

3 Teachers and teaching

3.1 Overview

Recruitment of teachers, the quality of teaching and teacher training, teachers' working conditions and ongoing provision of professional development opportunities to ensure the capacity of teachers to respond to the broad-based but changing demands made on them were amongst issues of national relevance in 1996.

Issues of teacher supply and demand were still of national interest in 1996, following the earlier study and continued views advanced by the Australian Council of Deans of Education suggesting a major shortage of teachers early in the next century. The resulting Preston Report on issues of teacher supply and demand, which is to be released in January 1997, is expected to further focus discussion and research at State and national levels.

The Commonwealth initiated two important measures relating to teachers and teaching. In May 1996, the establishment of a national professional forum for teacher professional associations was announced. The Australian Curriculum Studies Association undertook consultations on setting up the new body and, in December 1996, reported on how the process could be taken forward.

In October 1996, a review of the preservice preparation of teachers was announced. The Australian Council of Deans of Education entered into a contract with DEETYA to conduct a project to:

- develop national guidelines for initial teacher education, based on national work already undertaken;
- consider the role of such guidelines in supporting high standards of teacher education and in promoting quality entry into teaching; and
- foster partnerships to enhance the quality of initial teacher education.

During July, August and September 1996 a major national professional development exercise prepared 1,000 teachers and literacy consultants to take part in the NSELS. Survey participants came from all States and from both government and non-government school sectors. Teacher judgement was central to the survey methodology and sound and consistent professional development for all those involved in student assessment was critical to ensuring the reliability of the survey data.

Professional development for the survey comprised three elements:

- a three day professional development activity for approximately 100 External Assessors in July 1996 in Geelong;
- a two day professional development activity at the regional level for approximately 860 participating teachers before commencement of the survey in August 1996; and
- collaborative assessment by teachers and External Assessors of students' achievements over six weeks.

The professional development experience was a major outcome of the NSELS survey in its own right. Its quality and comprehensive and sustained nature led to enhanced understandings of literacy assessment. Feedback from teachers indicated that they particularly valued the opportunities to participate in a highly focused professional development exercise, drawing together learning and assessment in a practical way in the classroom setting, and to learn and implement new skills, particularly in the assessment of speaking, listening and viewing.

3.2 Staff numbers and characteristics

In 1996, 203,972 FTE teachers were employed in Australian schools, making up 79.1 per cent of the total school staff of 257,825 FTE persons, compared with 79.2 per cent in 1995. Of the teachers employed in Australian schools in 1996, information provided in Table 19 indicates that:

- 70.6 per cent of teachers taught in government schools, 53.3 per cent of their number in primary schools;
- 50.1 per cent of all teachers taught in primary schools, 75.0 per cent of their number in government schools; and
- of those persons teaching in Australia in 1996, 35.6 per cent were males, the percentage in government schools being 31.9 per cent, while in non-government schools it was 35.8 per cent.

Total numbers of teaching and of non-teaching staff each grew marginally from 1995 to 1996. The total number of teachers employed in schools in 1996 represented an increase of 1,572 FTE persons, or 0.8 per cent over the 1995 total. The number of non-teaching staff grew by 660 FTE persons or 1.2 per cent. These increases in staff numbers accompanied an increase of 1.1 per cent in the

Table 19. FTE (a) of school staff (b), by area of activity, gender, category of school and major function, Australia, 1996

<i>Major function</i>	<i>Primary</i>			<i>Secondary</i>			<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
Government									
Teaching	18,792	57,885	76,677	32,299	34,974	67,272	51,090	92,859	143,949
Special support	552	1,804	2,356	818	1,115	1,932	1,369	2,919	4,288
Administrative & clerical (including teacher aides)	556	15,482	16,037	899	11,125	12,024	1,455	26,607	28,062
Building operations, general maintenance & other	2,120	182	2,302	1,434	161	1,595	3,554	343	3,897
Total	22,019	75,353	97,372	35,449	47,375	82,824	57,468	122,727	180,195
Non-government									
Teaching	5,581	20,009	25,590	15,893	18,540	34,433	21,474	38,549	60,023
Special support	68	341	409	294	555	848	362	896	1,258
Administrative & clerical (including teacher aides)	393	4,899	5,292	1,260	6,253	7,513	1,653	11,151	12,804
Building operations, general maintenance & other	840	271	1,111	1,928	505	2,433	2,768	776	3,544
Total	6,882	25,520	34,402	19,375	25,852	45,227	26,257	51,372	77,629
All schools									
Teaching	24,373	77,894	102,267	48,191	53,514	101,705	72,564	131,408	203,972
Special support	620	2,145	2,765	1,111	1,670	2,781	1,731	3,815	5,546
Administrative & clerical (including teacher aides)	949	20,381	21,329	2,159	17,378	19,537	3,108	37,758	40,866
Building operations, general maintenance & other	2,960	453	3,413	3,362	666	4,028	6,322	1,119	7,441
Total 1996	28,901	100,873	129,774	54,824	73,227	128,051	83,725	174,100	257,825
1995	28,557	99,923	128,482	54,767	72,346	127,114	83,324	172,270	255,594
1994	29,121	95,395	124,516	55,508	70,612	126,120	84,629	166,007	250,636

(a) Since FTE figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between the sums of component items and totals.

(b) See the glossary for further details.

Source: ABS Cat. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996, 1995, 1994

number of full-time students. Figure 8 documents the changes from 1995 to 1996, by school sector.

The increase in staff numbers was most evident in the non-government sector, where teacher numbers grew by 2.4 per cent and the number of non-teachers by 4.4 per cent, from 1995 to 1996. Among non-teachers, overall increases in the number of administrative and clerical positions were most notable. In the nation's government schools, the number of teachers grew by 0.1 per cent and the number of non-teaching staff fell by 0.2 per cent.

Changes in school staff numbers during the year did not occur evenly across Australia. Five States recorded some level of increase in overall teacher numbers and three indicated a decrease, while non-teaching staff numbers increased in four States and decreased in the same number. The non-government sectors in all States employed more teachers and more non-teaching personnel than in 1995. In government sector schools, teacher numbers increased in only three States and non-teacher numbers increased in five States.

Changes in teacher numbers from 1995 to 1996 generally reflected changes in the relative enrolment levels in the

different school sectors in the States and resulted in minor changes to full-time student/teaching staff (FTE) ratios.

Table 22 summarises those ratios for the different States in 1996 and provides limited trend data for the period 1994–96.

Such variations in ratios among the various jurisdictions are also clear in Table 23, which also includes other staff involved in the education of Australian children and presents the full-time student/total staff (FTE) ratios applying in the different States. In most States, there was minimal or no change in overall ratios from 1995 to 1996, although individual education sectors in some States experienced more noticeable changes.

Table 20. Non-teaching staff as a percentage of total staff, by sector, Australia, 1994–96

	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>
Government schools	19.4	20.2	20.1
Non-government schools	21.9	22.3	22.7
All schools	20.1	20.8	20.9

Source: ABS Cat. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996, 1995, 1994

Table 21. FTE (a) of school staff (teaching and non-teaching) (b) (c), by category of school and level of education, by State, 1996

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Australia</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Government											
Teaching											
Primary	25,236	16,684	15,164	6,915	7,979	2,150	1,367	1,181	76,677	18,792	57,885
Secondary	23,966	17,360	10,734	4,888	6,219	2,056	675	1,374	67,272	32,299	34,974
Total	49,202	34,045	25,898	11,803	14,198	4,207	2,042	2,555	143,949	51,090	92,859
Non-teaching											
Primary	5,899	3,602	5,363	1,928	2,308	788	420	388	20,695	3,227	17,468
Secondary	5,125	3,054	3,148	1,213	1,819	595	271	327	15,552	3,150	12,401
Total	11,024	6,654	8,511	3,141	4,126	1,382	691	715	36,246	6,378	29,868
Total	60,226	40,699	34,409	14,945	18,324	5,589	2,733	3,270	180,195	57,468	122,727
Non-government											
Teaching											
Primary	8,330	7,172	4,191	2,143	2,387	589	269	509	25,590	5,581	20,009
Secondary	11,562	10,123	5,685	2,164	3,025	800	276	799	34,433	15,893	18,540
Total	19,892	17,295	9,876	4,307	5,412	1,389	545	1,308	60,023	21,474	38,549
Non-teaching											
Primary	1,735	1,652	1,397	569	1,041	188	141	89	6,812	1,301	5,511
Secondary	3,027	3,341	1,961	723	1,111	248	112	271	10,794	3,482	7,312
Total	4,762	4,993	3,358	1,292	2,152	436	253	360	17,606	4,783	12,823
Total	24,654	22,288	13,234	5,599	7,564	1,825	798	1,668	77,629	26,257	51,372
All schools											
Teaching											
Primary	33,566	23,857	19,355	9,058	10,365	2,739	1,636	1,690	102,267	24,373	77,894
Secondary	35,528	27,483	16,419	7,052	9,244	2,856	951	2,173	101,705	48,191	53,514
Total	69,094	51,340	35,774	16,110	19,610	5,595	2,587	3,863	203,972	72,564	131,408
Non-teaching											
Primary	7,634	5,253	6,760	2,497	3,350	976	561	477	27,507	4,528	22,979
Secondary	8,152	6,395	5,110	1,937	2,929	843	383	598	26,346	6,633	19,713
Total	15,786	11,648	11,870	4,434	6,278	1,819	944	1,074	53,853	11,161	42,692
Total all schools											
1996	84,880	62,988	47,644	20,544	25,888	7,414	3,531	4,937	257,825	83,725	174,100
1995	84,068	61,479	47,189	21,051	25,512	7,455	3,476	4,965	255,594	83,324	172,270
1994	81,596	61,616	45,705	21,324	24,992	7,193	3,337	4,873	250,636	84,629	166,007

(a) Since FTE figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between the sums of component items and totals.

(b) As from 1990, staff employed in special schools have been allocated to either primary or secondary education on a pro-rata basis.

(c) Teaching staff are staff who spend the majority of their time in contact with students and have teaching duties, that is, are engaged to impart the school curriculum or are engaged in the provision of services for the direct benefit of students. Non-teaching staff include specialist support staff (e.g. counsellors); teacher aides and assistants; administrative and clerical staff; and building operations, general maintenance and other services staff.

Source: ABS Cat. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996, 1995, 1994

Table 22. Full-time student/teaching staff (FTE) ratios (a) (b), by level of education, category of school (and non-government affiliation), by State, 1996

<i>Level of education</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Australia</i>	
Government										
Primary	17.9	18.2	17.6	17.4	18.3	16.8	14.8	19.0	17.8	
Secondary	12.8	12.3	13.5	11.6	12.7	13.0	11.2	12.8	12.7	
Total	15.4	15.2	15.9	15.0	15.8	14.9	13.6	15.6	15.4	
Catholic										
Primary	20.3	20.2	19.5	20.0	19.3	20.7	18.8	21.6	20.0	
Secondary	13.6	13.8	13.9	13.5	13.6	13.6	9.1	14.2	13.7	
Total	16.6	16.9	16.6	16.9	16.4	16.9	14.6	17.3	16.7	
Independent										
Primary	16.4	14.3	17.4	17.6	15.8	15.8	16.7	17.5	16.1	
Secondary	11.0	11.2	13.0	12.5	12.0	12.1	11.6	12.5	11.7	
Total	12.9	12.1	14.5	14.9	13.4	13.5	13.6	14.0	13.2	
Total non-government										
Primary	19.2	18.4	18.8	19.0	18.1	18.9	18.2	20.7	18.8	
Secondary	12.6	12.6	13.5	13.0	12.8	12.9	10.3	13.6	12.8	
Total	15.3	15.0	15.7	16.0	15.2	15.4	14.2	16.4	15.4	
All schools										
Primary	18.2	18.3	17.8	17.8	18.2	17.2	15.3	19.5	18.1	
Secondary	12.8	12.4	13.5	12.0	12.7	12.9	10.9	13.1	12.7	
Total	1996	15.4	15.1	15.9	15.3	15.6	15.0	13.7	15.9	15.4
	1995	15.4	15.1	15.8	15.1	15.5	15.3	13.7	15.5	15.4
	1994	15.8	15.1	15.8	14.7	15.7	15.3	13.9	15.8	15.5

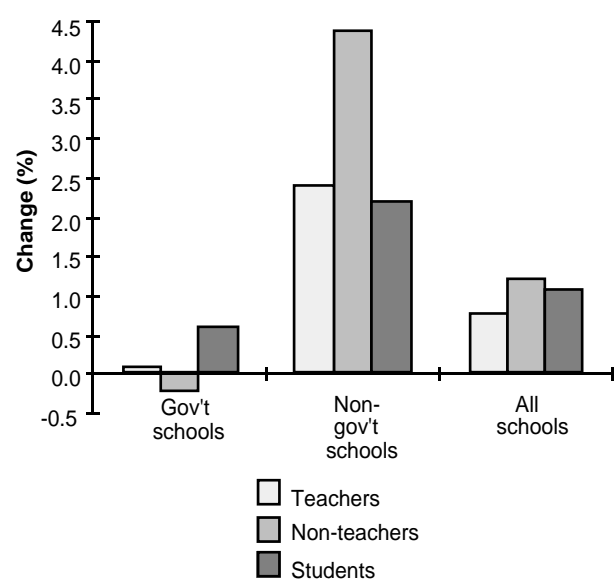
(a) Full-time student/teaching staff (FTE) ratio was calculated by dividing the number of full-time students by the FTE of total teaching staff.

(b) Teaching staff includes principals, deputy principals, librarians and senior teachers mainly involved in administrative duties together with some guidance, counselling and careers advisers.

Note: These ratios are not measures of class size.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 1996 and earlier related publications

Figure 8. Percentage change in staff and student numbers, by sector, Australia, 1995–96



Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 1996

As the growth in teacher numbers in government schools from 1995 to 1996 was relatively small, opportunities for people to commence a teaching career in a government school in 1996 were limited. Growth in numbers occurred mainly in areas of population growth where new or expanding schools were located. New South Wales reported some growth in the number of primary teachers, employed to create smaller class sizes in the beginning school years, as well as to implement literacy programs. As the State with the largest government school sector, New South Wales was able to appoint 1,139 beginning teachers to permanent or long-term casual positions in schools. The Northern Territory, numerically the smallest of the government school systems, provided places for 409 school-based teacher commencements in 1996.

Generally, there were greater opportunities for employment within the non-government sector, where student numbers continued to increase. Keen competition for teaching jobs was reported specifically in Western Australian independent schools, but shortages of teachers in mathematics, the

sciences, business studies and design were experienced by non-government schools in that State. A different concern was reported by independent primary schools in New South Wales, which had difficulty in recruiting male teachers to serve as role models.

3.3 Teacher education

Pre-employment courses of teacher education, as well as postgraduate courses for those already possessing initial teacher qualifications, are conducted through universities in each of the States. Courses tend to be specialised, aiming to best prepare students for roles in particular fields or levels of teaching. However, these formal courses are only one concentrated phase of the continuing professional education of teachers in Australia.

Table 24 provides a range of information as an overview of the participation of Australian tertiary students in teacher education courses including, for the first time, basic data about the participation of Indigenous students and students from non-English speaking backgrounds in teacher education courses. From Table 24 and from a comparison of its contents with data from 1995, it can be noted that:

- there were 60,031 enrolments across all teacher education courses in 1996, a decrease of 180, or 0.3 per cent compared with 1995;

- enrolments in initial teacher education courses grew by 1,607, or 4.2 per cent compared with 1995, while the number of persons seeking to further their existing qualifications through further university study fell by 1,787 or 7.9 per cent;
- primary teaching and secondary teaching were the two areas most commonly selected from among all the initial teacher education courses in Australian universities in 1996, each enrolling more than one-third of all students taking courses at this level;
- general teacher education courses were the most in demand of the courses of post-initial teacher education, attracting 49.2 per cent of students at this level;
- among students undertaking initial teacher education, the numbers of enrolments in general courses and in courses leading to qualifications in early childhood education both increased significantly over 1995 levels, the growth in commitment to early childhood courses continuing the trend noted a year earlier;
- the enrolments in initial teacher education courses in 'other' areas, which include TAFE teaching, grew by 748 persons or 21.5 per cent in twelve months; and
- 34.8 per cent of all students in teacher education courses were undertaking post-initial teacher training, a decrease from 37.7 per cent in 1995.

Table 23. Full-time student/total staff (FTE) ratios, by level of education, category of school (and non-government affiliation), by State, 1996

<i>Level of education</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Australia</i>
Government									
Primary	14.5	15.0	13.0	13.6	14.2	12.3	11.3	14.3	14.0
Secondary	10.6	10.4	10.5	9.3	9.8	10.1	8.0	10.3	10.3
Total	12.6	12.7	12.0	11.9	12.3	11.2	10.2	12.2	12.3
Catholic									
Primary	17.5	17.1	15.4	16.2	13.6	16.4	12.1	18.5	16.4
Secondary	11.0	10.7	10.6	10.4	10.2	10.6	6.7	10.8	10.7
Total	13.8	13.6	12.9	13.3	11.9	13.2	9.9	13.9	13.3
Independent									
Primary	12.4	10.6	11.9	13.5	10.7	11.3	11.6	14.4	11.8
Secondary	8.4	8.1	9.5	9.1	8.5	9.0	8.0	9.0	8.6
Total	9.8	8.9	10.3	11.1	9.4	9.9	9.3	10.4	9.7
Total non-government									
Primary	15.9	15.0	14.1	15.0	12.6	14.3	11.9	17.6	14.8
Secondary	10.0	9.5	10.0	9.7	9.4	9.8	7.3	10.2	9.7
Total	12.4	11.6	11.7	12.3	10.9	11.7	9.7	12.8	11.9
All schools									
Primary	14.8	15.0	13.2	14.0	13.8	12.7	11.4	15.2	14.2
Secondary	10.4	10.1	10.3	9.4	9.7	10.0	7.8	10.3	10.1
Total									
	1996	12.6	12.3	11.9	12.0	11.9	11.4	10.1	12.4
	1995	12.6	12.4	11.8	11.6	11.8	11.4	10.0	12.2
	1994	12.9	12.5	12.0	11.5	12.0	11.9	10.2	12.4

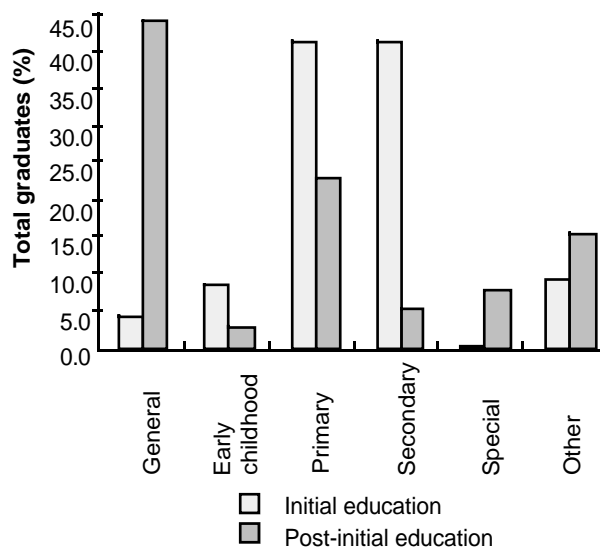
Note: Full-time student/total staff (FTE) ratio is calculated by dividing the number of full-time students by the FTE of total school staff.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996 and earlier related publications

Table 25 moves beyond enrolments in teacher education courses to focus on those graduating from those courses. It presents, for the first time, information about the number of Indigenous students and students from non-English speaking backgrounds graduating from these courses. Table 25 also shows how the number and course backgrounds of graduates from those courses has changed. It indicates, for example, that for 1995:

- the total number of students graduating from courses of teacher education fell by 704 persons, or 3.4 per cent, relative to the 1994 graduate totals;
- the number of graduates from initial teacher education courses fell by 828 persons, or 7.2 per cent, but the number of graduates from post-initial teacher education courses increased by 124 persons, or 1.4 per cent; and
- compared with 1994, there was an increase of 16.1 per cent in the number graduating with a higher degree and a 40.8 per cent drop in the number receiving lower level qualifications such as diplomas or associate diplomas.

Figure 9. Areas of specialisation of graduates from teacher education courses, Australia, 1995



Source: Commonwealth DEETYA

Table 24. Number of enrolments in teacher education courses, by level of course and field of study, Australia, 1996

Area of specialisation	Higher degree (a)	Other post-graduate (b)	Bachelor (c)	Other (d)	Total	Total Indigenous enrolments (e)	Total NESB enrolments (f)
Initial teacher education (g)							
General	3	344	1,939	346	2,632	333	24
Early childhood	8	113	5,170	50	5,341	99	102
Primary	11	630	12,621	102	13,364	294	133
Secondary	9	2,909	10,338	0	13,256	102	319
Special	0	9	270	31	310	6	4
Other (i)	36	829	2,482	878	4,225	328	83
Total	67	4,834	32,820	1,407	39,128	1,162	665
Post-initial teacher education (h)							
General	3,834	1,756	4,701	3	10,294	88	203
Early childhood	88	318	876	0	1,282	16	12
Primary	20	510	2,600	52	3,182	54	60
Secondary	50	380	166	0	596	2	21
Special	517	950	503	0	1,970	11	34
Other (i)	771	2,158	650	0	3,579	28	75
Total	5,280	6,072	9,496	55	20,903	199	405
Total enrolments	5,347	10,906	42,316	1,462	60,031	1,361	1,070

(a) 'Higher degree' includes Higher Doctorate, Doctorate by research, Doctorate by course work, Master's by research and Master's by course work.

(b) 'Other postgraduate' includes postgraduate qualifying or preliminary and graduate/postgraduate diploma, graduate certificate.

(c) 'Bachelor' includes Bachelor's graduate entry, Bachelor's honours and Bachelor's pass.

(d) 'Other' includes diploma, associate diploma, other award, enabling courses and non-award courses.

(e) Students included in this category had self-identified as Indigenous students at the time of enrolment. This does not necessarily equate with any definition of this student group used elsewhere in this report.

(f) Students included in this category had indicated the short duration of their residence, as well as the speaking of another language at home, at the time of enrolment. This does not necessarily equate with any definition of this student group used elsewhere in this report.

(g) Initial teacher education students are people not previously qualified as teachers.

(h) Post-initial teacher education students are people already holding teaching qualifications and seeking further teaching qualifications.

(i) 'Other' includes TAFE.

Source: Commonwealth DEETYA

Considerable attention was given by the States in their reporting to the continuing education needs of teachers in the years following their initial tertiary preparation. In some States, Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBA) have incorporated a commitment of teachers and government systems authorities to participation in agreed levels of professional development. Nationally, there was strong commitment to programs of ongoing teacher education.

Training and development programs accessed by teachers in 1996 included curriculum and skill development courses, training in curriculum leadership and various aspects of management, teacher exchange opportunities and the provision of courses which articulated with, and were accredited by, tertiary institutions.

For many teachers, particularly those in isolated schools, accessing external university studies was the principal form

of professional development available outside of their own school. However, the most widely used form of inservice education reported was that provided through in-school sessions, with region-based or larger-scale activities dealing with broadly applicable issues also being reported. Demand for professional development which had State- or system-wide application was generally met through programs arranged at that broader level.

The focus for much professional development and training in 1996 was the support of individual teachers and groups in professional activities related to school or system priorities. Among priority areas identified by a number of States in 1996 were:

- training in literacy, focusing on the early years of schooling, literacy in the key learning areas, whole school literacy planning and assessment practices;

Table 25. Number of persons graduating in teacher education courses, by level of course and field of study, Australia, 1995

<i>Area of specialisation</i>	<i>Higher degree (a)</i>	<i>Other post-graduate (b)</i>	<i>Bachelor (c)</i>	<i>Other (d)</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total Indigenous graduates (e)</i>	<i>Total NESB graduates (f)</i>
Initial teacher education (g)							
General	0	108	344	38	490	7	1
Early childhood	0	81	822	49	952	14	5
Primary	0	353	3,170	187	3,710	72	39
Secondary	0	2,116	2,310	1	4,427	21	123
Special	0	2	58	5	65	5	0
Other (i)	0	287	496	231	1,014	54	33
Total	0	2,947	7,200	511	10,658	173	201
Post-initial teacher education (h)							
General	1,026	1,041	2,022	0	4,089	32	80
Early childhood	5	95	167	0	267	1	3
Primary	2	304	1,812	15	2,133	11	24
Secondary	4	406	110	0	520	3	16
Special	90	424	229	0	743	1	11
Other (i)	308	926	195	0	1,429	12	42
Total	1,435	3,196	4,535	15	9,181	60	176
Total persons graduating	1,435	6,143	11,735	526	19,839	233	377

(a) 'Higher degree' includes Higher Doctorate, Doctorate by research, Doctorate by course work, Master's by research and Master's by course work.

(b) 'Other postgraduate' includes postgraduate qualifying or preliminary and graduate/postgraduate diploma, graduate certificate.

(c) 'Bachelor' includes Bachelor's graduate entry, Bachelor's honours and Bachelor's pass.

(d) 'Other' includes diploma, associate diploma, other award, enabling courses and non-award courses.

(e) Graduates included in this category had self-identified as Indigenous students at the time of enrolment. This does not necessarily equate with any definition of this student group used elsewhere in this report.

(f) Graduates included in this category had indicated the short duration of their residence, as well as the speaking of another language at home, at the time of enrolment. This does not necessarily equate with any definition of this student group used elsewhere in this report.

(g) Initial teacher education students are people not previously qualified as teachers.

(h) Post-initial teacher education students are people already holding teaching qualifications and seeking further teaching qualifications.

(i) 'Other' includes TAFE.

Source: Commonwealth DEETYA

- the integration of learning technologies into educational delivery, with areas of focus which included the across-curriculum application of computers and learning; and
- initiatives in postcompulsory schooling and vocational education.

The retraining needs of teachers were again addressed by a number of States in 1996, to enable individuals and groups of teachers to respond most appropriately to areas of identified workforce need.

Reporting from independent schools indicated that nearly all of their teachers had participated in some form of professional development during 1996. The programs accessed by teachers took many forms and had a number of aims, including pursuit of higher or postgraduate degrees, improving managerial skills and developing innovative teaching practices. For some teachers, the most accessed professional development opportunities were inservice training sessions presented at their own schools.

Teachers in most independent schools had little difficulty in accessing the professional development they wanted. However, distance to the State capital, cost and time restraints restricted the choices of other teachers. The financial impact of professional development included not only seminar or conference costs and the costs of travel, but also the cost of replacing participating teachers during their attendance at courses. Popular topics for these out-of-school activities included information technology, behaviour management and Christian education.

Professional and personal development of staff also continued to be a high priority for Catholic systems and schools. Induction courses were provided for new staff, and ongoing training opportunities were provided in key curriculum areas and in areas related to postcompulsory schooling and vocational education. Personal development activities included inservice training on performance appraisal requirements and leadership training. Mentoring programs were introduced to assist recently graduated teachers.

The Catholic system authorities in individual States provided much of the professional development activity available to teachers in Catholic schools. However, those schools and the Catholic systems also established cooperative arrangements with tertiary institutions and other education sectors in the provision of professional development programs. Teachers frequently participated in activities initiated within the government school sector.

Commitment to professional development programs also extended to other members of school communities, such as administrators, to enable maximum application of current technology and approaches to all aspects of schooling.

3.4 Issues affecting teaching in Australia

The range of issues impacting on teachers and on the quality and effectiveness of their teaching in 1996 included the social and economic context in which schooling occurred, a range of industrial issues relating to teachers and others interacting with students in our schools, and others of a more qualitative and professional nature.

Schools operated in 1996 in a complex social, political and economic context, in which much was required of them. Those who taught in those schools were influenced by a range of issues such as:

- a high rate of youth unemployment, with its inevitable impact not only on students preparing for a life after schooling but also on the schools and teachers charged with preparing those students for that transition;
- a more public questioning of the outcomes of aspects of schooling, with the development of literacy levels being a key concern;
- the increasing requirements for accountability, with a growth in the requirement for monitoring and reporting of the outcomes of schooling;
- increasing requirements for the greater convergence of general and vocational education, with a specific focus on the educational programs and options available to postcompulsory students; and
- the general requirement for teachers to be better informed, more highly skilled in a wider range of areas, more knowledgeable about technology and more innovative in the integration of appropriate learning technologies into their educational delivery.

Personal and professional development activities were key elements of the methodology employed in each State to address the range of contextual issues which impacted on teaching in 1996, as well as to maintain a focus on matters of subject content and methodology. Training and development programs were coordinated, improvements were made in arrangements for course accreditation and the

addressing of issues of retraining to meet new and changing areas of need occurred in various States. Leadership and management were the foci of many programs, while career development and aspirations underpinned others.

Issues relating to salaries and working conditions were again prominent in 1996. Positive developments were reported from several States, including the resolution of ongoing industrial disputes, the establishment of EBAs and the addressing of a range of workplace-related issues.

Among industrial issues not specifically linked to the current level of teacher salaries were those related to career paths and teacher status. For example:

- a range of programs now exist across Australia to give recognition to high-performing teachers, extending the provisions already existing for enhanced career pathways for teachers;
- the establishment of a remote teaching service in Western Australia, which stabilised the recruitment and retention of teachers in remote schools;
- the development of improved human resource systems designed to streamline the appointment of staff and to improve the capacity of schools to obtain the most appropriate staff for their needs;
- programs, including a deferred salary scheme and analysis of the feasibility of salary packaging for teachers, have been trialled as means by which schools and systems can address the varied needs of teachers; and
- performance management programs were again noted in some States/sectors.

Underpinning and supporting the employment of teachers were issues of Occupational Health and Safety. The highly emotive issue of stress among teachers was addressed, with early intervention and support policies helping minimise the negative effects on teachers and the children in their care.

Through the general adoption of Equal Employment Opportunity principles, merit and equity principles appear generally integrated as the basis for human resource management planning, processes and procedures in both government and non-government schools in Australia.

Teachers in all States and systems were keenly aware of the need for them to keep pace with the introduction of information technology to areas of subject content, teaching methodology and management. The extension of the application of that technology to linking schools across an area or a State, or even further afield, increased the complexity of the demands made on teachers and on the personnel and structures supporting them. The impact of the changing technology was increased by the rate at which applications became available, by the limited volumes or levels of the technology available and the range of requests competing for teachers' time.

The delivery of high-quality schooling is dependent on the maintenance of a professional approach by the staff in Australian schools. As they are held to be ever more accountable, asked to incorporate new technologies into their delivery and required to bring a range of educational approaches to diverse groupings of students, the growing skill profile of Australia's teachers is evident. To meet demands made of schools in Australia, the continuing improvement of those skills is also essential.