

# Excellence goals

## Teacher supply and demand

Last year's report advised that, in response to Ministers' concerns about a potential teacher shortage facing Australia, MCEETYA had established a Teacher Recruitment Taskforce. During 1998 the Taskforce continued its work to develop a national teacher recruitment strategy which could be adapted by State and Territory governments to suit local circumstances as required. Following its report to MCEETYA in April 1998, the Taskforce continued with the oversight of market research and the design of a market strategy. The Taskforce included representatives of government education authorities and the Commonwealth and will report again to MCEETYA in April 1999.

Following the MCEETYA decision to monitor teacher supply and demand, a Working Party of the Conference of Education Systems' Chief Executive Officers undertook the compilation of a further report on teacher supply and demand during 1998. Their report will also be submitted to MCEETYA in April 1999.

## Action in the States and Territories

### New South Wales

The New South Wales Department of Education and Training produced a workforce plan which projected the supply and demand for teachers in government schools for a seven-year period and is updated annually. In 1998, discussions were held with Deans of Education in NSW and the ACT in order to inform them of changing needs in teacher demand and supply, and to seek their assistance in developing strategies to address areas of need.

Based on current workforce plan projections there was an adequate supply of primary teachers on the department's waiting list. There was also an adequate supply of secondary teachers in most key learning areas. There was a shortfall of secondary teachers in the technological and applied studies key learning area and a potential future shortfall in science and mathematics in some geographic areas.

Nearly \$10 million was spent on retraining teachers in 1998. Twenty-eight teachers and 20 graduates from degree programs and industry were sponsored to undertake training in the technological and applied studies in 1997 and were appointed to schools in 1998. One hundred and fifty-eight teachers were trained in special education; 36 teachers were retrained as school counsellors; 25 teachers benefited from retraining in

English as a second language; 347 received training in languages other than English and 225 overseas-trained teachers participated in programs to induct them into the NSW Teaching Service.

### Victoria

The Victorian government conducted a Ministerial Review of Graduate Teacher Outcomes, which addressed issues of quality teacher preparation, selection for teaching and induction. In particular, it undertook the:

- development of a process to supplement the ENTER for selecting the best and most suitable applicants for teacher education courses
- development of a process for ensuring appropriate induction of beginning teachers when they secure employment in a school
- production and publication of *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Teacher Education Courses* to ensure quality graduate outcomes
- establishment of the Teacher Education Approval Committee to assist the council evaluate teacher education courses for employment purposes in government schools
- establishment of a Centre for Quality in Teaching to promote and assist the dissemination of research into teaching practice and teacher education.

In 1998, a number of strategies were put in place to encourage high-quality people to enter teacher education programs or consider careers in teaching. They included:

- a teacher graduate recruitment program employing over 470 new graduates to primary teaching vacancies for 1999 as part of the Early Years Literacy program
- distribution of information on teaching as a career to schools and tertiary institutions
- a teacher recruitment Internet site ([www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/hrm/recruit](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/hrm/recruit)) which had a minimum of 500 visits each month
- a successful seminar for over 800 prospective teachers outlining initiatives and priorities in Victorian government education, how job vacancies are advertised and how to apply for positions.

One hundred and twenty-five graduates (primary) were appointed to Victorian Catholic schools in 1998. Of note, only seven 1997 graduates were unable to obtain ongoing

employment as a teacher during 1998, indicating that the supply of graduates matched the demand.

Staffing in Victorian independent schools appears to have been fairly stable over the past three years, with the majority of schools experiencing low turnover (that is, from 0 per cent to 10 per cent). Only a few schools experienced teacher shortages in 1998, and for those that did, there was no discernible pattern in the types of teachers required. At primary level, a very few schools experienced shortages of classroom teachers and specialists in the fields of languages other than English, the arts and gifted and talented education. Similarly, very few secondary schools experienced shortages of teachers. Those that did, or anticipated future shortages, listed a wide range of specialisations.

### South Australia

South Australia instituted a campaign aimed at increasing the quality and quantity of teachers available for employment in South Australian schools, which commenced in June and finished at the end of December. Targeted teacher recruitment strategies were implemented, including:

- establishing programs targeting rural and regional areas
- distributing a brochure outlining recruitment programs for country schools
- increasing to seven the number of districts involved in country recruitment
- providing salaries in 11 districts through a retraining support scheme in areas of shortage
- providing training for employable teachers returning to, or beginning their careers
- establishing a pilot program in two country schools to train para-professionals to become teachers.

### Western Australia

At the end of 1997, 1,448 students graduated from Western Australia's five universities with pre-service qualifications enabling their employment as early childhood (246), primary (589) or secondary (613) teachers in Western Australia. Estimated graduations for 1998 were 752 (87 early childhood, 174 primary and 491 secondary). In 1998, there were 3,624 students undertaking pre-service teacher education: 2,037 at Edith Cowan, 702 at Murdoch University, 496 at Curtin University of Technology, 185 at the University of Western Australia and 204 at the University of Notre Dame Australia. Possession of a four-year pre-service bachelor degree will become mandatory for employment from 1999 and the first

cohort of four-year-degree early childhood and primary graduates will complete courses in 1999.

The State government established a teaching scholarship scheme in 1997 to encourage more high-achieving Tertiary Entrance Examinations students and more Indigenous students to enter teacher education courses. The first 30 scholarships were awarded for 1998. A further 41 were offered in 1999, including nine to Indigenous students.

## Recruitment from overseas

In 1998, the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition finalised a total of 362 assessments of overseas teaching qualifications, of which 244 were overseas school teaching qualifications. These are comparative occupational assessments provided as part of immigration processing procedures, or as advice requested by State and Territory education authorities. The assessments were in the following areas of teaching specialisation:

Early childhood	19
Primary	60
Secondary	118
Special education	7
Other	40
TOTAL	244

57 per cent of the applicants were assessed as meeting the Australian standard.

## Professional development and teacher education

Schools in all systems continued to acknowledge the importance of professional development of teachers as an essential component of providing excellence in school education. As a result there was considerable activity and development in this area during 1998.

### New South Wales

In New South Wales, funding for training and development from all sources in 1997–98 was \$110,975,000 and in 1998–99 it will exceed \$114 million. Since the department's training and development policy for school education was revised in 1996, training and development has been conducted primarily in the workplace. All training and development programs are based on individual need within the context of the school and the

department's priorities, and provided locally and through district and statewide initiatives.

In 1998, 91 per cent of time and 89 per cent of expenditure were used to support the department's priorities as defined in Agenda 98. An extensive range of programs was conducted to support newly appointed teachers, enhance school leadership and improve the quality of education provided in all government schools. Training and development initiatives such as Quality Teaching/Quality Learning, School-focussed Training and Development, the School Leadership Strategy and the Statewide Literacy Strategy achieved significant and positive changes across NSW government schools.

Independent schools in New South Wales were actively involved in professional development, with most of the surveyed independent schools undertaking initiatives in assessment practices and diagnostic testing for literacy education, including the First Steps program. Professional development also included a variety of Association of Independent Schools courses and attendance at conferences.

There was a strong interest among the surveyed independent schools in providing professional development related to the arts. Workshops and in-service training covered a wide range of topics, including the use of technology in the classroom, sound production, bands and video. Professional development opportunities for support staff were very important and were provided by the majority of independent schools surveyed. The wide variety of topics offered included marketing, computers, first aid, occupational health and safety and librarianship.

## Victoria

In Victoria, the *Framework for Accredited Teacher Professional Development*, which provides criteria to identify and evaluate quality professional development programs, was developed. The framework was launched in 1998 and provided a set of guiding principles and a structure for programs that allow teachers to gain credit towards a Graduate Certificate of Education at any of the eight participating universities.

Quality teaching was a high priority for the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, and teachers were encouraged to continually build on their existing qualifications through further studies and participation in a comprehensive range of professional development offerings. The major foci of professional development during 1998 included religious education, literacy, leadership, numeracy, science, assessment, curriculum development, learning technologies, personal

development, vocational education and training, special education, pastoral care, Asian studies, Indigenous education and languages other than English. As well as centrally developed programs, a number of programs were offered to Catholic schools in selected zones.

Education Officers and zone-based Curriculum Advisors were available to assist in the planning provision of school-based and regionally based professional development and for network support. A variety of programs offered by the Catholic Education Office placed teachers at the Zoo Education Centre, the Sovereign Hill Education Service and the CSIRO Science Education Centre.

The support of networks continued to be an important priority and there was an increased focus on the provision of programs for learning and information technologies. The main emphasis was to assist teachers to understand how these technologies worked and how they could be applied to teaching and learning contexts. The Catholic sector has adopted the new *Framework for Accredited Teacher Professional Development*.

Among the independent schools in Victoria, the most popular initiatives were in assessment practices for literacy education, such as Early Years literacy; Reading Recovery; collaborative approaches to early learning seminars and in-service training; and internal reviews of procedures, including record keeping, assessment, reporting policy and procedures. Professional development in numeracy attainment was important for a majority of schools, while for a substantial minority, programs to support vocational education, careers counselling, establishing links with industry and small business were popular.

## Queensland

In Queensland's independent sector, most schools took professional development initiatives in early intervention for literacy education. These included pre-testing, use of the year 2 Diagnostic Net, Reading Recovery in-service training, teacher aid support and Early Years Literacy programs. Initiatives in assessment practices included the year 2 Diagnostic Net in-service courses, the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland Inc. (AISQ) ESL Bandscale training, Australian Council for Educational Research training, school-based peer training, collaborative planning and First Steps workshops.

A majority of schools were involved in activities relating to vocational education, such as participating in network meetings facilitated by AISQ to discuss VET initiatives and funding, establishing contact with TAFE colleges, arranging in-

service training or attending Students at Risk seminars. Several schools were involved in professional development in regard to the arts. Activities included workshops and in-service training in areas such as painting and drawing, music and multimedia.

Examples of professional development activities relating to socioeconomically disadvantaged students included behaviour management training and emotional release programs for teachers working with children who needed support. A majority of Queensland independent schools provided professional development training opportunities for support staff such as special needs seminars, attendance at the Gifted and Talented State Conference, working with students with disabilities (ascertainment training and the development of individual education programs), and first aid training.

### **South Australia**

There were some significant developments in South Australia in 1998. The department commenced work with the three universities in the State to establish a Graduate Certificate framework to work towards a masters degree. A Teaching and Learning Project was established as a joint venture with Flinders University, resulting in the development of nine self-paced modules of work that teachers may choose to undertake at their local site, in peer groups or alone. Modules include Middle Schooling, Promoting Student Voice, Critical Reflection on Teaching and Learning and Enhancing School–Community Dialogue.

The department appointed a Retraining Project Officer to be responsible for establishing programs to address areas of specific need. These programs are based around retraining for teachers who need re-skilling, and recruitment of teachers to specialist geographic placements.

The department and the South Australian universities have entered a collaborative agreement whereby undergraduate teacher education students and practising teachers receive specific training relevant to the needs of a range of geographic locations. An example is the Teaching in Rural and Regional Communities project, in which student teachers in their final year of study can elect to undertake up to three subjects which will support them in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes to work in country schools in South Australia. In 1998, more than 250 student teachers participated.

The department has also developed and delivered postgraduate certificates in special education topics, in partnership with Flinders University.

A significant new initiative, begun in 1998, involved recruiting new graduates to Anangu schools. A program was developed in consultation with Anangu Education Services, the Retraining Team, the department's personnel counsellors and the State's universities. The success of the program can be determined by the increase in new graduates who sought appointments in Anangu schools for 1999. In 1999, the initiative will extend to include all Indigenous schools.

### **Western Australia**

Among the professional development that was delivered to Catholic school teachers in Western Australia during 1998 was the Professional Development for Leaders in Catholic Schools program. An integral part of this program was the three-day Collaborative Leadership conference, which involved some 500 school leaders and for which associated studies earned academic credits at the University of Notre Dame Australia.

Other professional development topics included 'Listening to Understand' (pastoral leadership), 'Catering for the Needs of Young Adolescents' (educational leadership), school management (appointment of staff, conflict resolution, dealing with poor performance, financial management, custody disputes and staff misconduct and redundancy) and computer skills.

The orientation program, which offers an introduction to Catholic education in WA and is a significant component of accreditation, was attended by 267 persons.

### **Tasmania**

The Department of Education in Tasmania, through its Professional Services Branch (PSB), initiated a program whereby it facilitates a professional learning program that registers private providers and coordinates centralised priority professional learning programs for teachers. In 1998, the Recognition Services Section of PSB developed postgraduate certificate courses in LOTE teaching, educational computing for teaching and learning, and technology. Courses on literacy teaching and educational leadership are due for completion in April 1999.

A postgraduate program in science education, operating in conjunction with the National Key Centre for School Science and Mathematics of Curtin University of Technology, had an enrolment of approximately 80 students. A comprehensive range of programs was offered during school vacations.

Each learning area developed a website to allow access to specific professional learning events, advertise courses and conferences and refer teachers to quality software packages

and websites. Many also included interactive sites for lesson planning and curriculum development.

Within the Tasmanian Catholic sector, significant professional development was done in the areas of literacy, numeracy, civics and citizenship and behaviour management. This included:

- training of First Steps tutors
- provision of First Steps training and resources for 23 primary and 2 secondary schools
- provision of regular literacy networking sessions for literacy coordinators and key teachers
- work on spelling
- work in conjunction with the Department of Education on the Classroom Literacies project to develop support resources for teachers
- participation in Discovering Democracy seminars by all schools.

Schools and the sector subsidised 20 teachers in undertaking postgraduate studies at masters level in educational leadership, and a large number of teachers taking accredited courses in religious education and pastoral care.

## Northern Territory

In the Northern Territory, 1998 was the first year of implementing outcome profiles. As part the process of informing parents and the community, a series of workshops was conducted on topics related to the Territory's Outcomes Profiles.

Professional development in literacy continued to focus on First Steps. During 1998, two initiatives were taken to further support the program – First Steps Literacy Intervention and Literacy Support Team training. In the former, parents were trained as part-time instructors to implement specific intervention strategies in the classroom designed to enhance literacy outcomes for identified 'at risk' students. The Literacy Support Teams represent an innovative extension of the program and were established to support tutors in schools.

Assessment, intervention and reporting in the early years of schooling were other foci of school-based professional development during the year. This assisted in the development of an assessment policy for schools to complement the document *Assessment, Intervention and Reporting in the Early Years*.

In the face of the rapidly growing need for vocational education and training (VET) in schools, the department conducted a series of VET in-service training programs for teachers. These nationally accredited courses, designed to allow both secondary and primary teachers to move into teaching in VET, included recognition of prior learning, assessor training, workplace training, and a highly successful Teacher in Industry program.

The department conducted its annual international training programs for principals, called the 'Managers and Educational Leaders Training Series' (MELTS). MELTS brings together school leaders in a program designed to develop their skills and understandings in a manner that will benefit education in both Australia and another country. MELTS98 was conducted in the Genting Highlands of Malaysia, in conjunction with the Institut Aminuddin.

Mentoring Support for Aboriginal Teachers in Urban Schools was a project designed to support and increase the number of Indigenous people teaching in urban schools through a professional development process. Its activities included a cluster meeting which focussed on a variety of professional support needs identified by teachers, school visits, and regular network meetings on selected topics, such as the teaching of Aboriginal studies and languages.

The Territory's Catholic schools continued to participate in professional development activities through the department and with tertiary education through various institutions around Australia. The Catholic Education Office conducted conferences and workshops for special education personnel, religious education teachers, principals, indigenous leaders and education workers in schools. Of particular importance were:

- the religious education accreditation program
- the mentoring program for Indigenous principals
- a program for recently graduated Indigenous teachers
- a program for the support group of Indigenous staff who act as deputy principals.

The last of these was part of the support provided to a new Indigenous principal in the establishment of a culturally appropriate management structure for the school. In this structure, the Indigenous principal worked with her 'deputy principal', comprising four women drawn from the four different ethnic groups in the community. This culturally based infrastructure facilitated the taking on of leadership roles in the school and has been taken up by two other community

schools and used to structure culturally appropriate leadership teams.

### **Australian Capital Territory**

All teachers in Australian Capital Territory government schools participated in a minimum of five days of staff development in holiday periods. At the system level, emphasis was given to professional development in literacy and curriculum renewal. In primary schools teachers were trained in the First Steps literacy program. In secondary schools teachers explored curriculum renewal through a program called Quality Curriculum: the Challenge for High Schools. Teachers in senior secondary schools explored moderation and assessment procedures and vocational education and training.

School-based professional development covered issues such as assessment and reporting, change management, cooperative learning, curriculum development, information literacy, multiple intelligences and student management.

All government school teachers developed, negotiated and organised individual development plans. The plans enabled staff to manage their own professional learning. Beginning teachers received support from a teacher induction program and mentors in schools.

All government junior secondary school teachers attended a seminar on youth issues. Strategies for developing resilience in youth were presented via keynote speakers and workshops. Senior secondary school teachers attended a seminar on youth issues and vocational education.

In 1998, the IT Networks Forum participated in the development of an Information Technology Professional Development Strategic Plan. The objectives of the plan were:

- development of school IT plans
- promotion of leadership in IT
- development of an information literacy program
- provision of electronic support, including on-line training and webpage publication
- provision of IT coaches.

In partnership with the Department of Education and Community Services, the Australian National University Language Inservice for Teachers program provided professional development for teachers in government and non-government schools. Workshops were offered on methodology and language upgrading.

Within the Catholic sector of the ACT, the Archdiocesan focus on professional development in curriculum during 1998 continued to foster the important balance between central in-service opportunities and site-based whole curriculum development. The following teaching and learning initiatives were taken:

- Curriculum Leadership Program for school teams focussing on developing leadership skills as well as knowledge focussed on performance-based assessment and its implications for curriculum practice
- regional cluster days focussing on literacy across the curriculum
- metropolitan grade-level meetings at which teachers shared teaching and learning best practice and resources
- staff workshops focussing on reviewing school mission statements, developing exit outcomes and other policy documents
- curriculum alignment staff development days and workshops focussing on appropriate classroom practice and documentation reflecting Catholic values, policy, agreed practice, programming and assessment
- staff development days and workshops focussing on the learning process, curriculum integration, thinking skills, multiple intelligences, learning styles and cooperative learning
- specific programs on protective behaviours and key learning areas.

Staff in ACT independent schools attended workshops and conferences on literacy assessment and early intervention, support staff training, citizenship, dance, music, digital technology for the arts, First Steps and Spalding Phonetics.

## **Action on paedophilia**

In 1997, Ministers adopted a national strategy in schooling to prevent paedophilia and other forms of child abuse. The key elements of the strategy were outlined in the previous edition of this report and in 1998, all systems continued their implementation.

### **New South Wales**

In 1998, New South Wales continued to implement policies and procedures to prevent paedophilia and to improve the care and protection of children in schools. All possible precautions were taken to ensure that child abusers were not placed in any

capacity associated with the care or teaching of children. To pursue this aim, the NSW government:

- instituted an automated facility linked to the Police Service to undertake criminal record checks for all employees
- has taken an active role in the National Strategy to Prevent Paedophilia
- undertook probity checks on employees involved in the care and protection of children
- reviewed policies and procedures for child protection in the light of Child Protection legislation passed in the NSW Parliament on 1 December 1998.

In 1998, comprehensive child protection curriculum materials were provided to all government schools in NSW. These materials assist teachers to implement effective teaching and learning about personal safety in personal development, health and physical education programs from Kindergarten to year 10. The NSW Board of Studies released a series of K–6 teaching kits in personal development, health and physical education focussing on the areas of safe living and interpersonal relationships. These kits establish children's rights and develop skills in the area of child protection.

During 1998, NSW Catholic education participated fully in the national strategy, and the Catholic Education Commission was involved in extensive direct negotiations with the NSW Cabinet Office concerning the implementation of the package of legislation passed by the NSW Parliament. In September, the Commission published *Guidelines for School Personnel on Identifying and Notifying Child Abuse*.

## Victoria

There was strong and ongoing liaison between the Department of Education and the Victoria Police and other States and Territories. In total, checks of almost 40,000 employees have been undertaken to determine if they have criminal records. All student teachers were required to undergo a criminal records check prior to commencing teaching practice in government schools in Victoria. All government school principals were briefed on the procedures to be followed when allegations of a sexual nature are made against any employee.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria established a working party to consider and implement relevant recommendations arising from the national strategy. During 1998, the working party refined consistent protocols across the Victorian Catholic education sector for dealing with allegations against staff in Catholic schools. Formal lines of

communication were established for the sharing of relevant information.

## Queensland

Education Queensland issued a comprehensive Child Protection Policy in April 1998, bringing together several established strategies to ensure that students can enjoy safe and supportive learning environments in schools. The policy mandates the reporting by all employees of instances of suspected child abuse from sources outside the school as well as all instances where official misconduct in relation to students may have occurred. Resource materials to support the policy's implementation were developed and all school-based employees will be trained in recognition of abuse of children, appropriate preventative strategies and reporting. A training program in investigative skills was set up and by the end of 1998, Education Queensland had completed the introduction of all strategies identified through the national strategy.

Catholic school authorities in Queensland operated within the terms of the Catholic Church's national protocol Towards Healing (Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Sexual Abuse against Personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia). In 1998, representatives of Catholic education in Queensland participated in consultations with respect to the proposed amendments to the *Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986* and the Queensland Crime Commission's Project Axis.

## South Australia

The South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment established a Child Abuse Prevention Task Group to review child protection measures and to plan additional strategies to ensure that children have safe learning environments. Child protection was strengthened by providing information to work sites designed to reinforce the legal obligations of mandated notifiers.

By the end of 1998, SA was well advanced in implementing the majority of the recommendations under the national strategy to prevent paedophilia and other forms of child abuse in schools. Since its formation, the Task Group has identified and reviewed current practice against national initiatives, and identified areas for further development. Work was begun on developing a departmental safety screening strategy and all staff were required to undertake annual retraining on their mandatory notification responsibilities. The Child Protection Policy was revised, updated and disseminated.

The Catholic schools in SA work within the context of the Teachers Registration Board. The Board recently introduced a criminal offender history check as a prerequisite for registration as a teacher. In addition, principals employing staff were required to check with previous employers of any persons being considered for employment in any role in a school. The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools produced a Child Protection Policy, which schools were required to implement. Staff undertook training in child protection in order to enable them to understand their role in mandatory notification of child abuse. In addition, a program called Protective Behaviours was taught in primary schools in order to develop self-esteem and self-protection behaviours in children.

The Independent Schools Board:

- developed an interim policy statement outlining the strategies to be undertaken in support of member schools. It covers student welfare and child protection, training and development, community awareness, coordination with other agencies, and procedures for managing allegations of improper conduct of a sexual nature
- began working cooperatively with the government and Catholic sectors to develop a consistent approach to the implementation of the strategy in South Australia
- contributed to the discussion on the possible role of the Teachers Registration Board
- provided advice to member schools on the development of school-based policies and procedures for student welfare and child protection
- sought expert legal advice on the request for criminal checks by school sector employers
- provided professional development on child protection and mandatory reporting legislation.

## Western Australia

All key elements of the national strategy, such as police clearances for all new employees, and the National Exchange of Information for teachers, were in place by the end of 1998 and all other MCEETYA recommendations had been addressed. The *Employee Screening Policy and Procedures Manual*, distributed in 1998, provides the department with all the necessary information to implement personnel screening. Screening information is available electronically to on-line schools. Cooperative information exchange with Catholic and independent school authorities continued, with all operating compatible screening procedures.

Within the Catholic sector, a comprehensive range of policies and procedures reflected the recommendations of the national strategy. Professional development courses were conducted in relation to the Catholic Education Commission's policy on the recruitment, selection and appointment of staff and its child abuse policy. The Catholic Education Commission outlined prohibited categories of prospective employees under current definitions, established a contact officer and provided a pro forma for schools. The Commission provided schools with a brochure for prospective employees detailing the compulsory screening procedures.

Three procedures were implemented for reporting and managing allegations against staff. They are detailed in the following publications:

- *Towards Healing*, issued by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes in December 1996, which details procedures to be applied in relation to accusations involving clergy or religious
- *Child Abuse*, issued by the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) in January 1997, which details procedures to be applied in relation to accusations involving school staff
- *Child Abuse and Neglect*, issued by CEOWA in 1993, which details procedures to be applied in relation to accusations involving parents or members of the public.

## Tasmania

The Department of Education's Grievances and Investigations Officer had specific responsibility for the ongoing development of policies and protocols associated with the investigation of allegations of child sex offences and other forms of child abuse. An inter-agency committee was formed to consider protocols for safety screening of employees and to exchange information. The department received approval for appointees to school-based positions to be subject to good character checks and accepted responsibility for safety screening all workers operating in home-based and centre-based childcare. The protocols for investigating and dealing with allegations of maltreatment of students, including mandatory reporting responsibilities for all employees, were being reviewed.

Catholic schools in Tasmania had an interim policy for the notification of any suspected cases of child abuse, including by employees, to Archdiocesan authorities and to the appropriate state bodies. A more comprehensive range of protocols is in preparation. All applicants for teaching and other positions in



Tasmanian Catholic schools were required to submit evidence that they had undergone police checks for any criminal offence and those from other education authorities were subjected to checks with all earlier employers through national cooperative arrangements.

## Northern Territory

The Northern Territory made progress with the implementation of the national strategy recommendations throughout 1998. Efforts concentrated on developing effective school-based staff screening policies and criminal history check procedures. These required close cooperation with the Northern Territory Police. As there had been limited exchange of staffing information with other State and Territory education authorities, the development of detailed procedures governing this sensitive process was held in abeyance, awaiting advice from the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.

While NT statutory provisions already covered mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect, these provisions did not extend to the reporting of improper conduct of a sexual nature by a school staff member against a student. Accordingly arrangements were made to amend the relevant part of the Education Act.

Child protection education was generally left to schools to develop in the context of health education and student behaviour management strategies. To address this issue, planning commenced at the system level, for the development of relevant and culturally sensitive curriculum materials on child protection as well complementary professional development. It was envisaged that the development of these materials would be undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team of health, education (government and non-government) and parent representatives.

## Australian Capital Territory

In 1998, the policy statement *Child Abuse and Neglect: Guidelines for Response to Concerns* was distributed. This followed the introduction of mandatory reporting requirements in the ACT in 1997. The statement provided information to professionals working in government schools regarding how to respond to suspected child abuse or neglect.

A child abuse prevention newsletter, titled *Keeping Children Safe: A Shared Responsibility*, was distributed to all schools, childcare facilities, doctors surgeries, family support agencies and ACT government shopfronts. A parent guide, titled *Paedophiles*, was also distributed to government shopfronts.

Programs were developed and implemented to support community linkages and to provide flexible approaches to meet the learning needs of 'at risk' students. Student management and welfare policies continued to be developed at the school level. These included protective behaviours, gender awareness and human relationships programs. The Protective Behaviours program taught children to deal with situations involving physical, sexual and emotional abuse. It addressed issues such as sexual harassment, bullying and racism. The program is supported by many government and community organisations and encourages the involvement of parents.

The Safe Schools Policy Framework emphasised positive student management and provided strategies for minimising violence and harassment. It identified the principles and common features of a safe school, curriculum and professional development needs and provided examples of current ACT, national and international initiatives. The strategies in the framework included:

- coordination of student support services with departmental and interagency activities
- review and evaluation of student management strategies
- support for continuing initiatives to eliminate harassment
- review of occupational health and safety.

The Catholic Education Office (CEO) in the ACT initiated and actively participated in a range of strategies, including in-service training on the Child Protection Policy; professional development initiatives for school staffs and CEO officers; involvement in the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect strategy networks; and employment policy screening procedures consistent with MCEETYA directives.

## Drug education and school drug prevention

The National Schools Drug Education Strategy was announced as part of the first instalment of the National Illicit Drug Strategy, *Tough on Drugs*, launched in 1997. A National Advisory Committee on School Drug Education has now been established to provide expert advice and direction on the development, implementation and progress of the strategy.

The draft National Schools Drug Education Strategy was released on 4 December 1998 for a ten-week public consultation period. Issues raised in the consultation process were considered by the National Advisory Committee on

School Drug Education prior to it being submitted for approval and implementation in 1999.

Within the States and Territories, there appeared to be two distinct approaches to drug education. One group operated through programs that were integrated into the curriculum as a whole by including drug education issues and topics in the programs offered by the key learning areas. The second group had drug education strategies delivered by specific-purpose programs.

## Integrated programs

New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory each reported the use of integrated programs. For example, all students in NSW government schools from Kindergarten to year 12 were taught drug education within the key learning area of health and physical education. The student welfare policy, with its focus on effective teaching and learning, positive climate and good discipline, and community participation, provided a supportive, whole-school context for the implementation of quality drug education. In 1998, the NSW government announced an action plan to protect students from illegal drugs and to support staff in their efforts against illegal drugs in schools. Initiatives in this plan included the following:

- A two and a half hour training and development module consisting of a video and support materials was distributed to all NSW government schools.
- Specialist training for all teachers about drugs was provided with the teacher resource *Drugs: Just the Facts*.
- Schools reviewed their drug education programs and policies for managing drug issues.
- All secondary schools conducted meetings in conjunction with the Department of Health and the Police Service to brief parents about drug matters. All parents who attended the meetings received a booklet about drugs and advice on how to communicate more effectively with their children on drug issues.
- All school counsellors were given training in the management of students at risk from drug use. Counsellors were also provided with a directory of all agencies in NSW to which they can refer students.
- All secondary students were provided with a copy of the school's discipline code and informed of the consequences for possession or use of illegal drugs.

A number of resources were developed for NSW schools during 1998, including:

- *Students Who Smoke* – a resource written to assist schools reduce the number of students who smoke at school and to provide an educational alternative to suspending students who are caught smoking tobacco
- *End of Year Celebration Materials* package – a booklet, a help card, pamphlets and other relevant information designed to encourage year 12 students to celebrate the end of their school year safely
- *No Risk Rage* – a booklet covering topics such as drink driving, binge drinking, rave parties, the formal dance and emergency procedures
- a drug education resource for geographically isolated students in years 5–8
- *Healing Time* – a drug education resource, designed especially to meet the drug education needs of Indigenous students. Developed in conjunction with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, it is a culturally appropriate resource targeting junior secondary students, and includes a comic, curriculum support materials, a poster and activities for students, staff and parents.

In 1998, Queensland began a project to develop guidelines and strategies for detecting and deterring the presence of illicit drugs in schools. Marijuana is the focus of the project, which was initiated at the request of schools who had identified an increase in the number of students bringing drugs to school for their own use and to sell to other students.

In both Tasmania and SA, the emphasis was on minimising the harm associated with drug use. Within SA government schools, drug education was part of the health and physical education learning area from Reception to year 12. Drug education was taught holistically, integrating the social, legal and emotional aspects and their implication for the health and well-being of the population. Students were taught about the consequences of drug use, as well as learning skills which promote healthy lifestyle choices. Issues included use of medicines, passive and active tobacco use, alcohol use, peer pressure, the role of the media, personal drug use, individual and community action to promote health, and the interaction of alcohol with other drugs. Teachers used the *Candidly Cannabis Kit*, *Harm Minimisation* video and *How Will You Feel Tomorrow?* kit provided to secondary schools.

In the NT, drug education programs were offered in 1998 through the health education curriculum. An integrated

approach was used to teach about drugs in primary schools through strands such as Safety and Health of individuals and populations. Further complementary programs such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education and Life Education were included to reinforce students' knowledge, skills and understandings about drug-related issues.

The Territory's secondary health education curriculum contains sequential units focussing on specific drug topics, such as alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. These were taught to students in years 8–10. Life skills were integrated with the units of work to provide students with opportunities to develop assertiveness skills to be used as circumstances require.

In the ACT, drug education was set within a Health Promoting Schools framework and involved the formal curriculum, the school ethos and the school-home-community interface. A Drug Education Working Party was established in 1998 to develop a Drug Education Policy Framework. Similar reviews of drug education programs will be held in 1999 in Queensland and within the Catholic system in South Australia.

## Specific-purpose drug education programs

Schools in Victoria and Western Australia each had access to recently developed drug education programs. Turning the Tide is a comprehensive drug strategy being implemented across Victoria in response to the report of the Premier's Drug Advisory Council, *Drugs and Our Community*. Turning the Tide strategy provides a balanced and comprehensive approach to drug use and misuse in our community.

Turning the Tide in Schools is designed to ensure that drug education is a core component of a school's health curriculum and includes strategies to address drug-related student welfare. Over a three-year period, all schools will develop an Individual School Drug Education Strategy (ISDES), which will address the needs of all students. It is estimated that 770 schools from all sectors will commence their ISDES in 1999.

During 1998, over 6,000 teachers, parents, students and members of relevant community support services attended professional development conducted by Regional Drug Education Facilitators.

Parents with students attending schools which had prepared an ISDES were offered the opportunity to attend a five-hour drug education program that specifically addressed the drug-related issues relevant to parents. A training program was conducted for 32 community health workers from rural

locations to enable them to deliver these five-hour sessions. Sessions were conducted in over 595 schools across the State. Comprehensive *Guidelines for Developing an ISDES* have been provided for all schools. These guidelines set consistent goals and principles of effective drug education from Prep to year 12 within a harm minimisation framework.

Resources developed to support schools include *Get Real* and a companion document *Get Wise*, which is designed to assist schools to deal with illicit drug issues. Both resources address curriculum and welfare issues. The publication *Responding to Cannabis Use by Young People* provides advice and support to teachers and principals on addressing issues related to cannabis use.

In Western Australia, the Education Department, Catholic Education Office of Western Australia and the Association of Independent Schools WA continued to cooperate in the cross-sectoral School Drug Education Project (SDEP), which is part of the State government's whole-of-government drug strategy Together Against Drugs. During 1998, considerable progress was made.

A *Drug Education K–12 Teacher Support Package* reflected the new outcomes-based approach to drug education and included comprehensive lesson activities and strategies to assist teachers to plan and implement effective drug education. It was piloted in first semester, 1998, with feedback being incorporated into the final package distributed to all WA schools. The package links directly to the Curriculum Framework and reflects current best practice in drug education.

A review of effective primary school and secondary school drug education resources was undertaken, and all schools received *Drug Education Resource Focus*, a compendium of drug education materials to assist teachers to select materials appropriate to the ages and backgrounds of their students. There are 25 primary, 77 secondary and nine parent resources included, as well as a selection of Internet sites.

In 1998, 16 Regional School Drug Education Networks were established, which further expanded the teacher professional development support provided by the SDEP. The purpose of these networks is to provide local support to teachers and other school-based staff as they implement drug education changes in their school community to meet the needs of their students. The networks provide ongoing professional development relevant to the local needs of teachers and their students and opportunities for teachers and other school staff to share ideas.

The SDEP produced several resources which were distributed to schools in Term 3, 1998, including:

- *Developing a Drug Policy to Promote Health in Your School*, which provides schools with the background information required for establishing the process and developing a school drug policy relevant to their school
- a chart, *When Students and Parents Need Help*, which contains a current list of Community Drug Service Teams
- a sample policy, which explains how to condense the contents of a school drug policy into a pamphlet for distribution to all staff, students and parents.

The SDEP established, maintained and sought direction from a School Drug Education Reference Group. This group provided advice on issues relating to the project's strategic plan and included representatives from all schools sectors, community

groups, key agencies and parent groups. Parent materials were developed and are incorporated with the school curriculum resources. The aim was to involve parents in school drug education programs and to encourage them to communicate with their children and schools about drug issues. The parent materials were trialled by 100 teachers in 69 schools.

During 1998, work began on the development of tools for monitoring school drug education. The resources being developed include a resource to assist schools to plan and review, monitor implementation and evaluate the outcomes of their programs; and a CD-ROM to help teachers to make professional judgements in assessing outcomes-focussed learning in drug education. At the system level, SDEP has established a comprehensive external evaluation plan that provides for both impact and process evaluation.