities which contribute to their professional learning. The VIT is promoting the value of 'a broad range of professional development activities', although the reference point for all activities remains the professional standards. It is currently establishing the PDi, an online professional development activities search facility that will enable teachers to access information about available professional development from a range of providers with reference to the VIT standards.

These initiatives are informed by current research on professional learning. It is very important for the Victorian Institute of Teaching to develop a strategy for professional renewal of Victorian teachers with reference to this research. Ms Fran Cosgrove and Mr John Mildren indicated that they were especially mindful of the ways in which school cultures shape the professional learning of teachers. While they affirmed the need for teachers to engage in learning that connected with their local settings, they also emphasized the importance for teachers to look beyond their school and to access other sources of professional learning. Indeed, Mr Mildren argued that one of the benefits of the PDi was that it provided an opportunity for all teachers, regardless of where they are located, to identify the professional development available and to bypass 'the traditional filters that occur in schools'. Both Mr Mildren and Ms Cosgrove indicated that they were working with a concept of 'professionals' as people who are able to negotiate what systems and schools require and to identify their individual needs. They see the PDi as a resource that 'gives things over to teachers', supporting them in thinking about their professional practice as individuals. This also involves providing opportunities for teachers to share knowledge that isn't necessarily reflected in talk about student outcomes or other performance indicators.

They imagine a situation where teachers are able to share what they are doing in their classrooms, making connections between what happens in class and the professional development opportunities available to them. Such teachers are always mindful of how their professional learning translates into classroom practice. This is not to say that this is a straightforward process, as though professional development automatically produces improved student learning outcomes. Rather, professional learning might best be described as a 'recursive process', whereby teachers are continually monitoring their professional practice in the light of what they have learned, and revisiting what they have learned in the light of their professional practice..

As can be seen in many jurisdictions around Australia, there has been a significant shift at the systems level in Victoria from the centralised provision of professional development to a recognition that professional learning occurs at a local level, requiring school leaders to take responsibility for the management of resources. This obviously has its positive aspects, but there is also a danger that such professional learning will not look beyond what is happening in local contexts, leaving sole responsibility for all professional learning in the school in the hands of the principal who must lead the learning as well as manage resources and infrastructure. This explains the Institute's policy that professional renewal requires that half of the professional development that teachers is sourced from outside the school. This is explicit encouragement for schools to look beyond themselves and their local communities in order to engage in issues as they are being debated at a larger, trans-local level.

Ms Cosgrove observed teachers need to have their knowledge and practice informed by current research. It is also important to recognise that, as individual professionals, teachers learn in many different ways and that it is also important to position teachers in such a way that they can say what is important to them. Teachers obviously need to ground their learning in their local settings, but they also need to develop a capacity to look beyond those settings, and thereby develop a perspective on what is happening in their schools. Obviously there are balances which need to be achieved between local contexts and larger settings. Both Ms Cosgrove and Mr Mildren indicated that there was a need to challenge teachers who might be locked into certain practices (Mr Mildren commented that 'the longer you continue to practice in a particular way, the more this becomes its own reason for being') to think beyond their local contexts and to acquire a larger perspective.

The VIT is envisaging a comprehensive process of professional renewal, a strategy that will take five years before it goes through its full cycle. In the first instance this has meant inducting early career teachers into a culture which recognises the need for strong evidence to support any claims about the learning that has occurred in their classrooms. Ms Cosgrove commented: 'We're heading for more inquiry based professional learning'. Yet this is not to say that all learning should

necessarily take the form of ‘practitioner inquiry’. The goal is to create ‘a more informed and thinking profession’, with teachers who are able to judge what works for their students: ‘It’s about thoughtful teachers who are not simply compelled to do whatever they are told.’

For all their focus on the needs for teachers to have the autonomy to identify their professional learning needs, Ms Cosgrove and Mr Mildren also placed emphasis on the importance of professional standards as providing a common language that enables teachers to articulate aspects of their professional practice. As in other states, the VIT has generated a set of generic standards that draws upon the work done in subject associations, especially the Standards for the Teaching of English Language and Literacy in Australia (STELLA), and seeks to apply them to all subject areas and disciplines. They articulated a vision of teachers working collegially, using the language of standards to ask what makes a teacher effective. They saw the structures and processes that the VIT provides as enabling individual teachers to see themselves as professionals while grappling with the demands of top-down reforms or mandates.

They recognised that professional renewal and change of the kind they are envisaging is a slow process, fraught with difficulties. The VIT has encountered resistance from the profession. But in order to make a significant change in the way teachers view themselves, it is important to give enough time for people to work everything through. It is difficult to ask teachers to do anything as a statutory authority in a climate of rapid change and flux, when morale has been poor. There is a need to be explicit about the tangible benefits to those who are involved.

On the other hand, research the VIT has commissioned along with other states shows that teachers really value their professional development. Victorian teachers in particular value the opportunities for professional development available to them. This is congruent with a view about the need to de-emphasize the compliance or regulatory dimension, to enable teachers to make informed choices based on what they feel improves their professional practice, as opposed to simply ticking things off.

What does the future hold? The generic standards that the VIT has developed appear to be working well at an introductory level, but there may be a need for further refinement of the standards for them to better reflect the expertise of accomplished teachers. This is not to suggest that the VIT is taking responsibility for setting up a mechanism for performance appraisal, but it may be possible that the process of providing evidence to demonstrate expertise or accomplishment could link up with performance pay. This is congruent with the Victorian Government’s *Blueprint* and the concept of a ‘performance and development culture’.

There is growing acceptance of the mentoring process in Victoria. Ms Cosgrove observed that fewer people are questioning this process by saying that it simply duplicates the kind of work students do in university. The process is more successful where different schools understand the broad process and modify it to suit their local needs.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Fran Cosgrove, Manager of Professional Learning, and Mr John Mildren, Manager of Professional Development)

6.3.3 System-school partnerships

6.3.3.1 The Catholic Education Office Melbourne

Ms Elina Raso is Manager of the Professional Learning Unit (PLU) for the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM). This unit was established two years ago to address the policy and coordination challenges associated with the planning, resourcing and the running of professional learning for teachers in Catholic schools. In particular, there was a desire to develop and build greater coherence and an underpinning vision for professional learning for and by Catholic schools, and to ensure that there was an effective registration, data management and communication system in place for professional learning. The PLU sees its main role ultimately as facilitating the policy and practice directions in relation to the design, delivery and support of professional learning for Catholic schools. This includes a focus on building the system-school partnerships for professional learning and helping to build schools' capacity to lead professional learning in their school, and supporting the development and capacity of leaders within a school to develop expertise in this area. Interestingly, until 2008, matters specifically related to AGQTP did not sit directly within the area of PLU.

The PLU oversees the continuing implementation of over 200 professional learning programs for the 329 schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. On one level, this helps to coordinate and evaluate some of these programs, operating at a systems level. Ms Raso emphasised that the role of the PL unit was not to 'deliver these programs, as such.' The PLU's coordinating role includes building and contributing to steering groups around key professional learning projects within the CEOM and facilitating connections between these groups. Additionally and crucially, the PLU is continually reflecting on the 'policy framework' of the professional learning that the CEOM and its schools and teachers are engaged in. This involves considering new ideas and policy development from governments, and re-visiting policy, approaches and strategies with a view to their appropriateness in a rapidly changing environment (and as new 'data' about their 'success' is generated). In this respect the PLU has a role in facilitating policy and directions for Professional learning for Catholic schools in Melbourne. Ms Raso and her unit are involved in generating a 'Discussion paper' that addresses some fundamental questions such as: how the system best supports schools to build their capacity (and, in turn, individual teachers' capacities) to lead their own professional learning; how to develop their own professional learning plans; and how to identify what is quality professional learning and further how the system ensures that its externally delivered programs are designed to support schools to achieve improvement in school and teacher practice .

The systems level professional learning of Catholic schools is funded through national and state government funding, by CEOM and by schools. Generally CEOM activities have minimal or no registration charges.

The CEOM is involved in a number of partnerships with government, universities and other education sectors to deliver ongoing professional learning. An example is Catholic schools' participation in the 'Creating and Supporting a Performance and Development Culture,' project which is framed the Victorian Government *Blueprint* document (from 2004, Flagship Strategy 4). Catholic schools which have chosen to participate in this project also participate in the DEECD accreditation scheme for building a 'performance and development culture' in schools.

A CEOM initiative in recent years has been the development of the 'School Improvement Framework' (SIF). This Framework has significant implications for CEOM directions in professional learning. It sets out a structured approach to internal school improvement planning and combines this with an external School Review. The approach works on a four year cycle and the external School Review normally takes place in the fourth year of this cycle. Following the Review, schools, with the support of CEOM staff, develop a school improvement plan for the next four years. These plans are already starting to guide the development of local and CEOM centrally designed programs.

A significant part of a school improvement approach involves recognizing and developing leaders and leadership potential in schools. This is done through facilitating projects that value and develop the role of Leadership Teams and professional learning leaders within the school. ‘Leadership in Catholic Schools: Development Framework and Standards of Practice’ is a document, generated by CEOM with AGQTP funding, that has been valuable for guiding and framing leaders’ ongoing reflection and action. This has been used as a resource in related AGQTP projects, such as the ‘Middle Leaders Program’ and in action learning projects. This resource has also been important in leadership succession planning in schools – another way in which the system has worked to build coherence in professional learning in Catholic schools.

The Catholic Education Office is also engaged in a range of Student Wellbeing initiatives which involve innovative professional learning partnerships with significant stakeholders both government and non government. These partnerships are designed to enable schools to provide the best learning outcomes for students in Catholic schools through linking school and community and building capacity of both in the context of the CEOM School Improvement Framework. An example is the CEOM and VicHealth funded *Schools as Core Social Centres (SACSC) initiative* which works with clusters of schools that actively promote and build partnerships with the school and broader community through engaging community organisations. The foundation principle which informs this initiative is that schools function as core social centres connecting families in the community in ways which are non stigmatising and universal.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Elina Raso, Manager of the Professional Learning Unit of CEOM)

6.3.4 Inquiry-based professional learning, including action research

6.3.4.1 The Ithaka Project

The Ithaka Project (a network of teachers and consultants working in and with nine independent schools in Melbourne) began formally, in 2005, with just two schools, MLC and Melbourne Grammar School. It has since grown ‘organically’ to include nine independent schools. In our interview with three educators from different schools engaged in the project, Dr Julie Landvogt (a consultant and the director of the project), emphasised that the ‘organic’ and emergent development of the project over time has been a distinctive factor in the success of the project. Such an approach allows the project to continue to grow and evolve every year according to the needs and wishes of the teachers and schools involved. Nevertheless, there is an underlying aim of ‘connecting teachers with one another and with the teaching and learning they are engaged in across their different settings.’

In an article published in *Teacher* magazine, ‘Sharpening up PD: learning for teaching,’ Dr Landvogt (October, 2005) outlined some of the structural, conceptual and practical principles for the Ithaka Project:

The *Ithaka Project* uses [Ron] Ritchhart’s dispositions of intellectual character – open-mindedness, curiosity, metacognition, truth seeking, strategic thinking and scepticism – to frame its inquiries, which can include an examination of reporting, the alignment between curriculum and assessment, or catering to students’ learning abilities. Teachers are usually involved through their department teams, subject teams or year level responsibilities, and communication and learning takes place in seminars, online discussion groups, reading groups and joint school meetings.

Other activities include: a recently initiated online professional learning wiki, structured around four ‘strands’ The wiki includes set readings and foci for online ‘talk’ and writing; small group planning and reflecting on changes to pedagogy, curriculum or assessment rubrics; collaborative planning of a unit and then critically reflecting on the effectiveness of this unit after it has been taught; structured programs of classroom visits and conversations around such visits; and critical discussion by teams of student work.

The Ithaka Project began with an understanding that teaching is in so many ways different in different settings; and teachers, depending on context, professional backgrounds and career pathway, have different professional learning interests and concerns at different times. Ithaka appreciates that just as students learn in different ways, so also teachers learn in different ways, and so teacher learning should allow for some differentiation as to approach and style. The project was intended to focus and stimulate the ongoing professional learning opportunities for these teachers – to seek out ‘more enmeshed ways’ of meeting needs than were enacted in more traditional professional development events or provisions, and to facilitate ongoing professional dialogue. One teacher in our interview spoke of the way in which his own faltering attempts to engage colleagues in professional learning dialogue in his school were greatly improved by the decision to participate officially in the Ithaka Project. Many of the structures and network-building that are so crucial to collaborative inquiry-based professional learning had been left to individual teachers within the school to initiate and manage. And progress was slow. However, from the moment the school formalised its commitment to the Ithaka project, those who were involved in the project felt affirmed in their professional learning initiatives. At the same time, the project quickly grew within the school and nourished those who were now more likely to participate with the active support of leadership in the school. Another teacher, Fiona, from another school, spoke about her excitement as she entered into dialogue with teachers in other schools and professional learning networks across different settings. To Fiona, this has been as important as the opportunities for conversation within the school. These two teachers both felt that the content of their professional conversations associated with Ithaka often went in unexpected directions. Participating teachers sometimes surprised themselves when they found themselves working across traditional discipline areas, or when a prep teacher might find herself deep in conversation with a teacher of Year 10 students in a secondary school.

One important aspect of this project is the ongoing support, mentoring and ‘input’ from academic consultant/s from beyond the immediate school community (such as ex-principals, academic consultants, and teacher educators operating within teacher education institutions). Dr Landvogt described this as an ‘insider-outsider interface’, where the outside consultant or academic or teacher from another school works in a school for longer periods of time; they thus get to know the school, over time their status is less of an outsider. Recently, the conditions under which Ithaka consultants such as Julie are employed by schools have changed. There is now considerable flexibility in the way consultant is permitted to work with/in a school.

Another important element in the success of this project, according to all interviewees, is having a leader of professional learning or a leader of curriculum in a school who can on the one hand ‘drive’ professional learning initiatives, and on the other hand can assist with, and coordinate, the various conversations and projects that are initiated and maintained via Ithaka. A crucial responsibility of this leadership role is negotiating a balance between Ithaka initiatives and more traditional professional development activities and structures that exist in the school. Another responsibility may be to ensure that there is some consistency of purpose and approach, such as in Wadhurst Melbourne Grammar’s whole school ‘Curriculum Design Framework,’ (a project that was both generating particular curriculum documents but also focusing teachers’ ongoing professional learning through the curriculum development conversations).

Interestingly, and in significant contrast to the jurisdictions of NSW, South Australia, and Queensland, both Julie and Julia believe that there is not an ‘immediately obvious’ forum for teachers in the independent sector in Victoria to generate professional learning networks.

Although this has not been a focus for Ithaka up until now, teachers around the table talked about the rich range of texts, materials and feedback they have generated and collected in the course of their ongoing professional inquiry through Ithaka. One of the teachers began the conversation by referring self-deprecatingly to ‘bits and pieces’ she has generated over time, although Dr Landvogt hastened to point out that these ‘bits and pieces’ were invariably rigorously theorised reflections and analyses by this teacher of her classroom practices and her students’ responses to these practices. In connection with these texts that Ithaka teachers generate in their course of their inquiry, some schools have drawn on this idea and provided dedicated online spaces to publish such texts. Such is the case with MLC’s Professional Learning Project journal. In this space, teachers are now required to document some of their involvement in professional learning conversations and professional development activities. Generally speaking, the teachers in this conversation have only just begun to consider formally mandated data that they will need in the future – e.g., to meet VIT re-accreditation of their registration, or to submit for formal appraisal processes – although it was apparent that the texts and artefacts they are already generating for Ithaka are those that would be recognised by newly articulated VIT requirements.

At MLC the success of projects such as Ithaka, and the richness of the ‘evidence’ that has been generated/collected through action research type of activities, has prompted those who are more convinced by hard data to acknowledge that data such as ‘dialogue between teachers around a series of classroom visits’ can be powerful evidence of professional learning. It can provide a useful focus for professional renewal on an individual and team basis. At the school-wide level, the ongoing organic presence of Ithaka in the professional learning culture of the school is being recognised at a leadership/executive level, through public affirmations by heads of schools/principals, and it is increasingly being acknowledged as a model of professional learning that the school would like to pursue. Melbourne Grammar, for instance, has taken on Ithaka projects as part of the school’s priorities.

(Based on notes from an interview with Dr Julie Landvogt, Mr Allan Bliss (Melbourne Grammar – Wadhurst), Fiona Green (MLC), and Julia Savage (MLC))

6.3.5 Professional learning through mentoring or coaching programs (with classroom observation components)

The following schools have developed various approaches to mentoring or coaching that involve some formalised program of classroom visits. In most cases this involves a sense of a more experienced or more skilled practitioners working with a less experienced or less skilled practitioner. However, most interviewees who engaged in these classroom visits and/or observations indicated that the more experienced teacher was also learning through the interaction, or that the two teachers were collectively generating knowledge and understanding in a way that is not explained by the notion of knowledge or skills being transferred from one colleague to another.

6.3.5.1 Ballarat and Clarendon College.

This school, independent co-educational secondary college in regional Victoria, has developed a particular approach to professional learning that involves more than someone else’s practices or models applied or transferred to their school.

Their approach to professional learning has developed over the last 10 years or so. School leadership originally discussed how teaching practices could be improved, and decided on an observation-feedback model. This initiative was discussed by the staff, most of whom were supportive of the idea. It was considered by staff to be

important to have structured feedback against performance-based criteria. Eight observation classrooms have been constructed, and provide videotaping facilities and one-way observation glass/mirrors so that classes can be observed by senior staff/mentors, without intruding on the normal running of the classroom.

All teachers are expected to participate in such observation/feedback sessions, every year, and this is embedded within the teaching/learning culture of the school. Teachers can also request feedback on lessons for particular reasons, which they identify as a professional learning goal. Videos of teaching sessions can be uploaded onto the school's e-portal so that professional learning experiences can be shared by staff with their agreement. Staff also have opportunities to discuss their experiences, to identify professional learning needs, and to share their experiences. This is also viewed as an important part of internal accountability and individual responsibility on the part of teaching staff. In order to be sensitive to teachers who might feel the process smacked of top-down surveillance, the process had to be 'carefully developed' by senior staff. The staff member who was interviewed believed that the observation/feedback model improved professional learning and teaching practice through the sharing of ideas that emerged from the process. She also believed it increased her confidence in teaching when she received positive feedback, and that such feedback was generated within a supportive culture.

The school has recently employed a consultant to assist with their professional learning program, namely Hilary Hollingsworth. Hilary provides guidance and mentoring for leadership and teaching staff. She also observes lessons and is involved in providing feedback to teachers on their teaching practices. A priority at the moment for staff professional learning is literacy, in particular writing. The belief was expressed that improvements in literacy were not just a curriculum issue, but one of equity for students. A primary goal for the leadership and staff is to make the most effective use of the feedback that is provided through the observation of lessons.

The school is currently developing a new career structure for staff – Expert teacher. A 'Teaching and Learning Framework' has been developed (see documents) in which 5 elements of professional practice have been identified: planning for teaching and learning; safe and challenging learning environment; range of strategies to engage students in effective learning; feedback and assessment; and reflecting on teaching and learning. These are linked to the VIT professional standards.

Teachers are able to apply for promotion to Expert Teacher if they satisfy 'essential elements' of teaching contained in an observation record sheet (see documents). Teachers are assessed as beginning, approaching proficient, proficient, or distinguished, using evidence such as videos/observation records, lesson plans, assessment records, data analysis records, curriculum documentation and their responses to analysis of data. Additional remuneration is offered to staff as an incentive and reward, as well as grants for teachers to engage in further study. Promotion is often associated with teachers' participation and leadership in professional learning, and this promotion is mostly into positions of leadership in teaching, curriculum or professional learning, rather than to positions that will withdraw teachers from teaching and learning.

Staff at the school strongly believe in the use of a range of data sources to evaluate student learning outcomes and the effectiveness of teaching/ professional learning of teachers. They use the 'value-added' analyses by Dr Carmel Richardson (VCE results); other external sources such as AIM data, ICAS (University of NSW); and internal data including student surveys about teaching. Teachers receive graphs and written comments as feedback about their teaching, on an individual and departmental level. Learning goals are then set based on this information.

Funds have been directed into the construction of purpose-built observation classrooms, and the employment of an expert in the professional learning field. Some resources are provided for outside professional learning activities, but the focus is on in-school professional learning opportunities. Support is given for attendance at outside conferences, seminars etc., but they must be connected to school priorities. Teachers work in teams (curriculum, year level, professional learning) and are involved in AGQTP projects to improve student outcomes in literacy and mathematics in the Middle School, lesson study (Japanese model), and discussions about key curriculum areas (e.g., literacy, numeracy, thinking skills). Time for professional learning activities is provided during pupil-free days, 4 days during the third term holidays and after-school meeting times.

6.3.5.2 *Kambrya Secondary College*

Kambrya Secondary College is a relatively new college in a rapidly growing area of Melbourne. The school has over 1500 students, employs 119 teachers (with more than 20 support staff), and in recent years has undertaken a whole school approach to professional development in the many manifestations of this term. The professional learning and professional development offerings in the school are informed by, and responsive to, teacher needs. These needs are communicated to the leadership group in the school via ongoing and structures evaluations and various feedback mechanisms. The philosophy of the school's professional learning is nicely captured by Robyn Fogarty's notion of the 'designer on site' – and the ways this can involved the 'sage on the stage' (such as when an 'excellent presenter is brought in from outside the school, but also to 'get a particular idea up on the agenda, and clarify staff understanding of that agenda/idea'), the 'facilitator on the side' (professional learning workshops facilitated by teachers from within the school), and the 'coach in the field' (who 'make sure that whatever is being said gets taken into the classroom'.

Ms Nalilini Naidu, one of a team of Assistant Principals in the school, began our conversation by saying that 'every [professional] interaction that takes place in the college should be one of professional learning.' This operates at three levels:

1. *A structured mentoring program*

In this program, the principal has a mentor (from outside the college); the principal works as a mentor for the assistant principals; the assistant principals work with leading teachers; and each of these work with a team of 8-10 teachers in a mentor capacity.

2. *A structured coaching program*

There are eight teaching and learning coaches, approximately two allocated to each year level. Some such as Allan, the ICT coach, work with teachers from any and all year levels. These coaches work with teachers from across the whole school in their classrooms to improve their practice in ways indicated in their teaching and learning goals.

* i.e. The mentors are seen as helping teachers to devise achievable and appropriate professional learning goals, and the coaches work to help them achieve these goals.

3. *Professional Learning Program*

This has evolved over time, and continues to develop and change according to the needs of existing teachers and the needs of those teachers who join the staff each year. This includes:

- a. a teacher induction program, which has a strong professional learning focus
- b. schedule of staff meetings, most of which are 'designed around professional learning'

- compulsory whole-staff professional development sessions, which are required to disseminate new information about new programs and policy developments, about which it is necessary for the staff to ‘develop a common understanding’
 - optional professional learning sessions, on Monday afternoons, for smaller groupings, addressing particular staff learning needs
- c. Co-education for international schools project
- This is a huge undertaking that has involved mapping and auditing of current curriculum and practices, and development of curriculum in ways that the review and mapping reveals are necessary and appropriate for a coeducational school with a diverse international population of students (and families). This too is classified as professional learning.

Ms Odille Oliver (Head of the Teacher Coaching team) explained that the school did not adopt an existing coaching model from outside, but rather created a program that suited the school. The program was constructed after the coaching team looked at existing models, including some ideas from the Project for Enhancing Effective Learning (PEEL), which many teachers in the school already had experienced and worked with in a different school setting. Before teachers are invited to participate in the coaching program – the voluntary nature of the participation is stressed, so that a teacher does not feel it is a threat to his/her professional confidence – the program is introduced to staff, with the intention of dispelling concerns that this might be a threat from school administration. At one time, this was done in the form of a role play, followed up with focused discussion at a staff meeting. These whole-staff meetings have also been used to present and encourage teacher involvement in certain college targets. Targets have included ‘habits of mind’, ICT and learning, and the ‘thinking curriculum.’ Such occasions are helpful in providing a sense of focused possibilities for staff who are thinking about their professional learning needs.

If teachers are willing, they sign up for involvement. Early in the process, they are encouraged to ‘audit their own practices’ with respect to these college targets, or they might have the option of auditing their practice in relation to questioning in the classroom. There is also a ‘deep learning rubric’ that the coaching team developed for teachers to use when auditing their teaching. Each of these measures is seen as a way in which the coaching team is providing guidance and structures for teachers to identify their needs and to begin to generate and clarify some professional goals. Each teacher him/herself indicates (through working with their mentors) an area of perceived need, perhaps a classroom practice and/or knowledge that he/she wished to improve. Odille and the team see this process as in many ways drawing on action research models of teacher professional learning. A process is put in place, with structures and supports available along the way so that ‘teachers can find solutions [to problems] within themselves and thereby have ownership over the whole process.’

Ms Joanne Wastle, a teacher who has the experience of being coached and of coaching other colleagues, spoke about the value in this coaching model of trust between the teacher and the coach. She also pointed out that, in her experience, the ongoing nature of the relationship between teacher and coach is crucial. A teacher is able to approach a coach at any time and bring before him/her some concerns or ideas (or some feedback for that matter). The expectation is that the coach will guide and support throughout the process. Martin, another teacher in the group, used the metaphor of a jigsaw puzzle to describe the way that this school seeks to develop the various inter-related elements of professional development and professional learning programs and to help teachers over time to put these elements together (and ‘make their own connections between pieces’) in their own way, rather than leaving them to implement knowledge or skills they have ‘picked up’ at a professional development session. Allan, the ICT coach, spoke about his need to utilise different approaches with different colleagues in the coaching process. Sometimes this is because, even with the opportunity teachers have to visit each others’ classrooms, it takes more time to develop the trust and relationship necessary for the coaching to be effective. At other times, it was a matter of recognising that teachers like students have preferences with respect to learning / teaching models. Allan said he needed to accommodate a range of these models and approaches just as he does in the classroom with secondary students.

The process of coaching is purposely kept separate from the process of ‘professional recognition’. Invariably, the process involves considerable time commitments from both coach and teacher. Fundamentally, there are three parts to the process: (i) a preliminary meeting and clarifying of goals; (ii) observation (classroom visit/s); and (iii) de-brief, which may involve a setting of goals for another cycle of the process. Coaches (who, in future will all be ‘expert coaches’, after a period during which early career teachers were trialled as coaches) are allocated a part of their workload so that they literally are able to find enough time to do the following: hold preliminary conversation/s with the teacher before a class visit – sometimes several meetings are needed to articulate some goals; possibly team teaching; working over time with the teacher to build a strategy for improving practice and or exploring a ‘new’ approach. Uppermost in the coaches’ minds is the importance of developing trust so that the teacher is less likely to feel threatened or judged (‘under the microscope’) by an outsider. An ‘alliance is forged between the two of you’ and there is a sense that ‘we are in it together.’

At the end of 2008, the funding from the Leading Schools Fund will cease, and it will be ‘necessary to find ways in which this program can be sustained without that funding.’ This is part of the evolving nature of the program.

During our discussion we briefly considered the ways in which the college evaluates teachers’ involvement in professional learning and other aspects of their professional work – this process is led by the mentors. It is the mentor who helps to evaluate teachers according to various ‘performance development’ criteria. It is the mentor who is more directly involved in deciding whether a teacher goes up an increment (salary scale). It was emphasised, however, that even this process is structured in a way which uses and enhances professional conversations. In this instance, the goals that a teacher has developed and articulated are examined, together with the teacher, by considering various measures of teacher performance (data), learning portfolios, and other artefacts. Component mapping, as described in various the ‘Principles of Learning and Teaching’ (PoLTs) materials (DET, 2004), includes such things as surveys of student responses to curriculum developments and student feedback about teaching and learning programs, as well as comparisons of student test scores before and after a teacher has implemented a new approach in the classroom. Component mapping is widely used to generate data by individual teachers within schools; the data generated through such processes is also used in the school’s applications to funding bodies for grants to sustain and initiate programs such as the Teacher Coaching program.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Nalini Naidu, Assistant Principal, Professional Development, Ms Joanne Wastle, IBO coordinator, Middle Years coordinator in 2008, Ms Odile Oliver, Head of Teacher Coaching team, Mr Martin Judd, Coordinator of ‘Year 9 Journey’ program, and Mr Allen Thwaites, ICT teacher coach, eLearning coordinator)

6.3.5.4 Methodist Ladies’ College.

Methodist Ladies’ College has approximately 280 teachers (FTE), many of whom work part-time: there are more than 400 teachers in the school overall. It is fair to say that MLC is one of the oldest and well-resourced girls’ colleges in Victoria. In our account of the Ithaka project interview, we reported that there were a number of ways in which teacher professional learning is embedded within the expectations of teachers’ work in schools which work with Ithaka. This is certainly the case with MLC. Ms Julia Savage’s role within the college, as Director of Professional Development and Staff Learning, is to work with other members of the College leadership group to articulate a vision and direction for the college’s ‘Professional Learning Program’. This entails facilitating and coordinating the various activities and strategies of professional learning, and ensuring that teacher learning in the college, at individual and collegial levels, is in line with college priorities. It also requires an awareness of developments in professional learning and the accreditation policy of the statutory body, The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), and the

different ways in which professional associations are developing their own standards. Julia described this as trying to deal with a range of ‘pressure points’ applied to schools, while still remaining faithful to the college’s priorities.

To a large extent the implementation of professional learning in the college is handled within separate departments. For instance, ongoing conversations between a Head of Department and a teacher within that department move through a two year cycle of (i) negotiating and articulating particular and grounded professional learning goals of that teacher, which must be registered on-line; (ii) monitoring and supporting that teacher in his/her working to achieve those goals, and then (iii) an evaluation at the end of each two year cycle to consider the extent to which the goals have been achieved. At least one of the goals must be addressing a particular college priority, and there is always some degree of choice as to which particular college (or curriculum group priority) is selected by the teacher as own of her/his goals.

Part of Ms Savage’s role as Director, Professional Development and Staff Learning, was participating in a working party to design and develop a coherent policy for Professional Learning for the whole college. In the end this process took four years, and it is significant that many of the initial plans, and assumptions underpinning these plans, underwent review and revision, so that the final ‘product’ was quite different from early sketched out plans.

A whole college project has been developed over the past 12 months, titled ‘Sharing Classrooms.’ The initial impetus in 2005 was to ‘get teachers out of their own classrooms and into other people’s classrooms.’ This involved changes in practice and even structures, and it also involved physical changes to the spaces where teachers were teaching – so that opaque walls were replaced by transparent glass. Other spaces in the college had already been operating with flexible walls which could retract or close, depending on whether classes and teachers were working with each other or independently at any one time. The program considers feedback from teachers and department heads, changes in policy and professional environments, and an over-riding goal is to integrate the program so that it is seen as consistent with, and responsive to, developments in curriculum and practice across the college. Julia works in cooperation with Heads of department to provide individual support and a degree of accountability with respect to teachers’ engagement with professional learning – this is a process that continues over a two year period with individual teachers.

At first, teachers were required to select a colleague whose classes they would visit, and this colleague had to be in a different curriculum area. In 2007, the college priority shifted to curriculum renewal within particular teachers’ own curriculum areas and particular class/year level for that curriculum area. And teacher observations are more likely to open up within teams, rather than just in pairs. One benefit of these observations is that the visiting teacher is less likely to be perceived by students or by the ‘observed teacher’ as an outsider. Indeed, Fiona spoke of being able to interact with students in an authentic teacherly way herself, even while she was observing and reflecting on her colleague’s practices.

When teachers negotiate a visit to a colleague’s classroom, the teacher is required to use a framework for observation that is provided by the college, which contains certain college priorities for close observation. Characteristically, the two teachers meet first to discuss the plans for the upcoming class. After the teacher writes her notes (in class or soon after), the written observations and reflections are usually used as the basis for a professional conversation between the two teachers, and subsequently a version of these observation notes must be written up and registered online, within the template established for this. The curriculum team-based approach is likely to remain the college priority for the next couple of years. While appreciating the reason for the change in policy, Fiona (a teacher of Prep) spoke enthusiastically about her classroom observation experiences across different curriculum areas and with teachers at widely varying school levels: i.e. her classroom

visits to, and conversations with, a teacher of Year 12 English, a teacher of Year 10 Art and a Grade 5 teacher. As she said, ‘It was great for me to see what goes on at that end of the school and for [the secondary teachers] to come down to us and see what goes on down our end. That was fabulous as well.’ This experience led to teachers in Ithaca, working across different schools as well as across different curriculum and age contexts. Julia and Fiona agreed that such experiences were ‘enlightening’ for the teachers involved.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Julia Savage, Director, Professional Development and Staff Learning, and Ms Fiona Green, Fiona Prep-2 coordinator and Prep classroom teacher)

6.3.6 Professional learning teams integrated into the everyday work of teachers

6.3.6.1 Fitzroy High School

Fitzroy High School, a co-educational secondary school, in inner-city of Melbourne, has approximately 445 students from a very wide range of socio-cultural backgrounds. Significantly, the parents of these students have themselves had widely varying experiences in their own schooling. There are approximately 40 teachers in the school, and 10 of these are members of the school leadership team. The curriculum at the school is not demarcated into traditional discipline areas, or KLAs. Instead, there are three fundamental areas: (i) inquiry – a topic or question is set by the leadership team for each term (e.g., one focus for inquiry might be related to the notion of ‘identity’); (ii) toolbox (such as the learning tools to engage in particular forms of inquiry); and (iii) personal learning (where students often elect, or are directed towards, a more individual goal oriented approach to their learning).

There are some quite distinctive ways in which the school teaching and learning program is structured, overall, that have significant implications for the teachers’ professional learning. For instance, the school day is divided into just three periods. Within these three periods, teams of teachers develop their own timetables and negotiate their own teaching and learning spaces according to the needs of their students. Beyond the fundamental three period framework, as Pauline Rice says, ‘There is no school timetable. Rather there are ongoing negotiations within teaching and learning teams in the school.’ Each team brings together teachers with areas of expertise in different discipline areas. Teachers tend to be constantly learning from and with each other as they negotiate teaching and learning activities that will deploy the different expertise in ways that will best enhance the students various teaching and learning opportunities.

Another important aspect of professional learning at Fitzroy High School begins with the professional structures from which all programs of teaching and student learning are built. The school is divided up into four teaching teams. Three of these teams work with students in 7-10: they have about seven teachers in each team, and each team works with approximately one hundred students. There is one separate team that works with post-compulsory (i.e. Years 11-12) programs and curriculum. All aspects of teaching are organised within each team: planning, teaching, assessing, etc. For the teachers interviewed in this conversion, these professional learning teams are the focus for the most rewarding and enjoyable aspects of professional learning in the school. One of the interviewees, Ben, identified the team approach as the key to the school’s professional learning culture: ‘It is the professional relationships and interactions you develop and enjoy with others in the team you work with. That’s what’s exciting. How you learn from each other, and see your skills develop....’

There are no whole-school staff meetings or KLA meetings in the traditional sense. Twice a week, however, there are teacher professional learning meetings, which take place after school. The agenda or curriculum of these meetings is developed by the leadership team as a result of teachers identifying particular areas of need,

and/or feedback generated through a number of evaluative processes which might suggest that some things could be working better. Following the identification of a particular aspect as a focus for teachers' professional learning, the Monday afternoon meetings over several weeks will maintain an ongoing focus on that aspect. For instance, one focus for teacher professional learning in the near future will be personal learning plans for students: What are they? How they are constructed? How might they be used? Another focus, which was in place just recently was assessment. The school uses a 'three storey intellect' model: i.e. Phase 1 – gathering as much information as possible; phase 2 – analysing that information and deciding what to do with the knowledge gained from this; and phase 3 – applying the 'new' knowledge in the classroom.

A third 'tier' to the professional learning dynamics and activities at Fitzroy High School is 'what teachers do together in their classrooms.' This means meeting as a team to plan for teaching and learning over a long term period as well as short term planning for what will be taught and how in the coming week, as it were. The school timetable is developed with a view to best accommodate and support team planning that involves all members of the team. All teachers and administrators in the school appreciate this as a 'priority' in the school. During a weekly (ninety minute) team planning session, it is characteristic for all members of the team to contribute to, and indeed to set the direction for, the planning for teaching and learning. Occasionally, members of the team have identified a need for particular expertise to be brought in from outside the school, and so such a person is contracted to come in and lead the members of the team in professional learning activities and/or to discuss approaches for addressing the identified needs. For instance, one team recently engaged someone from the English Language school to talk with teachers about strategies for supporting and engaging newly arrived students from parts of the world, students whose literacy levels were particularly low.

One interesting aspect of our conversation concerned the way in which teachers who had been engaged in extended professional learning leave have responded to these opportunities at an individual professional level and the way they contributed to curriculum development and professional learning activities in the school. The teacher who had been granted teacher professional leave most recently – she was one of 460 teachers who gained Professional Learning Leave (PLL) grants awarded by DE&T (see Flagship Strategy 5 of the *Blueprint*) – focused that leave on learning about personal learning improvement plans for students. The expertise that she gained during her leave was used to help the leadership team (who had also had opportunities to research this idea in professional learning leave they had been granted previously) develop policy. Together they crystallised a sense of the possibilities when teachers and students generate rich sets of 'data' about individual students' learning – i.e. about 'where they are' in their learning ability and potential (the idea being that such data will help teachers to plan for a particular student's learning and so extend and/or assist him/her in the particular areas of need or challenge),

When planning for this initiative, it was important to work with staff, acknowledging their existing expertise and knowledge, to develop common understandings. For instance, the staff and the leadership team needed to agree on questions such as: what does Fitzroy HS understand by the term 'personal learning'? How will various forms of data be interpreted and utilised to inform planning? and How teachers might best work with individuals to achieve targets identified in their 'personal learning plans'? This same teacher also played a leading role in framing and facilitating professional learning conversations and activities, as the school moved toward implementing a whole-school approach to using these plans for all students. The school continues to learn from the process of implementing, evaluating, reviewing and re-designing this sort of program. All these stages are done in association with student feedback and student input, and all these stages are considered to be a part of teachers' everyday professional learning lives.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Pauline Rice (Deputy Principal), Ms Fran Mullins and Mr Ben Johnstone-McCloud, classroom teachers and members of School Leadership Team).

6.4 SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The factor unifying many of the interviews with stakeholders in South Australia was undoubtedly *Learning to Learn* – even when other people interviewed were not directly involved in this project, they expressed a similar approach to professional learning to that embodied in this initiative, as though such ideas are indeed ‘in the air’ in South Australia. It was our good fortune to be able to interview Ms Margot Foster, State Manager of *Learning to Learn* within Curriculum Services, Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS), and to talk to the Principal and teachers at Birdwood High School, a school which had participated in the first phases of this initiative. We were thereby able both to gain insights into *Learning to Learn* from a system wide perspective and to develop a sense of how this initiative had been experienced by school principals and teachers at a local level.

The discussion of *Learning to Learn* in the next few paragraphs is based on these interviews. We have also drawn extensively from the evaluation report, *Assessing the Impact of phases I and II: Learning to Learn 1999-2004* (DECS, 2004).

6.4.1 The Learning to Learn Project

Learning to Learn is a major initiative in South Australia, involving a network of schools, which aims to provide a framework for renewal of teaching and learning. The full details of the initiative can be found in DECS material such as the evaluation report which has just been mentioned, the *Learning to Learn* dedicated website (<http://www.learningtolearn.sa.edu.au/>), as well as journal articles. The initiative is informed by a reasonably substantial body of research, both in the form of research by a range of national and international educational scholars, and continuing inquiry in the process of implementation. Especially significant in this respect is work by Dr Chris Goldspink, who has participated in implementing *Learning to Learn*. Dr Goldspink argues that *Learning to Learn* constitutes a significant alternative to ‘two sets of ideas that have influenced educational reform in the recent past: managerialism and market approaches’. According to Dr Goldspink, *Learning to Learn* contrasts with these approaches because it emphasizes ‘the need for a focus on people, relationships and learning rather than structures and centrally determined standards for conformance’ (see ‘Rethinking Education Reform: A Loosely Coupled and Complex Systems Perspective’, *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 2007, 35 [1])

The focus of *Learning to Learn* is on enabling school leaders and teachers to develop a deep understanding of the process of learning, namely ‘constructivist learning’ (DECS, 2004, p.1). This then provides a framework for their interactions with each other, as well as their work with students. People elect to join the network, nominating areas they wish to explore. Rather than a ‘program orientation’, participating leaders are encouraged to engage in inquiry. *Learning to Learn* does not pretend to be a package which supplies all the answers. Nor does it focus on teaching or behaviour management strategies. It draws on a diverse range of thinkers and university researchers across a wide range of areas in an effort to goad people into scrutinising their professional beliefs, most notably their understanding of the nature of learning and knowledge.

Ms Foster made the following comments in our interview with her:

Changing pedagogy is not about changing practices in the classroom but about changing assumptions about education. You can talk about as many strategies and processes to engage kids as you like, but the key thing is to challenge assumptions about knowledge. People still believe that knowledge is an absolute thing that can be transmitted, and in order to address this we’re trying to get into the underbelly of what drives schools. It is a difficult one to market, in that

people still tend to like a program, and they find it uncomfortable to bring to the surface things they've never thought about before, which challenge received understandings of teaching and learning. This then involves more challenges, because they are led to reconsider their role as educators. Once people engage deeply in the question of the meaning of learning, this can have a major impact on the way their classrooms are run, leading to more democratic classrooms in which student voices are valued.

Learning to Learn thus challenges the mentality which supposes that you can find solutions quickly to problems or identified areas of need. By contrast, it promotes learning over an extended period of time, learning that is deeply 'transformational' for teachers and their students – it is 'deliberately designed to stimulate thinking about education futures, purpose and transformation' (p.5), 'to build new professional knowledge and capacities to engage in transformational change' (p.2). It provides a framework for people to contest their assumptions about knowledge, teaching, and their professional identities as teachers. By pursuing this logic, people find themselves grappling with questions about the nature of education and schooling, including the way schools are organised and power is exercised within them.

Learning to Learn has gone through three different phases of school implementation over the past few years. It is now able to draw on the experiences and expertise of people who have participated in the initiative over that time, and the project is poised to distil what they have learnt into a framework for professional learning. However, it eschews any notion that a single model can be applied to any local community, emphasising the diversity of school communities, and the necessity for school leaders to lead learning that might address local needs. It believes that school leaders need to be at the core of any school change, and that they are crucial for setting the tone and culture necessary for any redesign of schooling to occur. Principals participate in 'learning circles' (DECS, 2004, p.4) which involve a practicum program, whereby a school is open for several days for visits from other Principals and nominated teachers, who then learn about the learning journey that this particular school has been taking. The intention, as Margot Foster remarked in the interview, is not to recycle 'best practice', but to create the conditions for a generative learning process: 'It is recognised that initiatives will work in some sites but not others, and that one size does not fit all.'

Schools participating in *Learning to Learn* can nominate any focus – it could be science, reviewing Year 10, tackling retention, anything. The key characteristic that participating schools have in common is that they are learning about the process of learning. The focus nominated by each school is a vehicle for deep learning to occur. It is recognised that it can take several years for a learning culture to become deeply embedded in a school, and for a school to reorient itself along new lines. Tensions continue to exist within schools that belong to the *Learning to Learn* network, both with respect to the mindset of teachers (who might harbour the 'program mentality' discussed above) and because of the need to be accountable, especially given the nature of existing accountability frameworks, which typically focus on standardised test results. The expectation of improvement within a short timeframe still proves to be an obstacle for the successful implementation of the initiative. Indeed, the more intensely schools feel the pressure to be accountable in traditional terms, the less success they experience, as this preoccupation undermines any preparedness to take risks and to work towards an 'expanded view of outcomes' (DECS, 2004, p.12). There is still a struggle to encourage participating teachers to get past 'the lesson plan mentality' (this is a perfectly understandable mentality given the way schools traditionally operate and the enormous pressures which teachers experience but nonetheless a problematical one) and to inspire them to reengage with the professional dialogue which *Learning to Learn* makes available to them. But it is vital to enable teachers to review the learning principles at the heart of their professional practice, and to ask what it means to be immersed in deep learning.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Margot Foster, State Manager of *Learning to Learn* within Curriculum Services, Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), Mr Ian Tooley, Principal of Birdwood High School, and a group of classroom teachers)

6.4.4.1 Birdwood High School

Learning to Learn has been the main vehicle for professional learning at Birdwood High School, and it is worth pausing over the way in which this state-wide initiative has been implemented in this particular school community. When Ian Tooley took on the position of Principal at Birdwood, he already had experience of Phase 1 of *Learning to Learn* at his previous school, and he decided to seek access to phase 2 (see DECS, 2004). Because of Birdwood High School's successful participation in *Learning to Learn*, professional learning is now recognised as a key component of the school's budget. Everyone understands the importance of investing in professional learning, and Mr Tooley has committed the school to further involvement in activities relating to *Learning to Learn*.

Successful participation in *Learning to Learn* requires vision as to where you want to go. As Mr Tooley remarked:

We called our project 'transforming secondary education'. We were of the opinion that things needed to change. You could look at outcomes, etc., but we felt that we wanted to 'learn' our way forward. We felt that schooling has had its day, that the industrial model was no longer appropriate. However, we also recognised that we were stuck with this model, and so, given those limitations, we asked ourselves: can we reinvent what we do in order to be more effective? Our starting point was in deciding what that could look like. In most of the professional learning programs that have been thrown our way, they've always been very linear. Governments say they want to improve literacy at the end of 6 or 18 months, and things are done, and the results are recorded. But the reports that are written about such projects sit on shelves. No-one really feels that things have changed. People lack ownership. Then the next initiative comes along – flavour of the month – and around we go again. Where *Learning to Learn* was different was in the belief that change could come about through impacting the hearts and minds of educators. If educators are given the time to engage in rich learning, they will see a way forward to change their practice.

Mr Tooley began with a small group of staff who were open to being involved in *Learning to Learn*, and has now managed to bring others on board. It is crucial that such change should not be imposed from above. The challenge in many ways is to enable people to begin to scrutinise their traditional beliefs and practices and to start to think differently about schooling and education. It is a matter of people being prepared to have their beliefs challenged and then of reconnecting with their professional responsibilities. Initially there was scepticism about the value of *Learning to Learn*, but now a significant number of staff have benefited from this initiative. Staff are open to the recognition that there may be mismatches between the way they teach and how students learn, which has meant that they are developing flexible programs and classroom strategies that accommodate a variety of learning styles and are responsive to where the students are coming from. It is not a matter of being the best teacher in the world, but of developing ways to connect with the students. They are now turning their attention to ways in which to encourage their students to do better.

Mr Tooley summed up:

I am of the view that if I said I know what is best for you, this would be denying ownership. You're more effective when you're invitational, and you grow a critical mass. Leadership is critical, but it's not about dependency. It's about ownership and drive. We set ourselves challenges, and then we ask ourselves what we can each do to make a difference. This has involved looking at things like lesson planning, and asking questions like: do I project a sense of optimism when I am interacting with students? It's noticeable that over time, there is less and less of the old talk that reflects authoritarian practices and more of the new. But new teachers are always coming into the school for a variety of reasons, and so it all remains a work in progress. My sense is that

things have shifted, but this is a journey we continue to be on. Just telling teachers to be better will not do it. You need to value teachers as experienced people. They clearly need to access new ideas and resources, but they need to be supported to do this. The world has changed and society has changed and so you have to invest in professional learning, and this is what *Learning to Learn* has done for us.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Ian Tooley, Principal of Birdwood High School)

The teachers who were interviewed at Birdwood affirmed the initiatives which Mr Ian Tooley had taken in order to bring about whole school change and a transformed attitude towards teaching and learning.

Mr Dave Swann, Mr David Folland and Mr Winston Bartlett provided an account of *Learning to Learn* from the standpoint of practising teachers. They combined a diverse range of experiences – Dave has been at the school since 2003, while Winston is relatively new; David is an early career teacher, whereas Dave and Winston have many years experience behind them – and their conversation provided fascinating insights, not only into their experience of *Learning to Learn*, but into their sense of their professionalism and the impact that state and federal government policies have had on their professional practice.

Rather than presenting a detailed account of each phase of their discussion – which proved to be a wonderful example of the value of professional conversations, of teachers learning through their talk and constructing professional knowledge – the following consists simply of excerpts.

Winston Bartlett: I believe in the old boiling frog principle. We've been gradually changing... Younger teachers might have embraced it more quickly. We're embracing structural change with respect to curriculum with an emphasis on flexibility, which involves recognising the learning that occurs outside the school, i.e. the other activities in which teenagers engage that might count as learning. One of the biggest challenges is that these things don't work within the traditional structure of a school and so we need to do a bit more thinking outside the square.

Dave Swann: I've also noticed that because I'm older I can see there is a lot of stuff that is returning now, stuff that was happening in the 1970s, and now we're returning to some of these things. The difference is that they now have scientific support.

David Folland: We've got some things happening with Julie Atkin, also the quality framework. For me it is very much that these things add on. I haven't experienced a radical change in my teaching – I'm still developing my practice. I'm not suddenly becoming a different teacher, I'm gradually changing as I learn new things.

Dave Swann: Ian has vision ... Sometimes you're lacking the energy, and when you're tired you go back to your instincts. I reckon that we are making changes here, but you need to be careful. You need to achieve a balance.

Winston Bartlett: I feel that Ian is encouraging us to have a go at something different, but that we're still obliged to work within the constraints posed by the school system.

Winston Bartlett: The opportunities here are much greater than where I've come from, and professional learning is actively encouraged.

Dave Swann: For me it's been reinforcement. I've been lucky to be involved in sites where you're encouraged to take risks, and coming here to me Ian was actively promoting and encouraging us to do that.

David Folland: I don't think it's been a huge journey but there's been the gradual change since I've done my teaching degree which is not a huge time ago. I've been tweaking things a little, change here, a little change there, but it hasn't been a huge radical shift.

Dave Swann: Through *Learning to Learn* what has been powerful has been an understanding of how people think, and that has proved to be a useful tool as a teacher. It has been interesting to understand how different people understand the delivery. When you understand the thinking styles of people, it allows you to see the other person's position, and this has allowed us to deal with some bigger issues. This has also had an effect on the way staff view each other. It's not just something we apply in classrooms. I have reflected on my own personal journey, and that has reinforced for me how I worked as a child and a student and at uni and then as a teacher. This has also involved recognition of my strengths, what I can do and how I can contribute.

Winston Bartlett: My impression – and perhaps this is a result of *Learning to Learn* – my impression is that staff aren't factionalised, which can happen in some places.

Dave Swann: Certainly, when you've been through the stages that Julia takes you through, you understand other people better. You understand what happens when you criticise people who think emotionally. You understand why they react the way they do, and you can take that into your classrooms, and that allows a little more movement in the way you deliver. You understand differences in the dynamic of classes. This is one of the key components in why this staff is a little more collaborative.

Winston Bartlett: Yes, we're really out to improve the outcomes of the kids.

David Folland: We're raising the bar, trying to develop a more high quality approach to learning and then retention. But it's not just retention for retention's sake, not just to keep the numbers up. Ian's approach in raising the bar is getting more kids to access what is available to them. *Learning to Learn* is enabling us to consider what other tools we might explore. We ask questions like: what do we mean by success? We're moving away from purely content stuff to understanding process.

Winston Bartlett: Ian's enthusiasm is what drives it. It's one of things that he brings to the school with him. He's also modelled it pretty enthusiastically as well.

The group then discussed the way government policy at both a federal and state level has impacted on their professional lives. They feel that the initiatives that are taken by governments are not always very well coordinated. Sometimes they can even be in conflict. The initiatives also have a discrete nature, with one thing following another. And there is always the emphasis on tangible outcomes which need to be produced within a short time span. They expressed concern about the emphasis on measuring everything, when so much that happens in schools – e.g., the promotion of values and the creation of a supportive culture – cannot easily be measured. Yet schools and teachers are pressured into making sure that they have got something to show.

Dave Swann remarked: 'There's one reason I'd jump out of teaching, and it's not about teaching.' He added that *Learning to Learn* was keeping him here, and enabling him to get real enjoyment from his work. He continued: 'For a lot of people who have worked in the 70s, there is a lot of retrograde thinking about in the

press and other places, and a lot of teachers they just want to get out because they know we've spent so much time weighing the cow that we've forgotten to feed it. It's been top driven stuff.' Mr Swann welcomes a situation where many ideas are being revived, this time with scientific evidence to support them. It's not a matter of returning to the 70s, but of applying current thinking about teaching and learning, a lot of which is congruent with ideas that had currency earlier.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Dave Swann, coordinator Maths, Numeracy and Boys Education, Mr David Folland, Science and Computing teacher, and Mr Winston Bartlett, SOSE Coordinator with special focus on sustainability project)

6.4.2 Teacher professional learning in other school communities

There is, as has been indicated in the opening sections of this report, still debate as to whether the term 'professional development' or 'professional learning' more appropriately captures the learning which teachers need to experience in order to meet the needs of children and adolescents at the start of the 21st century. It seems fair to say that the school leaders and teachers interviewed in South Australia would all opt for the term 'professional learning' to describe what they do. By this they mean learning that is grounded in a teacher's community of practice, involving ongoing reflection on the complexities of professional practice as it is experienced on a daily basis. It is also vital that such learning be supported by school structures which ensure that any individual teachers' learning has wider currency and is therefore likely to be of benefit to the whole school community. This means providing effective school leadership that is focused on issues of teaching and learning. 'Learning to Learn' reflects these characteristics, as do other initiatives taken by schools which are not part of this network, including schools from the State, Catholic and Independent sectors. The remaining sections of this report on the professional landscape in South Australia present accounts of initiatives taken by schools across these sectors.

6.4.2.1 Seaford 6-12 School

Seaford 6-12 School has established structures that support a collaborative culture for teachers and students. Teachers have learnt how to work with one each other, developing confidence in each other and supporting one another in implementing initiatives that are designed to enhance the prospects and sense of well being of students who attend the school. At the heart of these initiatives lies a strong commitment to the professional learning of teachers. *Teachers Teaming: A Focus on Excellence in Teaching & Learning for the 21st Century: Middle Schooling as a priority for the education of young adolescents at Seaford 6-12*, one of several publications the school has produced which explain its approach, conveys a sense of the culture at Seaford. The brochure explains the way the school is organised into teaching and learning communities (in some states these might be called mini schools):

'In terms of culture the teaching and learning communities (TLC) are set up for the possibility of a collaborative culture for teachers and students. In effect this means teachers have to learn how to work with one each other, develop confidence in each other and program in different ways. In relation to pedagogy it involves working in teams to develop their own timetable, being responsible for a cohort of students within a TLC with other teachers in that TLC and teaching up to 4 different subjects, team teaching, integrating the learning and flexible grouping.'

(Teachers Teaming: A Focus on Excellence in Teaching & Learning for the 21st Century: Middle Schooling as a priority for the education of young adolescents at Seaford 6-12)

This middle school structure reflects characteristics that are apparent in other aspects of the school organisation.

Everything that happens at the school relates to the site learning plan (available on the school's website, http://www.seafordhs.sa.edu.au/site_plan.html). This plan details 'what the school is about' – everything that the leadership team and staff do is directed by the site learning plan. It includes DECS initiatives, as well as initiatives at a local level.

In order to implement continuing improvement, the school uses an improvement cycle developed by David Langford, which can be summarised as plan, do, study and act (PDSA). This is applied to all initiatives, both those required by systems and internal programs in response to perceived local needs. The school uses a systems approach to identify what needs to be done. Teacher professional learning is a vital ingredient of any program for change, and the school timetable is structured in such a way that they are able to use Wednesday afternoons for TLC meetings, as well as meetings of Communities of Practice. The latter consist of passionate people who get together to pursue an objective they have formulated in line with the site learning plan.

Matching these structures is what Mr Stassinopoulos, the Assistant Principal at Seaford, described as a 'very flat' leadership structure, where school leaders are nominated to take areas of responsibility, most notably with respect to the TLCs, as well as other dimensions of the site learning plan. All staff are trained in the PDSA cycle. Data is used to arrive at decisions as to the best way forward. Teacher Teaming involves 'starting off with big picture thinking', and then formulating specific initiatives that accord with the school's site learning plan. Through these structures teachers are able to see beyond their individual interests and engage with the whole school culture. They have a certain degree of autonomy with respect to identifying their learning needs – both individually and at the level of the TLCs – but ultimately everything contributes to the life of the school as a whole.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Harry Stassinopoulos, Assistant Principal at Seaford 6-12 School)

6.4.2.2 St Monica's Parish School

St Monica's Parish School has arguably benefited from similar leadership to that shown at Seaford, with teachers collaborating in a major curriculum review within the framework provided by the South Australian Curriculum and Accountability (SACSA). In addition to considering whether their curriculum was consistent with the SACSA framework, they used this document to interrogate what they were doing at the school, exploring how to teach numeracy and Mathematics along constructivist lines. The model of professional learning they have been following promotes the idea of adults learning by doing their own investigations, using this approach to develop suitable investigations for their students. They are also using team teaching to engage in intensive planning, implementation of lessons, and then debriefing, involving continuing reflection on the students' needs. It is noteworthy that these changes have been driven by the Principal's active involvement in a professional learning community outside the school which is supported by the Australian Government Quality Teaching Project. This network gives participants an opportunity to review the initiatives they are taking at a school level, and to make connections between what they are doing and relevant research literature. It is a collaborative setting, in which school leaders formulate action research questions and are challenged into thinking more deeply about what they are doing. The Principal of St Monica's, Mr Greg Parker, has strong views about the need for school principals to be involved in collaborative inquiry networks of this kind, where they pursue their professional learning as their personal project. A key question for him is: 'How does my professional learning lead to improved student outcomes?'

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Greg Parker, Principal of St Monica's Parish School)

6.4.2.3 Pembroke College

Pembroke College reflects an equally strong commitment to the professional learning of its staff. Again, the emphasis is on whole school planning, which requires every teacher to engage in professional learning which matches school priorities. One of these is SACE, the newly mandated Middle School and Secondary School Curriculum, which Pembroke is obliged to implement along with other public and independent schools in SA. Pembroke is currently supporting staff to access professional development on this, working with them in order to ensure that they can align this state-wide curriculum with their own, and making sure that it dovetails correctly. This requires a great deal of collaborative work, and is part of a range of initiatives in order to create what Mr Jim Daws, the newly appointed Director of Human Resources, describes as ‘a dynamic learning community here which encourages self management, curiosity, intellectual rigour, enjoyment, innovation and the realisation of each individual’s potential’.

According to Mr Daws, there will always be the issue of how to balance the school’s priorities with those of the Faculties and the interests of individual members of those Faculties. This needs to be done within the constraints of a budget, and so what the school tries to do is to encourage self management, whereby individual members of staff are encouraged to set goals for the next three years that are congruent with the school’s priorities. This becomes part of a performance appraisal system. Staff and their Faculties are encouraged to apply for funding for initiatives which fit into those goals. There is, in short, recognition that professional development involves personal development on the part of individual staff – that individual staff should be able to identify their learning needs and actively seek ways to address them – but that this needs to be linked with school priorities. Under the leadership of the Principal, Malcolm Lamb, staff have been supported to do Masters and PhDs related to education by paying half of their HECS fees and providing other support in the form of time release. For Mr Daws, the issue of professional learning relates crucially to that of the long time viability of the school. Schools are both businesses and communities, and in both respects it is vital to develop strategies that will keep the organisation alive. You need to think of the resilience of the organisation as well as that of individuals.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Jim Daws, Director of Human Resources, Pembroke College)

6.4.2.4 Woodcroft College

Woodcroft College is located in Morphett Vale, and caters from K-12, with a junior school, middle school and senior school. It has about 1400 students, 140 teaching staff and 40 ancillary staff. The school is 20 years old and sits on 15 acres.

At the end of each year the school budgets for the following year. A generous amount of funds is allocated towards professional development. The funding is divided across the junior, middle and senior sub-schools. They identify what the current needs are to ensure that the curriculum continues to run smoothly and efficiently. Part of the Deputy’s role is to manage the organisation of the PD in the school. The teachers’ conference and the middle managers training has been part of the Deputy’s brief. Professional Development has always been a commitment of the school. Originally it was a commitment of the school council and the Head that money and resources would go into developing the curriculum and developing the staff and not the buildings themselves. There is almost a per capita allocation for PD for staff. They think it is important for staff to be ‘out and about’ and getting to know what is happening in other schools and bringing that information back to the school.

The Deputy Principal, middle managers and individual teachers all have some input into planning around professional development activities for the school. Teachers do not need to wait to be tapped on the shoulder to attend a PD they can initiate this individually. From year to year there are compulsory things they need

to do underneath the umbrella of PD. For example last year they had to train every staff member in mandatory notification. In Term 3 this year all staff are due for a First Aid update. Last year the focus was on differentiation and the success for boys program which has continued this year. Next year they will probably look at change as a focus and Week Zero focus will be on 'change' due to the rethinking of their senior curriculum. They endeavour to find key people in the school who can offer something related to the focus and they attempt to identify what their staff professional development needs might be in relation to the focus and then also bring external people into the school.

Professional development programs at this school include the following:

International Baccalaureate program:

The school has the IB program. The IB program in the primary and middle sub schools is an approach to teaching and learning. From Years 10 – 12 the IB Diploma becomes a choice. Students can participate in that program or they can do the normal high school certificate. Or they can choose a VET pathway. There is compulsory PD that is part of that program which involves sending staff to conferences, sometimes overseas so they can update their skills and content knowledge. The school was one of the first schools in Adelaide to be part of the program and some of their staff is part of the writing team in Cardiff. In the middle and senior schools they have a targeted funding body that is part of the Independent Schools Association and that source of funding supports students with special needs so that funding helps to support students and staff in that area.

Success for boys

Last year the school had a 'Success for boys' focus. The literacy manager received a grant from the government for \$10,000 to fund this initiative within the school. A number of staff worked on projects in teams. This program is going to continue despite the funding drying up as they know that boys are increasingly more disengaged with the curriculum which is a national and perhaps international problem.

VET pathway

In addition to the IB diploma they also have a VET pathway so a lot of professional development is spent on course counselling and certified training for implementation of TAFE modules within the school.

Leadership training

They have been working on leadership training for the past eighteen months. They have 38 middle managers in the school. They have the head and deputy, then they have a head of sub-school structure and then heads of faculty, heads of department and year level managers. They hire out a venue in Adelaide for the beginning of each year and on the first day of week zero look at what it means to be a leader. Staff received readings prior to the day and materials on the day. This started the conversations that continued through the year. They also held a symposium half way through the year where all of the managers were brought together to reflect on what had taken place in the first six months of the school year. This was continued at the start of this year when they had another leadership day where guest speakers from outside of the education sector were invited to talk about leadership in their organisations.

Teachers' conference

Because so many staff are moving in and out of the school doing PD they brought the staff together at the beginning of this year and held a teachers' conference. This was an excellent form of PD for the staff because it was facilitated largely by teachers within the school and by a small number of external presenters that were invited. The program was put together at the end of last year. The teachers who were involved were released to put their sessions together. It is a means for teachers to showcase some of the great work they are doing and to share their expertise with others. The remainder of the staff were invited to sign up for the event. They are hoping to make this an annual event and to incorporate the non-teaching staff. It is also a means to launch the PD focus for the year ahead.

Mentoring program

The school also has a mentoring program for new staff coming in. They tend to have a fairly young staff and they feel people are attracted to the school because they can try new things, be appointed to leadership positions earlier, etc They recognise that their school is quite a 'big' and sometimes 'scary' place to the new teacher so they allocate mentors to new staff who are more experienced. They are given a handbook, free coffee vouchers for the coffee shop so they can meet regularly. They help staff with the nuts and bolts such as where to lunch to other kinds of professional conversations. They give them examples of the kinds of questions to promote conversation. They are encouraged to talk about the kinds of professional learning the new teacher might want to access and various procedures within the school such as reporting. The Head also sends out emails asking whether the mentor and new teacher have met recently and had a coffee, etc. The feedback from new staff about the process has been very positive.

The school sees staff as their greatest resource and believes that they have good professional judgement when it comes to evaluating the usefulness of they PD they attend. Professional development is about the professional growth of teachers. The school thinks it is important for both teachers and students to be engaged in their work. They think it is important to promote professional dialogue about teaching and learning, and this extends to the need for staff to network beyond their school – it is important for teachers to get 'out and about'. The school also believes they need a commitment to professional learning. This commitment needs to be resourced in terms of adequate funds, teacher release, etc. The school believes that this commitment to professional learning helps to attract teachers to come to work at the school.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Rebecca Clarke)

6.4.3 School and university research partnerships

The initiatives discussed above show that, while there is a strong emphasis on the value of learning that is grounded in local settings, there is also recognition of the need for schools to look outwards and to draw on research and other support. Representatives from both Flinders University and the University of South Australia were interviewed, when it became apparent that their approach to professional learning matched the assumptions of the school leaders and teachers with whom we spoke. Both institutions have been involved in a range of professional learning projects, sometimes in partnership with DECS, and sometimes under the auspices of the Australian Government Quality Teaching Project.

6.4.3.1 Faculty of Education, Flinders University

Flinders has done a lot of work which has emerged out of local systems, embracing the Catholic, Independent and state school sectors. This work involves identifying what schools wish to achieve by engaging in fairly intensive dialogue with them. Workshops are then designed that address these specific concerns. This happens on a fairly consistent basis, and has a snowball effect, with other groups or schools contacting people at Flinders in order to facilitate professional learning

Ms Kerry Bissaker, one of the staff interviewed at Flinders who has taken some responsibility for coordinating this area of the university's operations, indicated that most of her colleagues had been engaged in providing some form of professional learning for the educational community here. This work reflects the university's partnership with education communities in South Australia. It is noteworthy that very rarely have they offered anything which they have felt demanded special attention, i.e. something which, as educational researchers, they believed school educators ought to know. The focus of projects is typically negotiated with school communities, in order to address their perceived needs. However, Ms Bissaker and her colleagues also feel that such occasions provide opportunities for them to engage in capacity building at a school level, giving teachers skills to conduct inquiry and to evaluate data effectively. Ms Bissaker has developed modules which are specifically targeted at the complexities of practitioner inquiry which lead to the award of a Graduate Certificate.

Overall, Ms Bissaker and her colleague feel that these days there is a much stronger appreciation of what the universities have to offer with respect to professional learning. People understand that they derive more from systematic learning on a sustained basis, and they appreciate the feedback and encouragement they receive through their interactions with university researchers. The researchers see themselves as being engaged in a significant form of capacity building which is grounded in local sites. As Ms Bissaker remarked: 'What we know is that good professional learning comes from the bottom up...' Teachers and researchers still experience tensions, not necessarily with each other, but because of systems demands, involving short time frames and managerial forms of accountability. In this respect, Ms Bissaker commended DECS's '*Learning to Learn*' initiative as opening up an alternative approach towards professional learning that is likely to be more effective in the long term.

Ms Bissaker summed up: 'You need to enable teachers to make links between what you are offering and their own professional context. But there's this fine line between 'let's go with what you want to learn' and establishing what you don't know. Through their exposure to university researchers, teachers encounter a wider range of ideas. This applies especially to current efforts to develop deeper understandings of teaching and learning – as in '*Learning to Learn*'. Rather than focusing simply on content areas, people get an opportunity to explore what is lacking in teaching and learning, and to develop a deep understanding of how learning occurs, what happens when people learn, and how it's different for people.'

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Kerry Bissaker, senior lecturer at Flinders University)

6.4.3.2 Faculty of Education, University of South Australia

The University of South Australia provides a number of post graduate courses for teachers, including Graduate Certificates, Graduate Diplomas, and Masters by coursework, research degree pathways and Doctor of Education.

The Graduate Certificates they design reflect a close working relationship between the teaching profession and the university. The Graduate Certificate is organised as a shell which comprises two policy units and two practitioner inquiry units. The policy units can be shaped so that whatever the current issues are in the field can be reflected in these units. Cohorts of teachers are recruited for these courses. Presently they are working in the north of Adelaide to create a cohort of 20 teachers

from a range of schools for a Graduate Certificate which focuses on digital literacy. The cohort of teachers comes into the university to do the two policy units and the two practitioner inquiry units. The practitioner inquiry units result in the development of projects concerned with bringing about change in their schools. The university has a raft of these units all focussing on different things, some on leadership, some on literacy. The teachers engage in this learning in a number of different ways. Sometimes teachers come in for a couple of Saturdays and then they do work back out in their schools. The Graduate Certificate is equivalent to 6 months full time study. It can be configured in a range of different ways.

Through such initiatives, the university is also able to pursue a research agenda. They are not simply providing a service, but alert to the way such initiatives fit with their research strategy. The language and literacy research centre, for example, provides professional development in a particular range of areas. It is driven by what teachers might need locally, what community sees as important, what is happening at the state level, but – crucially – it also sees this work as part of its research agendas. The university has had an extensive involvement in ‘*Learning to Learn*’, which is essentially about teachers building constructivist pedagogies in schools. This engages teachers in a rich professional learning in a range of different ways, drawing on an array of expertise within the university.

The three universities in South Australia, as represented by the three Deans of Education, confer regularly, and are part of a teacher liaison education committee (i.e. for the government sector). This is how they become aware of what the priorities are. The teacher liaison committee meets throughout the year. The universities also have similar conversations with the Catholic Education Office and the Independent Schools Association. The universities probably concentrate their efforts on the public system but there is increasing involvement of the Catholic and Independent sectors.

There is a strong relationship between the schools and the university and they play quite a significant role in the professional learning of teachers. Sometimes their role is to follow the agenda; sometimes it is to lead the agenda.

(Based on notes from an interview with Assoc Professor Michele Simons, at University of South Australia)

6.5 TASMANIA

A shift from ‘professional development’ to ‘professional learning’ (as described in the opening paragraphs of Chapter 1) appears to be evident in both the approach of the Education Department of Tasmania and that of the Catholic Education Office of Tasmania. There is a strong emphasis on the value of professional learning at a local level, rather than system wide professional development programs. This focus on local learning is congruent with other professional learning initiatives around Australia.

6.5.1 *Department of Education (DoE) Tasmania*

Rather than system wide provision of a particular program or activity, the Education Department is promoting the professional learning of teachers within their schools. Ms Jenny Gale, the General Manager, Strategic Policy and Performance, indicated that there is no longer a centralised area within the Department for curriculum and professional learning. These responsibilities have been decentralized to four ‘learning service’ areas – North West, North, South and South East. The responsibility for coordinating and facilitating teacher professional learning lies with the learning services manager in each of these four areas. The key concept driving this change is the ‘student at the centre’ model, which places the focus on service delivery in schools rather than on a centralized bureaucracy. The aim of professional learning programs is to build teacher quality and to support the internal capacity of schools to improve.

Each school in Tasmania is responsible for developing a school improvement plan, an element of which is professional learning. Ms Gale stated that if we accept that quality teaching has the greatest impact on student learning, as the research appears to show, then all teachers must be involved in professional learning. Schools are required to identify the learning needs of staff and to negotiate with the learning services manager how this learning is to be facilitated. Often schools are able to provide for their own needs in terms of budget and expertise, while at other times they might need assistance and support from the learning services unit. But what programs are put in place, and how they are delivered is ultimately the responsibility of schools, in negotiation with the learning services manager for the area.

While principals and support staff are included in professional learning activities, the main focus for the Department of Education (DoE) is on the professional learning of classroom teachers. It is felt that here the most important work is done, on professional learning that will improve the quality of teaching. She stated that ‘schools are the key organizational unit’ and focus for change. This is not to diminish the importance of networks that exist beyond the school. The DoE aims to become a networked learning organization that provides a ‘network for need, support and improvement’ at the local level. The learning service managers have a ‘brokering’ role to play in their areas, as they negotiate with individual teachers and schools how the best learning outcomes can be achieved for teachers and students.

Government policies and priorities continue to provide important frameworks for professional learning in schools. The Tasmanian DoE currently has three key priority areas – Early Years, Literacy and Numeracy, as well as retention. All schools are required to have a ‘literacy improvement plan’ as well as a school improvement plan, and the professional learning activities of schools are expected to work within this policy framework. However, the decisions about how this is to be done are left to the school, and, as appropriate, in consultation with learning managers. Professional learning is also expected to be within the broad framework of the national goals for schooling set out by DEST/DEEWR. The leadership of teacher professional learning is therefore a shared responsibility between the central Education Department, area learning centres and schools themselves, with the main focus being principals and teachers in schools.

Why were these changes made? Ms Gale stated that the earlier centralized model of ‘delivering’ professional learning to teachers through a series of Department ‘offerings’ was not successful. Not all teachers were able to access programs, and the ‘top-down’ structure meant that managers at a central location would determine what teachers needed. However, a change of thinking in recent years has moved away from this belief to one that values the knowledge that teachers have about their own professional learning needs. While some central programs are still offered in particular areas, for example the new Tasmanian curriculum framework roll out in 2008, most professional learning activities occur at a local level. The main aim of the change was to ‘flatten the hierarchy’ and to place the ‘student at the centre’ of education in Tasmania. Her views are clearly congruent with findings reported in the literature review that suggest some researchers ‘have strong criticisms of more highly structured strategies and practices that are delivered in similar ways across a nation, irrespective of the context and setting of the schools involved’ (p.1).

Each school in Tasmania has a ‘school resource package.’ The majority of funding for the professional learning needs of staff comes from within this budgetary framework, the decisions for which are made at the school level. However, extra resources can be negotiated with the learning manager, which include not only financial support but also, for example, sourcing outside ‘experts’ to assist teachers to implement new teaching strategies in their classrooms. As a ‘networked learning organisation’ the Education Department encourages individual schools to network with other schools in their area to maximize opportunities for professional learning. There used to be ‘clusters’ of schools based on geographical and other arbitrary factors, but now schools are encouraged to work with other schools that have similar needs and interests, including primary/secondary networking, to increase the pool of expertise available to each school in its professional learning programs.

This is a new approach to professional learning – 2007 is the first year in which it has been operating – and it is still too early to assess teachers’ response to the model or its effectiveness. Some principals and teachers are adjusting to the new system, and there is evidence that some would still prefer to be told what to do, rather than developing professional learning plans at a local level. The review of the new system, which will occur early 2008, will identify areas of need with respect to such issues. It is also not possible to establish a ‘cause and effect’ between the system model and teacher/student learning outcomes. There are some key performance indicators (KPIs) that will be used to evaluate student learning, and to determine ‘targeted support’ programs for schools which do not meet set goals. These KPIs include: student learning outcomes against benchmarks, e.g., reading and numeracy levels, staff satisfaction surveys, and retention data. School performance will be measured against these KPIs and a school improvement plan developed in response to the needs identified. This will form part of the range of data that would constitute evidence of the link with teacher professional learning.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Jenny Gale, the General Manager, Strategic Policy and Performance in the Department of Education Tasmania)

The principals and teachers at the schools we visited tended not to speak about their own professional learning programs in terms of this new model of professional learning was working for them. They did, however, provide a range of examples of professional learning activities and programs that suggests there is a rich culture of professional learning in Tasmania, much of which is managed at the local level.

6.5.2 Upper Burnie Primary School

Upper Burnie Primary School has existed since 1912 and has been added to and upgraded, particularly during the 1980s, and again in more recent years. The students come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, with a mixture of rural and urban communities. Burnie has one of the highest unemployment rates in

Australia, particularly for young people. Many students exhibit challenging behaviours, and a very strong behaviour management/student support program is in operation across the whole school.

The school's current enrolment is approximately 250, which includes a full-time kindergarten class. All grade levels are composite, i.e., prep/1, 1/2, 2/3, 3/4, and 5/6. Support services include a guidance officer, speech therapist, support teacher and social worker. There is also an after school care program run by the local council. We interviewed the current Principal, Ms Lynette Grundy, who started at the school in Term 2, 2007.

Upper Burnie Primary School is regarded as an exemplary school for its approach to teacher professional learning. This aspect of its program is highly valued by the principal and staff, and is mentioned in both the school handbook for parents and the teacher handbook. There is a focus on professional learning teams, which have dedicated, uninterrupted learning opportunities during the normal teaching hours of the day. Ms Grundy believes that teachers' learning is similar to that of children, in that they need dedicated times during which they are engaged and have opportunities to be creative. She also holds the view that after-hours professional learning is not conducive to quality learning, as teachers are often tired after a day's teaching, and they are not always able to attend after-school sessions due to family and other commitments. Ms Grundy commented that 'You can't underestimate the value of professional conversations', and opportunities for reflection. Although the time devoted to professional learning is well-planned and organized ahead (based on a 'structured, planned space' model), there is enough flexibility within the program for teachers to share their concerns and expertise on topics that are important and relevant to them at the time, and in response to the needs of the children. In addition to designated professional learning times, staff also attend regular whole staff meetings and have the mandated four pupil-free days per year for administration and profession learning. This year these pupil-free days have focused on improving the 'curriculum-planning-assessment-moderation' cycle in the school.

Approximately four years ago, a partnership with Burnie City Council (BCC) saw the implementation of a program in which child care workers (tutors) came to Upper Burnie Primary School to take activities with the children while teachers met in teams to plan and spend time on any other professional learning activity that they believed was appropriate. The former principal, Leanne Raw, advocated very strongly that professional learning be undertaken this way as it provided a key learning time for teachers during school hours. The program won a Tasmanian Ministerial award for community partnerships, but unfortunately staffing became difficult, and the program eventually evolved into the current one. Relief teachers (as opposed to volunteer tutors) are employed to teach the children for a set period of time every fortnight, while teachers meet in professional learning teams.

In 2007 the primary focus of professional learning teams has been the key priority area of literacy. Professional learning teams have worked on producing a whole school plan, with a particular focus on the Early Years model (e.g., two hour block; whole-small-whole). In addition to working in teams at the school, staff have visited an exemplary school in Devonport for further professional learning opportunities, a visit that was supported by the Education Department with extra funding. Most professional learning opportunities, however, are provided on-site by in-house personnel.

The school is also a member of a local network – Positive Behaviours Support Network – which encourages a whole-school approach to behaviour management. Staff often use their dedicated professional learning times for the implementation of this program, which is a very important issue for this school.

While key areas have been identified for professional learning teams by the school leadership, other foci arise out of staff expertise, and need or interest. For example, one of the kindergarten teachers has worked in a First Steps program at another school, and led professional learning sessions on the implementation of this Early Years literacy strategy. At another time the ICT team led the development of an ICT framework for use across the school, and another teacher who had expertise in a ‘success for boys’ program led the staff in professional learning activities on that topic. Ms Grundy stressed the need for all staff to be leaders at some time, and that it was important for senior staff to ‘not be the leaders all the time’, although she also believed it is also necessary to monitor the workload this sometimes creates for more junior staff.

Ms Grundy herself has trained in the ‘Tribes’ program, which is aimed at building learning communities and developing social skills, and to foster exemplary teaching and learning strategies. This is implemented on a ‘train-the-trainer’ basis – her aim is to train other staff members in the principles of the program, and to further develop a culture of learning communities at the school. Ms Grundy is also keen to visit Victorian schools in the Geelong area, which are leaders in this program. This is an example of the principal taking the leadership role in providing professional learning for staff, in a particular area of need for the school community (i.e. social skills and building strong communities).

Another focus for this year has been planning for the implementation of the new Tasmanian Education Department Curriculum Framework, which officially begins in 2008. In order to meet the requirements of this policy framework, teachers at Upper Burnie are using some of their dedicated professional learning time to determine how the new framework can best be implemented for the benefit of their students. While it is a state wide policy document, each school determines how it will implement the framework according to their particular context. Teachers at Upper Burnie are currently using the documents to inform their own professional learning in this area. They feel quite confident in the curriculum areas of Literacy and Numeracy, and look forward to the opportunity to focus on the other core areas, including Science, Society and History, and LOTE.

When asked how staff evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning approach, Ms Grundy commented, ‘That’s a really hard question to answer’. She stated that they ‘haven’t questioned it a lot’, but that anecdotal feedback suggested that staff were happy with the approach. The focus appears to be firmly on teacher learning, which in turn underpins student learning, and the belief that if professional learning is not within a set structure, it tends to ‘not happen’.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Lynette Grundy, Principal of Upper Burnie Primary School)

6.5.3 *Launceston College*

Launceston College is situated near the source of the Tamar River in Launceston, in the north of Tasmania. It is a year 11 and 12 school, and offers ‘level 5’ pre-university subjects. The college caters for local and international students, and currently has an enrolment of approximately 1000 students, with approximately 150 staff. The schools is spread over two city blocks, and offers academic and trade subjects, and has a training restaurant and automotive workshop.

Launceston College was nominated for inclusion in this research project because of the use of student feedback to inform teacher professional learning. The approach is referred to as the ‘Staff Feedback and Professional Learning Program.’ As far as the Assistant Principal, Ms Dianne Freeman knows, Launceston College is the only school in Tasmania to use such a system.

In response to a need for more and better quality feedback, identified by teachers in the school's Organisational Health Survey (OHS) in 2002-3, the school leadership team decided to develop a more formal process for providing feedback to their staff to assist with their plans for professional learning. The OHS survey had revealed that 71.1 per cent of staff believed that they were not given regular feedback on their teaching, and the same percentage believed that there was no structure or process in the school to provide such feedback. The leadership team investigated various models from around Australia, and decided that an on-line questionnaire would be most appropriate. The school was fortunate to have on staff an ICT expert who had developed on-line reporting systems for schools across the state, who was willing to develop a program that would enable approximately 1000 students to complete surveys for each of their subjects. The logistical difficulties associated with completing and analysing paper-based surveys were overcome by using the on-line environment, although the initial set-up was time consuming and created the greatest cost associated with the program. A manual explaining the program in detail was also developed over a period of approximately two years.

In addition to the feedback that staff receive via the on-line survey, they also obtain feedback on their teaching in the form of Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA) results, attendance and retention data for each subject (records of student movement into and out of subjects), and anecdotal feedback/comments from students and parents. Surveys of leadership capabilities were also included in the initial implementation of the program, and after some refinement, are intended to be implemented again in 2008.

The purpose of the program, as stated in the school manual is 'to develop best practices in teaching and best practices in leadership through a structured feedback mechanism. This is intended to improve student learning outcomes'. The on-line survey covers all areas of teaching practice – relationships with students, subject matter, assessment practices and clarity of teaching/explanations. The program is intended to give clear guidance to staff on their roles, and to provide opportunities for reflection and structured support to improve teaching practices. In addition to assisting individual teachers and teaching teams with their teaching performance, the program aims to produce clear goals for the direction of the College and 'to provide a formative approach for continuous organizational improvement'.

When the first draft of the on-line survey was developed in 2005, a trial was undertaken, with staff learning area teams (based on subject areas) given the option of participating in the program. Rather than impose the new system on teachers, the leadership of the school consulted with the Education Department's Human Resources division about the best way to proceed, and were advised to make the trial optional to overcome any resistance that some staff and teacher unions might have. They were also keen to emphasise the confidential nature of the process. It was important to emphasise that this initiative was not a case of 'big brother' looking over teachers' shoulders, but that it was driven by a desire to obtain genuine feedback to help improve teaching practice in the school. The trial of the student survey resulted in questions being amended and reduced, so that the current version has 16 questions to which students respond on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' Teachers also complete a survey of their own teaching practices in each subject that they teach, and these results are compared with those of the students. Results can be analysed for individual teachers/subjects, and across learning areas.

There are several stages in the implementation of the program, including an on-line student survey for each of their subjects, as well as teacher evaluations of the subjects they teach; feedback review, when teachers reflect on the survey results and identify strengths and areas for improvement (where strengths are recognised, staff are encouraged to share their expertise and mentor other staff in these areas); development of an individual development plan, when areas for improvement are noted, and support measures are identified, including resources, peer coaching, professional learning for an area team, and college based professional learning.

Although there were no direct links to teacher career development, the first criterion for promotion to Advanced Skills Teacher was evidence of ‘exemplary teaching practice.’ Results from the feedback program would no doubt provide some evidence of this kind. The building of mentoring and leadership capacity as a result of the identification of strengths would also assist teachers applying for leadership positions in the future.

Ms Freeman believes it is still too early to say much about the effectiveness of the program, and what evidence might be used to evaluate its success. She explained that two years was not enough time to see great changes in teaching practice or student outcomes, but that the growing awareness of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the feedback should encourage teachers to begin to make changes and to improve their teaching practices and leadership capabilities. A thorough assessment of the effectiveness of the program would take something some time, and even then it would be difficult to determine to what extent the feedback program was responsible for improvements, or whether other factors had brought about change.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Dianne Freeman, Assistant Principal of Launceston College)

6.5.4 Catholic Education Office Tasmania

We interviewed Dr Dan White, Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania, who cautioned us about making generalisations about professional learning in Catholic schools across Tasmania on the basis of what he had to say to us. Dr White believes there is a gap between the vision of professional learning being promoted by the Catholic Education Office (CEO) and the reality. Not all schools have the capacity to achieve this vision of professional learning at the current time. Accordingly, much of our discussion focused on this vision, rather than on specific initiatives.

Catholic schools in Tasmania are encouraged to adopt a holistic model of sustained school improvement, of which professional learning is an integral part. Schools are expected to engage in critical evaluation on the basis of evidence or data available to them, and to set clear goals and identify strengths and needs to guide future planning. These goals for improvement should be focused and sustained, and ‘owned’ by the staff and the school community. School development requires sustained professional learning, and learning is not something which can be done *to* teachers, but done *by* them. Teachers need to own their professional learning and be empowered to undertake it.

To this end, a key feature of the leadership structure in schools created in the last two years has been the appointment of two Assistant Principals in each school – one with the responsibility of religious education and the other for learning and teaching. Dr White suggested that having a senior person in a leadership role dedicated to learning and teaching would lead to a ‘professional learning culture’ in schools, whereby the professional learning needs and strengths can be identified and nurtured at the local level. He believes that an action research model is more easily facilitated when a dedicated Assistant Principal is placed in the role of leading learning and teaching in the school.

The CEO has produced a professional learning handbook for 2008 which has an extensive list of courses which it offers for teachers. While some one-off individual courses are still being offered, the CEO is promoting a more ‘sustained’ approach involving suites of professional learning courses, and tailoring them to the needs of individual schools, preferably on a whole school basis. Dr White stated that the most effective professional learning occurs within the context of the school itself, in response to the needs of the teachers in that school, at the time that it is needed. He spoke of a ‘just in time learning’ model, in which teachers are exposed to learning opportunities that they need at a particular time. If a certain set of skills (e.g., ICT) are not relevant to teachers, then they are less likely to use these skills in

the classroom. The CEO advocates a ‘train the trainer’ model of ‘up-skilling’ particular teachers in schools who then provide other teachers with skills as they require them.

In developing a ‘professional learning community’ approach to professional learning, Dr White stated that the CEO was trying to change a mindset not only in schools but within the CEO itself. The approach to teacher professional learning was reviewed approximately 5 years ago, and the Office realized that it was good at administration but not so good in its professional learning/educational focus. There were changes in personnel at the CEO in an attempt to build the capacity of the organization which would in turn change the way in which professional learning occurred within schools. Dr White stated that there was a change away from the ‘program delivery’ model to contextualised, school-initiated professional learning. He believes very strongly that the power lies within, and that schools already have the expertise to improve.

Dr White stated that ‘what makes the biggest difference to kids is the quality of the learning experience not the quantity of the learning experience’. It is difficult to assess the ‘value-added stuff,’ and the CEO has a rudimentary view about this. He believes that the effectiveness of the CEO itself needs to be monitored, and this will be done via an external validation process in October 2008. In terms of the effectiveness of the approach to professional learning in schools, the indicators would be both tangible and intangible. If the notion of professional learning is embedded within the culture of the school, and reflective practice seen as part of the ‘school improvement plan,’ then there will be several types of evidence that could be assessed. For example, Dr White suggested that literacy and numeracy indicators should show improvement over time, and evaluations of programs that are ‘delivered’ will reflect the value of such courses. There are also the intangible indicators, which are more difficult to assess. The CEO is a few years away from assessing the effectiveness of professional learning approaches through the external validation process.

To increase the ability of APs to facilitate PL at the school level, Dr White believes that more support is needed for these people, to achieve a robust PL culture in their schools. Focused professional discussion/dialogue should be the aim of each school, and the CEO intends to work more closely with APs to achieve this in all schools. There is also a need to provide more support for teachers who work with the increasing number of students with special needs who are entering the Catholic system in Tasmania. Dr White referred to the situation in which teacher aides are employed to ‘deal with’ children with special needs, whereas he believed the classroom teacher should be the person who provides most support to these students. He stated that when teacher aides were employed, there was the situation in which the children with the greatest needs were being taught by the least qualified person. Dr White would like to see classroom teachers develop greater capacity to teach these students, not only from a teaching perspective but from a moral stance. Teaching these students were a part of the moral ethos of the Catholic system, so one goal of future PL was to address these moral parameters of teachers’ work (referred to above). A similar approach would be taken, i.e. a ‘layered model’ of PL in which the CEO provided courses, programs etc, and helped to ‘upskill’ particularly members of staff who would become the resident expert, and in turn support the PL needs of other staff in the area of special needs teaching.

(Based on notes from an interview with Dr Dan White, Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania)

6.5.5 St. John’s Primary School, Richmond

St. John’s Catholic primary school is situated in Richmond, approximately 30 kilometres from Hobart. From the front gate of the school there is a picture-postcard view of the historic Richmond Bridge. The school has an enrolment of approximately 150 students, with 10 teaching staff. The principal, Mr. Cameron Brown is

new to the school this year. The two Assistant Principals (APs), Ms Jackie Lawless and Ms Laura Bourke, have been at the school for several years. All grades are composite grades. Currently, the school is undergoing extensive renovations.

The principal, Cameron Brown, stated that the school was undergoing a change in culture from a closed-door to an open-door way policy. AP Laura Bourke, who has been at the school for approximately seven years, believed that over the last five years or so, the staff at the school was more willing to share ideas and to work together in their planning and in developing effective teaching programs. The staff operates in learning teams, in both horizontal and vertical structures. Class learning teams teach at the same or similar grade levels (horizontal), and the PL team consists of one representative from each of the class learning teams (vertical). Mentoring takes place within teams, and with support from the leadership team, teachers who attend selected activities report back to others and provide PL for others on their teams. The structure of professional learning teams is consistent with the literature that suggests one of the key elements in successful PL is when teachers work and learn together in teams.

Ms Lawless stated that the change in PL culture at the school is undertaken in 'small steps,' to encourage teachers to talk about their teaching/pedagogy and to gain confidence in sharing ideas and problems. For example, she would distribute copies of educational articles from newspapers or professional learning sources and encourage teachers to informally discuss them in relation to their own teaching. Other strategies that have encouraged greater sharing of ideas are the composite structure and teachers changing grade levels on a regular basis. Although these decisions were made for operational reasons, the by-product is teachers sharing ideas, discussing challenges and helping each other. Jackie believes that this change of attitude constitutes a form of PL, and that 'it is easier to do this together – it's too hard on your own.'

Although there is room for informal opportunities for PL and conversation, the main emphasis appeared to be on 'doing courses.' Attending PL/PD courses was referred to most often during the interview. The whole staff is currently undertaking a THRASS course (spelling) and have recently completed a First Steps Maths course. While the team structure exists, there did not appear to be a great deal of emphasis on PL in teams, and it was up to individual teachers to organize their own 2-3 days PL. When asked whether or not this occurred in teams, Cameron stated that it was up to teachers to organize their own teams if they wanted to attend with others.

Every second staff meeting is held as a PL meeting rather than an administrative meeting, and gives teachers extra time for more informal PL conversations, planning etc. Also, once a month grade level teams work together for planning and discussions, and are released by the leadership team for this purpose. Jackie believes that the 'internal' PL opportunities are perhaps more effective than the external courses that they do. The structure is embedded within the operation of the school, and Cameron believes that the staff has accepted this in a very positive way. Jackie said that she is 'really excited to hear teachers talking professionally to each other.' There is a sharing across different levels of experience, for example, less experienced teachers ask others for advice, while more experienced teachers are happy to tap into the new ideas that younger teachers bring.

Professional learning appears to be driven mostly by the leadership team, members of which play a key role in identifying the PL needs of the school. They also suggest particular PL activities/courses etc that they think individual teachers should attend and make these teachers aware of what is on offer. The leadership team appears to have a pivotal role, and stated that it was not always easy for teachers to identify their own PL needs.

Ms Lawless stated that St. John's was trying to move away from the previous culture of being an '*Essential Learnings school*' (the previous Tasmanian Education Department Curriculum Framework) so staff were used to being told what PD they had to do. When they were asked 2 or 3 years ago to write down on paper what they believed their own PL needs were, Jackie said that this was not very successful. She thought it was 'too much too soon' so since then she has taken a 'small steps' approach (referred to above) to build teachers' confidence to take more responsibility for their own PL needs. They were used to PD being 'done to them' rather than identifying their own needs. Jackie thinks that teachers need more support to identify their own needs, and that the process should now be more formal or structured to ensure that this happens.

Half way through the interview the whole teaching staff came into the office to participate in the interview. The main focus of this part of the interview was on identifying what teachers believed were good and not so good PL opportunities in their school. Several of the staff did not contribute to the discussion but several, including Jackie, spoke about the effectiveness of PL activities with which they had recently been involved.

One staff member argued that on-site, whole-school PL opportunities are more valuable because teachers have the same 'in-put' and can share ideas and take advantage of opportunities for professional dialogue. She gave the example of how when one or two people attended external PD, then reported back, this was an ineffective way of facilitating PL because 'you can't learn from hearsay.' If the whole staff, or at least teams of staff members were involved in PL together, it was much more effective because everyone can engage in a share dialogue. It was also considered to be very important that PL activities are followed up. Regular 'revisiting' ensures that PL is sustained for the long-term. The THRASS program that the staff are currently undertaking was a case in point – one teacher argued that this should be revisited next year, and the next, to keep the momentum going.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr. Cameron Brown, Principal, and two Assistant Principals, Ms Jackie Lawless and Ms Laura Bourke, and several other teachers at the school.)

6.5.6 Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania

We interviewed Associate Professor Ross Brooker, Deputy Head of School in the Faculty of Education, about the role that the University of Tasmania plays in facilitating professional learning in this state.

Compared to most other Australian universities, the University of Tasmania occupies an interesting position in that it is the only university in the state in which it is located (Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory is in the same position). A Memorandum of Understanding exists between the State Government of Tasmania and the State's University, which lays the foundation for joint activities. Under this umbrella, collaboration between the State's Department of Education (DoE) and the University's Faculty of Education has occurred from time to time, negotiated between respective DoE Secretaries and Faculty of Education Deans. Similar relations exist between the Faculty and the Catholic Education Office (CEO) and with the State's independent schools.

To date, the Faculty of Education's major role in teachers' professional development has been in the preparation of pre-service teachers. In addition, it offers postgraduate degree programs in which a small proportion of Tasmanian teachers enrol. The Faculty of Education also grants credit for up to four Masters units to teachers who successfully complete designated DoE or CEO professional development programs. From time to time, individual academics are approached by schools and school clusters to offer short one-off professional development sessions. Also, teachers' professional learning is sometimes a by-product of their

occasional involvement in research projects with University of Tasmania academics. More systematic professional development of teachers is organised by Tasmania's DoE and tends to be related to the introduction of system initiatives. The introduction of the *Essential Learnings Curriculum Framework* in the early 2000s (see <http://www.ltag.education.tas.gov.au/references.htm>), for example, saw the establishment of pilot schools around Tasmania, with professional development provided by onsite curriculum teachers funded by DoE central office. Teachers in these schools then provided professional development to teachers in neighbouring schools.

The Faculty of Education has recently entered into an agreement with the DoE to offer Masters degrees focused on inclusive learning communities, with the DoE committing funds to establish a Tasmanian Institute for Research in Teaching and Learning Environments (TIRTLE) and the University guaranteeing a number of free HECS places for Tasmanian teachers. The Faculty of Education has also negotiated with the DoE a 'partnered delivery' of the Bachelor of Education at its Cradle Coast campus. The partnership includes research (by TIRTLE and schools) focused on improving literacy and aimed at identifying good practice and developing strategies to improve school education and teacher training.

Some Faculty of Education academics are also Board members of the recently established Tasmanian Institute of Teachers. While the Institute has been focused on registration and course accreditation issues, up to now, it has plans to require teachers to become involved in professional development activities as part of re-registration processes.

(Based on notes from an interview with Associate Professor Ross Brooker, Deputy Head of School in the Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania)

6.6 AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

In May 2007, a range of stakeholders and systems in the ACT contributed to the publication of a series of discussion papers under the heading of ‘Teacher Registration in the ACT.’ One of these papers, focusing on professional standards, sought ‘to provide information and to encourage discussion around the issue of whether an ACT teacher registration body should have any role in setting and managing professional teaching standards and what that role might entail’ (see http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/18253/tr_Issues_Paper_No_2_ProfessionalStandards.pdf). It would seem that other jurisdictions have already set in place more centralized professional standards, teacher registration process, and systems for driving and supporting teacher professional learning, and that the ACT is looking to learn from their experiences. At first glance, this might suggest that ACT schools and systems would be enacting an even wider range of approaches and programs of professional learning than in other jurisdictions. And yet, interviews with schools and non-school stakeholders reveal a similar level of diversity and tensions in professional learning policy and practices across the territory.

6.6.1 ACT Department of Education and Training

We interviewed Ms Trish Wilks, Director of The Curriculum Support and Professional Learning Directorate (CSPLD) within the ACT Department of Education and Training. The CSPLD has prime responsibility for the planning and provision of professional learning for teaching and non-teaching staff in government schools and colleges in the ACT. The CSPLD’s systemic focus is complemented by school-based models and funding for professional learning. Thus there is both a systemic and local approach to developing and implementing professional learning within the ACT government school sector.

For the ACT Department of Education and Training, the challenge is to provide for the breadth of professional learning needs, as well as developing professional learning programs that promote and enable depth of professional learning. The key beliefs that underpin their approach to professional learning are that:

- professional learning is ‘core-business’ and not an add-on;
- school-based and on-going professional learning is important; and
- professional learning needs to be relevant and ‘just in time’.

Professional learning priorities are determined by the following: specific needs or issues within the system; system innovations such as curriculum reform that necessitates large scale professional learning; national schooling priorities (e.g., literacy and numeracy).

Current programs developed by the Curriculum Support and Professional Learning Directorate include the following:

- Early Literacy and Numeracy (varied programs and models for building teacher capacity relating to literacy teaching);
- New Educators Program (learning, support and exchange program for teachers in their first 3 years of employment);
- Curriculum implementation – a new ACT curriculum is being implemented in 2008-2009. Alongside the curriculum implementation is a program of professional learning within Key Learning Areas;

- Leadership program (for existing and aspiring leaders);
- Targeted scholarships for study in specific priority areas such as inclusive education and Quality Teaching (through specific alignments with universities); and
- Work with individual schools on specific projects.

Programs are run in different modes and over different periods of time, some as workshops held outside of school, others within school programs that run over a longer period of time. Most programs are staffed by those working within the CSPLD (typically teachers with specific curriculum or pedagogical expertise seconded from their school position for a three year period).

We shall focus on the New Educators Program as an example of current initiatives. The New Educators Program, which began in 2007, is designed for beginning teachers and runs over a three year period. The program was developed to address the specific learning needs of beginning teachers, to provide a systemic approach to induction, and to reduce levels of attrition among those in the first few years of teaching. The program is linked to specific system priorities relating to the retention of teaching staff. The New Educators program is resourced through the professional learning budget. Schools are provided with relief days for teachers to attend. The program is based around 4 workshop sessions per year (1 per term), and is not mandatory.

In the first year that the program ran (2007), 80 teachers attended. Teachers who attended were from the primary and secondary school sectors. The demographic profile of participants indicated a range of ages and career experience outside the school system. In the first year of the program the following areas were considered in workshop sessions: student welfare; curriculum; assessment; inclusive classroom practice; and reflection. New content will be added as the program develops for teachers in their second and third year of teaching.

Given the newness of the program it is difficult to ascertain its long term impact. However, plans are in place to map attendance and retention of staff through the 3 year cycle. Evaluations conducted of the workshop sessions so far have been positive. The program did hope to establish cross-school networks of beginning teachers, but this has been difficult to sustain.

While there are no specific data related to the link between participation in this program and promotion, registration, etc., it is anticipated that participation in the program will support the process of probation for beginning teachers and will be a useful precursor to an anticipated program of registration for teachers in the ACT. Moreover, there appears to be a growing mindset among beginning teachers regarding their career progression, and options for promotion, and this program provides assistance with this.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Trish Wilks, Director Curriculum Support and Professional Learning)

6.6.2 Fraser Primary

Fraser Primary is a government primary school in the northern Canberra area of Belconnen. Over the last six years a strong professional learning community involving all staff has developed. Staff are committed to maintaining a professional learning community which reflects a culture of trust, respect and shared decision making. They believe in the importance of lifelong learning sustained by professional dialogue.

The principal, Ms Cherie Lutton, has been a key player in developing this professional learning community. On taking the principalship in 2002, her key goals were to build a strong school culture (for students, teachers, parents and the community) and to implement curriculum change that would both be forward looking and build levels of student engagement. The development of a coherent and sustained program of professional learning for staff was critical to achieving these goals. Since that time, Ms Lutton has taken considerable leadership responsibility for much of the professional learning program. At the same time she has set in place a system of shared leadership and responsibility. In this respect both the process and content of professional learning initiatives are negotiated with staff. Likewise, there is shared responsibility for initiating and implementing professional learning activities.

Over the years these activities have developed in ways responsive to specific local needs as well as systemic priorities. The professional learning culture within the school is supported by a range of complementary components, structures and practices, and is underpinned by research related to curriculum, pedagogy and professional learning. Staff receive folders containing all information related to the school, including professional reading. They have the opportunity to participate in staff professional learning study tours to Melbourne, Sydney and New Zealand (including visits to schools, universities, and other centres for education). Staff engage in team building activities and professional development days, sometimes drawing on outside expertise (including Ms Kath Murdoch as an on-going critical friend). Staff are also able to commit to individual professional development (e.g., attendance at curriculum courses, leadership programs). The school has a leadership team that drives professional learning, in order to 'keep the passion alive'. They have also established a system which involves 'in-house' critical friends, mentoring and induction programs for new staff, pre-service teachers, and so on.

All members of the leadership and teaching team at the school participate in professional learning activities. A core concern has been to build inclusive and collegial practices in order to foster and sustain participation and learning. Teachers at the school have varied levels of experience, and there is a mix of ages and gender. Teachers have built leadership skills as well as enhanced their pedagogical skill and knowledge through the professional learning activities. This extension of knowledge has been drawn on to underpin and support applications for promotion and Higher Duties. All members of staff have a mentor and this links directly to the Professional Pathways program in ACT government schools (which involves three meetings per year for appraisal and planning).

All interviewees noted a change in school culture within the space of a year. This changed professional learning and school culture has been sustained over five years. One interviewee (with over 20 years teaching experience) noted that working at the school, and being part of the professional learning community, has been one of the most exciting and rewarding periods of her teaching career.

Changes to the school culture have also occurred with increased parental participation and levels of student engagement. The school also has quantitative and qualitative data related to student learning outcomes. Over the five years there has been an increase in the number of students who are reaching or above system benchmarks for literacy and numeracy. Staff, student and parent surveys indicate high levels of satisfaction with school operation

ACT government schools are subject to a process of external validation. The domains considered as part of this review process include: learning and teaching, student environment, leadership and management and community involvement.

(See http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/publications_a-z/school_excellence_initiative/best_practice/learning_and_teaching).

ACT schools engage in self assessment as part of this validation process. A school portfolio prepared by all staff at Fraser provides documentary, data-based evidence related to the above domains. The collation of this data has provided a critical point for reflection and planning new professional learning activities.

What is of note about this school is the fact that a professional learning community has been built and sustained over the long term and with the involvement of all staff. It is clear that underpinning this professional learning community is the commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of staff for their own professional learning and its relationship to classroom practice and student learning outcomes.

The principal of Fraser moved to a new school in 2008. The current leadership team are working to ensure that the professional learning community is sustained.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Cherie Lutton, Principal of Fraser Primary, Ms Sue-Ellen Turk and Ms Joy Arblaster, classroom teachers)

6.6.3 *St Thomas Aquinas Primary School*

St Thomas Aquinas is a relatively small Catholic school in West Belconnen, Canberra. In 2005 the school got its first interactive whiteboard. In 2006 they were the first Catholic school in Canberra to install Interactive White-Boards throughout the whole school – in every classroom and in the Information Literacy Centre. Whiteboards are now an integral part of the pedagogy at St Thomas Aquinas. Integrating interactive whiteboards into the daily teaching and learning practices in classrooms has involved considerable professional learning for teachers.

Below are the stages of professional learning that enabled teachers to build their expertise in this area. Of note is the fact that the school is now recognised as a leader in the use of this technology and teachers in the school are regularly invited to other schools to conduct professional development sessions related to the use of interactive whiteboards:

- Basic in-service and training provided by whiteboard company;
- Teacher experimentation and self-help;
- In-house demonstrations and sharing of ideas among teachers;
- Preparation of whiteboard resources that can be used by all teachers;
- New teacher induction programs related to the use of whiteboards;
- Accessing resources, learning supports, online tutorials from Whiteboard company and other related websites; and
- Invitations to demonstrate the use of whiteboards at schools and PD sessions.

The use of whiteboards in the school was a joint initiative begun by the school principal and supported by the Catholic Education Office and the whiteboard company. The professional learning associated with the use of the whiteboard has been to a large extent driven by teachers in the school. Following initial

demonstrations by the whiteboard company, teachers have taken significant responsibility for building their skills and knowledge. One teacher in the school has taken considerable leadership responsibility for trialling new strategies and exchanging ideas.

The school has seven teachers on the teaching team. These teachers have a range of backgrounds and experiences with teaching and with using technology. All teachers integrate whiteboards into their teaching practices. There is variation in the ways that teachers use the whiteboards and the professional learning associated with whiteboards in the school is responsive to the varied backgrounds and levels of experience of the teachers. Teaching assistants are also included in all whiteboard professional learning.

The whiteboards are used as a resource to support teaching and learning in the school (rather than an end in themselves). In this respect, their use and associated professional learning link to the Quality Teaching framework (a NSW Dept of Education and Training initiative that has been adopted by the Catholic Education Office) and also to the new ACT curriculum framework which emphasises technology as a key focus for teaching and learning.

Important changes have been noticed in relation to the use of whiteboards:

1. A change in pedagogical practice. The whiteboard provides a resource that teachers can use in a range of ways, and more particularly in ways that extend and deepen student learning. Not only are students' technological skills extended, but the resource enables depth of study in relation to most curriculum areas.
2. A change to the professional conversation and dialogue among staff. A collaborative culture of exchange and joint professional learning has been established.
3. A change in relation to teachers' expectations. The change relates to expectations of themselves in relation to their own teaching, expectations of students in relation to their uses of technology and approaches to learning, and expectations of the leadership team in relation to support for professional learning.
4. Community involvement. Whiteboards have also provided a tool for engaging parents in school activities

The principal, Mr John Burke, has taken a key role in implementing whiteboards in the school, as well as for providing the conditions that support professional learning. There is also a strong culture of shared leadership within the school, with all teachers taking some responsibility for extending the quality of teaching and learning and supporting collaborative professional development. As noted above, one teacher in the school has a clear passion for the application of technology in the classroom and provides an inspirational model for others to follow.

What is of note in this case is that professional learning has been driven by a pedagogical reform through the school. Through their own learning and use of the interactive whiteboards, the teachers in this school are now considered leaders of professional learning in relation to this particular teaching technology.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr John Bourke, Principal, and Ms Elaine Hanbridge, classroom teacher)

6.6.4 Daramalan College

Daramalan College is a large Year 7-12 Catholic co-educational school in Canberra's inner north. Daramalan has a comprehensive approach to teacher professional learning and over the last five years there have been a number of initiatives that have worked to build the following: a strong staff culture and ethos aligned with the

school mission; support for staff in their day-to-day work in ways that connect to student learning; and sustained professional learning and exchange related to classroom pedagogy.

Professional learning programs have typically been initiated and supported by members of the school leadership team (especially the Principal, Director of Staff Welfare and Director Teaching and Learning), and the Professional Development Committee (a representative group of staff that meets on a weekly basis to provide PD direction within the school).

The professional learning culture within the school is underpinned by a range of components, structures and practices, including the following:

1. 5 day staff retreat and professional development conference. In 2002 Daramalan consolidated time allocated to professional learning into a five day intensive at the conclusion of semester 1 (instead of one day per term). The conference has provided time for focussed professional learning (typically structured around a one day retreat concerned with school ethos and spirituality; 3 days of professional learning with outside expert; one day for planning);
2. Staff attendance at range of outside professional development events and conferences;
3. Watching Others Work (WOW) program – teachers in pairs observe teaching practices and exchange ideas;
4. Fee support for post-graduate study;
5. Development and implementation of Academic Care charter and Quality Teaching Program;
6. Provision of *Teachers' Chronicle* (which contains various strategies, ideas, etc);
7. 'Strategies that Work' – located on school intranet site. Strategies are posted following PD days or workshops;
8. In-house exchange – teachers are invited to share ideas, resources and good ideas based on expressions of need and interest among staff;
9. Leadership training days; and
10. Professional Learning Leadership roles and professional development committee operation

Professional learning at Daramalan has focused on a variety of issues. The school-based professional development conferences over the last two years have focussed on ideas presented by outside experts, Dr Julia Atkin and Mr David Anderson. (Dr Atkin is well known for her work on learning styles and Mr Anderson for his work on cooperative learning and teaching strategies that promote inclusion.) Ideas presented both Dr Atkin and Mr Anderson have been a springboard for discussion, building deeper understanding of learning, and the trial and development of new teaching strategies. This coming year the school has decided to consolidate current learning and build on in-house expertise, rather drawing on an outside expert. That said, there will still be major professional learning activity in 2008 associated with the implementation of a new curriculum in the ACT and also the school's Academic Care Charter and Quality Teaching program.

All teachers participate in the professional development retreat and conference and then have opportunities to participate in more specialised programs based on their needs and interests. The school has a fairly stable and experienced staff, but there has been a number of beginning teachers appointed over the last couple of years. Professional learning activities are designed to take account of both those new in the school as well as those with considerable school experience. The school has designed specific activities and measures to enable new teachers to build their knowledge related to previous professional learning projects, as well as to draw on new teachers' knowledge by way of generating new ideas and practices among the staff.

All professional learning activities and programs are evaluated and feedback drawn on to ascertain links to classroom practice and inform planning for further professional learning. The use and application of ideas is ascertained through Departmental monitoring and discussion. Also some programs are trialled and evaluated prior to whole-school adoption (e.g., the Quality Teaching program was trialled in 2 areas prior to whole school application)

The professional learning work conducted in the school links to policy requirements related to school registration in the ACT and also the implementation of new ACT curriculum.

While there are no explicit links between professional learning and promotion, participation in the professional learning programs provides teachers with skills and knowledge useful for career development.

To sum up, these are the key principles associated with professional learning at Daramalan College:

1. All work in the school is underpinned by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart ethos. With respect to staff professional learning, this includes a valuing of the individual through respect, care and practical support.
2. Professional learning is responsive to local needs as well as new approaches and innovations
3. Professional learning has a practical focus in terms of applicability to all aspects of teaching and learning within the school.

(Based on notes from an interview Mr David Garrett, Principal of Daramalan College, and Ms Angela Dunn and Ms Karlana Clarke, classroom teachers)

6.6.5 Faculty of Education, University of Canberra

The Faculty of Education at the University of Canberra offers a number of programs of study that provide professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders. Most of these programs are for post-graduates and involve a formal qualification process. The Faculty offers a range of programs and post-graduate courses, including MEd, MEd (Leadership) and PhD. The Faculty also offers specialised Graduate Certificate programs through formal agreements with school systems. We interviewed Professor Denis Goodrum, Dean Faculty of Education at the University of Canberra, about some of these programs and about the beliefs underpinning the faculty's approach to the professional learning of teachers in schools.

Members of Faculty work with schools in a variety of roles based on their areas of expertise. Research conducted by members of staff also focus on, or contribute to, teacher professional learning, school pedagogy and curriculum. (Professor Goodrum's own work in science education provides an example here.)

A key role for the Faculty is developing professional learning programs that provide university qualifications. In this respect professional learning programs need to be reasonably large in scale so that they are cost effective and efficient (unless a research component is also attached).

The Faculty has offered two Graduate Certificate programs provide examples of such an approach: a Graduate Certificate in Physics Teaching (arrangement with NSW Dept of Education and Training); and a Graduate Certificate in Inclusive Education (arrangement with ACT Dept of Education and Training). These have been developed through specific agreements with school systems.

The two programs developed as part of school system needs, as well as the University of Canberra's interest in building credentialed programs. Programs are fully customised through negotiation with the relevant organisations. Their broad goal is to build professional expertise in specific areas, and in ways that provide participant teachers with a qualification. Courses are run in intensive ways with on-line components.

These programs are full-fee paying and teachers either self-fund or are supported by employers. The Physics program, for example, has been in operation for 7 years and has an average enrolment of 20 students per year.

Participation in either the Graduate Certificates courses, or the more general post-graduate qualifications offered by the University of Canberra, is typically linked to career progression – either moving into a specialised area or advancement to a leadership position.

Feedback on the specialised Graduate Certificate programs has been positive. They provide professional learning that is sustained over time; opportunity for reflection on practice; and formal qualifications enhance career opportunities.

This approach to professional learning reflects the belief that it should be:

- Practical;
- Based on exchange and sharing;
- Sustained;
- Linked to context;
- Linked to student achievement; and
- Undertaken within a professional learning community

(Based on notes from an interview with Professor Denis Goodrum, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Canberra)

6.7 QUEENSLAND

The newly appointed Queensland Minister for Education, Training and the Arts recently announced that all references to ‘professional learning’ in Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) documents were to be changed to ‘professional development.’ This decision *appeared* to be ‘against the tide’ since most other jurisdictions were moving away from traditional notions of ‘professional development’ toward more inquiry-based, collaborative and ongoing notions of ‘professional learning.’ However, it is not clear that all schools and teachers are swimming along in the same national ‘tide’ of professional learning programs and practices. And it remains the case that between and within jurisdictions in Australia, there continue to be tensions and inconsistencies with respect to professional learning policy and practice.

On the one hand, there would seem to be a desire to frame professional learning in terms of individual teachers’ PD activities and to focus on the individual’s achievements in a ‘performance and development culture.’ This might be seen in some of the language being used in Queensland, and the same might be said of the Victorian DE&T/DEECD *Blueprint* documents.. And yet the language of a ‘performance and development culture’ still leaves room (in Queensland, as in Victoria) for valuing and supporting the development of professional learning communities, and for fostering collaborative professional learning networks. In Queensland, where distance is such a factor in building and maintaining collaborative professional learning, there are numerous examples of partnerships between schools, and between schools and universities and industry partners, such as in *The Learning Place* project (see <http://education.qld.gov.au/learningplace/>). Clearly, the mandating of the term ‘professional development’ in Queensland does not simply determine or transform the professional learning cultures of that state. Nevertheless, there are ways in which such a change in language mediates professional learning practices in significant ways.

6.7.1 Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA)

The Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) *Strategic Plan 2007–2011* highlights the importance of building the capability of its workforce in order to achieve a ‘clever, skilled and creative Queensland’. As a result, DETA invests significantly each year in the professional development of its Education Queensland employees, including those teachers working with approximately 500, 000 students enrolled in over 1280 state schools.

Much of DETA’s policy with respect to professional development is explained by its *Developing Performance Framework* (see <http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/performance/>). This document, and the structures explained therein, provide Education Queensland employees with a process supported by tools and resources that assist them to develop their ‘performance.’ Through focused discussions with their line manager or supervisor, individual employees can identify the support or professional development they will access to build their capabilities, meet their work responsibilities, and fulfil their career aspirations. Such discussions use the standards or capabilities frameworks which have been developed for each employee group. These include the following:

Education Queensland’s *Professional Standards for Teachers* (<http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/standards/teachers/index.html>);
Leadership matters: Leadership capabilities for Education Queensland principals
(<http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/docs/leadershipmatterspdf.pdf>);
Professional Framework for Public Sector Employees (<http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/standards/framework.html>); and
Executive Capabilities Framework (<http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/standards/executives.html>).

Supporting teacher professionalism therefore involves developing not only content knowledge but professional capabilities such as pedagogy. Education Queensland's *Professional Standards for Teachers* articulate and support the complex and varied nature of teachers' work. They describe what teachers need to know and be able to do to provide relevant and worthwhile learning experiences for individuals and groups of students in Queensland state schools.

Education Queensland employees participate in PD which is delivered or managed by a variety of providers — DETA's central office business units, regional personnel, school-based staff, professional associations, universities and private providers. This PD is aligned to organisational objectives, role-related work responsibilities and/or personal career aspirations.

Key school PD priorities aimed at achieving organisational change are published annually in the Departmental publication, the *Professional Development Agenda*. In 2007–08, the implementation of the *Smart Classrooms Professional Development Framework* (a range of flexible PD pathways to use ICTs as a learning tool) is one of eight key school priorities. The *Professional Development Agenda* also outlines expectations of schools and the support provided to them by regional, district and central offices.

Responsibility for the management or delivery of centrally funded PD is shared across a number of business units, including its Curriculum, Student Services, and Indigenous and Strategic Implementation Divisions. Delivery of particular PD programs, monitoring and reporting on DETA PD participation and expenditure, publication of information on PD opportunities provided by DETA, professional associations and universities (through the *Professional Development Agenda*, bulletins and calendars) and publication of standards, capabilities and performance frameworks are handled by DETA's Professional Development Branch.

Within Professional Development Branch, the Professional Development and Leadership Institute (PDLI) is a dedicated team focusing on supporting and coordinating the PD needs of teachers and school leaders. Launched in June 2007, the PDLI provides a range of targeted induction and leadership development programs, and liaises with principals' networks and associations, professional associations, universities and other government organisations to enable teachers and school leaders in state schools to make informed choices when planning and accessing PD.

The notion of shared responsibility also applies to funding of PD in schools. Whilst various central office business units fund and manage PD in specific organisational areas, regions are resourced with staff who deliver major initiatives (such as Regional Literacy Managers) and Professional Development Coordinators (PDCs) who coordinate, promote and report on regional PD initiatives. These regional staff work closely with the key central office business units to ensure well-planned and responsive implementation of PD initiatives.

In addition, schools invest a significant proportion of their annual budget on the PD of their staff. While schools were required in recent years to allocate at least 10 per cent of their budget to PD, they have reported a higher proportion being allocated for this purpose. Such expenditure is notwithstanding localised non-event based PD which incurs minimal costs. Clusters of schools with similar needs and interests may also decide to pool their resources in funding locally-determined PD activities. Individual staff with specific PD needs can also negotiate access to school resources to support their planned PD pathway.

In planning their PD, teachers are cognisant of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements of the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT), the body responsible for teacher registration in Queensland. The CPD framework (currently under development) will specify minimum PD requirements for maintaining teacher registration in Queensland.

A range of awards, scholarships and incentives promote the PD of Education Queensland employees. These programs enable staff to undertake PD to extend an area of expertise, to initiate an interest group, and to ultimately re-invest new knowledge and skills in the organisation.

The *Professional Development Pathways* initiative is one such incentive program. Recognising staff participation in significant PD priorities, *Professional Development Pathways* was established through collaboration between DETA and nine Queensland higher education institutions. This collaboration grew from recognition that DETA would benefit from enabling its teaching workforce to access postgraduate qualifications and enrolments in postgraduate education programs could be boosted through the provision of incentives. The initiative provides teachers who have engaged in identified PD priorities with credit towards postgraduate study.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Penny Bedson, Director, Professional Development Branch, Ms Kristine Holm, Coordinator, Professional Development and Leadership Institute, and Mr Gary Francis, Manager, Strategic Partnerships, Professional Development and Leadership Institute, and Project Manager, Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme)

6.7.2 Queensland College of Teachers (QCT)

With its origins in the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration (BTR), the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) commenced operations on 1 January 2006, having been established by an Act of the Queensland Parliament as an independent government body with State authority to approve pre-service teacher education programs and register school teachers. The latter includes requiring teachers to engage in professional development/learning as a condition of their registration (e.g., moving from provisional to full registration, 5 year demonstrations of continual professional development [or CPD]), relevant to a set of QCT-developed *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers (PSQT)* that are regarded by the College as a resource to guide teachers' reflective practice and in planning teachers' professional development as well as benchmark standards for the full registration of teachers). The QCT itself does not offer teacher professional development as such but is very interested and active in promoting teachers' engagement in PD that enables them to comply with PSQT and hence meet its registration requirements. (See <http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/standards/teachers/index.html>)

For example, the QCT is currently promoting requirements for structured professional development for the induction and ongoing support of beginning teachers during their period of provisional registration (the first area that the QCT has targeted to embed its standards in registration processes) with school systems and principals of schools. This promotion includes interactions with systems and principals clarifying for them what the registration process in Queensland involves and how this is related to the QCT standards, and modelling how to use the PSQT as a resource for reflective practice for individual and teams of teachers and for planning professional development. One form of interaction involves seeking out opportunities to provide briefings at principals' meetings. (In the Queensland system, progressing from provisional to full registration is based on the recommendation of a teacher's principal, justified on the basis of meeting the QCT

standards.) These sessions are also delivered by the QCT in ways that model what it recommends with respect to how induction programs could be run with provisionally registered teachers.

The QCT is currently conducting a State-wide program of workshops for provisionally registered teachers, inviting them to also bring a support person from their school (which could be the Principal, Deputy Principal or a fully registered peer), as a forum for informing them of the PSQT and registration requirements. These workshops are supported by a range of information and supplementary optional tools for recording on the QCT's website. Further, to complement the support provided by the Queensland Department of Education Training and the Arts (DETA) (through a trained cohort of principals and deputy principals) to help its teachers gain an understanding of DETA's own set of teacher professional standards, the QCT is currently offering this same level of support regarding its standards to the Queensland Catholic education systems and ultimately to the independent sector. The aim is to support teachers and Principals to be able to integrate QCT requirements with the existing processes and requirements for their school or system and to encourage viewing the PSQT as a lens for understanding all teachers' work rather than regarding them as an add-on.

The QCT is also exploring ways in which teachers are able to identify what professional development opportunities are available to them, as a way of assisting teachers to meet CPD requirements. A number of models have been explored but no definitive approach has been adopted as yet, in part because of the QCT's desire to avoid replication of work undertaken by the various school systems (including DETA's recently established Professional Development and Leadership Institute). One way forward may be for the QCT to provide links on its web page to relevant pages on employer web pages. It has also considered whether it could recognise the alignment of PD programs from the range of providers with the QCT standards. This is distinct from certifying the *delivery* of PD over which the QCT has no control. No definitive decision has been taken on these matters as yet, although in the future the QCT will be involved in approving and possibly delivering part of a 'returning to teaching in schools' program as part of the renewal process (guided by the principles of 'recency' and CPD) to be implemented from 2010. In its policy development, in regard to CPD, the QCT will also consider how to address the implications of CPL requirements for teachers who move between employer systems and for casual teachers

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Ros Bell, Assistant Director, Professional Standards)

6.7.3 Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ)

Independent Schools Queensland is the peak association for the independent school sector in Queensland. Its membership comprises 186 schools, representing 102,000 students and 6,000 teachers. This includes sub-systems of independent schools such as the Lutheran, Seventh Day Adventist, and Anglican systems, which are systems by government definition, as well as other school groupings such as the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools' Association, the Christian Schools Association, and the Grammar Schools. Even though the heads of these systems and groups meet regularly with the ISQ Executive Director as an affiliated reference group, membership of ISQ is at the level of schools rather than sub-systems or groupings. (There is only one independent school in the State that is not a member of ISQ.) ISQ's Executive Director also meets regularly (every two weeks) with the CEOs of the Catholic and State school systems in Queensland to discuss potential collaborations and issues of mutual interest and concern.

The ISQ secretariat is comprised of approximately 30 staff and most (apart from its secretaries) are former teachers and principals. It is also noteworthy that the ISQ does not have an industrial brief. Hence, much of its activities are focused on providing professional development to the independent sector of schools in

Queensland. ISQ has a team of experienced employees to develop, manage and deliver PD programs for ISQ teachers. Most have worked in this role at ISQ for some time.

Funding for PD provided by ISQ predominantly comes from the programs administered by ISQ on behalf of the Federal and State Governments. Some non-government funded PD (such as ISQ's annual curriculum forum, and one-off forums in IT, international education, and so on) is also offered from time to time on a fee for service basis; its focus determined by the currency of issues in education at the time and within the sector. Schools also run their own PD sessions. With regard to the main PD offered by ISQ, the level of funding and associated government requirements and guidelines largely define its parameters. Hence, the main focus of ISQ PD is in areas of particular interest to government: literacy, numeracy, ESL, special needs, etc.

Programs are designed to be as sustainable and school-based as possible. The main model of delivery involves workshops for select teachers within schools and follow-up sessions that engage participants in reflecting on the impact of the PD in their schools. One-off sessions are linked to specific program needs for a particular year. PD sessions are held in ISQ's central office and in schools. Schools in geographical regions with similar PD interests and needs are encouraged to meet collectively at one site, to maximise the input from and resources of central office. Some PD for teachers also occurs across sectors, particularly in conjunction with various Catholic dioceses in Queensland, given their smaller system sizes and similar ways of working. ISQ PD consultants also have partnerships with their counterparts in the Catholic sector. For example, an ISQ literacy consultant and a CEO numeracy consultant might run joint PD sessions for teachers from both sectors in a particular region. Collaborations with the Catholic sector tend to be in relation to delivering PD 'on the ground' and with the State system on 'big picture' issues (e.g., input into State initiatives such as the QCAR [Queensland Curriculum Assessment Reporting] framework).

The ISQ has developed a set of understandings about professional learning that informs their development of PD sessions, as follows:

'Professional learning communities are characterized by active trusting relationships (school, sector and ISQ). A professional learning community in the ISQ:

1. Fosters ongoing collaboration, and collective and individual responsibility for development of effective teaching practices and improved student achievement;
2. Values diversity of teachers, leaders and schools and maintains a focus on renewal and continuous learning of all members of the community;
3. Respects and allows for the fact that teachers and school leaders are adult learners who learn in different ways, come from different backgrounds, work in a variety of contexts and cater for diverse of student needs;
4. Encourages dialogue, dissent and debate – challenging tradition and the unwritten ground rules, the way things are done around here; and
5. Provides opportunities for effective processes of reflection, review and accountability

Professional Learning is driven by policy and programs in The ISQ according to the following principles. Professional learning is:

- On going, sustained and supported by school leaders;
- Aligned with the vision and integrated into the culture, and wider change and renewal processes (schools, sector, ISQ);
- Focused on student learning outcomes;
- Focused on, and grounded in, teachers' everyday practice with students (including collaborative analysis of student work);

- Informed by current research;
- Focused on active learning and the integration of theory, research and practice (*how* as well as *what*);
- Collaborative and collegial with effective processes of critical reflective inquiry, feedback and follow up action;
- Evidence based and data driven; and
- Both an individual and a collective responsibility’.

Schools can also apply for funds under the AGQTP and other programs to engage in projects (including professional development) of their own design. Applications are considered on the merits of the project proposed, prior opportunity, and balanced distribution of project funds across the sector. Successful schools identify from their staff a School Leader and a School Facilitator who attend preliminary 2-3 day long project sessions organised by ISQ on general issues such as what constitutes good PD, change management and leadership, and sometimes specific discussion of program content (e.g., pedagogy). At the end of these sessions, the expectation is that participants will have developed an action plan for the project. Schools are each required to produce a report at the end of the project, which are presented at follow-up ISQ sessions and are posted on the web for other schools to access. ISQ staff also visit participating schools during the life of the project to offer support where needed.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr John Roulston, Director, and Ms Ann Kemp, Director Education Services)

6.7.4 Brisbane Archdiocese Catholic Education, Queensland

The Catholic Education Office (CEO) in Brisbane oversees the provision of catholic schooling in the Brisbane Archdiocese (covering the south-east corner of Queensland); one of 5 independent Catholic dioceses in Queensland. Each diocese independently operates its own system of education. With its counterparts, the Brisbane CEO is a member of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC), a lobby group for Queensland Catholic Education generally, which also performs some administrative functions for all Catholic education provinces in the State, such as the administration of government funding grants related to the professional development of teachers (e.g., AGQTP funding). (The comparable national body is the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) of which the QCEC is a member.) Centrally acquired and held AGQTP funds are used for specific PD programs (e.g., digital literacy), facilitated by State program managers. Teachers and schools benefit from this funding through the PD programs they attend rather than from the distribution of funds to schools. However, schools can generate their own AGQTP applications for PD funding, which are coordinated and forwarded by QCEC.

The Brisbane Catholic education system is the largest non-government employer in Queensland with a staff of over 8000 people (approximately 220 are in the CEO). One of the CEO’s functions is to facilitate access to and delivery of PD for its entire staff, including teachers in its 130 diocese schools (approximately 90 primary, 30 secondary and 10 P-12 schools). (There are approximately 20 other Catholic schools in the diocese that are owned and operated by Catholic religious orders, which do not come under CEO jurisdiction.)

The CEO is involved in teachers’ PD in two ways. First, it provides teacher PD directed at achieving systemic priorities (see CEO’s *Strategic Renewal Framework 2007-2011*, which can be found at, <http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/asp/index.asp?pgid=10735>) with which all schools and teachers are expected to engage. The CEO provides personnel who design and deliver PD directed at this engagement and also resources to enable schools to participate. Some CEO PD programs are compulsory for some teachers (e.g., newly appointed teachers, etc). Secondly, the CEO provides each school with an annual budget allocation for teachers’ PD – an

amount predicated on their student enrolment numbers and related staff numbers – which is expected to be expended in ways that contribute to advancing a school’s five-year strategic renewal plan and one-year implementation plan (contextualised and area-approved expressions of CEO priorities). Cognisant of these plans, the CEO identifies the common teacher PD needs indicated in these school-generated documents and then collates these PD needs by school (geographical) areas (e.g., Gold Coast) and (structural) types (e.g., primary, secondary, P-12) aggregated up for the entire system. Informed by this, the CEO arranges not-currently-offered teacher PD sessions for common needs across the system (e.g., a digital literacy program supported by AGQTP funds) and provides collated information on area-specific needs to area supervisors who help groups of schools with similar needs to identify existing and relevant teacher PD activities or to create their own (sometimes by generating AGQTP applications). The CEO facilitates this identification process by providing a full listing of CEO teacher PD activities on its website. Individuals and schools can also utilise system resources to access PD activities offered by outside providers.

The CEO’s approach to the delivery of teacher PD ranges from offering one-off events or intensive sessions (with a duration of 2 hours to 1 day) focused on a particular topic (e.g., workplace health and safety), to programs of several days duration, each day spaced 6-10 weeks apart over the course of a year, which can include pre-reading and post-session in-school action learning reported on at following sessions. These series of sessions can also involve a ‘ripple’ or ‘train-the-trainer’ approach (as used in PD on digital literacy, QCT’s professional standards for teaching, etc), employed for its economic efficiencies. There are also network meetings of teachers with similar interests (e.g., inclusive education).

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Ken Avenell, Professional Learning Coordination & Leadership Development, School Renewal and Quality Assurance)

6.7.5 Toowoomba State High School (Years 8-12)

Located in south-east Queensland, 132 kilometres west of Brisbane, Toowoomba is a large rural city of around 100,000 people; one of the largest provincial cities in Australia. It has three state high schools (including one with two campuses), with each school site located in one of the city’s four quadrants. We interviewed Mr Chris Zilm, Principal, and Mr Dean Russell, Deputy Principal and Manager of cross sector cluster in SCIPP (Science Centres of Innovation and Professional Practice – see <http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/area/science/scipp.html>) Mr Zilm and Mr Russell spoke about the school’s concern to secure its share of the full range of students in the area. In order to do this, the school has established strong working relations with its feeder state primary schools. For example, it conducts gifted and talented master classes for Year 5-7 students from these schools, bringing them on to its secondary school campuses to familiarise them with the environment, its teachers and programs, with the intention to help them to feel comfortable with the prospect of undertaking their secondary schooling at Toowoomba.

The school has a total of 120 teachers and 1,844 students, located on two campuses (Wilsonton and Mount Lofty) 5 kilometres apart. The smaller Wilsonton campus has 32 teachers and 447 students from Years 8-10; the Mount Lofty campus has 88 teachers and 1,397 students from Years 8-12. Since 2003, the School’s student population has increased by 36 per cent, with most significant growth on the Mount Lofty campus. In part, this is a consequence of new State legislation that has raised the school leaving age and of increased DETA emphasis and programs aimed at securing students’ greater and longer participation in schooling. In addition, the School has expended considerable effort on transition programs, to encourage Wilsonton students to continue on with their schooling at Mount Lofty after Year 10. This has contributed to a changed student demographic at Mount Lofty, with the retention of students from low socio-economic backgrounds who previously would have left school.

Mr Zilm and Mr Russell commented that the school has little difficulty in attracting high quality teachers, given its reputation in the state system as a desirable place to work and particularly because of its efforts (in conjunction with the District Office) to secure capable beginning teachers, usually identified during their pre-service placement at the School by the local university (the University of Southern Queensland). Staff departures are minimal although the School's growth has meant that there has been an influx of new teachers bringing new ideas into the School. However, the School is now at capacity in terms of student and staff numbers, so that staff renewal will rely more heavily on the School's approach to teacher professional development.

One of the School's key priorities in its current 100 day plan is to provide more opportunities for professional conversations between teachers, to share their curriculum knowledge and programs. This is part of the School's movement away from an expert-delivery model and towards providing opportunities for teachers to share their own experiences, moderated by a valid external viewpoint or critical friend. Embedded in the culture of the School is a commitment to continual learning, reflection and review of teaching practices. This means that organised PD sessions become the vehicle for this to occur rather than driving the professional development. Hence, expert-led PD sessions (whether organised by DETA or others) usually prompt staff to reflect on how such input might be used to shape the agenda in ways that suit the School's purposes and circumstances.

For example, the most significant professional development activity in which USQ's Faculty of Education has involved schools has been the *IDEAS Project* run by its Leadership Research Institute and funded by DETA. The Project is directed at developing teacher leaders particularly in strategic planning, including the visioning and actioning phrases of that process. The School became involved in the Project in 2004 and is now halfway through the second cycle. While complying with Departmental requirements, the School has modified the process to suit its own purposes. That is, the School decided to use the process to allow staff at each of its campuses to develop their own identities, with the unexpected outcome that they developed very similar visions. The School intends to engage in the IDEAS Project again in 2009, with the intention of developing one school vision.

A recent coalition has been established between the city's principals, USQ's Faculty of Education and TAFE, which has initiated a project to develop professional connections between the city's educators, creating opportunities and networks for teachers in the broader area to have professional conversations with other teachers and academics at USQ about curriculum and assessment standards; the first meeting is scheduled for July 2008. Staff who undertake formal study at USQ do so at their own discretion, although the School is supportive of Staff who seek to further their learning in this way. Indeed, the School has approached USQ about securing some HECS scholarships for its staff to facilitate this. (One of the School's Deputy Principal's, Dean Russell, is currently enrolled in an EdD at UQ, researching principals' professional development.)

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Chris Zilm, Principal, and Mr Dean Russell, Deputy Principal and Manager of cross-sector cluster for SCIPP)

6.7.6 Jindalee State School

Jindalee Primary School is located 14 kilometres north of Springfield and 12 kilometres south-west of Brisbane CBD in the 'Centenary' suburbs, so named because their planning began in Queensland's centenary year, 1959. The area is bordered by the Brisbane River to the west and north, Centenary Highway to the east, and the Ipswich Motorway to the south. The School is a member of an alliance (chaired by the Jindalee Principal) of 5 government schools (1 secondary school, Centenary SHS, and its 4 feeder primary schools: Jindalee, Middle Park, Jamboree Heights and Darra) in the Centenary suburbs. According to Mr Polities, teaching positions in these schools are highly sought after, contributing to considerable staffing stability.

The Alliance (CLASS: Centenary Learning Alliance of State Schools) was formed to create a competitive advantage in the local education market, by maximising their collective resources to deliver better student outcomes, which then could be used in marketing the schools in their catchment area. Their competition includes a Catholic school in Darra and a Lutheran school in Jamboree Heights. An education consultant was engaged in 2007-2008 to 'coach' the Alliance in these activities. The Alliance is also a response to the most recent (2005) DETA restructure of school regions and districts, and the perceived negative consequences for the Centenary schools, which have not eventuated. Its most significant activities to date have been in relation to the professional development of its teachers.

The initial professional development activity undertaken by the Alliance involved a day (in January 2006) of activities with 300 teachers from the 5 schools, focused on the middle years as a point of connection between primary and secondary interests. An education academic (Mike Nagel, University of the Sunshine Coast) was engaged to run PD in adolescent development (an introductory lecture followed by supporting workshops). The day proved successful in exposing teachers to information relevant to all year levels and in helping staff to see the Alliance at work in the creation of links between schools and teachers that were previously absent. It provided a forum for teachers to learn from others and with others from other schools and also provided a social context for the Alliance.

A series of follow-up professional development activities, focused on literacy (given its government priority and the availability of AGQTP funding), were undertaken in 2006 and 2007. Each school nominated two teachers with considerable expertise in literacy teaching and whose students were achieving well in the standardised literacy tests. Schools were also asked to nominate a further two teachers who were good practitioners but could benefit from exposure to additional learning about the teaching of literacy. This second group of teachers (in two halves) were then timetabled across schools (other than their own) to observe and then discuss demonstration lessons conducted by individual teachers in the first group. (Some principals also took part in these observations and debriefings.) Data derived from the exercise (lesson descriptions, observations, discussions, strategies, etc., in the teaching of literacy) were written up and published in a book and on a CD and made available to all schools and teachers in the Alliance.

The program inspired other 'exchanges' between teachers in various subject areas, and has prompted an extension in 2008. The new project will enable teachers to work for a week in partnership with another teacher at another Alliance school, in a mentoring / coaching relationship. The intention is that teachers will be able to learn about good teaching practice first hand from other teachers and then bring those practices and understandings back to their own schools. Participation in this new program is voluntary and subject to resources in the school to fund these placements and the logistics of their timetabling.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Michael Politics, Principal, and Chair of CLASS: Centenary Learning Alliance of State Schools)

6.7.7 Brisbane Boys' College

Brisbane Boys' College (established in 1902) is a school of the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools' Association, and one of 9 GPS (Great Public Schools Association of Queensland) independent day and boarding schools for boys located in south-east Queensland. The College is also a member of ISQ. In 2007 the School opened its Early Learning Centre, for the first time catering for boys from Prep to Year 3, so that the School now offers classes from P-12. The total student population is currently 1,550 (including 140 boarders) and 120 teachers. Ms Sandra Lummis, Head of Curriculum Enrichment, and Ms Jan Heffernan, Curriculum Co-ordinator and Support Teacher, whom we interviewed, told us that staff turnover is minimal, although the introduction of the Early Learning Centre has introduced new staff into the College who are bringing different ideas about teaching into the mix.

Teachers at the College have opportunity to attend subject-specific PD, particularly senior school teachers who are involved in the moderation of Years 11 and 12 student results across schools, as well as PD sessions provided by ISQ. However, the major involvement of teachers in PD is in the context of College initiated projects.

The design of professional development for teachers at the College is predicated on their active engagement in their own PD and on the need for PD sessions to be linked to the context in which BBC teachers work. That is, while teachers are given choices and options with regard to the level and degree of their participation, PD is linked to College directions as articulated in its strategic plan, with the intention to show immediate relevance of particular PD to participants. A PD team (including a Deputy Principal and two senior teachers) determines specific PD sessions for College staff. The main principle that informs their decisions is that PD should have long term influence / relevance. In the majority of cases this has involved an action learning approach directly related to teachers' particular circumstances and in relation to the strategic plan. Focus groups have also been used – involving groups of teachers exploring a common issue or question, or trialling a strategy – as a way of encouraging professional conversations around teachers' learning. Hence, groups trialling a new strategy would receive feedback from each other, modify their plans and then engage in further trials in a continual process, with a sharing of final outcomes / achievements with the whole staff at the end.

One specific and recent PD project we discussed in our interview focused on the College's teaching and learning framework. This project is informed by conceptual models developed by North American psychology academics, specifically 'Dimensions of Learning' and 'Habits of Mind'. (Early in their tenure, all teachers new to the College 'receive' compulsory PD in relation to the College's teaching and learning framework.) An opportunity (and resources) arose for teachers experienced in the framework to explore this approach to teaching and learning in greater depth. Staff interested in being involved were invited to self-nominate. Those selected represented a distribution of teachers across departments and year levels. Fully funded by the College, the resulting focus group of 8 staff travelled to Melbourne to attend a conference (including workshops) on teaching and learning (informed by 'Dimensions of Learning' and 'Habits of Mind' approaches) organised by Hawker Brownlow Education (HBE). (Focus group attendance at future HBE conferences is also planned: e.g., the Kagan workshops on collaborative learning are scheduled for May 2008; sessions by Eric Jensen on brain research are also being planned.)

The BBC focus group stayed an additional day in Melbourne after the conference to share with each other their initial thoughts about what they had learned from the different workshops they attended and to discuss the relevance of the ideas for their teaching and students' learning, enabling cross-fertilisation of departments and year levels. On their return to BBC, the teachers shared their experiences and insights at a whole staff breakfast. Opportunity was provided at this forum for other interested staff to join the project. As a result, 6 new focus groups were established and became involved in action learning in their classrooms, informed by ideas encountered at the HBE conference.

For example, the co-ordinator of middle school English (who attended the HBE conference) became interested in the idea of 'impulsivity' (a habit of mind) as a way of exploring and explaining middle school student behaviour and the challenges for classrooms. The focus was on developing teaching strategies to address this impulsive 'habit of mind'. The group that formed around this focus included other English teachers and a teacher librarian working in the middle school. Drawing on information from the conference and other sources, they engaged in action learning to trial a number of strategies in their classrooms. Different teachers chose to trial different strategies, then shared and discussed their experiences of using these strategies, which informed further trials. Evidence of the success of these trials was

seen in student performance data, in particular, teacher observations of students' increased on-task behaviour and reduced 'impulsivity'. At the conclusion of the project, the group's findings were presented to a whole staff gathering, summarised in an in-College publication for access by all teachers, and presented by the teachers involved at teacher conferences.

In attempting to measure the success (or otherwise) of its approach to teacher PD, the College employs a number of approaches. For example, it encourages individual teachers involved in action learning in their classroom to use reflective journals to document their learning and checklists to aid their observations in their classrooms. Heads of Department / Schools also engage individual teachers in conversations about changes to their practice. Pre and post questionnaires are used by the College to gauge teachers' perceived value of a PD project. And students' achievement results and perception are monitored before and after a PD intervention.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Sandra Lummis, Head of Curriculum Enrichment, and Ms Jan Heffernan, Curriculum Co-ordinator and Support Teacher)

6.7.8 *St Augustine's College (P-12) Springfield*

St Augustine's College is a P-12 school in its sixth year of operation. Its students are drawn from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, representative of the wealth and disadvantage of surrounding areas. Currently there are 85 teaching staff and 1,120 students enrolled from Prep (Preparatory year, the year before Year 1) through to Year 12, having started in its first year catering for 170 students in Prep to Year 5 and Year 8. 2007 was the College's first year as a P-12 school and the first year catering for Year 12. The school is committed to a developmental learning approach and organises students from Prep to Year 9 into multi-age learning groups. The narrative of a new school remains strong in the ethos of the College. Indeed, there is a view that staff are attracted to the school because of its newness and the opportunities this provides them to construct a new approach to schooling, 'from scratch', uninhibited by the shortcomings of times past.

The College's Curriculum Development Committee, which includes teachers (1 early, 1 junior, 2 middle, and 3 senior years Teaching & Learning Coordinators) and parent representatives from across the school, has provided the impetus for much of the professional development of teachers. The Assistant Principal (Curriculum) chairs this committee, which sets priorities and develops strategic plans (utilising its sub-committees, chaired by T&L Coordinators) for the school's curriculum development and related teachers' professional development. For example, while whole-College issues are typically addressed at the level of the entire Committee, in 2007 the literacy sub-committee undertook work around a core resources model. The Committee and its sub-committees also provide forums for development and recognition of the integrated nature of the school's P-12 characteristics. This has been evident in a number of PD opportunities conducted for staff by staff that may involve a sub-committee of early years and senior years teachers planning together to present PD for all teachers, which has also had a positive impact on how it is received across the range of staff.

In 2005 and 2006, the College adopted an 'action learning' approach to professional development. This was initiated by identifying and negotiating staff priorities for PD, which then informed the construction of a list of potential PD offerings. Staff were then required to sign up to one of these offerings (10-15 staff per group), which involved 4 PD sessions (1 per term) each year. The first session invited staff to set the agenda for the remaining sessions and the in-between actions. These included such things as teachers visiting their 'teaching partner' in classrooms to observe particular teaching strategies or approaches and/or to provide feedback. Some of the PD offerings (e.g. behaviour management) were run by members of staff with expertise in the area; others (e.g. information literacy) were run by outside experts (such as Catholic Education Office consultants) brought in for this purpose. The sessions were incorporated into the School's regular staff meeting schedule of four meetings per month (i.e. every Tuesday). As a matter of course, in each month one meeting is designated as a whole staff meeting, a further two as

learning team meetings (for early, junior, middle, senior years precincts), and a fourth as a professional development meeting. That is, there is an expectation that all staff are engaged in professional development.

In mid 2006, the Curriculum Development Committee identified a need to revisit the School's initial education brief as a P-12 'seamless' environment, particularly given the addition of new staff to the School in more recent years. As a way of addressing this, the School has engaged over a 3 year period an independent education consultant (Ms Felicity Beezer; previously employed by DETA) to help it create a 'thinking and learning culture' within the School, which now permeates the language of and rationale for school activities. It also serves as the distinctive message the School seeks to convey to its community about itself and a way of contrasting itself to other schools in the area. To facilitate this work, a focus group of teacher representatives from each of the (early, junior, middle, senior) precincts has been established to work directly with the consultant and who in turn will become mentors and role models for other teachers in their precincts.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Marica Dann, Assistant Principal, Curriculum, and Ms Marlene Blundell, Middle Years – Years 6-9 – Teaching & Learning Coordinator)

6.7.9 Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

Like similar institutions, the Faculty of Education at QUT is involved in the professional development of teachers through its undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs. In addition, it is a partner in the Queensland Education Recognition of Professional Learning Committee, along with the Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) and 8 other universities in the State (including the University of Southern Queensland). This has involved Faculty staff (in collaboration with academics at other universities) in constructing common (i.e. not specific to one university) assessment tasks to complement particular DETA delivered PD programs (e.g. in literacy, standards, early childhood, etc.), and making these available to teachers who undertake these programs and seek credit towards a postgraduate qualification. Successful completion of one assessment task counts towards one eighth of a Masters degree at any of the participating universities, such as the Master of Learning Innovation at QUT. (From 2009, this will be called a Master of Education.)

Further to this, and in response to a DETA tender, a consortium of universities in Queensland (including QUT, University of Queensland and James Cook University) has come together to propose a Masters in Public Education for DETA teachers to complete. This tender has been successful, and will involve a Public Education strand within the MEd offered by each of the three universities. This strand will be in response to Education Queensland policy and program initiatives.,

Other involvement by the Faculty and its staff in the professional development of teachers tends to be more ad hoc. This includes individual lecturers running sessions at particular schools and school clusters as well as at various teacher professional associations, according to academics' particular expertise and the needs of the groups concerned. These sessions tend to be one-off events, even when they are repeated from year to year. They are also ad hoc in that invitations to be involved in this way tend to be related to networks of acquaintances rather than a strict adherence to expertise.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Peter O'Brien, Coordinator of pre-service teacher education courses)

6.7.10 Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland (USQ), Toowoomba

Professor Temmerman has been Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland for just over one year. USQ Faculty of Education courses provide for undergraduate and graduate, Masters degrees (including some that articulate directly from graduate study programs) and PhDs. Student numbers

are approximately 1,500 on-campus and 3,000 off-campus students. They enrol from locations as diverse as Far North Queensland and the Middle East. In our conversation, Professor Temmerman described the fundamental purpose of the professional learning offered and supported through USQ as ‘enhancing understanding of what we all do and building and broadening professional knowledge to prepare for tomorrow’s world.’ This is best achieved, she emphasised, by recognising the different contexts and backgrounds that the students bring to their study and professional learning with the faculty.

A strong characteristic of the professional learning programs offered at, or in association with, USQ is purposeful seeking and developing of links with schools. This means valuing formalised and ongoing partnerships with the profession – i.e., with schools, professional associations. Consistent with Queensland Government policy, there is a strong and continuing focus on building professional links with/in educational communities. Examples of this include the ‘The Downs - Toowoomba Learning Community’ – see <http://www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=25802> – an initiative supported and managed through Education Queensland’s ‘The Learning Place’ program. Another initiative is the Toowoomba Education Coalition (TEC) that links together Independent, Catholic and State High Schools with Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, the University of Southern Queensland and Commerce Queensland in the region to progress pathways from school to training or tertiary study and to the workplace in the region – see <http://www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=25503>. Academics from within the Faculty of Education act in mentoring or critical friend roles in projects run by schools. In addition, programs are likely to be staffed by members of the Australian College of Educators, teachers and principals from all sectors (including TAFE), people with industry expertise and retired principals.

All members of USQ Faculty of Education are now required to seek out and develop strong links with at least one school. It is now considered a fundamental part of the role of a teacher educator at USQ. This minimum requirement (links with one school) has been embedded within the workloads of all teacher educators. The Faculty, as an institution, has made a commitment to recognize and validate this aspect of teacher educators’ work, and Professor Temmerman believes the individuals working within the faculty have embraced this enthusiastically, with a majority of faculty members now maintaining strong and ongoing links with more than one school. The main purpose of these links is to build and maintain strong interconnections between schools and universities, so that the knowledge being developed in each place, can be shared and brought together to generate richer knowledge and understanding and ‘good quality professional practice’ for schools and universities alike.

Programs such as ‘Transition to teaching seminars’ and ‘Strengthening the links’ are offered by USQ (in association with partners) for pre-service, early-career and experienced teachers across all sectors (who nominate areas in which they are concerned about and/or would like to develop their knowledge and skills, and then undertake professional development seminars in these areas). It is possible for participants to gain credits through these professional development sessions for postgraduate study such as in a Master’s degree. Partly as a result of the links developed through specific professional development sessions and seminars, and partly through practicum components of pre-service education programs, a number of action research projects are underway in schools, involving practising teachers, pre-service teachers and teacher educators. In these projects classroom practitioners are usually generating classroom case studies, which are used to focus their reflection, their professional learning and their efforts to improve their practice and/or develop curriculum. Pre-service teachers learn much about pedagogy, curriculum development, collaborative practice more generally, and various aspects of discipline knowledge, through their participation. They also receive an entrée (i.e., mentoring) into the nature of research in a teacher’s work and the roles played by academic critical friends in this collegial process. Teacher educators have the opportunity to develop firmly grounded appreciation of the situated nature of teaching knowledge, of notions of quality in pedagogy, curriculum development and

professional learning in particular settings. These sorts of programs have captured the attention of school leaders in various ways: at the Fraser Coast campus, school principals have come together to generate workshops specifically for their own concerns and interests.

One feature of working in the Faculty of Education in a regional area such as Toowoomba, as noted by Professor Temmerman, is the sense that schools, teachers in schools and even adult workplaces see universities as a rich source of knowledge and expertise.

The Faculty of Education in USQ works strategically with a body known as EIDOS in generating research networks, collaborations and funding opportunities. The website for EIDOS describes itself as:

an independent research institute and think tank. Its objective is to generate new ideas and dialogue on good education, labour market and social public policy. We believe that engaged research collaboration and policy innovation contributes to a good society. Eidos is Greek for ideas. Our aim is to inspire, facilitate and support our members and partners to be more collaborative, effective and legitimate. Eidos members include universities and policy leaders. We draw the intellectual strength of our research community into an active dialogue with policy makers and practitioners. Within the Eidos membership there are more than 50 leading research and policy institutes and centres, and over 300 active senior and early career researchers. (see <http://www.eidos.org.au/about/>)

Professor Temmerman describes EIDOS as a ‘research brokerage group’, and explained that seven of the eight universities in Queensland have membership with this organisation. EIDOS is seen as a non-partisan space where universities are able to liaise with politicians, political groups and policy-makers. Professor Temmerman feels that working in education faculties in Queensland, there is a strong sense of ‘collective generation of policy’ in the state, involving inclusive (if not necessarily formalized) partnerships between organizations, educational ‘sectors’, political groups and schools.

<http://www.eidos.org.au/about/>

(Based on notes from an interview with Professor Nita Temmerman, Dean, Faculty of Education; Pro Vice- Chancellor Academic Quality)

6.8 NORTHERN TERRITORY

PLEASE NOTE: The Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training (NTDEET) was unable to participate in this project.

6.8.1 *Catholic Education Office*

Each school in the Catholic Education system is responsible for its professional learning programs, and this is usually connected to their strategic plan. This results in schools being involved in a range of different activities that are important for each school. The Catholic Education Office thinks it is important to give autonomy to schools, whilst at the same time promoting the need for professional learning to be planned and not ad hoc. Professional learning needs to have direct relationships with student learning, and it should be sustainable in that it serves the needs of individual teachers who then serve the needs of the school and the children in their care.

The Catholic Education Office offers some professional learning as part of a service they provide for schools. There is currently some professional learning going on at the present time in the area of school improvement and renewal. This has been happening for six months and will go on for about the next 12 months. Schools are involved in a range of different programs including Accelerated Literacy, First Steps, and Stepping Out, Count Me in Too, Middle Years Maths.

As part of the Catholic System teachers are required to do a certain amount of professional learning each year. This is linked strongly to promotional opportunities

Across the system there is a program which focuses on Education Leadership. This is being run through the Australian Catholic University, and leads to a Masters in Educational Leadership. There are also a number of Graduate Certificates. There may also negotiating partnership arrangements with Charles Darwin University in relation to some masters units.

The Catholic Education Office also has access to professional learning provided by DEET, although they do not always get priority. DEET generally invites the CEO to be involved in a number of initiatives. The relationship between the various sectors is quite good. The CEO has been invited to be part of the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework renewal.

The Catholic Education office has a teaching and learning team. The team has its own strategic plan which has a number of different foci. Different members of the team are responsible for different areas. One team member, for example, focuses on early years, primary years and ICT. They also have a couple of advisors who have a core focus on the Catholic remote schools. The members of the team have different portfolios which are often quite large. They run and organise some professional learning programs but also communicate to schools in relation to professional learning opportunities that arise.

The Catholic jurisdiction in the territory covers a huge geographical area. In fact, one school is some 1600 kilometres away. They try to facilitate site professional learning for their remote schools, although they see value in the networking opportunities by bringing teachers into Darwin from these schools for professional learning. However, finding Emergency Relief Teachers in remote schools is challenging.

Professional Learning for teachers is expensive. Resources need to be good value for money as schools do not have massive budgets to spend in this area. There are issues with professional development, where you send teachers off to do a program, but then they cannot share that professional development with others due to copyright restrictions, etc. Conferences can also be problematical – they may be valuable, but they are often too expensive for teachers to attend.

Each teacher has a responsibility both personally and professionally for their own professional learning in addition to what is provided for them by the school. The motivation for professional learning should come from what teachers are doing in the classroom. The AGQTP program is a good initiative because teachers and individual schools decide what they will apply for, seeking funding for initiatives which they have devised in response to local needs.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Brendan Keenan, Deputy Director, Teaching and Learning, and Ms Georgie Jones, Education Officer, Middle and Secondary Education)

6.8.2 Sacred Heart Primary School

Sacred Heart Primary School adopts a whole school approach to professional learning. The school prefers groups of teachers to become involved in professional learning activities. The one off professional development that teachers attend tends to be less sustainable. Professional learning must respond to a need in the school and not just be based on a ‘whim’.

Whilst the school prefers professional learning activities to be linked to the school’s strategic directions, with groups of teachers involved, individual teachers can still apply to do other kinds of professional learning activities. The school also includes their support staff in professional learning activities.

Professional learning is not linked to issues around teacher standards or performance management in any formal sense, although for promotional opportunities teachers do need to show that they have continued to develop themselves professionally.

The leadership team in the school tends to make the decisions around the professional learning that occurs in the school, but everyone has a role in this process, in the sense that teachers are encouraged to contribute their own ideas about directions the school should be following. Student outcome data also informs their decisions around professional learning activities. The school thinks it is important to use evidence as a base for these decisions.

In previous years the school has been involved in a number of whole school professional learning programs such as ESL in the mainstream and TRIBES. They are currently involved in three major programs – Count Me in Too, Kids Matters, and Science in Schools. Their extensive evaluation of the TRIBES programs showed that it was very successful and well received by their parent community. TRIBES is a professional learning program which helps teachers and schools build a positive learning environment which takes into account students social and emotional well being. (See http://www.tribes.com/tribes_professional_development.htm.)

There is also mandatory Professional Learning that teachers in all Catholic schools must do. For example, every teacher must do 6 hours of professional learning in religious education each year. This professional learning is run by the Catholic Education Office.

The school has accessed the AGQTP program two or three times. The school thinks this is a good initiative because it is largely teacher driven, in that schools and teachers design programs they would like to be involved in and then apply for funding. Their only criticism of the program is the submission process and its competitive nature. This process is also very time consuming. They think it is valuable to team up with other schools and apply for funding collaboratively.

Here are examples of two specific professional learning initiatives in which the school has been involved.

Count me in too. All the teachers get trained in Count me in two. Tutors are trained in the program so they can train other staff. Teachers are released to participate in this professional learning. It has resulted in teachers from Transition to Year 3 having a common approach to the teaching of number. All new teachers who come to the school are trained in the program by the trained staff in the school. They have found that students' results in the MAP tests suggest this has been a successful project. Across a five year span they have gone from having a percentage of children who didn't benchmark in their Year 3 numeracy tests to all Year 3's reaching and exceeding benchmark.

Kids Matters is a program that looks at mental health issues for children. It is the primary school version of Mind Matters. It gives teachers the skills to help them to identify students with mental health needs. It also helps schools evaluate the programs that are currently in schools relating to social and emotional learning and involves a component where the school looks at planning in the future in this area. It involves two days professional development for the whole school, and then there are a series of workshops that are held during staff meetings. The two days is delivered by an external consultant and the series of workshops is delivered by a group of teachers dedicated to the program in the school. It requires a 12 month commitment from the school. The full days of workshops occur on pupil free or staff development days. The school is allocated three of these each year. This program is funded through Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council. The school applied for funding through the quality teacher programme. The rotary club is also one of the partners and has contributed funding to the project. The ongoing costs of resourcing the program will come out of the school budget. It is still too early to ascertain teacher's evaluations of this project and its effectiveness.

When professional development opportunities arise, the school needs to ascertain whether it can commit wholly to the program. Often a small team of teachers are identified to take carriage of this. The school also thinks it is important to choose teachers who are planning on staying with the school. Otherwise sustainability of the program becomes an issue. The school executive makes decisions in relation to who is going to lead the bigger projects the school undertakes.

(Based on notes from an interview with the Principal, Ms Kathy Neely, and Curriculum Coordinator, Ms Danielle Cavanagh.)

6.8.3 *St Paul's Catholic Primary School*

The following are some examples of professional learning initiatives that have been taken at this school.

In the past two years the school has invested quite a lot of funding in technology, and they have spent a considerable amount of time providing teachers with professional development in this area. The school now has interactive white boards in every classroom, and has been involved in professional learning which helps teachers use the smart boards and the software available in their teaching. They sent a teacher to professional development that was offered by the Catholic

Education Office which was similar to a train-the-trainer program. She did some fairly intensive training in innovative uses of the smart board. This teacher has done a number of workshops during staff meetings where she demonstrates to teachers different uses of the technology.

The Catholic system is connected to a system called 'My Internet' and the school has also been involved in professional learning related to this program. This has involved setting up the 'My Internet' pages in each classroom. They have also been working with parents so they know how to access their child's classroom internet page. They sent two teachers off to do the training for 'My Internet' and they have come back and worked with other staff. They have also had a consultant come in from the CEO who has worked with the teachers who completed the training. Teachers are now being released to work individually with the trained teachers. Funding applied for through the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme and school budget has resourced this initiative. In addition two curriculum coordinators last year applied for funds last year from the AGQTP for a digital literacy program with two other Catholic schools.

The school applied for, and received, funding with five other schools for the 'Success for boys program'. The whole school was involved in the project, focusing on success for boys through technology. This involved a junior primary class working with an early childhood class on a buddy system. Other classes did similar things working with buddy classes, using technology like photo stories or PowerPoint. 'Multiple Intelligences' is the preferred approach for learning in the school, and the school often sends teachers to professional learning programs related to multiple intelligences. The school is also involved in 'Count me in too' and PM Benchmarking.

Professional learning at St Paul's is driven by the belief that it needs to be collaborative, and that it speaks to the particular needs of the school. Whole school initiatives tend to be more sustainable. It is important to provide the necessary resources to support the professional learning program. The school expects that teachers will come back from professional learning activities and share this learning with their colleagues. Whole school initiatives generate good professional conversations among teachers. When teachers go to one off PD's these teachers often come back feeling energised, but it is really difficult to generate that same level of enthusiasm in other teachers. The school tries to ensure that they send at least two teachers to a professional learning workshop. The Principal has interviews with all of her staff early in the year and it is during these interviews that individual needs related to professional learning can be discussed. The school informs its parent body about the professional learning in which the school and individual teachers are involved. The curriculum coordinator in the school makes a point of advertising Professional Learning that becomes available to teachers or particular teachers whom she thinks might be interested or benefit from the program. The school thinks it is important that you carefully choose who goes to professional learning as you have to make sure that they come back and share what they have learned with others. It is also important that teachers be able to engage with professional learning according to where their own skill levels are. The curriculum coordinator gave the example of 'My Internet' and how some teachers were more technologically advanced than others – it is difficult to make professional learning a 'one size fits all'.

(Based on notes from an interview with the Principal Ms Mary Cutjar and Curriculum Coordinator Ms Shandell Bryant)

6.8.4 Good Shepherd Lutheran College

The Principal, Mr Julian Denholm, felt that the school was overly reliant on text books when he arrived and that there was a real need to refresh teacher's knowledge and skills in various areas. Since that time, Mr Denholm has made teachers' professional learning, knowledge and skills one his highest priorities.

All teachers are required to complete individual professional learning plans, under a program initiated by the Principal. One of the executive staff (Head of Junior School or Head of Middle School) observes the teachers to get a sense of 'how they are going.' Mr Denholm described it as similar to a 'coaching exercise.' This assists in the development of professional learning plans for teachers. Teachers are also encouraged to contribute to these plans by reflecting on their strengths and professional learning needs. Teachers are encouraged to pursue areas they are passionate about or interested in. Initially this has been done with younger staff but they are now moving towards the inclusion of all teaching staff. This is linked to processes such as performance management and standards. Mr Denholm believes staff have responded fairly well to the initiative.

MLATS (Mathematics Learning and Teaching for Success), a Mathematics program developed by the Lutheran sector in SA with a constructivist focus, has now been taken up by schools in WA, NT and Victoria. All teachers are involved in the program and another Lutheran school was also involved. Essentially mathematics is the vehicle through which constructivist understandings and practices are taught. It shows teachers how constructivism can be used in all learning areas and it challenges teachers to rethink ideas around teaching and learning. It is not a 'one hit wonder' program but consists of a series of workshops where teachers are required to implement a series of activities in their classes and are then paired up with other teachers to implement the strategy and plan together. This is followed by after school workshops where teachers are given an opportunity to report and reflect on how the strategy went in their class. The professional development is considered worthwhile because it goes over a 12 months period and teachers are required to do professional reading to support their learning. They are also supported in their learning through a coach/mentoring arrangement. The initiative was funded through the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program. The Principal feels there is more value in this kind of professional learning where more than one teacher is involved. Teachers have responded well to this program. He believes there have been changes in student learning and that this has had a positive effect on student outcomes. Parents have also been very supportive of the program.

The school has been a teaching school for Charles Darwin University for two years. Currently the school has eight pre-service teachers they are working with. One teacher coordinates the program. The school runs some of the tutorials for the university in their school. The university provides professional development for the teachers involved on their program and on mentoring. The principal feels that in addition to being beneficial to the pre-service teacher, this has benefits for the classroom teachers involved, as it keeps them up to date with some of the latest developments in research relating to teaching and learning. The school receives a small amount of money to assist with set up costs and money for the coordinator's position, and the individual teachers involved receive the normal payment for having a pre-service teacher.

While the school does some of its professional learning as a whole school, it also thinks it is important to meet the needs of individual teachers. 'One-off PDs' are not as sustainable as professional learning, especially with respect to the whole school or groups of teachers. Professional learning for teachers is seen as core business for the school. The Principal believes it needs to be planned for. It is important to have a coordinator for professional learning in the school. Networking with other schools is also important. It is also important for the school to have long term strategic plans.

(Based on notes from an interview with the Principal, Mr Julian Denholm)

6.8.4.1 A note about MLATS at Good Shepherd Lutheran College

MLATS is a course involving ten professional learning sessions that ideally run over a year. MLAT grew out of the Lutheran system in SA some twenty years ago. The course is based on constructivist notions of learning. It begins with a three day intensive workshop that looks at student learning data and patterning. The way the workshop is presented to teachers is intended to reflect the ways teachers should implement the program in their classroom. The teachers are required to do some professional reading and each session they are presented with a different classroom strategy to trial, for example, using literature, journaling etc. Teachers are also given time for planning, and this is done in collaboration with another classroom teacher.

Pupil free days and the week leading up to the start of school (week zero) are often used for whole workshop sessions. Ms Maria Denholm, who has had responsibility for coordinating the program at the school, explained that it was becoming increasingly more difficult to fit the 10 days required for the program in one school year, and this has resulted in some schools running the professional learning for the program over a two year period. She feels that this tends to affect the continuity of the program.

Teachers involved in the program were surveyed at the beginning of the course and at the end to evaluate its effectiveness. Although Ms Denholm is now not directly involved with the professional learning component of the program she still makes herself available as a mentor to other teachers.

Ms Denholm agrees with the Principal of Good Shepherd Lutheran College: professional learning is a high priority, and it needs to be planned for. She believes that it is very important for teachers to continue their professional learning throughout their career. Organising professional learning in the school year is incredibly difficult due to the lack of relief teachers, lack of money, time, and so on.

In her view, it is important to give teachers time to do the follow up with other staff and colleagues after they have engaged in professional learning. It is also important that teachers who do the professional learning have or acquire the skills to be able to effect the necessary change in their wider school community.

(Based on notes taken in an interview with Ms Maria Denholm)

6.8.5 Kormilda College

Due to the geographical isolation of Darwin, and the fact that Kormilda College is an independent school without the support available in the state or Catholic systems, the College has had to be creative when facilitating professional learning. The Principal, Mr Malcolm Pritchard, described the school's approach to professional learning as eclectic.

The school has institutional obligations – they are a member of the Council of International schools. They are also an IB school which requires them to deliver professional learning to all teachers involved in the program as part of the accreditation process of the IB program. They are also a World School within the international baccalaureate association. They are currently gearing up to offer a middle years program and that initiative alone requires a significant requirement in terms of teacher professional learning for the manager, senior teachers and teachers.

The school has used some models in the past offered by private providers of Professional learning, for example the Real Justice organisation. These programs tend to target specific parts of the college who would benefit from them. The school has access to a small number of professional learning opportunities through DEET. They are also a teaching school for Charles Darwin University, and they regularly have pre-service teachers from Deakin and Charles Sturt University.

The school keeps a record of all the professional learning that staff is involved in, and it is a requirement that this is reported to the wider community as part of the funding arrangements with the Federal government. Depending on the nature of the professional learning, there is an expectation that staff will share what they have learned with relevant colleagues in the school. Professional learning occurs in both formal and informal contexts. The school has whole school briefings twice a week. This provides another forum for sharing of successes initiatives, in addition to the regular school and faculty meetings that take place.

Measuring the benefits of professional learning for individual staff is difficult. It is difficult to distinguish between staff's existing knowledge and the new knowledge that they might gain. Each member of staff undergoes a staff appraisal process which continues throughout the year. This process helps to identify targets that the line manager and staff member agree on in relation to areas of need for the individual staff member. This does not always equate to a weakness but a strength that the staff member has and an area where they can develop further. This process is strategic in that it addresses the needs of the college and the needs of the individual. This process is documented and there are an agreed series of activities named that could be beneficial for the particular staff member.

The school has a Professional Learning budget. The school has a notional per capita amount allocated to each staff member depending on their role in the college. Obviously the difference in sending a staff member to Malaysia for a conference or sending a maintenance worker to a workshop on Occupation Health and Safety is different. The budget is flexible but they have an understanding that each member of the teaching staff undergoes at least one interstate professional learning activity in a calendar year. Obviously not everyone will go interstate each year but this is the formula to help allocate the funding to each staff member.

In the last week of the mid year break the schools holds a mini conference. It is not compulsory to attend but is open to all staff from maintenance to boarding to teaching staff. They put on a range of activities. Last year, for example, they did a day workshop on cultural understanding. They also ran a two day workshop on restorative practices which provided staff with a different approach and set of strategies for resolving conflict.

The development of the culture of the organisation is one of the major benefits of professional learning – the development of teachers, students etc. Talking and networking with other professionals outside of the organisation is also important. It helps to get rid of institutional myopia. It gives teachers confidence and the competence to deploy the skills they have. They also realise through conversations with other colleagues outside the institution that others have similar issues, and so they move from thinking that the problem might rest with them.

Kormilda College sees itself as a learning community, which means that everyone learns, from the Principal through to the students. They also expect their parents to learn.

The following professional learning programs were named by three teachers at Kormilda College as being particularly significant.

Accelerated literacy

The accelerated literacy program for Indigenous students in which the school is involved, has a requirement for teachers to attend professional learning workshops. These workshops are led by teacher educators from Charles Darwin University.

4MAT program

The school is involved in a program called 4MAT which is essentially a planning tool. Both the Director of Curriculum and Head of Support Services are trained as facilitators in the program. This training is external to the school. They have been running workshops for staff in this program for the past five years. Around the time the school moved towards a middle school curriculum they recognised the need to revitalise teacher's knowledge and skills in planning and programming.

TRIBES

A similar approach to professional learning has been used with the TRIBES program, which is another approach that has whole school support. A staff member in the middle school is a TRIBES facilitator who completed training outside the school and is now responsible for providing professional learning in this program.

The school runs programs each year for programs such as TRIBES and 4MAT in order to enhance the skills of any new teachers. As much as possible the school tries to facilitate professional learning on site, as there are many constraints with respect to accessing Professional Learning outside of the school.

Learning Centre

The learning centre in the school has become part of support services and it provides a range of professional development activities for staff. It comprises the head of support services, library, special needs, gifted and talented, literacy and numeracy support staff. There is a range of professional learning opportunities that the group can offer to other staff. This year they have been successful with another AQTP grant, and they are hoping to facilitate conversations with the CDU pre-service teachers as part of their arrangement as a teaching school for the university. This will in effect put mentoring arrangements into place.

In the view of the teachers interviewed, it is difficult to fit professional learning into the 40 weeks of the school year. Teachers need to understand they are part of a profession and with that come a personal responsibility for professional learning.

(Based on notes from an interview with Principal, Mr Malcolm Pritchard, Assistant Principal, Ms Helen Spiers, Head of Support Services, Ms Marilyn Willis and Director of Studies, Ms Elsabe Bott)

6.8.6 Faculty of Education, Charles Darwin University (CDU)

Charles Darwin University offers a range of formal courses for teachers. These include Bachelor of Teaching and Learning in-service which 'up skills' teachers who only have a three year qualification. The university has increased its enrolments in this because of new teachers coming up to the territory who only have a three year qualification and need four years for teacher registration. Other important offerings are in the Masters and graduate certificate programs, with flexible units that can be customised to the needs of various stakeholders. These are designed specifically for teacher professional learning. The units are tagged: Professional Learning 1, Professional Learning 2, through to Professional Learning 6.

In our interview with Ms Alison Elliott, Head of School at CDU, she explained that the university works with industry partners to plan and deliver a series of units that are customised to their needs. The university works with the industry partners to deliver these units. The students are then simultaneously enrolled in the other masters units. The focus for this professional development can be anything the industry partner needs. This is similar to the University of South Australia and University of Canberra model. This often involves the university and the industry partner sharing the teaching of these units. If there are not the experts to deliver the course either in the university or within the industry partner organisation, then experts are brought in. Areas of specialisation at present include mentoring and maths education. The mode of delivery is tailored to the industry partners needs – e.g. an intensive course, online, weekends etc. A key difficulty with this model is working around the university enrolment system. In Darwin this goes through SATAC and this becomes a major hindrance. The university is trying to negotiate ways to streamline bulk enrolments. The university is currently negotiating agreements with all of the major stakeholders re this program.

Essentially the Graduate Certificate is nested within the masters program. Students might choose to just do the Graduate Certificate course or go on to do a complete masters program. Some enrol in the M.Ed from the beginning.. The masters program is by course work and students can choose to specialise in professional learning or educational research. The masters program is 8 units or 80 Credit Points (equivalent to one year or FT study). Student can exit with the Graduate Certificate after completing 4 units or 40 Credit Points. All students can undertake a 20 or 10 Credit Point project similar to an honours program. The degree articulates into the PhD or Doctor of Teaching program. In most cases the industry partners support their students to enrol in the program financially.

The program was also implemented as a strategy for the university to increase its enrolments in their Masters program. There are presently about 30 students enrolled in this program. The demographic of teachers enrolling in these programs would generally be described as more experienced teachers. CDU is hoping to partner with DEET (and other employing authorities) to run programs for more inexperienced, beginning teachers in a mentoring arrangement as part of their registration requirements. CDU is also delivering this program in Alice Springs and externally so a greater coverage of teachers has the opportunity to be involved. At present most students are external and based outside Darwin.

Accelerated Literacy and Applied Linguistics are two other Graduate Certificates offered by the university. The university evaluated the current MEd and Graduate Certificate programs in 2007. The current initiatives have developed as a result of that evaluation. This evaluation did not include the Graduate Certificate in Accelerated Literacy as this is delivered by the School of Social Policy and Research.

Universities have a very important role to play in teachers' ongoing professional learning. Timing of these kinds of professional learning initiatives is crucial. Universities need to be flexible in relation to how they deliver. It is also important to respond to the needs of the clients. It is also necessary to value the knowledge that teachers already have when planning and delivering Professional Learning and be very clear about what the goals are for teachers and schools. Teachers are essentially a challenging group to work with in that they have a lot of demands in their lives – work and family. A major issue for the NT is trying to accommodate teachers working in remote areas. Getting relief teachers is a major challenge, travel and accommodation costs are high. And it is not always practical to go to remote locations to deliver professional learning. Ms Elliott believes it is important for universities to partner with other professional associations in the interests of improving teacher professional learning provisions.

Believes there is little financial incentive at the moment for teachers to engage with professional learning. It might be useful for teacher registration authorities and schools to start thinking about mandating some professional learning. This is actually one of the hall marks of a profession in that you need to constantly update your professional learning.

It was noted that universities could be involved in delivering professional learning related to the teacher registration process by offering a formal vehicle for supporting graduates in their teaching. For teachers to move from provisional registration to full registration some formal sort of course work that is formally or informally mentored through their school. So students could do a four year qualification and then a 5th year part time and come out with something like a Masters degree or graduate certificate.

(Based on notes from an interview with Ms Alison Elliott, Head of School, at CDU)

6.9 WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The professional learning of teachers in Western Australia is undergoing change, partly signalled by a change in preferred nomenclature from ‘professional development’ to ‘professional learning’. This is not to say that there has been a radical break with the past. Many practices and activities that previously went by the term ‘professional development’ have continued under the title ‘professional learning’.

Until recently (the last 3 to 5 years), teachers’ professional development was largely directed by the WA Department of Education and Training (DET) – by far the largest employer of teachers in the state – or by its counterparts (Catholic Education Office and the Independent Schools Association) and ‘stand alone’ schools within these counterpart systems. Employing a sizeable group of consultants, DET has developed a large number of professional development programs, which it delivers to interested teachers across the state; bringing groups of teachers into central locations to undertake these programs, often at regional offices located throughout the state.

The licence to one well-known and successful program, namely *First Steps*, which originally developed by DET, was sold to a company established by Edith Cowan University, which continues to deliver (throughout Australia and overseas) and (re)develop the program and other similar programs on a commercial basis, with ongoing royalties paid to DET. Such programs are based on a ‘train the trainer’ model of delivery and exemplify the general approach to teachers’ professional development in Western Australia (perhaps because of the success this program has received). That is, the system or private provider (e.g., Steps Professional Development Australia) takes responsibility for developing appropriate learning goals and activities for teachers and for imparting this learning to select teachers across the system in a way that enables them, now as experts in their local settings, to similarly impart this knowledge to their colleagues. Often employed in combination with this ‘train the trainer’ model is an ‘action learning’ model, which involves teachers attending an initial session, implementing some changed action as a result of the initial session, and then reporting back on the outcomes of these actions at a follow-up session.

Recently, DET has taken stock of its professional development offerings, developing professional development programs (emphasizing system requirements) for teachers at three strategic points in their careers (beginning teachers, senior teachers, and school leaders) as well as rationalizing its other offerings, targeting certain areas (e.g., literacy and numeracy) and auditing its programs to clarify their aims, intended outcomes and points of overlap. Some regard the (often compulsory) programs that address system imperatives and those (often voluntary) programs that address the felt needs of teachers as the distinguishing feature between

‘development’ and ‘learning’. Federal government funds (specifically, AGQTP) are seen by DET as the way for schools to fund professional learning programs of their own design.

The approach to professional development by the WA Catholic Education Office largely follows the DET model, although on a smaller scale. It also relies more heavily on AGQTP funds to run its centrally organized programs. The Association of Independent Schools in WA similarly provides its members with centrally developed and organized professional development programs, almost exclusively funded by government. The professional development delivered by these sectors can vary in name but the areas they address and their content tend to be similar. Variation tends to revolve around sector-specific material.

6.9.1 Learning Institute, WA Department of Education & Training

The WA Department of Education and Training (DET) established its Professional Learning Institute (PLI) in 2005 in order to operationalise its commitment to re-conceptualise how to build capacity within its teaching workforce. From its inception, the PLI was charged with responsibility for providing teachers with opportunities to develop their abilities as teachers and for managing an effective system of professional development.

Ms Jayne Johnston, Director of the PLI, spoke in our interview about the ways that PLI has been working to develop:

- A register of professional development activities available to teachers, beginning with the professional development offered by DET;
- A commitment among teachers to their professional development, which goes beyond compliance with DET requirements;
- Criteria for determining what type, quality and quantity of professional development activities DET should sponsor and/or provide its teachers, balanced against their available time to engage in these; and
- Evaluation processes that enable judgements to be made about the effectiveness of professional development activities, particularly the extent to which these lead to improved student learning outcomes.

As part of its commitment to the development of its workforce, DET (through the PLI) guarantees to directly provide or broker the delivery of professional development for its teachers at three strategic points in their careers: graduate teacher, senior teacher and school leader.

- *A graduate teacher induction program.* All beginning teachers are required to attend this program. It is delivered by District Offices (or by the PLI where the capacity to deliver this is not available in Districts). There are 2 day modules, which involve teachers in 4 days per year of professional learning activity for first two years. The PLI is also trialling the program’s online delivery, particularly for beginning teachers in remote areas. An in-class coaching program for graduate teachers is being developed to complement the professional learning program and is being introduced progressively over 2008 and 2009. This program involves training teachers currently outside the system (retirees, part-time teachers, teachers on maternity leave, etc) to work part-time alongside beginning teachers in their classrooms, supporting them in their first two years to develop their teaching expertise. Two different models are being trialled in the program’s development: one where the coach is skilled in diagnosis (able to identify specific issues in the beginning teacher’s practice and then able to source existing support); and the other where the coach is a generalist (able to provide support across a range of issues).
- *A senior teacher program.* Teachers who aspire to the status of senior teachers are required to attend this program of professional development. The program is delivered or endorsed by DET with successful completion leading to achievement of Senior Teacher Classification and access to two salary increments.

- *A school leader program*: This includes professional learning programs for aspiring, practising and experienced school leaders. Aspiring school principals will soon be required to attend a mandated program, delivered by the PLI and District Offices, with successful completion leading to eligibility to apply for a school principal position.

These programs are part of a large number of professional development programs provided by DET, currently being audited to determine their aims, intended outcomes and points of overlap. One of these programs, ‘Getting it Right’, is DET’s flagship professional development program for teachers, based on the *First Steps* literacy and numeracy programs. It adopts a ‘train the trainer’ model, whereby designated teachers from identified schools (typically Primary schools but not exclusively) attend the training and then return to their school to train their colleagues. Schools identified to receive the training (over two years) are those whose students fall below benchmark literacy and numeracy standards. Designated teachers from these schools are also required to attend two further professional development activities: ‘Data Club’ and ‘First Cut’. ‘Data Club’ provides instruction to teachers and principals on how to read DET-generated student performance data specific to their school. ‘First Cut’ is a follow-up program that provides student performance data down to the level of classrooms. Access to this data is restricted to those who attend the professional development

In addition to these programs offered by DET, schools and school clusters are eligible to apply for AGQTP funding (the WA allocation is managed by the PLI) to undertake other professional development activities that meet specific needs that individual schools have identified themselves. While this onsite and school-directed professional development currently represents a very small proportion of all professional development sponsored by DET, the PLI envisages an expansion of this model: offering greater flexibility to manage current available time and resources for site-specific professional development. From a PLI perspective, the model represents a shift from privileging professional *development* directed from the centre to professional *learning* directed by schools and teachers, albeit augmented by systemic requirements (see above). This centre/school direction provides definition to the PLI’s distinction between professional development (driven by external imperatives or mandates) and professional learning (where the motivation for it is internal). The PLI believes that professional learning organised by and at the level of schools will go some way in redressing an historical view among teachers that professional development is primarily about complying with system imperatives.

The PLI also envisages a number of other advantages of moving to a professional learning model:

- *More effective resource management*. Withdrawing teachers from schools to undertake professional development (almost exclusively conducted in school hours) is not seen as a viable option in the context of an acute shortage of teachers across the State, whereas onsite professional development is seen to be more manageable in this context.
- *Access to resources from outside the system*. The model provides schools with opportunities to develop partnerships with outside providers of professional development (such as universities, Steps Professional Development Australia, etc.), to address the specific needs of the schools concerned and might lead to credit in degree programs (particularly where the partner is a university).
- *Releasing under-utilised capacity within schools*. There is increasing recognition that capacity exists within schools and their teachers (as opposed to being brought in from outside) to advance the professional development of all teachers within the school, to build capacity from within.
- *A whole-school approach to professional development*. A whole school professional learning model would enable teachers to develop *shared* understandings that allow them to have more focused conversations about their practice and about their students’ learning.

Given such a model, and in addition to providing system professional development at specific teacher career points (see above), the PLI sees its role as providing schools with the skills to make judgments about their professional development needs and to assist them in identifying appropriate programs and providers that meet these needs, which then translate into improved student outcomes. This new context for teachers' professional learning also creates possibilities for teacher-led initiatives across schools. For example, a model, which DET is now exploring as a viable option particularly for remote areas, began with a small network of secondary science teachers located in different schools but in the one District who decided to develop a shared online teaching environment for their students. While the focus was on sharing resources and teaching expertise in science across school sites, developing the online environment also provided opportunities for beginning teachers in the curriculum area to learn from more experienced teachers and for all to learn about what teaching means in a new online environment.

(Based on notes taken in an interview with Ms Jayne Johnston, Director, PLI)

6.9.2 Catholic Education Office, WA

Although there are a number of Catholic Dioceses in WA, unlike other Australian states, there is only one Catholic Education Office (CEO) in the State, located in Perth, and three regional offices, which come under the umbrella of the Perth office. The Broome regional office is the only other site where curriculum consultants are located, although they are hard to attract and retain. The CEO's curriculum consultants manage most professional development across WA's various Dioceses. Under the new strategic plan, curriculum consultants in regional offices will be responsible to the team leader in the Perth office. As far as possible, what is offered by way of professional development in the metropolitan area is replicated in regional areas.

The CEO is responsible for 158 systemic Catholic schools, the majority (approximately 120) of which are primary schools as well as a number of K-10 and K-12 schools and straight secondary schools (Years 8-12). In regions outside Perth, there are approximately 13 schools in the Kimberley, 6 schools in the east Kimberley, 11 schools in Geraldton, and 24 in Bunbury. The Perth Diocese also includes Kalgoorlie, Southern Boulder, Southern Cross and other areas along the Great Eastern Highway. Extra funding is provided to regional schools to account for the extra travel involved in things like teacher participation in professional development activities.

The main professional development currently offered to teachers by the CEO is in relation to its Raising Achievement in Schools (RAISE) initiative, now operating in 88 of its primary schools. RAISE is a whole school improvement initiative, with an initial focus on literacy and numeracy, being rolled out across a number of years. Schools come into the initiative via a literacy or a numeracy pathway. There are three main elements of RAISE: its whole school approach; effective pedagogy in the classroom; and data-informed learning and teaching.

The initiative also includes a focus on supportive school structures that involve teachers in professional learning. The first of these involves the appointment of a first wave coordinator (with 0.5 teaching release) who coordinates the professional learning needs of teachers in the school related to the identified needs of students. Their role is in identifying the capacity building needs of classroom teachers and (facilitating) how these can be met within the school, rather than being a source of expertise. For example, if a school has come into the initiative through a literacy pathway, then the coordinator arranges for teachers' professional development in literacy to support the literacy development of the school's students. A second supportive school structure involves the appointment of a second wave intervention teacher, in either literacy or numeracy. For example, if the entry pathway is literacy, then the intervention teacher receives professional development in Reading

Recovery (the CEO's preferred literacy intervention program), delivered by Edith Cowan University (ECU) and funded by the CEO. In completing this training, teachers receive credit towards a postgraduate award at ECU.

A third wave of support targets schools where some students are still seen to be struggling, by providing a designated (third wave) teacher with professional development specifically designed by Edith Cowan University in collaboration with the CEO and delivered by ECU. Each year, 20 to 25 teachers from Catholic schools are involved in such professional development. As with Reading Recovery, the training (in diagnostic testing, how to use student data to inform teaching plans, good classroom strategies, etc.) involves an intensive initial year of professional development sessions of 2 days per term during school time, with 'action learning' in between. In the second year, the professional learning is organised around specific needs (e.g. how to support students with Asperger's syndrome, ADD, etc. in the classroom) and pursued through networks established in the first year.

As well as these three waves of support, Teacher Leaders (of literacy or numeracy) are appointed as experts or role models within schools. After three years, a school can decide whether to 'add on' numeracy or to continue with literacy, or vice versa if its initial pathway into RAISE was numeracy. If the school opts for an 'add on' option, the first wave coordinator stays in place, now focused on teachers' professional development in literacy and numeracy.

First wave coordinators and Teacher Leaders attend the CEO for PD one day per term each. In the regions, they attend regional offices and Perth CEO staff travel to meet with them. (The exception is the Broome office and region, which is not involved in the RAISE initiative. Instead, they are involved in the Kimberley literacy strategy.) Principals of schools also attend PD sessions at the CEO twice per year with their Teacher Leaders and first wave coordinators. The purpose of these PD sessions is to build leadership capacity (e.g. working with teams of people, managing people, managing interpersonal conflict, etc).

Students academic results in the schools involved in RAISE have dramatically improved, suggesting that the initiative and the associated teachers' professional learning are making a difference. This assessment is based on results in a battery of tests: (i) State level tests in literacy and numeracy; (ii) the Performance Indicators in Primary School (PIPS) testing developed by Murdoch University, implemented by classroom teachers and results analysed by Murdoch (now linked by Murdoch with the Year 3 State tests data); and (iii) in Years 1, 2 and 3, the Marie Clay observation survey, which Murdoch provides analysis linking survey results with State tests and PIPS.

(Based on notes taken in an interview with Ms Sheena Barber, Team Leader K-12 Teaching and Learning Curriculum Team)

6.9.3 Association of Independent Schools Western Australia Inc (AISWA)

As its name suggests, AISWA is an association of approximately 150 independent (non-government, non-Catholic systemic) schools in Western Australia, including remote Indigenous schools (approximately 15), faith-based (Christian, Islamic, Jewish, etc.) schools, 'alternative' and community schools, philosophical (e.g., Montessori, Steiner, etc.) schools, and coeducational and single-sex church schools. About 50 per cent of these could be categorised as 'small'. Almost all independent schools in the state are AISWA member schools; membership is by choice, not compulsion or default. AISWA works on behalf of these schools (e.g. as their representative to governments) rather than directing them in their activities. As part of this representation, however, AISWA manages funds provided by state and federal governments (such as AGQTP funds) in relation to the professional development of teachers in these schools (as well as managing other funding support for such issues as Indigenous schooling, curriculum development, etc). What AISWA does with these funds is framed by the requirements of the funding sources.

Also, AISWA sees itself as responsive to its membership rather than driving any agenda of its own in relation to professional development (and in other areas as well).

Two sources of funding are accessed to support the professional development of teachers: Commonwealth Targeted Programs funding and AGQTP funding. Most of the funding from these sources is distributed proportionally and directly (through AISWA via a grant application process) to schools themselves. A portion of the total funding is retained by AISWA for the employment of consultants in literacy, numeracy, inclusive education, and LOTE, who provide teachers with professional development that is targeted particularly at Indigenous students, students with a LOTE as their first language, students from low SES backgrounds, and students whose performance is below State benchmarks. Particular professional development programs offered by AISWA are informed by government agendas and by the specific needs of schools, identified by AISWA consultants and declared (via survey) by schools themselves. PD in literacy and numeracy is prominent among these. Program delivery is by AISWA consultants, university experts (e.g. from Edith Cowan University, University of New England, University of Sydney, etc.) or other private providers (e.g., Steps Professional Development), brokered by AISWA. A full range of professional development programs offered by AISWA is listed on its website: <http://www.ais.wa.edu.au/>.

Typically, professional development delivered and/or organised by AISWA is characterised as ‘action learning’ cycles or ‘spaced learning’, where teachers attend professional development sessions ‘spaced’ across a period of time and which require completion of related set tasks in between. This is often accompanied by ‘facilitator’ or ‘train-the-trainer’ training. For example, representative teachers (preferably at least 2) from each school will complete an off-site AISWA-sponsored First Steps professional development program and then return to their respective schools where they offer First Steps professional development to their colleagues and become the ‘key’ teachers in that area. AISWA also provides or negotiates whole school professional development (e.g., integration of Asian Studies throughout the curriculum) on a case-by-case basis, which may involve one-off sessions or action learning cycles. Evaluation of AISWA professional development programs is undertaken through informal comments, end of program surveys and follow-up surveys undertaken six months after the completion of the program. Programs in schools that are directly funded (via application to AISWA) are evaluated on the basis of a school report on program outcomes (including outcomes for students, teachers, and schools) and against criteria established at the application stage.

(Based on notes taken at an interview with Mr Ron Gorman, Literacy Education Consultant, and Ms Claire Leong, Deputy Executive Director)

6.9.4 Safety Bay Senior High School

Safety Bay Senior High School (Years 8-12) has 1,100 students and over 80 teaching staff. Its School Vision statement on its website states that it ‘aims to provide a curriculum that draws upon the traditional areas of academic knowledge but also takes into account the new directions in technology, the increasingly complex demands of media and the important social dimension of learning and work, seeking to provide outcomes relevant to that world’ (<http://www.safetybay.wa.edu.au/profile.htm>).

A major program in which the school is involved is a Classroom Management Strategies (CMS) program, developed by Canadian professor Peter Smilanich, who was brought out to WA first by the WA Teachers Union to conduct Level 1 workshops in classroom management and then by the WA DET to conduct Level 2 or ‘consultant’ training, to skill teachers in training other teachers to CMS Level 1. There are about 50 CMS Level 2 or ‘consultant’ teachers in WA. Mr Mick Churchman is the only qualified CMS Level 2 teacher in the School. He told us the school’s involvement in the program began around 3 years ago when he began

working with colleagues in the school (particularly at Years 8 and 9) and in its 5 feeder primary schools (including Coo loongup Primary School) to develop teachers' classroom management strategies. This fitted in with the existing transition programs between the school and its feeder primary schools. An inter-school network of teachers developed around their collective interests in classroom management strategies, which Mr Churchman believes has contributed to good working relations among the principals of the network schools.

In late 2006, the network of teachers and schools determined that they would extend their collective efforts to focus on instructional strategies (particularly cooperative learning strategies), enticed by an 'instructional intelligence' model introduced to WA by Canadian professor Barrie Bennett. While the School did not wish to mandate the use of cooperative learning strategies, the intention was to build a common language and approach to facilitate the collective professional development of its teachers. In conjunction with its five feeder primary schools, the school submitted and was successful in its application for AGQTP funding for the 'cell' of six schools (managed by Mick) to enlist experts (including a Curtin University academic Glenda Raison, Professor Barry Benhill from Canada and others, including Mr Churchman) to deliver workshops in cooperative learning for teachers in the participating schools. Funding also covered payments to teachers to attend the workshops after school hours as well teacher relief funding distributed to schools for staff to attend workshops during school hours. After school workshops also ensured that the operations of the schools were not overly disrupted.

The workshops were delivered in waves. The first four workshops were reserved for an expert group of teachers from the six schools who were given intensive training and became ambassadors for the program. They then partnered with another teacher within their school who then received similar professional development in a second wave of workshops. A third wave followed with new teaching partners, and so on. By the end of the year, 100 to 200 staff were involved in the program at different levels. From one workshop to the next there was some accountability involved, which required teachers to demonstrate the use of cooperative learning strategies in their classroom and working with others in their teams.

The program has been highly successful at three of the participating primary schools, with principals reporting dramatic changes in the instructional strategies of their teachers. Involvement in the program of the other two feeder primary schools (including Coo loongup Primary School) validated what they were already doing. Nearly all of the secondary teachers have been involved in the project and are utilising the strategies to greater and lesser degrees. There is a high level of enthusiasm from teachers in all schools. Most network meetings (2-3 times per term) are attended by all of the school principals, and this has contributed significantly to the success of the program. Three of these principals are new to their schools in 2007.

Application has been sought to continue the program into 2008, extending it to include a 'train-the-trainer' component that would see local experts (drawn from the first wave) conduct the workshops. The extended program would also include skilling teachers (HODs or equivalent) to observe other teachers teach and then conferencing with them after the event. These teachers would also form an instructional committee for discussion about what is working, what needs improvement and how accountability can be raised within their area. One issue that the schools continue to grapple with is sustainability. Training staff who can train others is directed towards addressing this.

(Based on notes taken in an interview with Mr Mick Churchman, Deputy Principal, Mr Patrick Freese and Ms Juanita Stafford, classroom teachers)

6.9.5 Coo loongup Primary School

Cooloongup Primary School is a feeder school to Safety Bay Senior High School. It opened in 1978 and quickly grew to around 1,000 students. Over the last 5 years student numbers have declined to 383 in 2007. We were able to interview the Acting Principal, Mr Wayne McKay, and a focus group of four classroom teachers.

The School has enjoyed a fairly stable and consistent teaching workforce for much of its history, although the introduction of a merit-based system of teacher appointment (about 5 years ago) coupled with a reduced student population has seen a reduction in permanent teaching positions and a rise in teacher turnover. The last two years, however, have seen more teacher stability. Including its specialists, the School currently has between 15 to 20 teachers.

In 2005, the school adopted a 'Tribes' program (<http://www.tribes.com/>) to inform and provide coherence for a wide range of curricular and community elements of teaching and learning. This program has four basic agreements subscribed to by all staff and students: attentive listening, mutual respect, no put-downs, and the right to pass. Agreement about all four elements now characterises interactions between all staff and students, between students and students, and between staff and staff. All staff – including everyone who works at the School, including teacher assistants, office staff, gardeners and parents – receive Tribes training.

The impetus for the introduction of Tribes was the involvement of some teachers in an AGQTP program on cooperative learning, which had the effect of highlighting their students' lack of social skills required to engage in these learning activities. Tribes provided a way of addressing these shortcomings. The School is now a leader in the District, with four members of staff trained to train others – they have now trained hundreds of teachers throughout the area. In effect, the School is a provider of professional development in Tribes (and CLS and CMS; see below) for the District's teachers.

Tribes provides the school community with a shared set of values and language to talk about their social interactions, which extend to playground interactions between students and often beyond the school to the interactions students have within their families. In classrooms, this shared set of values and language instils confidence in students to contribute their ideas without fear of ridicule and, in the playground, to not accept physical and verbal abuse from others. The Tribes approach is also evident in the school's staff meetings, parent / teacher meetings and student councils, which employ a Tribes 'community circle' approach that provides all with an opportunity to speak without ridicule. Specifically in terms of teachers' professional development, Tribes has helped to break down barriers between individuals, enabling staff to get to know each other better, facilitating mutual respect and a learning approach in the School. Staff are more willing to listen to and learn from others who have expertise in particular areas, to engage in professional dialogue. Hence, in the context of the 'Getting it Right Literacy' and 'First Steps Numeracy' programs operating in the School, the Tribes values and language have enabled the mutual valuing of contributions in moderation sessions among staff, for example. Moreover, 'living' the principles in their own interactions also helps teachers to better employ them in their own interactions with students. Indeed, a particular strength of Tribes is the way it works in with and informs other programs operating at the School. It marries well with the School's emphasis on Cooperative Learning Strategies (CLS), which involves students working in small groups, assuming group roles, sharing between groups (e.g., 'think-pair-share'), and also Classroom Management Strategies.

The latter is a program developed by Mr Peter Smilanich, an academic from Canada, brought out to WA in 2002 by the WA Teachers Union to conduct Level 1 workshops for a number of WA regions around the State. The WA DET became involved a couple of years later in funding a return visit by Mr Smilanich, which enabled some teachers to receive Level 2 or 'consultant' training; effectively, to perpetuate the life of the program by training teachers to train other teachers. CMS assigns specific labels to classroom management strategies: (i) identification of (often well-known) strategies that can be employed, taking them from the unconscious to the conscious level of teaching practices; (ii) a shared language among teachers to describe these strategies (e.g., 'proximity', 'come on back', etc.) so

they can be discussed and employed meaningfully; and (iii) the development of a sense of intensity of strategies (e.g. simple strategies vs informal contracts) that can be matched with different levels of student behaviour, in part to avoid the escalation of behaviour ('bumping') that can occur when an inappropriate strategy is employed. The program seeks to empower teachers to take responsibility for student behaviour in their classroom, to deal with the issues themselves, leading to better working relationships within the classroom.

Five teachers at the School are now trained as Level 2 CMS teachers. This qualifies them to observe another teacher teach a lesson (recorded in written notes) and then discuss this with them at a later time. The discussion (devoid of judgement statements) begins with the observer feeding back to the teacher what they saw and heard (including actual words spoken and actions taken) and providing opportunity for the teacher to comment on what informed their choice of strategies employed at the time. It provides opportunity for affirmation of the strategies learned and exploration by the teacher of other strategies that could be employed. All staff at the School have chosen to be 'conferenced' in this way 2-3 times per semester. This level of commitment means that the CMS language is maintained within the School and is easily transferred to new teachers. All new teachers to the School also receive individual on-site training in their first year in Tribes, CLS and CMS. Informal conversations about CMS also occur between teachers within the staffroom on an ad hoc basis.

The success of the above programs (Tribes, CLS and CMS) in the School is attributed not just to the programs themselves but also to the demonstrated commitment of the School's leadership to these programs and the commitment and involvement of all of its staff (not just teachers). This level of commitment, as much as the value and fit of the programs themselves, has contributed to establishing a professional learning community within the School.

(Based on notes taken in an interview with Mr Wayne McKay, Acting Principal, and Mark, Sue, Annette, and Debra, classroom teachers)

6.9.6 *Christian Brothers College*

Christian Brothers College (CBC), in Fremantle WA, is a Catholic secondary school catering for boys from Years 8 to 12 (with Year 7 to be introduced from 2009). The site was first established as St Patrick's Boys' High School in 1882 and was later acquired by the Christian Brothers in 1901, making it Western Australia's oldest continuous school site. CBC Fremantle is one of a number of schools around the world owned and administered by the Christian Brothers (a Catholic religious order founded by Edmund Rice) and is one of three such schools in the Perth area. It is a school that has long been noted for the high quality of its pastoral care of students. Over the last five years, the school has explicitly sought to couple this with a high quality academic experience for students, which has led to improved student achievements and associated reputation for the school.

Included in this shift has been a focus on the professional development of teachers in relation to teaching and learning within the College, identified in 2003 by Professor Roger Valance (then at the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle) in his invited assessment of the College (known internally as the Valance Report) as an area (among others) requiring improvement. The primary means of addressing this need has been through the introduction of a 'mentoring' program, which involves Heads of Departments conducting non-judgmental observations of their teachers' classroom teaching, observing each teacher in their department once per semester. The approach is modelled on the method of school assessment employed by Professor Valance, who later (2004-2005) instructed Heads of Departments (HOD) on how to conduct such observations.

Teacher mentoring in this context includes the completion of a pre-observation lesson sheet, given to the Head of Department (HOD), outlining what the lesson is about and what the teacher expects from the lesson (including outcomes for students). On this, the teacher indicates one main area of their teaching practice that they want their HOD to focus. Often this is an area of particular importance in the school at the time, in that year (e.g. ‘questioning’ in 2007; ‘behaviour management’ in 2006). The lesson is taught as normal, with the HOD sitting at the back of the classroom taking notes. Following the lesson, the teacher and HOD meet to reflect on the teaching practice in question. The emphasis is on feeding back what is observed in a non-confrontational way, without making judgments about that practice.

Nevertheless, HODs also use the process to identify teachers who demonstrate good practice in the particular focus area. Following observations, each department nominates an exemplar teacher to the College’s Professional Development Committee (PDC) (formed as a direct result of the Valance Report) of HODs and the College’s leadership team. Four teachers are chosen by the PDC to talk to all staff at the start of the next semester about what they do in the focus area. This has contributed to the development of a culture of sharing and openness among staff, and collective celebration of good practice. Informal learning about teaching also occurs through HODs, who share examples of exemplary teaching during individual feedback sessions. It also occurs in ad hoc conversations between teachers, particularly in the context of department meetings. Recently the College has installed a one-way window at the back of one of its classrooms to facilitate opportunities for teachers to observe the teaching practice of other teachers, with minimal intrusion on the class.

(Based on notes taken in an interview with Mr Rob Henderson, Headmaster, Mr Frank Norton, Deputy Headmaster, Mr Mike Masterton, Head of Department, Science, and Mr Owen Thompson, Science Teacher & Housemaster)

6.9.7 *St Thomas Primary School*

The professional development of teachers at this School is informed by a Western Australia Catholic Education Office (CEO) initiative known as RAISe (Raising Achievement in Schools); a program described as a data-driven approach to teaching and learning focused on up-skilling teachers. (For the WA CEO overview of RAISe see http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/learning_k12.asp.) RAISe is predicated on the view that:

- all children can learn; if they are not learning, then adjustment is required;
- it is adjustment to teacher’s practices that makes the difference; and
- the more you invest in teachers’ professional learning, the better their students will perform.

Data gathered in relation to the performance of students at the school is analysed in order to direct teaching at the needs of individual students within classroom situations (i.e. without withdrawing them from classrooms). The program includes up-skilling teachers to be better able to diagnose students’ needs from the data. As part of the RAISe approach, teachers at the School have access to off-site professional development activities offered by the CEO, including instruction in well-known professional development programs such as ‘Reading Recovery’ and ‘Extending Mathematical Understanding’ (EMU). The CEO also offers off-site professional development in areas requested by schools (e.g. writing, word work, reading, etc). More recently, teachers at the School have been involved in CEO-facilitated professional development days involving dialogue between schools, encouraging the sharing of strategies used (teaching practices to meet the needs of all children), how to manage workload, etc. In these dialogues (particularly prevalent during 2007), the school is represented by its Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators and Teacher Leaders. Professional development days (approx 2 per year) involving the school’s leadership team tend to be focused on leadership issues (e.g. RAISe

philosophy, how to give feedback, etc.), whereas professional development days (approx 2 per year) involving the Coordinators tend to be focused on classroom strategies. In addition, teachers have had opportunity to attend a RAISE conference.

As part of the RAISE initiative, and under guidance of the CEO, the school's Teacher Leaders and Coordinators initiated a 'professional learning community' (PLC) of teachers in the School. It began with a meeting to develop a format for the PLC and now involves teachers in readings, discussion, analyses of student data and viewing videos of teacher practices (supplied by the CEO). Meetings are held every fortnight (since 2004) and are minuted, including a record of strategies championed and the task (strategy trial) to be completed between meetings. Minutes are available to staff on the School's central computer. These meetings have led to a shared vocabulary, ideas, understandings, and philosophy in relation to teaching and learning. One outcome of this is that teachers now regularly raise the issue of student data and seek advice on strategies that can be employed to address specific issues in teaching and learning. There has been an increase in and valuing of formal and informal professional talk among teachers, including between junior and upper primary teachers. Other outcomes include the development of a whole school responsibility for student achievement and the willingness of teachers to open their classrooms up to visits by their fellow teachers. This includes planned lessons to model teaching strategies (by teachers in the school and by invited CEO consultants) and opportunities to provide feedback to teachers on their teaching. There is regular celebration of exemplary teaching practice and encouragement for teachers to visit classrooms of exemplary practice (e.g. modelling guided reading) within the school.

(Based on notes from an interview with Mr Mark de Kluyver, Principal, Ms Tanya Giovannangelo, Deputy Principal, and Ms Samantha Valentine, Coordinator.)

6.9.8 *Rockingham John Calvin School*

The Rockingham campus of the John Calvin group (or sub-system) of schools was established in 1994. John Calvin schools are affiliated with the Dutch Heritage Free Reformed group of churches and are administered from a central office in Armadale, WA. John Calvin schools are members of AISWA; one current member of the John Calvin administrative board is also a member of the AISWA Board. The School in Rockingham is one of six John Calvin primary schools offering classes from K to Year 6. The School has 102 students, 4 full time teachers, 4 part time teachers and 5 teacher assistants..

Teachers in the School have access to professional development provided by AISWA. They are also supported in their professional development by teachers and support officers within the John Calvin group. For example, a teacher at another John Calvin school is a qualified First Steps Literacy trainer and has delivered professional development in literacy for teachers at the School. The professional development of teachers in the school is currently focused on LOTE, specifically Dutch, which has been recently introduced as a curriculum area in the school. Consideration was given to introducing Indonesian as the School's LOTE (a language with strong connections to the Dutch community and church, and also taught at the John Calvin middle school), but resources available to the School determined against this. While most teachers at the school are not fluent in Dutch, the new Year 3/4 teacher has recently arrived from Holland, and most have a Dutch heritage and have some knowledge of the language. There are also members of the wider school community who are Dutch speakers.

One teacher at the School, Mr Ben Kramer, leads this professional development of staff as the designated LOTE teacher, drawing on his own involvement in a professional development course in LOTE provided by AISWA and funded by AGQTP. The course was run over a number of sessions and required participants to complete certain tasks between sessions. The course also gave Mr Kramer access to a community of language teachers; other participants in the course were teachers of a variety of languages at other schools. Through Mr Kramer's leading and his colleagues involvement in the teaching of Dutch, the School has come to a new

understanding of how to teach a LOTE that does not require expert knowledge of the language and is not predicated on a grammatical or themed vocabulary approach to its teaching but an understanding of a particular teaching methodology or strategy focused on learning meaningful chunks of text. Specifically, the School has instituted an immersion approach to teaching LOTE. Dutch is taught through the other subjects in the curriculum; it becomes a medium of instruction and interaction, albeit constrained by teachers' and students' knowledge of the language, and reinforced by putting the language to use. Lesson planning in the full range of subjects now includes planning the Dutch that the teacher and students will use and how that will be assessed.

In terms of teachers' professional development, this strategy has worked particularly well at the School because the LOTE teacher is a classroom teacher (of Year 1/2); in small schools, teachers often have several responsibilities. Also, in this strategic approach to teaching LOTE and because of the constraints of a small school, much of the LOTE teaching is undertaken by classroom teachers, supported by the LOTE teacher. This has meant that staff have had to work together in developing their understanding of the approach and in the development of resources. Unlike other languages, there are few textbooks that support the teaching of Dutch, and translating activities from other language textbooks does not take account of the cultural differences involved. Moreover, a textbook approach is antithetical to the immersion approach adopted by the school. This has required Mr Kramer and his colleagues to collectively develop and share resources in the teaching of Dutch that are culturally specific to their own situation, drawing on the resources (e.g. Dutch books) and individuals (Dutch speakers) available to them within the wider school community. It has also positioned the teachers as learners alongside their students. As part of this resource development, the school is producing a teachers' support document (containing lesson plans, games ideas, songs, task ideas, etc.) to develop a sense of continuity within each class and a scope and sequencing of the LOTE across the curriculum and across the School. This is being developed in conjunction with the John Calvin schools curriculum support officer, who is keen for the approach to be adopted across the John Calvin sub-system. Mr Kramer has become an advocate for the approach to teaching LOTE within John Calvin schools.

(Based on notes taken in an interview with Mr Nico Louw, Principal, and Mr Ben Kramer, Lead Teacher)

6.9.9 School of Education, Edith Cowan University (ECU)

The School of Education is the largest School at Edith Cowan University with a cohort of around 3500 students and 100 academic staff (FTE), producing 800-900 graduates per year. The School offers courses in Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Education in the preparation of beginning teachers, as well as a range of postgraduate coursework and research degree programs for teachers and other educators seeking to advance their knowledge in the field. The School sits at the core of the institution's history, which started as a Teachers College and later became a CAE and then a University. This history is regarded as informing the School's current practical orientation within its activities. For example, it is seeking to develop its reputation in research *and* development, as interrelated activities, and has a strong focus on the impact of these endeavours particularly within schools and school sectors. This is most strongly evident in the areas of literacy, numeracy, science education, ICTs, and behaviour and classroom management, which form the key areas of the School's research and development activities.

Hence, the work of the School's literacy research and development group (specifically Professor Bill Loudon and Ms Judith Riverland) has informed the development of teacher professional development approaches and materials in literacy, in close association (particularly Ms Riverland) with WA school sectors (DET, CEO, AISWA). For example, in addition to traditional research outcomes (e.g. data analysis, report, etc.), the *In Teachers' Hands* research project produced video materials (of highly effective teachers in action; micro teaching strategies) that are used in professional development sessions as well as the School's undergraduate and postgraduate teaching programs; thereby feeding the products of research back into professional learning activities. The intent of this research and development is to complement previous professional development in literacy (e.g. First Steps Literacy: a general skilling of teachers in literacy teaching; Reading

Recovery: intensive work with a withdrawn group of struggling readers) by focusing on more specific teaching strategies that can be employed with students within classrooms.

Following a similar approach, the *Science Connections* project (involving academics from a number of universities, including Mark Hathaway) began as a research project that then produced professional development materials and activities in Science Education based on the findings of the research. There are similar illustrations of this approach in each of the School's key research areas.

(Based on notes taken in an interview with Professor Greg Robson, Head of School)

6.9.10 Steps Professional Development Australia

Steps Professional Development Australia is a private company (owned by Edith Cowan University) offering approximately 9 different professional development 'products' to (school) teachers. *First Steps Literacy* (now in its second edition) is the company's first and best known product and one of its most significant. It is now complemented by others, such as: *First Steps Mathematics*, *Stepping Out*, *VET steps*, and so on. (A full list is available from the company's web site.)

While Steps Professional Development is wholly owned by Edith Cowan University, most of the intellectual property invested in its resources is owned by the WA Department of Education and Training (DET). Edith Cowan University won the licence to utilise these resources through a tender process, which included establishing Steps Professional Development to manage these. A royalty continues to be paid to WA DET for the use of its intellectual property and resources. The University, through Steps Professional Development, also acts on behalf of WA DET in offering these resources outside the state and Australia. To this end, it has established branches in the USA, UK, and New Zealand. Within WA, Steps Professional Development offers its programs to teachers and schools in the Catholic and Independent sectors. Outside the state, it is not restricted in its potential participants. With the recent return of Service Areas Curriculum Consultants back into WA government schools, Districts in WA will now be able to access First Steps Literacy and Mathematics professional development through Steps Professional Development.

Steps Professional Development adopts a 'train the trainer' model in its professional development programs. Its initial negotiations are with school clusters, parts of sectors (e.g., a Catholic Diocese) and whole sectors (e.g., a state Association of Independent Schools). Negotiations include agreements regarding hours of training (12 hrs), the prepared materials that each teacher receives from Steps, and the (geographical and sector) limits placed on teachers in training others. Teachers representing the schools in these clusters/sectors (e.g., 1 or 2 from each participating school) attend sessions delivered by Steps Professional Development. (Occasionally, although rarely, Steps Professional Development will conduct professional development for one entire school, although it is more cost effective for this to be achieved by training one staff member who can facilitate the training of others.) Facilitator training involves three parts: (i) as a 'user', as the classroom teacher would experience the training; (ii) training in presenting the materials to others; and (iii) follow up support. Teachers who successfully complete this training are then 'licensed' to train their colleagues in the specific professional development course (e.g., *First Steps Literacy*).

(Based on notes taken in an interview with Mr Kevlynn Annandale, Marketing Manager)

6.10 REFERENCES

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CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report has not been to reach any definitive judgment about the most effective forms of professional learning. For reasons given within the report, it is not easy to say that one form of professional learning is better than another. Yet there nonetheless appears to be general agreement about the importance of professional learning, as well as strong consensus with regard to the conditions in which professional learning ought to take place.

Importantly, it must be noted that among the key findings of this report, two are fundamental to our understanding of professional learning in the 21st century. These are that

- professional learning is an important form of capacity building, and is a lever for reform at both school and system-wide levels; and that
- professional learning is no longer perceived to be an add-on, but is viewed as an integral part of teachers' professional lives which best occurs over a sustained period of time, instead of one-off professional development sessions which are generally perceived to be of little value.

In addition, teachers generally affirm the crucial importance of professional learning as a means for them to meet the ongoing challenges they face. This is experienced by them as a professional and personal obligation. They are mindful of the need to develop their capacity to negotiate relationships with both their students and the community at large within a changing socio-economic climate. They are acutely aware that society is changing, and that they need to be able to equip their students with the skills and understandings necessary to find a place in the new world that is being created.

As a 'mapping' exercise, this report refrains from making any direct recommendations with respect to professional learning. It attempts, instead, to distil the foregoing analysis into a set of 'Guidelines for Quality Professional Learning'. These guidelines are based on what key players have reported to us in the interview and survey data about their experiences of professional learning and also on the consensus that appears to have emerged about the kinds of professional learning which require support and investment. We have attempted to capture those experiences in the form of succinct statements about what teachers and other educational stakeholders feel is quality professional learning.

Some of the initiatives which interviewees described to the research team appeared to be especially innovative, indicating fresh new directions that might open a window to the future, and these have also informed the following guidelines. It would be worthwhile for systems and schools to seriously consider many of the initiatives described in the foregoing report because of the promise they show.

The 'Guidelines for Quality Professional Learning' are drawn from the key findings of this whole mapping exercise, as outlined in the Introduction (pp. 1-8). They address five key foci: (i) Teachers' work; (ii) Planning for professional learning; (iii) Fostering professional learning relationships; (iv) A culture of inquiry; and (v) Accountability. The guidelines build on what is currently being accomplished by teachers, schools and systems, rather than pretending to be a 'new broom'. It is intended that they assist education authorities and DEEWR in supporting quality professional learning.

7.1 GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Teachers' work

1. Professional learning should be explicitly embedded within teachers' work.

It seems clear that in order to develop capacity with respect to teacher professional learning, such learning should be explicitly embedded within teachers' work. This would mean that professional learning should be fully accounted for when determining teachers' workloads given that professional learning is now recognised as a vital component of any school or system-wide reform. It is not something that can be traded off against other conditions, such as face-to-face teaching time.

To acknowledge that professional learning is integral to teachers' work is not to suppose that all learning takes place on site and within school time. Some of the richest professional learning occurs in periods of time set apart from the day to day imperatives of teaching and learning, when teachers have the opportunity to engage in intense and focused critical learning. While, with sufficient resourcing, such spaces for professional learning can be created as part of the school day, it is also necessary to recognise that teachers actively seek out opportunities for professional learning beyond their immediate school environment. Amongst other things, such professional learning can take the form of involvement in a professional association, formal enrolment in a university course, or a period of leave dedicated to professional learning. Teachers need to be supported in their efforts to do this.

This understanding of professional learning also presupposes that learning needs to be supported over a sustained period of time. Many of the teachers who were interviewed were critical of professional learning designed simply to support short term initiatives or fads. They saw themselves as engaging in *continuing* inquiry that contributes to achieving worthwhile and sustainable educational reform. They felt that both school reform and professional learning needed to be understood within a larger time frame, and not simply as relentless waves of reform that are continually displaced by new policies or pedagogical bandwagons.

2. Professional learning should be diverse, and appropriate to individuals' and groups' needs.

It is vital that a diverse range of professional learning programs and activities be developed, and that these programs and activities are appropriate to teachers' particular professional needs and the needs of the students they teach. Given the diversity of school communities around Australia, it is inevitable that professional learning will take a range of forms in response to the specific needs of those communities. Research indicates that professional learning typically has a deeply situated or local character, and that teachers need to be given support in their efforts to recognise and respond to the needs of their local communities.

Professional learning that addresses identified needs in one setting is unlikely to be simply transferable to another setting. As the literature review shows, 'one-size-fits-all', teacher-proof packages run counter to what research suggests about the deeply situated nature of professional learning. When schools adopt packages, or become involved in networks that utilize common frameworks or approaches, they typically modify the ideas they are importing to suit their local needs.

With respect to the question of the effectiveness of professional learning, it seems clear that a diversity of approaches is more likely to yield insights into the nature of professional learning and how it might most productively be applied. There is no single way when it comes to effective professional learning. Rather, teachers engaging in professional learning should be given support to cultivate a reflexive approach to the learning they are experiencing, and to monitor carefully the value of what they have learned when they apply new understandings to their professional practice. Professional learning should itself be a focus for sustained inquiry in order to understand its complexity and likely potential.

Planning for professional learning

3. Professional learning should involve strategic planning, at system-wide, school and individual levels.

A balance needs to be achieved between system-wide initiatives and mandates and the professional needs of teachers working within specific local communities. Any strategic planning for professional learning at a school level involves negotiating between school priorities, particular curriculum requirements, government or education authority priorities and the professional learning needs of teachers as they perceive them.

Governments, systems, regions, networks of schools, individual schools, groups of teachers within schools, and individual teachers need to share the responsibility of planning for professional learning. Alongside planning for students' learning, planning for teacher professional learning should receive sustained and focused attention, as a necessary condition to enhancing students' learning and engagement in schooling.

Fostering professional learning relationships

4. Teachers should be encouraged to develop and/or extend professional networks with colleagues.

This report has shown that extensive professional learning networks exist between teachers, between schools, between professional associations and other educational organisations. It would seem likely that teachers' professional capacities would be enhanced if these networks were consolidated and (where appropriate) extended, with structures to facilitate and support the development of new professional learning networks. These networks could be face-to-face, online (utilising ICT initiatives), or a combination of both. Governments might consider funding incentives for schools to develop and/or participate in such networks as a form of capacity building. While professional learning has a deeply situated and local character, it is also vital that teachers be able to share their professional learning in forums that extend beyond their school communities and that they have access to a wider range of ideas and perspectives than is available to them in their local community.

5. Sectors should be encouraged to work collaboratively in cross-sectoral partnerships.

Sectors (i.e., state, Catholic, independent, TAFE) have already begun working together in some jurisdictions. The success of these collaborations suggests that it would be productive to encourage cross-sectoral partnerships which manage, support and enable the development of ongoing professional learning programs and activities. There are educational challenges in common across the sectors, and it would be generative for all concerned if sectors engaged more often, and over longer periods, in collaborative projects in an effort to address those challenges.

6. Schools and teachers should be encouraged to form and develop a range professional learning partnerships.

This guideline relates to the desirability of teachers accessing and participating in strong and integrated professional learning partnerships including:

- **Industry.** Of note in this respect is the way governments encourage and seek to develop school and industry partnerships that facilitate and promote teacher professional learning;
- **Community groups (including parents).** The survey indicates that teachers desire to form stronger links with their school's communities. We appear to have reached an historical moment when teacher professional learning might be directed towards a better understanding of community needs and school/community relations. Governments at both a state and federal level and non government education authorities might encourage and seek to develop relationships between schools and community groups (including parents) that facilitate and promote such learning. Often these might be in single projects or programs that address particular learning needs of a school and its teachers. Existing partnerships between schools and community groups should be consolidated and extended through funding incentives, and both schools and community groups should be encouraged to build and develop such partnerships. In this respect, the establishment of the Family School and Community Partnership Bureau, to be owned and managed by the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSO) and the Australian Parents' Council (APC), is a welcome initiative;
- **Professional associations.** There is a great deal of productive work being done by professional associations at both a state and federal level with respect to curriculum reform, and the way that curriculum reform impacts on the work of teachers. It would seem appropriate, therefore, for systems and sectors to work closely with professional teacher associations in developing professional learning programs and initiatives, being mindful of the networks, knowledge and expertise that these associations represent and bring to teachers' professional learning; and
- **Universities.** Historically, there have always been projects developed between schools and universities that have supported and enabled professional learning around the country. Now, there are several interesting examples of partnerships between schools and universities that facilitate and promote teacher professional learning, beyond single one-off projects. These partnerships are often established in order to address government priorities, and they sometimes reflect productive partnerships between schools and governments. This mapping project has shown how schools have pro-actively sought support from the university sector, encouraging academics to work alongside their staff, participating in joint-inquiry in order to address key issues. Academics who become involved in local school reform help teachers to extend their research skills, both with respect to understanding data and engaging in practitioner inquiry, such as action learning and action research. Some of the schools visited for this project were supporting their staff to complete university degrees, as they felt that a tertiary course would give them the capacity to engage in the kind of sustained and systematic inquiry necessary to bring about change. This suggests it will be worthwhile to review existing partnerships between schools and universities, in order to develop strategies for consolidating and extending such partnerships. Time and again these partnerships are shown to be mutually beneficial to the needs of schools and the universities.

A culture of inquiry

7. ***Teaching should be recognised as engaging in continuing inquiry into practice, and this inquiry should be recognised as strongly collegial and collaborative in nature.***

The aforementioned partnerships between schools and tertiary institutions are designed to give teachers the knowledge and skills to engage in independent inquiry into their professional practice. If, between 2000 and 2008, 'professional learning' has displaced 'professional development' as the way to describe the reflection and

inquiry in which teachers engage, then it is tempting to speculate that a future mapping exercise might show that ‘practitioner inquiry’ has become the term educators use to name this dimension of their work. This tendency manifests itself in a number of ways:

- through focused attempts by teachers to develop the skills of collaborative inquiry, both qualitative and quantitative;
- through supplementing teachers’ school-based inquiries with an increased capacity to read research and engage in statistical data on school and individual student performance;
- through engaging in practices such as lesson observation and debriefing, and through moderation of students’ work – i.e., critical reflection on day-to-day practices that have always been part of teachers’ work; and
- through mentoring early career teachers into the profession, and making the complexities of teaching and learning a shared object of inquiry. (In this respect the structures which systems have put in place to support the induction of early career teachers are very significant.)

These initiatives show how teachers’ learning is embedded in their work. They also reflect the collegial and collaborative nature of that learning. Rather than drawing a line between teaching, professional learning, and instruction, they bring these dimensions of teachers’ work together as integral parts of teachers’ professional commitment to their students and the communities in which they work. Teachers live and enact that commitment on a daily basis, entering into dialogue with their students, colleagues, parents, and others. In so doing, they seek to better understand their work and to enhance the learning, well being and opportunities of the young people in their classrooms.

8. *Systems (including Teacher Registration Bodies) and schools should work together to share their historical and contemporary knowledge about inducting early career teachers into the profession.*

In schools and systems where induction of early career teachers into the profession is perceived to be most effective, this induction is not seen simply as performance appraisal of early career teachers. Rather, it is a fundamental part of forward thinking policy and practice with respect to professional learning. It is preferable for the professional learning of early career teachers to be supported through a range of school-based professional learning experiences, often within a school’s mentoring program, and for these to be complemented and enriched by opportunities to form or join networks with teachers in other schools (especially early career teachers). Such an approach reflects a spirit of inquiry and collegial support for the new generation of teachers coming into the profession. It reflects an awareness that such support is crucial for attracting and retaining quality teachers in the profession and it helps the induction of early career teachers into a culture of continuing professional learning and inquiry.

Accountability

9. *Governments, Teacher Registration Bodies and schools themselves should investigate and value a variety of evidence in accounting for teachers’ professional learning.*

Systems, organisations, schools, groups of teachers and individual teachers need to plan for, and participate in, longer-term collaborative teacher professional learning. This professional learning could include forms of practitioner inquiry in which teachers engage in a rigorous program of critical reflection, and in which they actively seek to develop their knowledge and improve their practice. Indeed, there is strong evidence to suggest that systems have been able to induct and encourage schools into various forms of practitioner inquiry such as action learning, action research and reflective inquiry into practice. These forms tend to respect and affirm teachers' autonomy and professional judgements at the local level, and do not impose rigid system-wide processes or methods on those teachers.

Teachers might be encouraged to form professional learning teams and to build mentoring (and co-mentoring) professional relationships, but the nature of any collaboration will vary according to particular schools' and teachers' needs, settings and curriculum contexts. It would seem best for systems at a federal or state level to avoid imposing specific requirements for a mentoring program or professional learning team structure, and to encourage a range of approaches to accountability. Local bodies and schools might be encouraged to investigate their own accountability measures rather than rely on prescriptive assessment instruments or protocols for measuring the effectiveness of all mentoring programs and all professional learning team initiatives.

There is a variety of quantitative and qualitative evidence for rendering teachers accountable for their professional learning, which some systems, schools and teachers are currently using and which others might use in the future. This evidence could include various forms of data, both qualitative and quantitative, without privileging any single measure or account of professional learning, be it qualitative or quantitative, over others.

7.2 FURTHER RESEARCH

This mapping exercise has been extensive in the scope of its information gathering, in quantitative and qualitative forms, and in the depth and diversity of analysis of this information. The consultations with schools and stakeholders, along with the results of the surveys of schools and teachers, have revealed much about the landscape of teacher professional learning in Australia in 2007-8.

Since the publication of *PD 2000*, it is apparent that certain trends in professional learning policy and practice that were emerging eight years ago have now become widely accepted in the profession and amongst stakeholders. And there would seem to be significant changes in some areas. In the cases in Chapters 5 and 6, we have been able provide some level of detail about individual practices and policies that appear to be contributing to rich and productive professional learning by teachers in those particular settings. Nevertheless, there is much detail about the ways in which different communities of teachers build professional knowledge that a project of this scope can only rarely capture. More in-depth research into the particularities of the work of communities and networks of teachers would be a useful complement to the knowledge gleaned through this project.

Research that investigates the ways in which professional learning has been useful as a lever for school reform (at local and systems levels), especially with respect to professional standards, would be very helpful for future policy making at all levels.

When making comparisons between professional development policy and practice in the year 2000 and the current professional learning landscape in 2007-8, it has been necessary to proceed with some caution. Educational, professional and industrial environments have become so much more complex. For instance, the proliferation of professional standards, the establishment of Teacher Registration Bodies in most jurisdictions, and the introduction of new registration and re-registration requirements in the years since *PD 2000* have had a fundamental impact on the way teachers learn and develop.

Another reason for exercising caution in making comparisons between practices and policies in 2000 and 2007-8 relates to the decision, at the outset of this project, to closely align the questions in the 2007-8 survey with the set of questions asked in the 2000 survey. In a much changed professional environment, teachers were being asked in the 2007-8 survey to ‘consider professional development as activities which are more formally defined as contributing to your professional knowledge’ (see Appendix 4). It became clear in the consultations that for most teachers and stakeholders this traditional framing of ‘professional development’ was already being replaced by more flexible, hybrid and inquiry-based professional learning programs and activities. This would suggest that some of the results of the 2007-8 surveys need to be followed up by inquiry that further investigations for instance, teachers’ responses to questions about their involvement in ‘formal professional development’. Do they see this ‘formal’ involvement as different from, or related to, their engagement in other forms of professional learning?

In both the surveys and the consultations, a wide range of other issues have emerged and warrant further research. We shall conclude by posing some additional questions which strike us as being especially important:

- How do schools evaluate the value or effectiveness of their professional learning programs?
- How much of the funding for professional learning is set aside for this evaluation?
- How much funding is set aside for traditional or formal ‘professional development’?
- How much funding is provided for the development and sustaining of flexible, inquiry-based projects, networks and partnerships?
- How might schools and systems better address teachers’ desires for more professional learning in the area of parental and community involvement?
- How might schools and systems better address teachers’ desires for more professional learning in how best to teach and support Indigenous and refugee children in schools?
- When teachers (as in Table 4.29) report that their professional practice has ‘changed’ due to the professional learning in which they have engaged, what do they mean by ‘change’?
- How might it be possible to enable those teachers who report that their professional development has had no impact on their work to engage in professional learning that does enhance their teaching?

The way these issues are addressed will decisively shape the nature of teacher professional learning in the near future. By the year 2016 teachers’ professional learning will no doubt differ from the learning which teachers experience in 2008, just as the learning reported in this document differs from the professional development described in *PD 2000*.

This report has described and analysed the basic principles that shape professional learning at the current moment. The respondents to the surveys, as well as the school leaders, teachers and other stakeholders who have been interviewed around the country all affirmed the need for educators to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century. There is no doubt that it is vitally important to reach a better understanding of the nature of professional learning and the way quality professional learning enhances the learning of students in Australian schools. This report provides a basis on which to reach such an understanding. It is hoped that it will be a useful platform for the development of models of good practice in teacher professional learning to meet the needs of the future.

7.3 WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The surveys and interview data in this report illustrate the crucial role that DEEWR has played in promoting quality teacher professional learning in Australia.

In particular, DEEWR's AGQTP has been a positive and important intervention in an environment that continues to support a rich diversity of professional learning models and practices. AGQTP has recognised quality in much of this diversity, and has provided distinctive leadership and an effective framework for professional learning in a complex educational landscape.

Much has been learned about quality and capacity building in teacher professional learning. Much continues to be learned. It would be of value to systems, professional associations, universities and schools to explore the dynamic range of possibilities, programs and processes that allow teachers to embed their professional learning within their teaching roles. Part of this exploration could involve developing imaginative structures for teachers' learning to be recognised as fundamental to their teaching and fundamental to the ongoing project of improving outcomes for student learning and well being.

Given the integral role that professional learning is currently playing in educational reform, it would be of value to DEEWR and to educational authorities to explicitly scrutinise any project for reform with respect to the model of professional learning embedded within it. It seems clear from the interviews conducted for this project, that educational reform cannot be sustained without ensuring that it involves quality professional learning, or at least well-developed professional learning strategies designed to support teachers in their efforts to address the needs of their students. Put simply, sustained educational reform in Australia's future relies on vibrant cultures of ongoing professional learning by Australia's teachers with governments and educational communities working together to support and enhance this learning.