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## ***Raising the Standing of Teachers and Teaching***

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## ***Introduction - Raising the Standing of Teachers and Teaching***

This paper is a summary of work undertaken by the Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of Teaching (MACQT) Working Party on the Standing of Teachers and Teaching. It is based on four papers prepared by the Working Party:

- The Image of Teachers and Teaching
- Meeting the Challenges of Change
- Schools and their Community
- Teacher Educators and Teacher Education.

The purpose of this document is to highlight the key issues arising from those papers and to outline possible strategies that could be implemented to improve the standing of teachers and teaching. The attachment to the paper sets out a framework of responsibility and action. At this stage, it has not been possible to establish priorities for action. This is an aspect still to be addressed.

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Prepared by K.J. Eltis,  
with assistance from S.J. Crump,  
University of Sydney.

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## *2. Meeting the Challenges of Change*

Prepared by K.J. Eltis,  
with assistance from S.J. Crump,  
University of Sydney.

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### ***3. Schools and Their Community***

Prepared by the  
NSW Department of School Education

Additional Material by K.J. Eltis,  
with assistance from S.J. Crump,  
University of Sydney.

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Prepared by Mark McFadden and Bob Meyenn

Charles Sturt University

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## ***issues, strategy and action***

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### **issue**

Improved links between schools and their communities

### **strategy**

Develop positive partnerships between schools and their communities

### **actions**

- Provide teachers with skills for interaction with parents and diverse communities through initial teacher education and professional development
- Provide schools with resources such as case studies and resource kits to assist with interaction
- Publicise benefits to the community of being involved with schools and target traditionally resistant communities
- Identify and publicise best practice in school / community interaction in a range of settings involving a variety of activities
- Provide opportunities for key members of community / business to undertake sessional teaching, guest roles in appropriate curriculum areas
- Extend professional development opportunities for teachers to understand links between education and employment and between general and vocational curriculum
- Accompany policy directives with timely, accessible, widely disseminated information.

### **issue**

The image of teaching and teachers

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## **strategy**

Promote positive images of teaching and teachers

## **actions**

- Introduce school 'quality awards' based on quality improvement and benchmarking criteria
- Publicise lighthouse schools across government and non-government sectors
- Publicise pre-requisites for entry to teacher education programs to debunk myths about low level entrants
- Develop a Professional Code of Practice for the Teaching Profession
- Introduce teacher registration system to control standards of entry to and continuation in the teaching profession
- Launch regular media campaigns at key points in the educational calendar
- Provide opportunities for school leaders to develop skills in public and media relations
- Introduce Minister's awards for educational journalism that promote the image of teachers
- Use forum established in Salaries Agreement to reduce public, adversarial nature of industrial negotiations
- Review pre-requisites for teaching at primary and secondary levels.

## **issue**

The changing nature of teachers' work

## **strategy**

Support the profession and increase awareness of the complexity and quality of teachers' work

## **actions**

- Develop and publicise profiles of successful teachers in range of roles and situations
- Publicise range of responsibilities that teachers undertake including pastoral care
- Publicise the impact of technological change and other major social and economic changes on teachers work
- Support teachers in developing skills for new curriculum areas such as vocational education and computer education
- Involve teachers in the development and process of change and analysis of its impact
- Establish lead times for change and provide appropriate training and development

- Introduce an annual teachers forum that focuses attention on quality teaching
- Develop a set of professional standards that identifies the competencies required of all teachers
- Introduce and promote examples of flexible school operations
- Recognise administrative and curriculum tasks in industrial agreements
- Involve teachers in performance appraisal programs including peer review.

## **issue**

Selection, recruitment and retention of high quality teachers

## **strategy**

Promote positive aspects of teaching as a career

## **actions**

- Broaden criteria for entry to teacher education to attract entrants from diverse backgrounds
- Review policies on retraining for teachers wishing to re-enter the profession
- Research composition of entrants to the profession and identify trends
- Work through professional organisations to encourage teachers and career advisers to promote teaching as a career to prospective trainees
- Publicise quality work produced by teacher trainees
- Review incentives and rewards for teachers such as sabbaticals, formal recognition of professional development.

## **issue**

The quality of teacher education

## **strategy**

Ensure teacher education programs are seen as current, relevant and rigorous.

## **actions**

- Publish program criteria eg. course objectives, entry and exit requirements
- Publicise processes used to keep teacher educators up to date with knowledge and skills such as interchanges between teacher

educators and classroom practitioners

- Expand practical aspects of teacher education programs such as practicum and internships
- Promote closer, more formal relationships between education employers and teacher educators
- Develop mechanism for formal external accreditation of teacher education programs
- Develop a centre for innovation and research in teacher education
- Review the ` *Desirable Attributes of Beginning Teachers* ' document and examine its relevance in the context of the development of a set of professional standards that identifies the competencies required of all teachers.

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### **systems**

Promote and publicise:

- Profiles of successful teachers in range of roles
- Impact of technological, social and economic change on teachers work
- School quality awards and lighthouse schools
- Advantages of and best practice in community involvement in schools in range of settings and situations
- Information to support major change

Consult and Introduce:

- Code of Professional Practice
- Teacher Registration as gatekeeper to profession
- Award for educational journalism
- Forum with focus on teachers' work

Provide professional development:

- Media and public relations skills
- Skills for new curriculum areas
- Training and development to support change initiatives
- Skills to understand links between education and employment and general and vocational education
- Skills for interaction with community and industry

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### In consultation with teacher unions:

- Recognise administrative and curriculum tasks in industrial agreements
- Use forum to reduce adversarial nature of industrial negotiations
- Review incentives and rewards eg sabbatical, recognition of professional development
- Involve teachers in performance appraisal programs including peer review
- Develop competency frameworks that reflect the diversity of teachers work and career patterns.

### In consultation with universities:

- Broaden criteria for entry to teacher education courses
- Research entrants to the profession and identify trends
- Develop teacher education accreditation system
- Develop centre for research and innovation in teacher education
- Review 'Desirable Attributes of Beginning Teachers'
- Review pre-requisites for teaching at primary and secondary levels
- Promote closer, formal relations between providers of teacher education and teacher employers
- Promote positive aspects of teacher education.

## **schools**

- Identify and target communities that require innovative involvement approaches
- Extend range of information sources on student achievement
- Encourage teachers to promote teaching as a career to prospective trainees
- Provide opportunities for members of communities and business to undertake sessional teaching, guest roles in appropriate curriculum areas
- Publicise student and teacher achievements at local level
- Provide professional development opportunities to enhance teacher skills and morale.

## **parents and community**

- Work with schools to improve community links
- Work with schools and systems to implement change
- Promote positive images of students and teachers.



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## *the dilemma of being of a teacher*

Being a teacher in the 1990s is very much an active proposition. A consistent, at times formidable, agenda has been run about how schools and teachers should respond to the growing demands made by employers and by changing expectations in the general public. This agenda threatens to stretch the capacity of teachers to cope with the daily routine of their work as well as place that work in the context of a recognised need for ongoing professional development and structural reforms.

Teachers have demonstrated over the last decade a healthy willingness to participate in what is now called a learning organisation. Despite periods of public protest over specific reforms, teachers in NSW have worked constructively to ensure that the commitment to their profession is one both building on clear traditions of pedagogy and public service as well as charting new ways forward particularly for curriculum renewal. But this is the dilemma. While ever so much that teachers be and do occurs on the basis of goodwill, personal (intrinsic) motivation and occupational morale, society risks tearing the heart of its schools by continuing to insist that change should be based on the presumption that teachers and teaching have a justified poor image.

Thoughtful response to new challenges can not occur in a climate of disrespect, even abuse. Being a teacher in the 1990s means maintaining a strong belief in what you do balanced against a perception that whatever you do may not be enough for some of whom you serve. This requires bifocal vision: one focus on the short-term achievements of your pupils, the other on the long-term needs of yourself, your workplace, your employer and your profession. Arguable, no other group in our society faces this dilemma with so little extrinsic reward.

**Society is ambivalent about the way it values our teachers and schools.** So much is expected of the teaching profession yet so often those dedicated educators in our schools receive little public praise - as against individual and private - for their efforts. Regularly, writers report on the major problems of the teaching profession: how education is letting the country down, how unions are undermining schools, how there is a flagging of the spirit and a loss in morale (see for example, Schools

Council, 1990). Brian Scott, in his final report on how to 'renew' NSW government schooling, concluded that at the end of the 1980s, 'morale is down, and cynicism is up amongst teachers and staff' (Scott, 1990: xiv).

While there are grounds for optimism about establishing a new image for the teaching profession, substantial obstacles remain for teachers to overcome - one of which is themselves - an issue raised in the NSW Report *Teacher Education, Directions and Strategies* (1990: Minister's Foreword):

*The key to quality education and necessary education reform lies not with reform strategies, but with individual teachers in the classroom. Teachers will play the central role in improving educational standards and opportunities in our schools in the years ahead.*

The problem is that the general public is not openly appreciative of teachers even though over recent years teachers have made an effort to absorb many extra tasks and responsibilities in order to do the best for those coming to school. There is a need, therefore, to give a high profile to the work of teachers and the contribution schools make to support young people as they grow up to confront a confused and confusing world. In particular, **society needs insights into how teachers are compelled to meet as best they can the needs of all students** and give them maximum opportunity to make something of themselves. As Connors (1992: 16) argued:

*The public school system remains one of the major institutions we have created to serve our young people in their own right, irrespective of the circumstances over which they have no control...a good school ... is the school providing the best education available for every child, including the child whose parent is not around to pay fees or keep watch - or who is careless, luckless or unworthy.*

*In public policy, there is little recognition of, or sympathy for, the sheer social and intellectual difficulty of what we ask of our children. (...) There is consequently little sympathy for the fact that teaching... is difficult - in fact, it would not be unfair to say that one of the competencies teachers need is the ingenuity, sometimes the sheer guile, to lure young people, by non-violent means, away from things they would much rather be doing, to address themselves to learning what adults think they need to know.* (1992: 8).

For the current generation of teachers the compass of educational work has expanded well beyond that experienced in the past. Further, **there is a perception of instability associated with working conditions, teaching content and the school as an organisation** (changing spheres of responsibility and authority). It can be argued that this expansion in work load and practice is being handled in an increasingly professional way. An OECD Report (1990) referred to conditions across OECD member countries as "What once could have been seen as exceptional devotion to duty has now become seen as normal practice". Some examples are:

- Teachers are required to carry ever increasing levels of responsibility to assist the young, to cope with a rapidly changing world and one where the future appears a lot less clear or certain.
- \* Teachers work more closely with their communities to improve understanding of the achievements of schools and of the complex circumstances and conditions under which schools operate.
- Teachers have become increasingly professional, sophisticated and effective in all they do both inside and outside the school through inservice professional development, National Schools Network summer schools, and further study in higher degrees.
- The growth in knowledge in contemporary society means teachers have become better skilled and keep up-to-date with educational thinking and technological developments.

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## *the changing status of teachers*

One of the clearest indicators of the image of teachers is the changing status they enjoy in the community, particularly post World War Two. The declining status of teachers in society has been outlined by Dinham and Scott (1996: 6) and the implications arising from this for practising teachers in particular [Appendix 1]. Teacher stress and dissatisfaction with their image is one factor leading to industrial stoppages over salary issues but, while disputes concerning teachers are news, it has been noted in the NSW Industrial Commission that the unobtrusive public service rendered in the routine of their daily work is not.

Student disrespect toward teachers is another factor that reflects personal as well as societal attitudes towards teachers and the teaching profession. **The status of teachers has been eroded to a point where teachers feel themselves devalued as professionals.** This acts to increase the reluctance of potentially good teachers to enter the profession. However, one element of teaching that applies to teachers considering professional preparation programs, as well as serving teachers, is that intrinsic rewards often compensate for, and are valued above extrinsic rewards such as status and a just salary.

Some commentators claim there is a crisis in the teaching profession (Porter, 1990), while others point to low morale (Bagnall, 1995), and the erosion of credibility. The difficulty is that teaching is not a homogeneous profession formed of uniform parts. In NSW, public schools compete with a broad spectrum of private schools that enrol approximately 30% of school-age children. Non-government schools have often been perceived generally to have better learning conditions. However, this is certainly no longer the case, if ever it was. There is almost as much variety within government and non-government schools as there is between them. From an external examination performance perspective, many government schools score highly in HSC rankings (sometimes despite their local image) and the schools involved are not necessarily government selective schools. **A lack of sensitivity to these shifts in school image often precludes a better understanding of the image of teachers.**

There are other differences such as those between primary and secondary

and tertiary level teachers and the different perceptions of status within the levels. For example, within secondary schools there are perceived differences still in some sites between subject/course area status amongst faculties [English, Maths, Computing and the Sciences versus TAS and the Creative Arts], differences that translate into student subject selections as well as into selection of specialists areas for teacher training.

There are further differences arising from the growth of public selective schools, specialist schools and senior high school sites which take on a higher status even though the staffing policy for each is exactly the same as any other school - but the public seem to believe (and expect?) that teachers in these schools are "better" [such as being more highly trained, better qualified, better in the classroom] and capable of delivering a specialised and very rigorous curriculum.

**Technological and Further Education, and Vocational and Educational Training sector teacher status is undergoing change with relevance to work gaining worth and value.** Nonetheless, the public perception of VET educators is that they do not match the status of university lecturers, mainly because they have fewer opportunities to undertake research which attracts positive media attention to this level of teaching. The lack of uniformity in teaching thus leads to discrimination between teachers and other teachers in lower positions in the school, with early child care teachers seen as - and paid - little more than child minders.

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## *the image of teachers*

The image of teachers seems to vary according to the 'eye of the beholder'. Parents or guardians do not accept the idea that their children are at risk in the school they attend. Elam and Gallup (1990), commenting on the 22nd Gallup Poll of the public's attitude (USA) toward public schools, observed that "the more first-hand knowledge one has about the public schools (that is, knowledge that does not come from the media), the better one likes and respects them". (Elam and Gallup, 1990: 51).

**But not everyone has such first-hand knowledge** - even second-hand knowledge in the hands of grandparents already may lead to a distortion of the picture of what is happening in schools as standards are suddenly seen by the older generation to be dropping - a generation that has no or little comprehension of the impact of, for example, Information Technology on schools and schooling. Swetman (1992: 30) has argued that "without personal knowledge about schools and teachers, people form their attitudes based on fictional media representations".

Research in Australia and other countries suggest several important factors which influence the image of teaching as a profession include the following, Walker (1996):

- Teachers' own self concepts and self esteem - individually and as members of a profession;
- The extent to which teachers accept responsibility to enter public debate to inform and listen to the community to promote understanding of teachers' work;
- The way teachers work with students.
- Collaboration of teachers with government, senior education policy makers and administrators in planning future directions;
- \* The community sees education as a vital component in the promotion of public interest and the personal development and quality of life of students. Teachers have a role in this and the image of teachers suffers if there is a perception that schools have failed.

Although the media portrayals of other professions may be equally as

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unrealistic as the portrayal of teachers, "the fictional spin these other professional characters are given makes them human but effective at their jobs and the respectable heroes of the story in most episodes" (Swetman, 1992: 30). Supporting this view, Kaplan wrote:

*Unlike the lawyers of LA Law, the surgeons of MASH or the police officers in any crime series, the people who work in schools do not spend much time at their real jobs. The entire K-12 enterprise (especially secondary schools) comes through as less professional and less attractive than comparable endeavours (Kaplan, 1990: K7).*

In Australia, the TV drama *Heartbreak High* reflects quite dysfunctional relationships between teachers and students and stereotyped dress and behaviour. **The actual working conditions under which teachers and students are expected to operate are rarely seen on television, even on news/current events coverage.** Student behaviour problems, as outlined in TV shows and news coverage, are a significant source of stress for teachers, something frequently coupled with negative community attitudes. It is reasonable to hypothesise that there is a positive correlation between a high level of job dissatisfaction and more marked work stress (as discussed below).

Yet there are occasions in the media when some positive images of teaching and teachers are presented. What is shown when an attempt is being made to present schools and teachers in a very positive light? One good illustration is the television series shown some time ago called *To Serve Them all My Days*. Here the emphasis is on dedication to duty, tradition, standards, and above all, the message conveyed is that such significant and expected values are to be found in a particular kind of school - the great public school originating in the UK. It is true that this was an English series but the lesson is clear.

What comes across on television is that our best schools are (or should be) modelled on fine public schools from the Europe and 'the others' - including large 'multicultural establishments' - reflect American (and increasingly Australian) conditions seen by many as chaotic and somewhat out of control. With a few exceptions like *Degrassi High* [a Canadian production], **TV programs do not show how our schools manage to tackle and solve the dilemmas faced daily and often successfully by teachers.**

In other research, students have been asked, 'Do you think teachers are looked up to in the community?'. They replied how they 'felt that while individual teachers could achieve high standing because of the calibre of their work, teachers generally did not have particularly high status in the community'. (Abbott-Chapman, 1991: 124). Reasons students gave for this view included:

- 'No, because parents and the government don't realise that teachers have to work very hard and their job is very important. (Female student, Year 9)';
- No, because they are criticised very much. (Female student, Year



11/12)';

- Perhaps the majority of students do not look up to teachers. The community in general sees teaching as a necessary profession, and not much else. (Female student who wished to go to NIDA, but would 'fall back' on teaching if all else failed)'.

Teaching is thus a profession that school-age students perceive as having a disparity between its status in the community and its contribution to that community. To what extent is this perception widespread, particularly in a comparative context?

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## ***how does teaching rate amongst the professions?***

The following data is based on a Morgan Gallup Poll (1996) on ratings for honesty and ethics for occupations. The Table below is based on data for the ethics and honesty of teachers from 1984 [the poll began in 1976].

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## *teaching amongst the professions*

How occupations rate for ethics and honesty (%):

	1984	1992	1994	1995	1996
<b>Nurses</b>					87
<b>Pharmacists</b>	-	-	86	86	80
<b>Doctors</b>	-	79	78	79	72
<b>School Teachers</b>	64	69	66	69	68 (12% increase. Since 1976)
<b>Dentists</b>	55	62	65+(10)	69	
<b>Engineers</b>	62	66	60	65	65
<b>Police</b>	53	58	57	59	56
<b>Tertiary lecturers</b>	53	53	56	59	55
<b>Accountant</b>	51	55	54	52	50
<b>Bank Managers</b>	48	47	42	45	46
<b>Lawyers</b>	61	44	37	39	37
<b>Business Executives</b>	44	34	30	32	29
<b>Federal MPs</b>	22	17	17	17	17
<b>Press journalists</b>	19	10	10	9	13
	11	7	8	8	

Cars Salesmen	3	3	3	3	7
					3

In the twelve year period from 1984-1996, **school teachers ranked fourth in the professions** after nurses, pharmacists, and doctors and teaching was the only profession to improve its rating significantly, 12% since 1976. It is interesting to compare these results with perceptions of 'confidence the public has in public agencies'. In 1991 *The Sydney Morning Herald* (8/7/91) reported as follows:

*Teachers and education administrators take a bow. A Saulwick poll of the confidence in their community institutions ranks the education system at the top. Lawyers, judges, magistrates and policemen?, as well as bankers rate a bare pass: please lift your game. Politicians and media workers? continuing failures; you need to take a good look at yourselves.*

The pollsters went on to suggest that the reason for the comparatively high standards for the education system is not related to efficiency or outstanding performance, nor to the quality of work done by teachers working with students:

*The relatively high level of public trust in the education system may be explained by the absence of those two corrupting influences, power and money, one or both of which come into play in the other institutions.*

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## ***how much confidence do you have in:***

	<b>A great deal</b>	<b>A fair amount</b>	<b>Total C1.1/2</b>	<b>Not much</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Education system</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Legal system</b>	8	54	62	28	4	6
<b>The banks</b>	6	46	52	36	9	3
<b>The media</b>	6	46	52	37	9	2
<b>Political system</b>	3	36	42	48	12	1
	3	33	36	49	13	2

*All figures rounded to nearest whole number.*

Incidentally, the older the group responding, the less the confidence shown in the education system and the argument is advanced that older Australians come to believe standards in our schools have declined in recent years, while younger people with children at school are more in touch with the system and can, therefore, presumably better judge its performance. **Some of the research has also shown that the further a person is removed from schools, the less likely they are to have a realistic view of what occurs in the classroom.** It stands to reason, then, that when members of the community or care-givers become involved in a school setting and are able to work closely, alongside teachers, they soon become impressed by the professionalism and the sheer dedication that is demonstrated by teachers.

To get away from the more populist (though certainly not irrelevant)

approach to looking at teachers and the teaching profession in the collective mind of the community, some writers have attempted to analyse the complexity of the work undertaken across the professions. Interest in this particular area has come about because of the perception that the work of teachers has become simplified, standardised, and deskilled as a result of central planning and direction by strong administrators.

It is not unreasonable to assert that teaching has become more complex and - on top of this - the process of devolution has seen more responsibility being given to teachers and school administrators who require additional time and personnel resources that are difficult to muster in the current fiscal climate. Yet it is worth noting that school administrators have been exceptionally flexible in gaining a broader base of professional skills in a very short period of time to enable them to deal with and solve some of this complexity. Concomitantly, classroom teachers have shown a high degree of commitment and purpose in responding to and helping to shape new curricular models and purposes.

It is worth commenting that in the First Report to emerge from the *Assisting Schools with School Renewal Project* (Eltis and Laws, 1993), following the introduction of Strategic and Management Plans in the participating schools, it was concluded that teachers in the project schools freely acknowledged that opportunities were there in ways that had not existed before for greater teacher and community participation in setting directions and establishing priorities. **What was seen was an enhanced professional role for teachers, which was much appreciated.** Perhaps this is a good foundation on which to build a more positive image for schools.

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## ***belonging to a profession***

The role of initial education and professional development in raising the status of teachers and teaching is crucial in this context. Concerns about the quality and standing of teacher education programs abound in the literature. Questions raised include: How can we improve the quality and relevance of what is happening in programs of professional preparation? What does the general public know about the quality of professional preparation of teachers? How prominent are teacher educators in significant educational debates? How in touch are they with the profession, and with the community more generally?

Teachers will need to be helped to extend and develop the professional work they do both inside and outside the school if the negative images of teaching are to change. Part of this professionalism and sophistication will depend upon the capabilities of teachers and schools to understand the expectations held of schools, the demands being placed on schools and how new responses can be developed which harness the energies of those responding and those demanding (Connell, 1991). Essential in the whole process will be effective partnerships at and across various levels and organisations [for example, professional associations, system bureaucracies and sector associations, peak community and employer organisations]. The extension of these partnerships will provide an avenue for teachers to develop their professionalism and become conscious of the significant work they do for our society.

But what does it take to convince the public that a particular profession is respectable? While Law and Medicine have had their share of adverse publicity, it is still true that they are probably seen as the leading and most attractive occupations. What should be done? Improve working conditions? Improve salaries? Or, does the major cause of low standing reside in the fact that teachers are public servants perceived to have limited autonomy?

Teachers are invariably - and largely incorrectly - seen as occupying a very subservient role, accountable to superiors rather than making independent judgments about their work. **There is insufficient public recognition about how teachers carry major responsibilities** for students across a vast age range and at crucial times in their lives. Yet, in contrast, the

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professional scope of a teachers' activities is heavily circumscribed by the conditions and terms of their employment which do not match those occupations seen as being part of a more prestigious profession. In Australia over the last decade there has been a sense of loss of professionalism - with teachers seen as, and seeing themselves as paid workers, rather than professionals (Chadbourn, 1992). (According to Lokan and McKenzie (1989: 93):

*Professionals are accountable in a significantly different way from production line workers because their work cannot be supervised all the time. It is clear enough that the conditions of work for teachers, which include a great deal of autonomy, are those that characterise the professional's work place. ... It is clear... that many teachers behave like professionals and that many others do not, a situation not unlike that in other professions. (...)*

*However, teacher organisations do not accept full responsibility for updating their members' repertoire of knowledge and skills without employer support (beyond identification of deficiency), as is common in the better paid professions. And teachers as a whole have never set up codes of professional conduct or boards of*

*ethical review that characterise the more highly regarded professions. (...)*  
*Teachers*

*in Australia are also relatively immune from consumer suits for incompetence.*

Given that the current scenario of education is one increasingly driven by economic and industrial considerations and "the increasing transformation of education into an industry, *the education industry*" (Knight, Bartlett and McWilliam, 1993: 1-4) and the formation of a national teaching union with its assumptions and platforms based on traditional union and worker lines, **it is becoming increasingly fashionable amongst writers and critics to consider education as industry award-based type of work.**

The 1990s agenda for quality teaching and the desire for professional recognition sees a potential contradiction emerging of whether a teacher is a worker or a professional. However this is a paradox rather than a contradiction as a list of what constitutes a profession (see, Beare, 1992) can easily be overlaid onto the type of work an effective teacher engages in (Eltis and Turney, 1993: 27).

**One constraint is that the image of teacher unions is based on an employee-employer relationship**, not on the model of a professional association and its attendant assumptions. As Beare (1992: 66) suggests, "The teacher unions are one of the largest blocs in the trade union movement; can teachers expect to be regarded as 'professional' at the same time?" But, as a well-placed AEU union official explains:

*To the unions, 'restructuring' had always meant a professional agenda.*



*This included improved salaries and careers, quality preservice and inservice provision, democratic decision making at all levels involving teachers, a curriculum guarantee, affirmative action strategies and an industry plan involving increased resources from governments. (Durbridge, 1991: 90).*

**One other constraint is the changing language used to describe teachers' work which has direct implications for their image.** As Milligan, Ashenden and Quin (1994: 13) see it, even the language in which reforms are cast and pursued is changing. They go on to argue that schooling has imported from other industries and from the industrial relations system a reform agenda which strongly emphasises the skills and abilities of workers.

The National Project on the Quality of teaching and Learning *Report of National Conference on options for a national framework for teachers' qualifications and professional standards* (1993: 23) presents a different angle on this issue:

*Some have argued that the low status of teachers in the community arises from the diffuse nature of the skills involved, and with the fact that a high proportion of teachers are women. Teaching, like nursing, has suffered for a long time from the vision of women doing what comes naturally. It's no surprise to me that the professions that have had their act together for a long time are the male dominated professions of medicine and law.*

What all of these analyses ignore is that law and medicine have a very different history to their current status. As recently as Victorian England, these professions had low status and variable quality. **Teaching should be able to learn from their history** the mechanism for constructing a view of themselves as professionals thereby building the higher status teachers not only believe they deserve, but do deserve.

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## ***how can teachers be esteemed as professionals?***

Questions of the governance of the teaching profession are raised throughout the research literature. The hallmark of a profession is that those belonging to it establish high standards, set stringent criteria for those seeking to enter, ensure that those standards continue to be met, while taking steps to ensure new criteria are devised so that members of the profession are not allowed to stagnate. **Could we apply these criteria to teaching?** We have a long way to go if we are going to have a teaching profession which itself accepts a need to set and monitor high quality standards and convince the public of the success the profession is having in meeting such standards. The Schools Council (1990) presented a sample Charter for Teaching [Appendix 2] while Beare (1992) offered eight characteristics common to most professions:

<b>1. An esoteric service;</b>	<b>2. Preservice study;</b>
<b>3. Registration and regulation by the profession itself;</b>	<b>4. Peer appraisal and review;</b>
<b>5. Professional code of conduct;</b>	<b>6. Earned status;</b>
<b>7. The ideal of public service;</b>	<b>8. Client concern.</b>

If we think of teaching we might be inclined to argue that certain of these criteria match up well but for others there is a huge gap. We may not agree on the distribution of these criteria in an individual assessment of teaching as a profession.

Asking the community who `controls' the teaching profession generates some obvious answers: the Department, the Union/Association, or, more likely, `no-one does and that's what's wrong!'. It is crucial that there be an attempt to address this aspect of professionalism much more directly **to**

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**see how we can have all of those affected by and working with teachers provide a more unified voice on what constitutes professionalism in teaching and ethics and teaching.** This was an aspect about which young teachers who were interviewed in a national Competencies Project felt a little despairing, which prompted the authors to include a significant set of competencies in the professional domain to be pursued in teacher education programs (Eltis and Turney, 1993).

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## ***the attractiveness of teaching***

There is a set of central issues to be addressed when looking at the future recruitment of teachers: How do we attract high quality graduates into teaching? How do we fight the competition from the more prestigious and well-paying professions? Given what some students experience by way of 'learning conditions', how can we persuade them to face the prospect of facing a life in the very same conditions, receiving salaries they know to be much less than in other occupations with, often, fewer personal demands? Abbott-Chapman (1991: 126) argues that:

*Prior to the 1970s, few professional career opportunities were available to women other than in the 'helping' professions (that is, teaching, nursing and social work). Now an increasing number of women are entering the traditionally male-dominated professions, such as law, business, communications and medicine, instead of selecting teaching as a career. Women will continue to make up the largest proportion of people in the teaching workforce, but "it is apparent that other more appealing professions are attracting young women, particularly those of high quality.*

The attractiveness of teaching as a career alongside other professions, therefore, is a matter of

importance but, as Berkely (1991:21) warns, "The very size of the school teaching service (of the

order of a quarter of a million) limits the probability of most, or even a majority, to its members

belonging to the highest centiles of academic ability or talent. More than one in eighty of the Australian population [in 1991] is a teacher; so teachers, it is argued, are not exceptional people".

The status of teaching as a profession and the recruitment of suitable people into the occupation raise issues such as:

- The 'image' of teaching in the community, especially amongst those

who are making decisions and choices regarding their future occupation;

- The professional recognition that teachers receive for their efforts and the system of rewards;
- The professional demands which teaching makes upon its practitioners;
- The professional competence and commitment that can be expected of teachers;
- The extent to which a genuine meritocracy can exist in a teaching service; and
- The existence of career opportunities (Abbott-Chapman, 1991:4).

Salaries and status are strongly related in the minds of most students contemplating teaching and, according to Abbott-Chapman (1991:124) in some cases students perceive these as being the same thing. In interviews conducted by Abbott-Chapman, students saw high status occupations as those where earnings were high, and 65 percent of respondents felt that higher salaries would make teaching more attractive.

Money is the measure of social worth in most modern societies and to some extent salary level is commensurate with community standing and prestige. **What happens when teachers discover that many less qualified jobs pay substantially more than teaching?** Such a situation must threaten a teacher's sense of self-worth and social location.

It should be no surprise then that "At a time when teacher morale is very low many teachers (...) Both by their example and by active discouragement are deterring their students from entering the profession. Nearly one-third of students reported that their teachers had advised them not to go into teaching" (Abbott-Chapman, 1991:131).

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## ***conclusions***

It can be argued that much of what has been occurring in schools in recent years has the potential to improve the quality and standing of the teaching profession. On the basis of school performance as measured by tertiary entrance scores, stronger applicants are being accepted into teacher education programs. Programs themselves have been the subject of considerable scrutiny, review and redevelopment. Conditions in schools have been changing to give teachers more autonomy in their day-to-day work. But can we be overly optimistic about the future unless some radical changes occur?

To what extent will schooling change in shape, form and function. Beare (1995) prophesies a borderless world, with new groupings including privatised, free-form, public schooling. Education systems may operate like small companies or franchises of a diversified parent company. All this will go on top of local management that has been the focus of so much energy this decade.

Looking forward, therefore, it can be expected that the well-being of Australian society may be even more reliant on what teachers do and on how teachers foster in young people the attitudes

as well as the skills for surviving in the twenty first century. If society continues to focus on criticising teachers and withholding extrinsic rewards, then it should come as no surprise when teachers lose interest in what they do.

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## ***notes***

Thanks to Cheryl Schofield for assistance in the assembly of original material incorporated in this paper.

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## appendix 1

- [Table 2: Major Sources of Respondent Satisfaction](#)
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**Table 2: Major Sources of Respondent Satisfaction**

%	Issue/Item
98	Changing pupil attitudes in a positive way
97	Changing pupil behaviour in a positive way
92	When my students achieve success in some way
91	Working with higher ability students
86	My relationships with students
84	My development/acquisition of professional skills since I began teaching
83	Assisting other teachers
83	My mastery of teaching content since I began teaching

81	My capacity to change pupil behaviour
78	Successfully organising teaching activities
77	My capacity to change pupil attitudes
75	Relationships with teachers in my school
72	The `official' working hours and holidays in teaching
71	My capacity to contribute to whole school progress
68	The degree to which I have achieved my professional goals
65	My relationships with parents
61	Working with lower ability students
61	The degree of feeling of belonging, collegiality, teamwork in my school
60	The quality of leadership in my school

[Dinham and Scott, 1996: 7].

**Table 3: Major Sources of Respondent Dissatisfaction**

%	Issue/Item
90	The community's opinion of the `official' working hours and holidays in teaching
88	The image of teachers portrayed in the media
85	The degree of support provided by the DSE to implement change

85	The way that the state government works for the betterment of education
82	The status of teachers in society
79	The amount of recognition I receive for my efforts from the DSE
73	The pace of educational change
73	Recent changes to school responsibilities e.g. global budgeting, local selection
68	Support structures for teacher welfare in the DSE
67	Recent changes to media
65	Class sizes in my school
65	The way promotion on merit had occurred in schools/the DSE
65	Inservice courses/programs/consultancy/support for teachers
62	My current salary
61	My current workload overall
61	The concept of local selection/hiring of teaching staff

[Dinham and Scott, 1996: 7]

**Table 7: Orientation to and Preparedness for Teaching**

% True	Item
	Orientation to Teaching
50	I always wanted to be a teacher

46	I thought that teaching would fit well with family commitments
38	I was attracted to teaching because of the hours and holidays
38	Teaching was not the first choice of career
20	I became a teacher because of lack of other options
11	I was attracted to teaching because of the salary
12	There was pressure from my family to become a teacher
	Preparedness for Teaching
52	I had a realistic view of teaching before I began my training
38	My training adequately prepared me for teaching

[Dinham and Scott, 1996: 7]

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## ***appendix 2***

- [A CHARTER FOR TEACHING \[Schools Council, 1990:60-61\]](#)
  - [Values and Attitudes](#)
  - [Approaches to Content](#)
  - [The Methods of Teaching](#)
  - [Making Teaching Practice Explicit](#)
- 

### **A CHARTER FOR TEACHING [Schools Council, 1990:60-61]**

Teachers need their own 'curriculum' for improvement, a defining framework for initial training, continuing professional development, appraisal and performance-based assessment, related to the core of their work - developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of their students. Improvement in the quality of teaching is justified by an improvement in the learning outcomes for students. While there are many other things which teachers need to be able to do besides those we nominate below, we believe the following are essential, in the context of the values and goals of systems and schools.

#### **Values and Attitudes**

- 
- Teachers must believe that all their students have the capacity to learn.
- Teachers need an understanding of how students develop and how they learn.
- Teachers need to recognise and respond to individual differences in their students.
- Teachers need to treat students justly, to be alert to the consequences of their own behaviour, and to encourage students to do the same.
- Teachers need to treat students equitably.
- Teachers need to believe in, express, and be able to justify the value

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of what they teach.

## Approaches to Content

- Teachers need to have a thorough grasp of the content of what they are teaching. Their knowledge should be sufficient to have an understanding of the underlying structure of their subject matter, and its relationship to other areas of knowledge. They should appreciate and be able to convey its complexity and richness.
- Teachers need to appreciate that process and content of learning are inextricably interwoven, and that an education, or view of education, which concentrates excessively on either one of the other is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers need to be able to adapt the content that is being taught to suit their students and the context in which they are teaching.

## The Methods of Teaching

- Teachers need a wide repertoire of teaching strategies.
- Teachers need to be able to structure learning tasks effectively, by
  - fostering motivation and engagement
  - explaining
  - establishing expectations for students which are clear, challenging and achievable, and
  - increasing learners' own sense of responsibility for learning.
- Teachers need to make regular use of the assessment of individual pieces of student work as a fundamental part of the process of teaching and learning.
- Teachers need to monitor student progress consistently and provide feedback on that progress.
- Teachers need to be well informed about the purposes, nature and uses of a wide variety of strategies of assessment.

## Making Teaching Practice Explicit

Teachers need, above all, to make their teaching practice explicit. This means:

- clarifying the broad intentions of any unit/topic/segment
- outlining the content of any unit/topic/segment
- setting out what is expected of the student in terms of work
- establishing how students are to be assessed, according to what criteria ('what will a good piece of work be like?'), and showing how this assessment procedure relates to the other three above.



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## ***change: a potent and unavoidable force on schools***

Changes occur during any teacher's career which may well contribute toward a sense of fatigue as our socio-economic climate and educational culture undergo transformations neither expected nor well synchronised. Fullan (1991: 36), a key North American writer in this field, has argued:

*People do not understand the nature or ramifications of most educational changes. They become involved in change voluntarily or involuntarily and in either case experience ambivalence about its meaning, form, or consequences. ...there are a number of things at stake - changes in goals, skills, philosophy or beliefs, behaviour, etc.*

While the second part of Fullan's observation would appear to have general application, **the claim that people do not understand educational change is arguably too harsh** a judgment on the practice of government and non-government education in NSW over the last 30 years.

For some time there has been a need to demonstrate outside education how schools are successful in adapting to changing socio-economic demands, changing cultural contexts and consequential changing curriculum requirements. **Educational work undertaken since the 1970s in New South Wales has shown a profession willing and able to respond to the challenges of change** the elements of which are inescapable for teachers but do not necessarily have the same compelling influence on the rest of society.

Examples of major innovations in NSW just in the 1990s include the introduction and ongoing development of Key Learning Areas, the development of Joint Secondary School-TAFE courses, the introduction of alternative HSC Pathways, administrative and financial restructuring in schools and Colleges of TAFE, and an unique across-sector field-testing in NSW on the national Key Competencies Project. This Project is of particular interest. It is a critical response by the schooling sector to the demands by employers for the development of particular skills in school leavers. The schools can carry the burden while the employers make the demands.

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Further, data from NSW quality assurance processes in both primary and secondary schools documents how different schools manage change in different ways. This is an important feature which will be discussed later in this paper. Supporting these changes is a history of reform and innovation in NSW as outlined below.

Responses to change in NSW have been matched nation-wide by programs such as the National Statements and Profiles and the National Schools Network. This State has made a significant contribution to both of these projects and conducted the first major review of the level and extent of NSP implementation (Eltis, 1995) which provided the basis for subsequent state reviews and, now, for a national forum on Profiles and Outcomes to occur late in 1996.

There is an urgent need to demonstrate why schools have changed and how teachers continue to do 'a great job' despite new and complex work demands. **Schools are places where there is plenty of action and innovative spirit but this is not generally recognised by those outside education**, a factor that makes it difficult to counter criticism in the media.

This paper highlights, therefore, major change factors at work on Australian society and NSW schools (Connors, 1991; Crump, 1993). It presents a clear picture of an educational community that is resourceful in its response to systemic and sectoral initiatives that attempt to make sense of these change factors and attempts to turn changes towards coherent and purposeful educational provision based on the principle of equitable resource allocation. In doing so, the teaching profession demonstrates levels of professional behaviour at least equal to (if not in excess of) that to be found in the more prestigious areas such as medicine and law.

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## ***nsw developments***

Many educators in NSW consider the *Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales*, chaired by Dr. Harold Wyndham and presented on the 28th October 1957, as the most seminal Report on education in NSW this century since the reforms of the then Director General, Peter Board [1910-11] which had established the Immediate and Leaving Certificate structure. The Wyndham Report led to the Education Act of 1961 which changed secondary schooling from 5 to 6 years with external examinations after 4 years and 6 years of study.

The most recent (April, 1996) discussion paper on secondary education prepared for the NSW government, that written by Dr. Barry McGaw titled *Their Future: Options for Reform of the Higher School Certificate*, has been variously interpreted as the culmination of the Wyndham reforms or, alternatively, as leading to the dismantling of secondary education as set up following Wyndham's report. Possible, if one refers to the Terms of Reference for the Wyndham Committee [there were only 2] written in September 1953, the second term of reference is intriguingly contemporary:

*2. In particular, to examine the objectives, organisation and content of the courses provided for adolescent pupils in the public schools of the State, regard being had to the requirements of a good general education and to the desirability of providing a variety of curriculum adequate to meet the varying aptitudes and abilities of the pupils concerned.*

**There has been a consistent and remarkably productive series of reports on NSW education over the 40 years between Wyndham and McGaw.** This history of policy development - spanning curriculum and assessment, administrative structures and corporate goals, welfare and equity, gender and ethnicity, staffing and career options - highlights the responsiveness and sensitivity of education in NSW to the challenges thrown out by changes, sometimes quite dramatic, in Australian society.

**There is a clear sense of development and sequence over these 40 years that illustrates a powerful cumulative body of work and a**

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**guide to meeting the challenge of future change.** The list below includes examples of major responses to the challenge of change from the early 1980s.

- 1981 The Report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly Upon the School Certificate [Parts 1 and 11] - McGowan Report
- (Established 21 November 1979)
- 1984 Future Directions of Secondary Education in NSW - The Swan/McKinnon Report. (Discussion Paper released in April 1983)
- 1986 Schools and Schooling 7-10
- 1987 A Statement of Corporate Purpose and Goals
- 1987 Education and Public Instruction Act
- 1988 Discussion Paper on Curriculum in New South Wales Schools (November)
- 1989 Girls' Education Strategy (March)
- 1989 Schools Renewal (June)
- 1989 Excellence and Equity: New South Wales Curriculum Reform (November)
- 1989 Committee of Review of New South Wales Schools - Discussion Paper (April)
- 1989 Report of the Committee of Review of New South Wales Schools (September)
- 1990 School-Centred Education (March)
- 1990 Education Reform Bill (May)
- 1991 Education 2000 (June)
- 1992 Teacher Education Action Plan (February)
- 1992 Your Schools Right to Choose - Staffing (June)
- 1992 The Carrick Report Two Years On (July)
- 1994 Achievement for Everyone - Equity
- 1995 Focusing on Learning - The Eltis report (August)
- 1996 Their Future: options for the reform of the HSC (April)
- 1996 The Key Competencies Pilot Project (forthcoming)

It is acknowledged that not all of the reports listed above led to specific and penetrating shifts in the process and purposes of public schooling in NSW. There are gaps and contradictions arising from the differing political, industrial, socio-economic and cultural contexts within which each was written. Even if all the reports had been written at the same time, differences between authors and audiences would militate against uniformity. **Nonetheless, diversity in itself is of value in the task of meeting the challenges of change.** Duplication, where and when it occurs, need not be construed as wasteful but, rather, as generating the impetus for competing interpretations and propositions to drive a better solution.

And when decisions have flowed from reports such as *School Certificate Education* (Scott, 1990) who has carried the brunt of the burden? Ultimately it has been the teachers in schools working with young learners and members of their community. Life has been very complicated for teachers at all levels required to keep on providing every day a stable environment for the State's children and at the same time introduce new

patterns of operation into the school's management practices. The pressure has been enormous and understanding of this difficult position in which teachers have found themselves has been lacking.

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## ***national developments***

All of the changes which occurred as a result of educational reform and restructuring in Australia since 1972, have elicited - as Fullan argued above - changes in goals, skills, philosophy, beliefs and behaviour at national, state, system, school and personal levels. **Chief amongst these influences in Australia is the constitutionally complex - for education - relationship between state and federal economic and political environments** and consequential attitudes towards spending on education.

At a national level, since the early 1970s, the condition of the economy has shifted from what Angus (1991: 82) defines as the expansion of the Whitlam labour government to the austerity of the Fraser Liberal government, followed by the Hawke/Keating governments when the condition of the economy more tightly constrained educational spending, resulting in increased pressures on state education budgets. The published budgetary restraints of the 1996 Howard Liberal coalition, and their impact upon education, are yet to be fully assessed but indicate a continuing period of tight fiscal control deriving from attempts to redress the national deficit.

The Whitlam government, operating within an 'agenda of social reform', restructured federal education and expanded education at all levels. The 'themes of this period in education according to Connors (1990: 9-10) were experimentation, localisation, fragmentation, cultural relativism and 'democratic' forms of managements'.

When the Fraser Coalition government was elected late in 1975 it initiated a program to rationalise Commonwealth spending and in the process this had influence on education at all levels. It was during this time that the CAEs began to be amalgamated and that the Schools Commission (1981) focused critical attention on issues such as multiculturalism, sex discrimination, Aboriginal education and disadvantaged schools.

In the mid-1980s the Hawke government school to work programs were underpinned by issues of equity and participation, in an era of increasing



youth unemployment with a focus on increasing the retention rates in the postcompulsory years of schooling and promoting the importance of vocational education. An extract from the Guidelines of the *Participation and Equity Program* (1983-87) shows the continuing depth of the Commonwealth government's concern at that time with these issues:

*There is far more to participation than merely staying on at school.... Participation has much to do with the quality of the relationship between students, their parents and schools; the extent to which they share access to all the school or system has to offer; and the degree to which the school curriculum, organisation and climate for learning accords with their experiences, values, interests and aspirations (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1983: 12).*

**In what is constitutionally, and in practice, an educational federalism in Australia**, each State and Territory plays the key role in determining how federally-financed strategies such as the DSP are interpreted and implemented at the state and school level. In NSW, commonwealth funded programs such as the DSP were focussed at state and regional (since 1995 district) levels to ensure the intent to act as a catalyst for pedagogical innovation was fulfilled. Broader curricular implications were drawn, however, so that a state-wide understanding of the DSP achievements were constructed in a way that benefited the system itself as well as non-DSP schools. The point is that commonwealth money funded educational programs that were conducted by and benefited State systems. While programs like the DSP are nation-wide, they are national developments with a state and regional, rather than national, scope.

Similarly, the Eltis Report, *Focusing on Learning* (1995) presented the first worksite view of the Commonwealth-driven NSP reforms (Crump, 1996). The Eltis review panel visited a broad range of urban and rural schools in NSW and held public meetings, in addition to working through 600 submissions. The Report used the stories of teachers, parents and others to construct a set of recommendations linked to the NSW context. This is in contrast to South Australia which - initially - adopted the NSP *edito princeps*. As Crump (1996) argues, the recommendations of the Eltis Report represent a state rather than commonwealth agenda for curriculum development. However, these claims are not made as an incitement to exacerbate state-commonwealth differences in education but as an example of how to **provide a focus for reflexive collaboration that allows for unequivocal state positions within a generally agreed set of nation-wide possibilities**.

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## ***commonwealth and state shared perspectives***

The relationship between commonwealth and state education functions, purposes and operations has often reflected - on the surface - a marriage of convenience rather than choice. **The partnership, however, is better understood as iterative and dynamic with overtures in either direction, while not unrequited, often hesitant and coy.**

A major change occurred from June 1996 when Federal and State Ministers, through the Australian Education Council, came together to focus on an agreed agenda for Australia's schools. Issues that were addressed and which had an influence at both Commonwealth and State level included, according to Logan (1991: 66):

- National goals for schooling
- National curriculum statements and assessment guidelines
- Profiling teacher competencies
- Instituting career pathways and appraisal systems
- Identifying the characteristics of effective schools
- Documenting the features of quality teaching
- Ascertaining the possibilities and worth of open access education through a wider use of distance learning and teaching
- Broadening the curriculum
- Making schooling more driven by workplace demands
- Removing barriers between types of institutions

Although all of these changes impacted on each state or territory education department in different ways and with different outcomes, due to state-level responsibilities, **there was an agreed acceptance that these changes needed to be addressed from a nation-wide perspective.** Such a response was additional to the joint programs already underway as a result of the Commonwealth Programs for Schools.

At the same time, state education systems themselves were undergoing change. Changes in NSW have been noted above. In the Queensland review, *Focus on Schools* (1990), Dempster (1991) listed the various concepts, concerns, themes and issues which emerged that now can be

identified across Australia:

- Self managing schools in a public education system
- Leadership and management
- School development plans
- Financial audits of schools
- Community management
- Class size
- Diminished work performance
- Professional support personnel for teachers
- Curriculum development
- Integration of welfare and discipline of students
- Negotiated staffing
- Professional development
- Resources
- Regional Services
- Central Services
- Systemic Management Practices
- Implementation (Dempster, 1991: 125-126).

From the research and policy analysis literature, many themes and issues emerge regarding how schools have been working hard to meet the challenges of change. These will be outlined briefly below as the basis for a discussion of the implications the work of schools and those who work in them.

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## ***the educational impact of changing social contexts***

The lists above highlight further questions and issues regarding the educational impact of changing social contexts in Australia. Perhaps the most visible changing context is in the area of industrial work practices and industrial reform in general. During the 1980s several reforms have occurred within Australian industrial relations and industry restructuring initiatives played a role in promoting the adoption of more comprehensive workplace change. **These reforms have had a direct impact upon the education industry.**

In comparison with overseas initiatives, there have been two unique differences in the Australian industrial relations scene with its move toward a more decentralised pattern of collective bargaining. First, "the emergence of workplace bargaining within a centralised wages system" and second, that "Australian trade unions have taken the initiative and encouraged the new emphasis on workplace industrial relations" (Curtain, 1991: 68).

The significant restructuring of many Australian industries and the mainstream trade union movement provided a backdrop to the various restructuring programs experienced in education. According to Milligan, Ashenden & Quin (1994: 10) "discussions in the industrial arena are extending their scope from a focus largely on improving conditions of work for teachers to more encompassing issues such as how to generate improvements in learning, thus reflecting the concerns for productivity framing industrial agreements in other industries". Angus (1991: 82) argues that "the wider involvement of unions in educational reform is a **recognition that educational reform has frequently fallen short of the mark because of the opposition of unions**". Milligan (1994) provides a list of the ways that award restructuring has impacted upon teachers:

- Strengthening of merit-based access to careers
- Introduction of the powerful idea of 'productivity' into schools
- Achievement of improved pay relativities for teachers

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- Introduction of the new category of the 'Advanced Skills Teacher'
- Reconceptualising of many aspects of teachers' career development in terms of 'skills', and more recently 'competencies'
- Professional development and some form of appraisal to become a more integral and ongoing part of teachers' careers (Milligan et al., 1994: 10).

Concern has been expressed that the award restructuring processes would see teachers being "subjected to the same processes of technical standardisation and central regulation which are a key feature of current microeconomic reform" and that "teaching would ... be re-defined as little other than an elite form of labour" (Ryan, 1994: 147-148) rather than as a profession/vocation. However, it can also be argued that substantial and deserved gains were made regarding remuneration and professional concerns, such as the introduction of the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) classification and positions (Durbridge, 1991:85), though the AST is now to be phased out in NSW the latest salary agreement.

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## ***changes in the work environment***

Teachers' work has changed with the introduction of various inclusive government policies to combat discrimination, disability and inequity, the establishment of School Councils, and, the increasing participation and involvement of the community and parents. In addition, the variety and contrast of school contexts or settings is increasing (Eltis, Meyenn & Parker, 1993: 5). Areas described by Durbridge (1991:87) and Milligan et al. (1994: 11) show a number of changes which could impinge directly upon teachers' work and workload:

- Changes in the student population
- Changes in teachers' professional and social roles
- Greatly increased retention rates
- The impact of retention rates upon work load and expectations of teachers
- A more culturally and linguistically diverse student population
- Integration of students with disabilities
- More flexible and open practice
- A wider curriculum
- The use of technological aids
- Increased responsibility for upper secondary assessment
- Increased role in school management
- Increased parental contact
- Adopting a more individualised approach to teaching
- \* Making greater use of negotiated work contracts with students
- Cooperating more with other educational and community groups in the delivery of the curriculum
- The use of information and communications technology in the classroom such as:
  - The use of interactive multimedia
  - Computer managed learning
  - Use of personalised communications systems
  - Computerised administration.

In the 1990s, schools and teachers are expected to cater for, become involved in and solve an array of social issues which previously were considered to be external societal problems and not a part of the school or

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a teacher's domain (Dinham & Scott, 1996: ). Government concerns for the safety and welfare of students and teachers have resulted in altered rules and regulations and new levels of accountability (see Stewart, 1992). New social issues which confront educators range from the implementation and regulation of anti-smoking laws, to the more complex issues surrounding 'drug abuse, sexism, racism, homophobia and violence' (Eltis et al., 1993: 6).

For teachers, this social change is reflected both in the climate and culture of their educational organisation and at both the classroom and playground level where anti-social and disruptive behaviour (Abbott-Chapman, Hull, Maclean, McCann & Wyld, 1991: 123) may interfere with the day to day processes of teaching and learning and the supervision of students (see Burke & Jarman, 1994). **Certainly at the system level, authorities have recognised that there is considerable social change occurring** and have been developing policies and designing strategies to address the complex social issues that are causing problems and affecting schools, teachers and students.

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## *workplace learning*

Workplace learning is taken for granted in many occupations where the employee simply learns what to do while 'on the job'. Whatever the job, types of learning may vary from rank beginner to some sort of advanced up-skilling, or upgrading of qualifications, and the idea that someone is being trained on the job rarely attracts sufficient attention.

The concept of teachers learning while on the job, in their workplace, seems different. In the past any courses such as in service and staff development were held at school or elsewhere, but **school was not thought of in terms of being a worksite in these terms**: students were the ones learning, and the teachers were already trained.

Although the concept is not well accepted, 'continuing teacher development and effective educational change are closely connected features of school life' (Retallick et al., 1993: 15). To embrace educational change in the workplace, what is needed is ongoing training in the workplace itself, where dealing with identified needs and imposed reform is just a part of a process of continuous improvement in a collaborative environment where shared learning empowers teachers to assume responsibility for decision making, development, design, implementation and evaluation of their ideas.

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## *the quality of teaching*

In education, the use and meaning of the word "quality" according to its context (Retallick, Hill, Barton, Cocklin & Sparrow, 1993: iii). For example, "quality" might refer to raising the quality of teaching (NBEET, 1991: 8), or to the personal characteristics or qualities of a teacher, or, quality control or workplaces and work practices. In this particular section, the use of the word "quality" is confined to concepts surrounding raising the quality of teaching. The Retallick Report (1993) presented a useful table [Appendix 1] which gives an overview of some of the **different approaches to understanding and raising the quality of teaching**.

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## ***professional development***

In education systems throughout Australia which have embraced a philosophy of 'devolution', the area of professional development (also referred to as staff development (Maxwell, 1993) or in service (Logan, Dempster, Chant & Warry, 1990b: 22) has undergone changes since the 1973 Schools Commission first allocated funds for the professional development of practising teachers (Logan, 1995: 5).

### **Professional development is a major component of educational practice.**

School systems are keen to provide teachers with the skills required to implement more successfully the new educational agenda, and to 're-vitalise that section of the teaching workforce which has had ten years or more of teaching experience' (Ebbeck Report, 1990: 56). Milligan (1994: 24-25) compiled an overview of the changes that occurred in relation to the promotion of and provisions for professional development:

- lifelong learning is now integral for career progression;
- skills acquired should be those needed for workplace improvement;
- supplementation of traditional professional development opportunities;
- evaluation of effectiveness, value and usefulness of programs.

**Interschool professional development arrangements** and opportunities might be another way to ensure that teachers come to experience what is done in a range of schools and workplaces. This may also help to prevent some teachers and schools from staying too isolated. As the Ebbeck Report stated:

*The importance of training and retraining of the Australian workforce has become an important economic and political issue.... It has become accepted that all industries - public industries as much as private ones - should seriously examine the training needs of their workforces as an integral part of improving productivity and efficiency (Ebbeck report, 1990: 56).*

Issues raised for further academic and industrial consideration include how to improve the university and union contribution to non-award in service education, the resolution of credit transfer, accreditation of non-university based courses for degree credit, teachers' study leave, and the place of continuing study in performance appraisal (Logan et al., 1990b: 25).

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## ***teacher appraisal and quality assurance***

Years ago, schools and teachers were regularly inspected by the school inspector whose range of duties included enforcing students and penalising inefficiency, testing potential promotions candidates, and mentoring teachers who needed advice or assistance to improve their teaching (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989: 219). Seen more as a punitive practice then, **the concept of inspection has been replaced by that of teacher appraisal which** is underpinned by the philosophy that it is an opportunity for 'someone else' to comment on a teacher's work in a professional and thorough manner and should in all cases include formative and developmental consequences (Connors, 1990: 95-97). There are several types of appraisal suggested by Connors:

- Informal view and planning
- appraisal following induction
- Periodic appraisal
- Content knowledge
- Pedagogical knowledge
- Appraisal for specific purposes
- Advanced skills teachers
- School enrichment tasks
- Leadership
- Incompetence (Connors, 1990: 95-102).

Most importantly, however, appraisal, managed well, is an important way in which teachers can review their professional goals and career paths, renew and refresh their work practices with an informed critical overview of their performance and capabilities, contribute to collegiality through peer review, and use the feedback from their appraisal as a method of monitoring continuous and this assist towards raising the quality of their teaching (NBEET, 1991: 12).

Quality assurance, total quality management, the use of performance indicators, and bench marking (Boston, 1995) are tools for measurement which are being used in schools and other educational organisations. **The notion of performance indicators is not new to educational discourse, but the use of bench marking is** (Pascoe, 1995: 55). It is

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worth briefly describing the different interpretations, in the private and the educational sectors, of the term bench marking [see Appendix 3 and 4].

Ideally all methods for measuring outcomes are designed to assist schools to monitor continuous improvement through the careful and thoughtful identification of areas where functionality, effectiveness of efficiency needs attention. In the quality assurance reviews of schools, bench marking was integrated with the concept of best practice and performance enhancement (Cuttance, 1995: 68). Issues which arise here are whether the bench marking information is being collected for public accountability or fiscal control and will the information gathered for a public purpose be too narrow to be of real to the school setting from where it was collected (Watson, 1996).

Another change that teachers and school administrators face is related **to accountability in a legal sense**, Teachers and schools are increasingly having to deal with issues of legal constraints and legal risk management in the workplace. Knowing how to predict, to prevent and to deal with legal issues as they arise in the workplace or with students and school property, is now an important professional need. Not only is the increasing fear of litigation a stress upon teachers, but media attention that focuses on the negative aspects of school related disturbances is both stressful and demoralising.

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## *technological change*

Technological change is perhaps one of the most far reaching issues that teachers face in the mid-1990s. Change in this area is constant and includes not only the impact of computers as well as other forms of technology. **Constant technological improvement asks teachers to alter their strategies to incorporate the newest software and hardware** in order to maximise their students' exposure to the latest sophisticated tools to assist the delivery of quality teaching (Connors, 1990; Sachs, 1992).

The range of technology available to schools and teachers is growing rapidly and the latest technological arrivals will soon include cable TV, intended use of video conferencing, and, access to the Internet. The issue here is how do teachers learn the features and applications of the new and existing technology?

Other issues which arise from changes in technology include those of equity, access and delivery. For example, whether or not schools are able to afford the technology of their choice is a matter of concern and impacts on the morale of the teachers. The relevance of the equipment to the educational experience is important, the integration of the technology and the curriculum, and the integration of the technology with the real life experiences of the students (Sachs, 1992: 66). **Changes in technology clearly impact on teachers** and strategies to assist teachers with the seamless incorporation of technology in their delivery greatly improve the quality of teaching.

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## *youth unemployment*

Youth unemployment is another social issue which has directly impinged upon educational policy and on schools. The prospect of unemployment has meant that more students in the postcompulsory years have been either encouraged or 'forced' to stay on at school (Dwyer, 1994: 58-9). Increased retention rates are viewed as an indicator of the success of government efforts to promote post compulsory education and training, however the affects of the significant numbers of students staying on have not been fully explore, especially the changes in gender balance and performance and how teachers can best address these changes.

Increased retention rates have also posed a major dilemma for those who have responsibility for the school curriculum. The design and implementation of HSC *Pathways* (1991) sought to address some of those issues by encouraging students to stay on at school, take advantage of the school to work programs, and participate in the multiple and articulated options now available in education and training.

One issue that has emerged from recent research has been that as a result of the changing patterns of enrolment emerging in the senior school curriculum, at some schools, the teachers were faced with a mandatory **requirement for their own re-training and credentialling** in order to be able to deliver some, or all aspects of a number of the courses being offered in the post compulsory school setting (Laws & Schofield, 1996).

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## multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has been a pressing issue in educational discourse for some time now (Rizvi, 1992: 69). For the last two decades it has been addressed with limited success through a number of government policy documents (Galbally Report, 1978; Kaldor Report, 1981; MacNamara Report, 1977; NSW Department of Education, 1983; Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1989). Part of the problem in addressing multiculturalism has been the varied interpretation of what multiculturalism means and what it is suppose to achieve. McCarthy (1990; cited in Rizvi, 1992) argues that:

*In education at least three discourses of multiculturalism can be identified - those emphasising the idea of cultural understanding and sensitivity to ethnic differences; those insisting on a curriculum for cultural competence that encourages students to develop competencies to live comfortably in a pluralist society; and those suggesting the possibilities of cultural emancipation through education, leading to improved life-chances of ethnic minority students [Rizvi, 1992: 70].*

Recent curriculum materials, for example the NSW DSE *Whole School Anti-Racism Project* (1995), were designed to overcome these problems but place new demands on schools and teachers whereby educators need a way of managing change **through working smarter rather than harder**.

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## ***conclusions***

In `meeting the challenges of change' educators are seeking strategies for understanding a range of issues they face in their teaching, curriculum development, professional practice and community relations. The future is likely to see educators working in a range of schools/workplaces, drawing on good practice from - and bench marking with - other sites, developing mechanisms [increasingly technological] for writing and talking about their own experiences in order to break down then isolation of the classroom, and actively constructing new types of organisations within which to work.

Social themes that surround teachers' work in NSW are not parochial but rather reflect international trends in the reshaping of the modern world. Workplace restructuring is proceeding hand-in-hand with wider economic and socio-cultural change and schools no longer cast themselves as a microcosm of society but as an integrated unit. School-centred leadership/management, closer business/industry links, trends towards life-long learning, curriculum assessed through competency and shifting concepts of professional practice are indelibly marked on schooling as the most visible features of Australia's education industry. However, a clear understanding of state and district particularities is an essential ingredient for making change work in NSW.

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## ***notes***

Thanks to Cheryl Schofield for assistance in the assembly of original material incorporated in this paper

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## ***appendix 1: some approaches to raising the quality of teaching***

		Major Focus
<p>Approach</p> <p>Improving the Theory and Knowledge Base of Teaching</p>	<p>Sources</p> <p>Stones</p> <p>[1992]</p> <p>Schulman</p> <p>[1987]</p> <p>Carter</p> <p>[1992]</p>	<p>A theory of teaching should be based on the psychology of learning [teacher as inquirer attempting to solve pedagogical problems]</p> <p>‘Pedagogical content knowledge’ should be identified [knowledge base might be represented in the following categories - content, curriculum, classroom management, learner's characteristics, educational contexts, educational ends/ purposes/ values, pedagogical content: a teachers own special form of professional understanding]</p> <p>Emerging conceptions of teachers' knowledge and how people learn to teach [teachers knowledge: draws on personal understandings, is task specific and event structured, teachers</p>

		<p>knowledge of content affects organisation of instruction and representation of curriculum; the value of case studies is being explored as a possible means for improving teacher education (Schulman, 1992)]</p>
<p>Context and Conditions of Teaching</p>	<p>Hargreaves [1988]</p> <p>Bacharach [1986]</p>	<p>To move away from 'transmission' teaching, there a need to improve the context, status and professional recognition of teaching [re-examine the control purposes of schooling, improve resource allocation and alleviate material restraints, alter the assessment and reporting system which dictates curriculum, expand teachers knowledge of other curriculum areas, extend staff development and collegial support, promote collaboration amongst teachers]</p> <p>Teachers need increased resources, opportunities for decision making and communication and support [resources include: authority, time, space, human support, equipment, supplies, information]</p>
<p>Developing a Reflective and Critical Practice of Teaching</p>	<p>Schon [1987; 1983]</p> <p>McDonald [1986; 1992]</p>	<p>Professional practice can be improved by adopting the model of 'reflection-in-action'</p> <p>Recognise teaching as an 'uncertain craft' and 'learn to read' teaching through journal writing and reflection</p>

<b>Establishing Competency-Based Standards for Teaching</b>	<b>Gonczi</b>	<b>Defining competency- based standards in professions [a CBS is a level of achievement required for competence in some areas of professional practice (Gonczi, 1990: 10)]</b>
	<b>[1990]</b>	
	<b>Reynolds</b>	
	<b>(1992)</b>	<b>Determining what beginning teachers should know and be able to do</b>
	<b>Louden</b>	
	<b>(1992)</b>	<b>Developing competencies and standards for the teaching profession</b>

[Retallick et al., 1993: 2-9)

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## ***appendix 2*** ***teachers' workplace learning: facilitating and inhibiting conditions***

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<b>Facilitating Conditions</b>	<b>Inhibiting Conditions</b>
<b>A "personal-communal" ethos in the workplace</b>	<b>A 'rational-bureaucratic' ethos in the workplace</b>
<b>Dialectic and problematic approaches to reform [mutualism]</b>	<b>Logistical approaches to reform [direct application of theory to practice]</b>
<b>Recognition of connections between personal and professional knowledge and lives of teachers</b>	<b>Ignoring the personal dimensions of professional knowledge and lives of teachers</b>
<b>The school is viewed as an 'educative workplace' for teachers as well as students</b>	<b>Only students are viewed as learners in the school</b>
<b>Principles of adult learning are recognised as important and applied to teachers' learning</b>	<b>Principles of adult learning are ignored</b>
<b>Stages of professional and development are recognised as teachers' lives</b>	<b>Teacher development is not viewed as a continuum or a staged process</b>
<b>Teachers' needs are seen as differentiated on a range of factors including age, gender, experience in teaching, ethnicity, etc</b>	<b>Teacher needs are regarded as the same irrespective of individual differences</b>

**Professional development [in service] programs are designed to provide for follow-up and continuing support**

**Principal and executive provide leadership and a vision for improvement**

**A culture of collaboration and a sense of professional community in the school**

**Developmental and reciprocal approaches to teacher appraisal**

**One-shot conferences and programs are the only form of development opportunities provided for teachers**

**Lack of leadership and vision for improvement**

**A culture of teacher isolation a**

[Retallick et al., 1993: 26]

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### ***appendix 3: the meanings of the term benchmark when used by different sectors or in different contexts:***

Private Sector	Educational settings
the means by which an enterprise seeks to improve its performance by reviewing best practice amongst comparable organisations, comparing its own performance with these levels of performance as goals.	levels of performance are spoken in relation to standards setting; sometimes the term benchmarks used interchangeably with level of performance implicit within this use of the term benchmark is the pegging of performance at the norm for student behaviour, not at some estimated level of peak performance. To further clarify the definition of benchmarking within the educational sector, we need to distinguish between the dimension or variable being measured, the document used to measure it and the particular level on the scale.

[Pascoe, 1995: 55]

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## *appendix 4: setting a benchmark*

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### Example 1:

	<b>Absenteeism in a school</b>
<b>Dimension</b>	
<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>Average % attendance per week</b>
<b>Means of Measurement</b>	<b>Counting absentees according to rolls</b>
<b>Choice of benchmark</b>	<b>Best average % attendance from a range of school of similar size, locality and clientele</b>
<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>[Minimum of] 92% attendance</b>

### Example 2:

Dimension

Performance indicator

Means of measurement

Choice of benchmark

Choice of benchmark

Academic excellence in a school

Average TER if Year 12 students

BOS and VTAC processes

Best average TER from a range of schools in the region

Average TER of 80.00

Stevens [1995] cited in Pascoe, 1995: 55].

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## ***introduction***

The increase in community involvement in NSW schools in recent years has changed the way in which schools operate. Before community involvement in schools became widespread, schools were places which community members rarely attended, unless the event was a school open day or a student was sick or in trouble. Why is community involvement in schools desirable? When community involvement works well, students learn better. Raising the quality of teaching and learning is the aim of all education providers in NSW and community involvement can contribute to better outcomes for all students. Research evidence strongly suggests that the higher the quality of the relationship between schools and their communities, the higher the level of the contribution due to community involvement. This discussion paper will work through four sections: Policy, Themes, Issues, Research.

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## *policy*

The development of a clear understanding of the type and extent of school-home links is central to determining the practice and effectiveness of recent policies aimed at improving parent views on the standing of teachers and teaching. As noted above, parents have been involved in Australian through a number of channels, however, most of these related to fund-raising or teacher aide type activities, restricted to what Epstein (1989), 16) calls Level 1-4 [parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home; level 5 is representation]. These channels are now understood as a limited and uni-dimensional link between the home and school that has proved inadequate in meeting parental expectations about participating in their child's education. **Many teachers, too, particularly at the primary level, now have come to value a broad range of contributions parents and the home can make towards the educational achievement of children as well as the general well-being of the profession;** all of which implies an expanded idea of how schools and their communities can work together with great effect to improve the quality of teaching.

As a consequence, recent policies in NSW, and around Australia, have changed the focus and intent of school-home links to ones which require levels of genuine two-way interaction over issues and decisions that have been predominantly managed by teaching staff with little or no community involvement or consultation. Very recently, these intents have been pushed further through the concept of greater cooperation between different government agencies dealing with young people [including moves towards joint training of these professions] with the school now becoming a meeting place for the community rather than functioning just for education. Positive steps for creating better home <> school links that can improve the image of teaching as a profession are:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools as community centres</li> <li>• School and business links</li> <li>• Community links in schooling</li> <li>• Working with families</li> <li>• Working with companion professions</li> <li>• Alternative learning environments</li> </ul>	<p>(family rooms, community resource information)</p> <p>(work experience and alternative learning sites)</p> <p>(curriculum dev./ assessment, governance)</p> <p>(consistent expectations, parenting skills)</p> <p>(counselling, juvenile aid, health personnel)</p> <p>(community colleges, adult/private education)</p>
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For the purposes of this discussion paper the focus will be these policy shifts in NSW **where `community participation' and `regular reporting to parents' were two of five priority areas for the NSW Department of School Education [DSE] for 1994 and 1995** [the other 1995 priorities were `quality learning', `quality teaching' and `happy and safe schools']. These aims are implicit in the 1996 NSW Government School Agenda priorities which include `Teaching traditional values in safe and happy schools; aiming for excellence in high-tech classrooms; and providing a fair go for all'. The DSE stated, in the 1994/95 documents, the parents have a right to information about their children's learning and the community has a right to information about the achievements of its schools (*School Education News*, 4:15, Oct. 1994, supplement). In addition, many schools in NSW have moved to an "outcomes-based" model for curriculum and pedagogy intending to generate better and more meaningful information on student progress to parents as well as more specific information to the community [as already provided through the Basic Skills Testing]. The DSE goals were:

*In 1995 we will:*

- explain outcomes-based education to parents
- set clear expectations about student homework
- improve school reporting on student achievement and progress
- explain basic skills testing results better
- report the findings of quality assurance school reviews.

*We will measure our success through:*

- increased parent awareness of new curriculum approaches
- positive parent response to new reporting procedures
- the extent of parent involvement in homework
- follow-up of school review findings.

**\* These are significant factors for providing a foundation for raising the status of teachers through building higher levels of understanding in the community about teachers' work.** The DSE 1994/95 priority 'community participation' began with the statement "Parents and teachers are partners in the education of children (...) Schools are most effective when their teaching and learning programs reflect the needs and aspirations of students and their communities" (Boston, 1995, p.1.). The DSE viewed the latter as expressed through "school councils and parent organisations (which) provide a focus for local decision-making and an opportunity for parents, staff and other community members to set collaboratively the goals and policies of schools". The stated goals were:

*In 1995 we will:*

- support the effective operation of schools councils
- increase parent and community participation in school planning and decision making
- expand parenting programs
- improve procedures for monitoring and responding to parent/ community concerns
- promote community awareness of the goals and achievements of public education.

*We will measure our success through:*

- the effectiveness of school councils
- parent and community response to training and support materials
- positive media coverage of the achievements of schools and their communities
- parent/community satisfaction with the quality of service provided by schools.

This was an ambitious agenda and the DSE decided to maintain these priorities over two years. Nonetheless, where schools have been active in this arena, many have enjoyed increased respect and empathy over the complexity of their task [see Discussion Paper 2].

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## themes

### *Why have community involvement in schools?*

Despite official encouragement of community involvement there are still barriers between teachers and parents and the community. **Most parents are interested in the education of their own children but some are apathetic towards schooling.** Most parents, because of their background and the stress of everyday living, find it difficult to support the work of the school (Turney et al., 1986: 137) and negative communication from the school may cause mistrust and anxiety in dealing with teachers (Tangri and Leitch, 1982 in Turney et al., 1986: 137).

Teachers have many demands on their time and have difficulty in relating to some parents. They frequently feel overwhelmed by parental problems and expectations (Turney et al., 1986). There may even be inherent conflicts between home and school because of different priorities and perceptions about the needs of individual students. Most parents believe that they have a significant part to play in their children's education. Beliefs on the part of some teachers that apathy about education can be assumed about working class parents have served as rationalisations for avoiding closer contact. **Sensitive approaches on the part of schools to parents from less affluent backgrounds or from non-English speaking backgrounds have been shown to be productive.**

Indications are that these parents wish to be more well informed and involved in their children's schooling although they are inhibited and even repelled by schools and teachers (Moles, 1982; Lynch and Pimlott, 1976 in Turney et al., 1986: 146).

There is no doubt that in recent years not only has the level of parental and community involvement in schools increased, but also the nature of this involvement has changed to one where parents make significant contributions to high level school decision making. One example is the school community representation on selection panels to fill school based positions. There are other examples of community involvement in the school becoming more a process of collaborative decision making largely through the work of school councils. **This emerging parental role**

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**contrasts sharply with previous more limited models of community involvement such as fund raising activities in comparatively isolated groups.**

Many teachers still have misgivings about parental involvement, especially in relation to decisions about policy and curriculum. Some of these misgivings are legitimate. Teachers often fear the community involvement could lead to a deterioration in educational standards, that minority pressure groups or more articulate groups of community members could exert undue pressure and that ultra conservative community attitudes could inhibit innovation (Henry, 1977, in Turney et al., 1986: 137). **Some teachers may also see community involvement as a potential undermining of their professionalism.** Research also shows that community members and teachers have much the same aspirations for students when it comes to educational outcomes.

Just as there is a wealth of evidence to show that children's achievement at school is affected by their family and social environment (Jencks et al., 1973; Edgar, 1979, in Turney et al., 1986), there is considerable research indicating that community involvement in educational processes brings about improvements in students' learning (Hunt, 1980; Phi Delta Kappa, 1980, in Turney et al., 1986).

The mixture of feelings on the part of both community members and teachers in relation to community involvement in schools, and the evidence which suggests that community involvement in schools impacts positively on student learning outcomes, indicates that schools need to discover the best ways to achieve productive relationships with parents and community members.

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## *the achievement of schools as seen by parents*

Quality Assurance processes in the Department of School Education have sought the views of teachers, parents and community members and students in evaluating the quality of various aspects of a school's service delivery. The process involving individual reviews examines broader issues which are of relevance to the public school education system as a whole. The school review process examines the way in which parents view the achievement of schools. Results, overall, have been particularly positive and provide a contrast to the impression that the media gives at times that community dissatisfaction with schools and teachers is widespread.

**School review processes in the DSE have revealed that parents judge the success of a school predominantly by the achievements of its students.** This includes the performance of the school at public examinations, state wide academic competitions, sports and cultural activities. Parents also value highly the many programs launched by schools to cater for the learning needs of individuals. While many parents express satisfaction with the outcomes achieved by their children, others express concerns about the teaching and learning practices evident in many schools. They do, however, appreciate the efforts of many teachers to change towards more learning-centred practices (QA 20/20 Report). The review reports indicate that parents more often view schools positively when they are:

- made to feel welcome and see that their opinions and contributions are valued and accepted;
- well informed about curriculum and school processes and structures;
- given regular, meaningful information about student progress and are accepted as partners in the education process;
- offered the opportunity to be involved with school planning and decision making processes;
- invited to visit the school, attend meetings and functions, and have access to teachers;
- confident that the school encourages cultural diversity and is seen to welcome the contributions from the entire community;
- satisfied that a secure, caring environment exists in which their children are happy and encouraged to develop to their full potential;

and,

- confident that teaching is strongly focussed on student learning.

In the majority of reviews, schools have been commended for the open and welcoming image that they present to the community. Warm relationships between parents and teachers made parents feel welcome to contribute to class activities.

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## ***how the media portray teachers and the teaching profession***

It is interesting to compare the views of parents and community members expressed in school reviews with the view expressed in the press. Press articles frequently talk about low teacher morale and low status of the profession. Such articles also frequently imply that this parlous state of affairs is recent, that is, that morale and status have "hit rock bottom" and describe the profession as "once respected".

In an article by Stephanie Raethel in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (5 August 1996), Professor George Cooney is quoted as stating that the same doom-and-gloom predictions have been delivered consistently for the past three decades. Raethel reports that the issue of teacher status and what the rest of the community thinks of teachers continues to vex governments, academics, teacher unions, teacher educators and parents, with successive governments pledging to improve the status of one of the largest professions in Australia.

While there is no single or simple solution to raising the status of teachers and their relationship with the community, research findings on community involvement in schools and teacher satisfaction suggest that at least part of the answer lies in developing more positive and productive relationships between schools and their communities.

So far in this paper, discussion about school communities has related primarily to links between home and school, and the Department's accountability to parents. Another aspect of school community involvement which can improve the status and image of the teaching profession is schools' links with industry.

There are five programs for the placement of teachers in business and industry in NSW: *Teachers in Business Program*, the *National Teacher into Industry Program*, placements as part of the training of vocational education teachers, placements as part of the training of careers advisers and the Executive Interchange program.

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Participating teachers attest to the capacity of these programs to enhance:  
their ability to assist students to be better prepared for life after school;  
and the standing of teachers and teaching in the wider community.

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## issues

### Fostering more productive relationships between schools and their communities

#### *Parental involvement*

Most schools are aware of the need to reach out to all sections of the school community and have instituted many strategies to do so. The translation of school newsletters into community languages is common. Some schools also provide large print versions of school documents for community members with impaired vision. Other schools have accepted the need to be more flexible in their arrangements for parent/teacher meetings so they can be more responsive to community members' needs (QA 20/20 Report). **Parental involvement in classrooms and other school activities is widespread at primary school level in particular.** This may be because parents of younger children are more likely to take their children to school and positive links will grow out of this proximity. Another reason is that learning-centred practices are an integral part of the culture of many primary schools and schools for specific purposes and that these practices may be more likely to engage parents (QA 20/20 Report).

In secondary schools generally, parental involvement tends to focus on issues other than curriculum which is often regarded as 'out of reach'. The Participation and Equity Program (PEP), which operated in New South Wales government schools in the 1980s, and **programs such as Staying On have demonstrated that parent participation in curriculum innovation is as important in secondary as in primary years** (Allen, 1992). While curriculum development is generally done by a school committee, the processes leading to an used by those committees may be greatly facilitated by the employment of a liaison officer to encourage and organise input from the parent body. Liaison officers have proved to be a valuable and effective in heterogenous school communities where people from many different and multilingual backgrounds need to be brought together into the decision-making arena of the school (Allen, 1992).

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When schools are proactive and enlist a range of strategies to increase community involvement the message parents receive from these efforts is that they are valued members of the whole school community involvement for both social and educational reasons. In these cases parents report that they are happy to have their children attend the school. **Positive relations between schools and their communities, in particular community members having a positive image of the school, will do much to promote the quality of education in NSW schools.**

Community members from a wide variety of backgrounds perceive the success of schools in fostering acceptance of cultural diversity as an emerging strength. Some schools are forming Aboriginal Student and Parents' Committees to assist the school in further raising community awareness of school activities. Similarly parents appreciate schools implementing effective behaviour management and other student welfare programs. Schools' increasing use of such programs, especially when developed in consultation with parents, is seen as effective in developing positive behaviour in the large majority of students.

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## ***links with industry***

Universally positive comments have been received in NSW, from teachers and principals, and from key industry groups and individual employers, about the outcomes of teacher placements in industry. One key outcome is the diversity of ongoing networks and partnerships between schools and enterprises being established by teachers and industry personnel.

Teachers who participate in industry programs are in a powerful position to be able to forge stronger links between industry and schools in a range of ways and enable the system as a whole to benefit from their experience.

As well as providing an opportunity for professional regeneration, spending a significant period of time in industry provides a chance for the participant to stand back and reflect on his or her work as an educator. Participants in the program report an affirmation of their commitment to teaching which assists them to deliver a better educational service. On their return to school, these teachers are therefore able to provide even greater benefits to students.

One of the participants in *Teachers in Business* in 1995 was placed in a training and publishing company. The teacher reported that as a result of this placement, she felt that her students would benefit in a number of ways.

*I have more competency to help them layout and present any written formal work that they wish to present, for example, their Personal Interest Projects for the Society and Culture course. I have computer skills that I can pass on to ... [the students]... My dealings with the private sector allow me to speak on a first hand basis about work in the publishing industry.*

*School publications can be enhanced, presenting a more professional image to the school community.*

Participation in industry programs broadens teachers' knowledge of other workplaces and informs their professional role. Participating teachers gain

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a range of skills, some of which are subject specific, and some of which are more general competencies. When these skills are redirected into their role as teachers, the teachers' perception of themselves and their profession is enhanced. As a result students and community members also respond more positively to these teachers' renewed professionalism, thus enhancing their status and standing.

Participating enterprises have reported that they have benefited from teacher placements in a variety of ways including:

- enhancement of enterprise training and organisational development
- development and promotion of effective curriculum and training materials
- increased effectiveness in dealings with the school sector
- enhanced profile of the enterprise in the local community
- the development of business links and contacts through national networks

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## ***the role of teacher education programs***

**Many teachers feel that they lack adequate training in dealing with parents and that this should have been addressed in teacher education programs in a way that is more common in the 1990s.**

Through pre-service training teachers should come to appreciate the importance of the community domain, acquire skills necessary to explore the school-community domain, acquire skills to bridge the gaps between schools and community and develop confidence in dealing with parents and positive attitudes to community involvement. Teachers need exposure to a range of human relationships and social differences together with an increased awareness of cultural diversity.

In all communities the work of parents and teachers is reinforced when there are cooperation between home and school and efforts to promote cooperative endeavour in the interests of the students. Such programs can result in higher achievement scores, improved student behaviour, reduced absenteeism and more confidence and participation among parents (Moles, 1982, in Turney et al., 1986: 138). Schools have a responsibility for initiating communication with parents and community as parents often feel they have few rights in this regard and do not want to intrude. Teachers need very good communication skills in order to achieve the positive involvement of parents. (Birch and Ingram, 1979, in Turney et al., 1986: 137).

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## ***making the most of teacher community relationships***

### *Parental Involvement*

Some research indicates that the greatest source of satisfaction was student achievement, and therefore, teacher accomplishment (Dinham, 1995). This finding reinforces the commonality between aspirations that both teachers and parents have for their students and children. Recognition from others is also a strong source of teacher satisfaction, whether the recognition comes from the parents, other teachers or superiors. Even teachers at the highest levels in the Department maintain that their greatest satisfaction has come from being in the classroom making a difference to students rather than from administration or higher duties associated with promotion.

Good relationships with students, parents and other teachers were also commonly recognised sources of satisfaction, as was later contact with former students who spoke favourably of the contribution the teacher had made to their development. Overall, teacher satisfaction was closely linked with the human or affective domain and centred on **strong argument that curriculum, teaching and learning can be enhanced by community members and schools working together**. (Allen, 1992). Teachers and parents need to listen to one another in order to ascertain the contributions each can make and develop means of working together.

A learning process whereby parents are enabled to arrive at a better understanding of teachers' areas of professionalism, and whereby teachers gain valuable information about the student through a better understanding of their home life, could be the basis of better outcomes for students. Collaborative learning and decision making processes between teachers and community members are of particular benefit to students in low socio-economic locations.

A study of the Disadvantaged Schools Program [DSP] and other equity programs in New South Wales found that parent and community participation was crucial to success and recommend the strengthening of

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their roles both at state level committee level for policy development and at school level in 'genuine' participation in development of the program submission (Predl 1991 - as quoted in Allen, in Logan and Dempster, p 106). Connell, White and Johnston also suggested that "Program committees and schools should be encouraged to focus community participation practices on substantial curriculum issues" (Connell, White and Johnston, 1990, cited in Allen, chapter in Logan and Dempster, 1992: 106).

American evidence, summarised in an article by Henderson (1988) supports an important principle which underlies the thrust of the DSP in Australia - that to improve outcomes for students generally as opposed to achievement of individuals there needs to be community involvement which brings about change in schools. She says: "Involving parents and their children's education at home may not be enough to improve schools; a school's average level of achievement does not appear to improve unless parents are involved in the school" (henderson, 1988, cited in Allen, in Logan and Dempster, 1992: 107).

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## ***links with industry***

Formal and informal reports of teachers in industry programs indicate that the outcomes for schools of this participation have been very positive. Teachers are gaining economic awareness and a greater understanding of a broad range of industry issues including industry priorities, work practices and work organisation and the impact of technology.

Participating teachers are also able to impart to students and the wider school community relevant vocational skills, knowledge and understanding. Students benefit from programs containing current information about industry practices as well as industry expectations of young people entering the workforce.

Teachers have also reported that the industry experience has provided them with broad ranging skills which have been of particular benefit in the classroom, and in fostering stronger links with the community. These skills include team building, creative problem solving, communication skills and flexible learning models.

As a result of the new networks which teachers in industry develop, the teachers can call upon industry personnel to work directly with students in a way which acknowledges the protocols, resources and priorities of industry.

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## ***case study***

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### **The Home-School Links Project**

As noted above, community participation and regular reporting to parents were two of five priority areas for the NSW Department of School Education for 1994 and 1995. This was a policy initiative reflecting the need to link families, schools and family support services as portrayed in recent international policy developments. In late-1992 a pilot study was undertaken in an urban Sydney primary school to ascertain the worth of a larger independent project on the nature and effectiveness of home-school connections. The full project began early in 1994 to continue and expand research on this topic, though this time more from the point of view of staff, parents and pupils rather than that of management (Crump and Eltis, 1995a, 1995b, 1996). In 1996 the project has been extended into the non-government school sector with research underway in a Western Sydney diocese of the Catholic Education Office. The project aims to:

- To determine and compare parent/teacher expectations in NSW primary schools regarding the impact of policy on school-home partnerships
- To determine parents', teachers' and school leaders' judgements about the steering of school-home partnership strategies;
- To explore if the state has replaced detailed rules with looser framework rules regarding education policy and to assess the impact of such changes in community participation.

In 1994 the researchers and some parents and teachers adapted the Johns Hopkins University survey of home school connections, tested in hundreds of sites in the USA. We then applied it to eight primary schools in what we called the "Baysview" cluster of schools which provided a discrete and coherent administrative and geographical location and variation in socio-economic status and ethnicity [as established through 1992 Census

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statistics]. Surveys and interview questions were approved by the Human Ethics Committee of the University of Sydney. The study sought both depth and breadth of data sources to construct, through triangulation of research strategies and techniques, as full a picture as possible within research limits of what was occurring. In August 1994, 467 surveys were distributed randomly to families across all classes in the seven core schools with a return rate of 61%. Ninety surveys went out to teachers in those schools with a return rate of 63%. Responses were evenly split between families with female and male pupils (49.8%): 80% were filled in by the mother, 16% by the father and the rest by other relatives/guardians at >1% each. Of the responses: 56% had one child at the school, 36% had 2 children, 7% had three children and 1% 4 or more. The responses, expressed in percentages, are listed in Appendix 1. In the short summary below there is a series of key positive and negative findings of the 281 responses completed sufficiently for analysis.

Comparisons of respondents' different items [using SPSS crosstab] revealed uncontentious is the finding and others that portray complex and fluid school sites. Uncontentious is the finding that 64% of families reported contact from their school about fund-raising, 49% about committee membership, 33% about community services, and 27% about assistance with school maintenance. This form of reaching out is a regular feature of school newsletters. It was no surprise to find that most homes stated that they helped their child with writing, reading and math though it was interesting to learn that 82% [46%=YES; 36%=yes] responded they could help more if shown how.

Of greater interest was the finding that 96% (yes=YES) of parents responded they talk to their child about school but 26% reported they had not visited their child's class (though 72% did regularly). Only 14.3% of those who do not talk to their child about school claimed to visit their child's class. 86% of those who do not talk to their child about school, also did not visit their child's classroom. **There was a strong link between not discussing school with your child and not visiting the school.**

Conversely, strong affirmation [YES] of discussing school is supported by claims to visit the class [YES/YES=30.5%; YES/yes=46.4%] though 'visiting' is not as strongly reported conjointly as 'discussing'. Only 3% of those who strongly affirmed talking about school with their child indicated definitely not [NO] visiting their class, though 19.7% reported doing so infrequently [no]. While this analysis indicates the validity of the statical data, it does not provide an explanation whether parents were prevented from visiting because of work commitments, disinterest, apprehension, or other causes. These aspects were followed-up in the qualitative stage [see below].

These findings are given added weight by the additional data that, even though the survey was conducted two thirds of the way through the academic year, 26% of respondents had not talked to their child's teacher. One explanation may be that 29% reported having different goals for their child than the school. Perhaps parents saw little point in, or were anxious about, confronting about these differences. **Another reason may be that**

**contact between school and some is controlled by the teacher who determines the content of that communication:** for example, 35% of homes responded YES to being contacted about problems their child was having but only 14% responded YES for contact about improvement. Finally, 27% replied they had not been told the skills their child needed to learn. These results construct an interesting set of challenges for teachers in working with their community in such a way that their image and professional standing could be enhanced.

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## other data

The study aimed to gain a cross-section of views on home-school connections through a multiple set of data sources. As well as collecting data through the survey, the study also conducted a review of school policy documents such as the Annual Report, the school plan for the years ahead, the weekly Newsletter and other documents like the homework policy. These documents portray in general a high degree of concern by school management for better home-school connections. There were a number of factors influencing this:

- a genuine and long-held belief in this aspect of schooling at the primary level;
- the impact of market forces which mean that if the school does not attract local and additional enrolments staff may be transferred out;
- the ongoing impact of recent government/system/sector/association policies;
- the multiple-use if some of the school sites [long day care and/or before-after school care].

The school plans and annual reports of the Baysview schools provided extensive detail on current practice. They listed a number of inputs and outcomes for students, teachers and the school community including:

- parents as reading tutors (K-2) and with senior students having difficulty with reading, and a more active home reading program;
- community speakers and parent involvement in environmental education;
- \* formation of a School Council (though not with unanimous agreement);
- significantly improved fund-raising; surveys on homework and other topics;
- parent/coffee rooms initiated in 3 schools; and
- increased communication through greater staff/parent collaboration on committee work.

In addition, interviews were conducted with parents and teachers. The senior staff confirmed impressions gained from the documentary and survey data: while home-school connections have a high priority there are areas where the concerns of the home and the school have yet to cohere and that other policy concerns compete for attention. **Teacher interviews confirmed the survey data which indicated a fairly evenly spread continuum of enthusiasm<-> disinterest for community participation.**

The interviews uncovered a series of professional qualms and even hostility towards active parent input rather than less contentious 'involvement'. Written teacher comments included:

I generally appreciate seeing parents about the school to pick up children, doing canteen duty, on special days and talking informally of progress, work set and expectations. (...) Some parents don't avail themselves of this opportunity to work together with the school, while others are available much more often and very interested. Usually, parents have some problems at school.

This school has provided the opportunities for parental involvement, however, in the past 4-5 years there have been fewer parents able to volunteer as most have taken-up part-time or full-time work.

Parents need to take responsibility for their child's upbringing and need to make them responsible for their own care - shoes, clothes - and become partners in training children to be responsible caring members of a group. Many children are coming to school with no self-help skills, poor social skills, little/no English and poor self-discipline. Parents need to be aware of the implications the lack of skills may have in the educational development of their child.

Although I see homework as extremely valuable it can place a stress on a sometimes overloaded timetable at home. I think children need to learn to relax and unwind.

Parent interviews confirmed findings from the survey that indicated the importance of school. We conducted interviews with over 40 families, some individually at their home, others in group interviews held during the different times of the day to enable as many people as possible to attend. One interview was conducted over the phone. We believe that we achieved a representative cross-section of adults from the different schools as well as from different socio-economic levels. Parent support for their children is very high and parental concerns about school practices reflect a mature balance of strong support for each school against critical reflection about how various aspects might be improved. Teachers should not feel discouraged or alone as they face new work demands in today's complex society. These suggestions include:

- Preparation of older children for the transition to secondary school
- Promotion of social skill development
- More sports activities (there is no inter-school sport for some schools)
- More effective policies for playground violence and for "quiet" boys
- Detailed information about curriculum programming for each term
- Homework requirements explained to assist parents
- Continuous feedback on student progress during the year
- More Music and Physical Education
- More support for gifted and talented students.

★

Parents' written comments indicated:

After 11 years at this school there is not much that we haven't been involved in.

I want to continue to support special programs and events organised by the school and to praise the school; (to my children) so that they realise what a valuable place it is.

School could provide a copy of their program to be taught to my children so I have a good idea as to their level of knowledge at anytime they are currently learning.

Some parents expressed a personal concern, almost guilt, about not being able to help their child or school enough due to family/work commitments. For example:

I can't participate much at the moment as I have 2 babies to look after and have no spare time.

And some teachers recognised this dilemma for families, **strengthening their standing in the community through reaching out rather than seeking to blame:**

In the current climate, many parental involvement proposals are not possible when parents work long hours and when both parents work.

Overall, families in Bayview provide a rich and diverse resource for the schools as a community tentatively reaching in, to which the schools reach out with varying success.

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## *conclusions*

Far too often the themes and issues in this draft discussion paper, and the research noted above, pose this question: Is the school or the family more important for a child's success in school? This may be the wrong question. One answer has been that they are both important, but for different areas of a child's education (see Reynolds, Sullivan and Murgatroyd, 1987). This is also unsatisfactory. Not only does it create another false division between formal and informal knowledge but also it creates a context within which the two participants are seen as divided. This, in turn, allows them to blame each other when things go wrong.

For the 1990s the focus of research and practice about schools and their communities is clearly on partnerships and shared responsibilities. Future policy development may need to focus on the following three questions:

- Which interest group(s) has/have authority over the forms of the school's activity?
- Is the change currently taking place in this area of school activity to be regarded as a reform penetrating existing boundaries or is it an innovation within these?
- Which sources of authority are decisive for the content and form of the school's actual activity, and on which institutional values base are these sources of steering founded?

What is happening alongside the changes to teachers' work as outlined in the Challenges and Image discussion papers is that a significant number of parents are seeking ways to take a higher profile in their child's education and that many teachers are attempting to attract parents into the classroom in ways beyond what can be achieved through traditional P&C/ P&F and School Council/School Board processes. **There are deeply ingrained individual and institutional histories that need to be overcome:** teacher disappointment in perceived support or interest from the home and parents' negative experiences with education, either their own or their child's.

But what we have in the 1990s is a happy confluence of interests.

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Increases to workloads and changing professional practices are driving teachers towards greater parent involvement and participation (Catalan & Hepworth, 1994, p.11) though not all want to step beyond the traditional role of "teacher" (Labone, 1994). Common ground is found as parents exercise improved rights and access to schools. **In NSW, what is changing is the relationship between home and school, and the space for this change has been created by the policies alluded to throughout this discussion paper.**

It is not unreasonable to suggest that effective parent participation enhances the authority of both the home and the school/teacher. Both remain central institutions in our social contexts and provide a balance of values and beliefs from which the child can learn and grow. The search for common ground begins by accepting that there will be differences in opinions, perceptions and expectations between the home and school and that closer connections may bring these tensions to the fore. But diversity of opinions does not have to be threatening. As parent participation increases (successfully). So will expectations about new levels and sites for participation. Shared meanings are possible and, probably, the best way forward for enhancing a community perception of teachers as professionals with high status.

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## ***appendix 1***

- Key Survey Data (percentages), Baysview Schools, Sydney 1994
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### **Key Survey Data (percentages), Baysview Schools, Sydney 1994**

- There were 65% of parents/families in the Baysview data who felt very strongly (YES) that teachers cared at their child's school and 33% felt this strongly (yes). Only 2% responded negatively (NO, no).
- In addition, 66% of those responding felt very welcome at the classroom.
- Families felt that schools send out clear messages [73%=YES], and reach most homes with invitations to school events [76%=YES].
- Most families thought that schools have an active Parents and Citizens Association [57%=YES; 37%=yes]. However, only 25% reported attending meetings and, even then, documentary and anecdotal evidence indicates self-report for P&C attendance was exaggerated.
- Community support [52%=YES] and partnerships [60%=YES] were acknowledged.
- 60% of families reported having the same level of involvement as for the previous year (1993) [7%=more; 16%=less].
- Most responses stated that they helped their child with writing, reading and mathematics though 82% [465=YES; 36%=yes] responded they could help more if shown how.
- A very high percentage [98%] of parents stated they talk to their child about school.
- However, 27% reported they had not visited their child's class [though 47% did regularly] and 26% had not talked to their child's teacher.
- A "significant" group [29%] reported having different goal for their child than the school.
- Just as many families [27%] replied they had not been told the skills

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their child needed to learn.

- 35% of homes responded YES to being contacted about problems the teacher reported about their child. Only 14% responded YES for being contacted about improvement in their child's work or behaviour.
- For other forms of contact between the school and home, 64% reported contact about fund-raising, 49% about committee membership, 33% about community services and 27% about school maintenance.

Crump and Eltis, 1994/95

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## ***introduction***

We know a good deal about the inputs, processes and outcomes of teacher education both in New South Wales, in particular, and in Australia more generally. Issues of input to teacher education like, for example, the attraction and selection of prospective teachers is the subject of much media speculation and discussion particularly at university admission time. Of specific interest to academics is the process issue of the perceived disjunction in programs of initial teacher education between theoretical knowledge about teaching and the craft knowledge of teachers. Outcome issues like beginning teacher competencies and employment opportunities, which are linked to the broader issue of teacher supply and demand, have been the subject of recent and detailed policy debate. These issues to do with teacher education also affect community perceptions of teachers and teaching. For instance, perceptions about employment prospects for teaching graduates affects the attractiveness of teaching as a career and the status of teacher education within universities (NBEET, 1991). Discussions about the kind of people coming into teaching affects the public perception of the quality of teachers and teaching<sup>[1]</sup>.

In the last decade, teacher education has been the subject of numerous federal and state government reports and enquiries which have attempted to set directions and state strategies for raising the quality of initial teacher education (see for example NSW Ministry of Education, Youth and Women's Affairs, 1990). However, there is very little written, and certainly no recent large scale research, on the characteristics and roles of teacher educators in Australia. Nor has there been any serious recent research effort to uncover the effects of teacher educators on their students or on the systems of education into which their students move.

This is all the more surprising when one considers the momentous changes which have occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s in both the structure and nature of the higher education sector in Australia. At the same time there have, as well, been major changes in the structure and content of schooling (see Eltis, Meyenn & Parker, 1993 for an overview). So, in itself, teacher education seems quite a visible process and its link with the quality of teaching seems tangible, whereas the role of teacher educators within this process is almost invisible and is therefore more difficult to

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assess.

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[1] The Bulletin (February 14, 1995) explored this very confluence of factors in an article titled `Crisis in the Classroom' which set classroom issues in the wider context of the image of teachers and teaching.

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## ***the image of teacher education***

### Inputs

The following description of the start of the school year is indicative of the media's view of the public image of teaching:

*In early February each year a sigh of relief swells from coast to coast as 3 million young Australians are returned to the care of the nation's 218,000 teachers. Handshakes and pathetically grateful smiles conceal parents' bewilderment as they retreat to adult-only havens. Who on earth, they wonder, would want to be a teacher? (The Bulletin, February 14, 1995:38).*

The media speculate about the effect of low teacher morale on prospective teachers and the impact of relatively poor financial rewards in teaching on the quality of those entering teacher education. Sadly, government reports confirm the media's view of teaching as having a low rate of attraction for those students who achieve high academic grades in particular (NBEET, 1991). This is not a phenomenon that is restricted to Australia (see, for example, National Commission on Education, 1993 - UK). The reasons for teaching's lack of attraction reflect the media speculation about low morale and poor rewards, *inter alia*:

- other professions offer graduates superior salary prospects
- failure to attract academically able students leads to education being viewed as an 'easy option' course
- salary disputes exacerbate the already negative image which the public have of poor pay and conditions in teaching
- women, who in the past have seen teaching as a relatively attractive career path, see a greater range of professional options available to them (MBEET, 1991).

As Holmes (1993) argues, 'The profile of teachers and teaching as a career needs to be lifted in order not only to attract those with high academic scores but to attract those people most suited to the occupation of teaching' (p49).



What is often forgotten, however, in the debates and discussions over declining entry standards into teacher education is that prospective entrants come from a variety of backgrounds apart from school leavers. For example, the vast majority entering initial teacher education in the secondary area are already graduates and a number of universities have moved to give these students the option of taking out their initial teaching qualification at Masters level. Universities also provide for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) to facilitate the flow of other professionals into the profession of teaching.

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## ***processes***

A common metaphor in current use to describe the processes of teacher education is that of the crossroad (Berrill, 1994; Furlong, 1994; Knight, 1994). Teacher education is said to be at a crossroad in the sense that there are choices to be made about future directions and strategies. And there are different views from different points on this crossroad. There are views, for instance those of policy makers in England and Wales, which place the future direction of teacher education firmly in the hands of schools (see Whitty *et al*, 1992). In Australia, there is a growing call for collaborative and collegiate attempts at providing school-based programs of teacher education where academics working in partnership with teachers in schools encourage strategic thinking and the development of professional skills and capacities in their students. This is a feature of teacher education which Eltis (1987) argued offered so much promise in the 1970s.

In the early 1990s the link between reform in teacher education and the effective delivery of educational reforms in schools was clearly a policy focus for the NSW government in particular. The teacher development said to be crucial for educational reform was held to be possible only through 'co-ordination requiring commitment and co-operation from teachers, teacher educators, higher education institutions and employers' (NSW Ministry of Education, Youth and Women's Affairs, 1990: foreword). As we approach the year 2000, there has been a renewed interest in Australia in the construction of partnership programs in teacher education which go 'beyond consultation'; that is, which involve teachers in genuine discussions about the form and content of teacher education programs (Deer *et al*, 1995:48). The idea is to provide prospective teachers with challenging school-based experiences firmly situated in reflective discussions about teaching and learning (Dobbins, 1995). It is in this way that professional craft knowledge becomes accessible to neophyte teachers (Coopers & McIntyre, 1996).

Underpinning...partnership is the proposition that the knowledge and understandings derived from research, combined with the craft knowledge derived from practice, provide a more powerful basis for reform than either body of expert knowledge considered in isolation (Burrow, 1994:5).

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The work of the National Schools Project, also points also to the 'growing interest in collaboration' in Australian schools and the renewed focus of educators on 'collaborative action' as a strategy to bring about innovation and change in times of economic uncertainty (Ladwig, Currie & Chadbourne, 1994: 14). In addition, the Innovative Links project between Universities and Schools for Teacher Professional Development underscores the potential educational gains to be made through the construction of research partnerships between teachers and academics (Gore, 1995; Yeatman & Sachs, 1995). It is this type of intellectual partnership which Grundy (1996) describes as 'researching *with* the profession', rather than *in* or *for* the profession (p.3), a relationship which offers the opportunity for shared scholarship and recognition.

It has been argued that if the following 'essential features of educational partnerships' are enacted, then teacher education will be less likely to reproduce past processes, and be more likely to engage in genuine reciprocal relationships in the education of prospective teachers. These essential features are said to be:

- a recognition of interdependence and the unique contribution the various parties bring to the partnership;
- constructive and imaginative problem solving;
- a will to work to not only change but to improve;
- a working relationship which permits risk taking;
- a tolerance for ambiguity, uncertainty and dilemmas;
- joint responsibility for the planning, implementation and evaluation of outcomes;
- joint benefits of a commensurable kind;
- organisational structures which facilitate the enactment of decisions;
- appropriate resourcing; and,
- intercultural understanding

(Groundwater-Smith, Parker & Arthur, 1994: 10-11).

The Queensland Board of Teacher Registration (1994) has also argued the appropriateness of partnerships for the Australian context, stressing the importance of 'appropriately constructed reflective practitioner courses' (p18). This reinforces the view that teacher education has too often been seen as initial teacher education only and unrelated to continuing teacher professional development (Fullan, 1991). In addition, partnerships are said to be a response to the criticism that teacher education has been unresponsive to students' and teachers' needs and divorced from the realities of schools and classrooms (Cooper&McIntyre, 1996). At the risk of mixing metaphors, as Eltis, Meyenn and Parker (1993) have argued, 'Unless teacher educators accept the need to engage in ... collaborative efforts' with teachers in schools 'they will remain in the backwaters or, worse still, beached' (p4). In this sense, the choice at the crossroad alluded to above will become yet another 'missed opportunity' (Fullan, 1993).



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## ***outcomes***

Perhaps the most vexed issue which affects teacher education and the attractiveness of teaching as a prospective career is the issue of teacher supply and demand. As Preston (1992) demonstrated in her paper for the Australian Council of Deans of Education, the calculations of teacher supply and demand differ from state to state and differ again federally. Her work points to the cyclic nature of teacher supply and demand also to its historical and contextual relationship with the labour market more generally (Walker, 1993). Although Preston's proposed model projected an increasing demand for teachers particularly after 1996 and through to 2000, there is a perception both in the general community and in universities that teacher education may be doing no more than educating graduates for unemployment or for casual teaching roles (see McWilliam & Kirk, 1993).

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## ***the image of teacher educators***

Most knowledge in this area comes from overseas research (Eltis, 1987; Grundy&Hatton, 1995). The most recent large scale survey of teacher educators in Australia was carried out by Turney and Wright (1990). This work mirrored many of the findings of overseas research on the image of teacher educators specifically in relation to the low standing of teacher educators in institutions of higher education. Ironically, research indicated that teacher educators were seen by their academic colleagues as lacking in theoretical rigour while at the same time they were seen by teachers in schools as being too theoretical and lacking in practical experience.

Turney and Wright's (1990) work, while helpful, is now, more than halfway through the 1990s, problematic because it was completed prior to the implementation of what has come to be known as the Dawkins reforms. These reforms led to the amalgamation of colleges of advanced education with universities and the establishment of a range of new universities. All but one of these amalgamated or newly established universities contains a faculty of education. Teacher education, throughout the 1990s, has therefore experienced major restructuring and many amalgamated institutions have experienced the tensions and conflict associated with major structural change the effects of which have, for the most part, gone unresearched. The extent of the difficulties and challenges experienced by teacher educators as a result of these structural changes is aptly captured by Eltis, Meyenn and Parker (1993):

*The creation of the Unified National System and the consequent increasing demands made by governments on universities through quality assurance measures, appraisal profiles and other accounting, controlling measures, have often resulted in preoccupations which have distracted teacher educators from their primary purpose, viz, the establishment and delivery of exemplary programs. Even more distracting for some faculties of education has been the decrease in funded student load and the consequent retrenchment and early retirement of staff (pp 12-13).*

Regardless of its problematic nature as described above, Turney and Wright's work provides a useful, although quite general, demographic base from which to view the relationship between teacher educators and the

quality of teaching. They argued strongly that the quality of teacher educators was inextricably linked to the quality of teachers and teaching in schools. Their work indicated that teacher educators in Australia were, on the whole, Australian born middle-aged males of middle-class Australian parents who grew up in the city, went through teachers' college, worked in state schools and had been employed in colleges of advanced education for more than 10 years (Turney & Wright, 1990). Professionally, teacher educators:

- taught mainly in undergraduate primary programs and spent more time teaching than on research, supervision of practice teaching or administration
- paradoxically engaged in extensive direct teaching while expounding the virtues of personal autonomy and independence in the learning of school subjects
- were concerned about their image in Academe which saw their teaching as superficial in content and their research as lacking in rigour
- \* recognised the need to spend more time on research to enhance their image with their university colleagues
- recognised the need to spend more time supervising students on teaching practice to enhance their image with teachers in schools
- largely saw their work as successful but did not base this perception on detailed or systematic evaluation of practice.

Turney and Wright (1990) made a series of recommendations to address both their own concerns about the image of teacher educators and the image related concerns of teacher educators themselves. One of Turney and Wright's major concerns was that teacher educators did not seem to realise the significance that their work had for the quality of teaching in schools and the potential impact that improvements in their own practice had for raising the quality of teaching across systems. Turney and Wright's recommendations extended across the range of roles demanded of teacher educators; that is, in teaching, research, scholarship, administration, supervision of practice teaching, and service to the profession. In essence, they argued for teacher educators to be more proactive in pursuing opportunities to 'expand' and 'upgrade' the quality of their research and scholarship, and as well, to become advocates of their own successes and commentators on issues of educational importance (Turney & Wright, 1990: 116).

The evidence from more recent studies, and there have been very few, indicate, however, that not much has changed both in terms of others' perceptions of teacher educators and the image which teacher educators have of themselves (Hatton, 1994; Grundy & Hatton, 1995). What this brief analysis of the image of teacher educators indicates is a crucial need for focused research on teacher educators as opposed to another review of teacher education. Reviews of teacher education *per se* will continue to highlight the inputs, processes and outcomes of teacher education without opening to scrutiny the role which teacher educators play in constructing, entrenching or changing these practices and processes.





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## conclusion

A decade ago, certain questions were posed about the prospects for Australian teacher education into the 1990s. Eltis (1987) asked was teacher education to be in a steady state? A state of transition? Or a state of decline? From what was a 'lively' 1970s teacher education scene, the 'bleak' 1980s were said to be characterised by diminishing resources, greater accountability, and teacher educators coping with new administrative structures (Eltis, 1987: 188). In the latter half of the 1980s the hope was that teacher educators in the 1990s would have the resources and policy support to pursue 'program renovation and renewal' (Eltis, 1987: 189).

The available literature suggests that this hope has been dashed on the very same rocks which caused the bleakness of the 1980s. As then, teacher educators still call for a concerted effort in integrating developments in curriculum, teacher professional development and institutional arrangements to deliver better quality educational outcomes. As then, there are consistent call from academics and teachers to link more closely educational studies and practical teaching experiences. These calls are best expressed in the move towards establishing school and university partnerships and in the construction of changed models of initial teacher education which see extended periods in schools as integral to the academic program. As then, the major gap in knowledge about the way in which teacher education helps shape and define the image and standing of teachers is the lack of information about who teacher educators are and the role they play in teachers' professional lives from initial training through induction to their role in providing ongoing professional support.

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