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Executive Summary

1. A NSW Institute of Teachers should be established as soon as practicable.

2. In the interests of student learning, the principal aims of the Institute should be to:
   a) contribute to improving the standards of teaching;
   b) maintain and improve standards of professional practice by teachers,

3. The Institute should be responsible for:
   a) developing standards of teaching;
   b) developing standards of conduct for teachers, including Code(s) of Conduct;
   c) enhancing the role of the teaching profession;
   d) advice on the training, career development and performance management of teaching;
   e) advice on recruitment to the teaching profession and related supply and demand issues;
   f) identifying incentives for teacher Accreditation.

4. Teachers should be accredited and disaccredited through the application of a process of peer review.

5. The Institute, and the processes in which it engages, must recognise the legitimate rights of parents to educate their children in a school with religious goals where they will be taught by teachers who support those goals and who may be specifically educated to teach in such a school.
1. PROMOTING THE PROFESSION OF TEACHING

1.1 The Catholic Education Commission, NSW (CEC) agrees with the fundamental contention of Dr Ramsey, namely, “that teachers in NSW have limited mechanisms for their wider professional interests to be represented and no capacity to develop professional guidelines and standards for their practice” (Quality Matters p.13f.). Consequently a structural arrangement is required in NSW to promote the involvement of teachers in the regulation and enhancement of their profession.

1.2 Any such structure must:

- be teacher focused;
- be non-industrial in character;
- provide for maximum teacher involvement;
- provide for independent, objective and rigorous professional standards;
- recognise the rights and responsibilities of all school proprietors and the communities they service;
- promote teacher development and student learning;
- involve all school authorities;
- be voluntary for teachers, while having the capacity to evolve into a universal structure encompassing all NSW teachers;
- accredit teachers by applying a process of peer review.

1.3 The CEC believes that at this time the most appropriate structure to achieve the purposes set out above is an Institute of Teachers, as proposed by Dr Ramsey.

1.4 The design of the Institute, and the processes leading to its establishment, must ensure that, as its primary
aim, it has the promotion of teaching and teachers. All activities of the Institute must:

- serve to promote the status of teachers/teaching;
- identify incentives for teacher accreditation, linked to the procedures and processes of the Institute of Teachers.

2. TEACHING AND SCHOOLING

2.1 As the CEC pointed out in its November 1999 submission to the Ramsey Review, teaching and schooling cannot be separated. Teaching is contextualised in schooling and vice-versa. Likewise, the nature of the teacher and the nature of school-work are intimately related.

2.2 Consequently, each Catholic school depends for its ethos and character on teachers who are committed to the specific purposes of Catholic education in general and Catholic schooling in particular. The nature of teaching in a Catholic school focuses on both the personal and professional qualities of the teacher in an ongoing process of human interaction.

2.3 This integral and holistic perspective on schooling and teaching is echoed in the recent articulation of teaching as a “social good” by the Australian College of Education:

Through addressing the needs, taking account of the interests, and challenging the capacities, of each individual student – the essential “social good” pursued by the profession of teaching is to maximise the learning opportunities to help enable each individual student to achieve personal excellence in the intellectual, personal, social, cultural, emotional, physical, moral, spiritual and other aspects of human development.

(P. Brock, quoted in Standards of Professional Practice for Accomplished Teaching in Australian
2.4 Catholic education authorities agree that teachers should strive to achieve this social good through:
   a) a commitment to students and their learning;
   b) knowing the subjects they teach and knowing how to teach those subjects to students;
   c) managing and monitoring student learning;
   d) thinking systematically about their practice and learning from experience;
   e) practising as members of learning communities.

2.5 These are the core standards for teachers and teaching as developed by the United States National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. They should be adopted and adapted for application to teaching in NSW.

3. TEACHING IN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONTEXT

3.1 For the Catholic school community there is a necessary connection between parenting and schooling. In the first instance, parents have a right and duty to choose schools that will help them in their tasks as Christian educators. This creates the legitimate expectation that “the school must be a community whose values are communicated...through both individual and corporative adherence to the outlook on life that permeates the school” (refer The Catholic School, paragraph, 32).

3.2 This view of teaching as an extension of parental rights and duties has two critical and related
implications for teacher education and teacher development:

- All families have the right to access teachers for their children who will educate their children in a manner consistent with each family’s values and beliefs, including religious beliefs;

- The NSW community must therefore be able to provide a supply of teachers appropriate to the needs of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-faith and pluralist society. Religious communities based on faith traditions, in this context, have the right to access trained teachers who are appropriate to the needs of their communities and their schools.

3.3 Teaching is both a profession and, in the ethical sense, a vocation. It must be promoted and supported as such. To this end the State, as the instrument of the common good, and in collaboration with school authorities must:

- ensure an adequate supply of teachers;

- ensure a range and choice of appropriate teachers in relation to community needs as expressed through the lawfully established schools of that community;

- enable each and every child access to teaching which is appropriate to the age, development, family values and beliefs of that child, including the religious beliefs of the child’s family.

3.4 In practical terms this means that Government, on behalf of the community, in order to promote the common good, must provide resources sufficient to:

- educate an adequate number of teachers;
• educate a diversity of teachers commensurate to the diversity of a pluralistic society which supports a plurality of school types, including schools of a religious nature;

• remunerate teachers in a manner which will both attract and retain highly talented persons;

• provide for the continuing education of teachers;

• provide incentives for ‘best practice’, or ‘accredited’ teachers.

4. IMPROVING QUALITY OF TEACHERS AND THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

4.1 There exists a pressing need for teacher renewal, given the increasing complexity of teaching stemming from causes such as:

• new models of teaching and assessment;

• technological change and the information revolution, including the internet;

• social and behavioural change of both adults and children, particularly arising from family dysfunction and breakdown;

• significant numbers of marginalised and alienated students;

• growing impact and complexity of teachers’ legal responsibilities/liabilities.

4.2 At the same time governments and the community are demanding that schools and teachers be more accountable.
4.3 The twin demands for new teacher skills and new teacher accountabilities, make it imperative that the education partners, including universities, government, employers, professional associations and unions address the related issues of:

a) **entry level standards for teaching** (those standards which should be recognised as a precondition to teaching);

b) **teaching standards** (those sets of attitudes/knowledge/skills/competencies/understandings/values and beliefs which are essential for ongoing effectiveness as a teacher, and

c) **rewards for teaching/teachers**

4.4 Both entry-level standards for teaching and teaching standards can and will vary in response to the teaching context. Teaching context includes:

- the nature of the school community e.g. in terms of SES, ESL, Indigenous, ethnic and cultural background, as well as religious factors where relevant;
- the nature of the learners e.g. maturation, cognitive development, disability;
- the availability of school resources e.g. class size, capital facilities, access to information technology;
- the availability of opportunities for teacher renewal.

4.5 Entry-level standards for teaching and teaching standards will also reflect, and should reflect, the
philosophy and values of both the school and the community the school serves. In respect of a school established by a religious body such values will include religious values.

4.6 Consequently both entry-level standards for teaching and teaching standards will involve a complex mix of:
   a) generic standards, applicable to all teachers;
   b) specific standards, applicable to particular teaching requirements and contexts, including requirements arising from:
      • the nature of the school
      • the nature of the learner(s)
      • the knowledge/skills/content/discipline taught
      • the nature of the community which the school serves.

4.7 These observations on standards for teachers and teaching re-emphasise the earlier observation of this response that, teaching and schools exist in a symbiotic relationship.

4.8 This fact leads the Catholic education community to argue that the enhancement of both:
   • entry-level standards for teaching, and
   • continuing teachers effectiveness through teaching standards,
must be a shared responsibility promoted and overseen by teachers, teacher employers and school authorities, as well as government.
4.9 In this context, and for these reasons, the Commission agrees with Dr Ramsey that teaching quality can best be promoted through the establishment of a NSW Institute of Teachers constructed as a voluntary professional body. Over time such an Institute might well extend its membership to include all teachers in NSW.

5. ESTABLISHING AN INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

5.1 Together with Dr Ramsey the Commission agrees that the primary purpose of an Institute of Teachers must be to enhance the level of professionalism of both teachers and of teacher education.

5.2 To achieve this primary aim the Institute of Teachers will need to be independent and to work constructively and collaboratively with:

- Teachers and teacher organisations, including unions and professional teaching associations;
- Teacher employers and school authorities including religious bodies;
- Teacher educators and universities;
- Parents, through recognised representative parent bodies;
- Government, as the representative of the common good.

5.3 Consequently the Commission envisages the Institute of Teachers will need to be established by statute and provided with a governing board comprising a majority of teachers currently engaged in the classroom on a daily basis.

5.4 The governing board will need to be empowered to establish such committees, working parties and peer
review panels as will be necessary for it to carry out its mandate.

5.5 Membership of committees, working parties and peer review panels, must always be comprised of a majority of teachers currently engaged in the classroom on a daily basis.

5.6 The Institute of Teachers should be provided with a clear and achievable mandate.

6. THE MANDATE OF AN INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

6.1 A clear and achievable mandate for the Institute of Teachers would be one focused on four inter-related tasks:

a) development of standards for preservice education for adoption and implementation by universities;

b) development of standards for professional competence and practice, including continuing education, for adoption and implementation by teachers;

c) establishment of processes and procedures, including peer review panels, for the recognition of the implementation/achievement of standards;

d) provision of advice on teacher supply and demand trends.
6.2 The core function of the Institute of Teachers should be the development of a staged system of accreditation based on three levels of recognition:

a) professional competence;
b) professional specialisation;
c) leadership in classroom practice, curriculum and assessment.

6.3 The role of the Institute in respect of this staged system of accreditation should focus on:

a) the design and specification of standards;
b) the development of assessment tools and procedures;
c) accreditation of teachers applying recommendations arising from a process of peer assessment implemented by peer review panels;
d) identification of incentives for teacher accreditation, in consultation with teacher employers, government, professional associations and unions;
e) establishment and maintenance of a record of accredited teachers.

6.4 The role of the Institute of Teachers must be complementary to, and not substitute for, the existing legitimate roles and scope of authority of:

- Universities
- Teacher employers and school authorities
- Teachers’ professional associations
- Teacher unions.
6.5 Once established the Institute of Teachers must recognise the role and duties of School Authorities as well as other involved institutions, such as Universities.

6.6 The Institute of Teachers should aim to achieve its mandate through incentives arising from the recognition of best practice.

6.7 While the primary focus of the Institute of Teachers should be open the recognition of K-12 school teachers overtime its work should expand to include:
   - early childhood teachers
   - TAFE and VET teachers.

6.8 In addition the Institute should have a special brief with respect to the recognition of teacher educators.

7. JURISDICTION OF THE INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

7.1 The authority and powers of the NSW Institute of Teachers will be exercisable by its Governing Board.

7.2 The Institute of Teachers will develop and publish standards for:
   - courses in teacher education, both pre-service and post-graduate;
   - professional competence in teaching;
   - for professional specialisation in teaching;
• leadership in classroom practice, curriculum and assessment.

7.3 The Institute will, following application of its standards, accredit:

a) courses in teacher education;

b) teachers on the recommendation of peer review panels subject to appropriate and necessary quality assurance and appeal mechanisms;

c) both courses in teacher education and individual teachers for such periods of time and on such terms and conditions as the Institute, deems necessary in order to give effect to the Institute’s Standards.

7.4 Procedures will need to be established in respect of the accreditation of both courses and teachers in the field of Religious Education.

7.5 The Institute may withdraw its accreditation from a teacher education course or from a teacher on the ground of breach of standards.

8. OBSERVATIONS ON KEY RAMSEY REPORT CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Commission shares Dr Ramsey’s doubts about whether a system of Teacher Registration would lead to higher standards in teacher performance, Quality Matters pp 30 and 149. Consequently, as already outlined above, a voluntary system of Teacher Accreditation is seen, at this time, as providing a strategy more likely to raise both entry-level standards for teaching and
continuing teaching standards. As noted in the longer term Institute membership and Accreditation may become a universal expectation of teachers.

8.2 As discussed at pages 152-155 of the Ramsey Review the Institute of Teachers will need to address how teacher Accreditation might be encouraged and supported by a system of incentives and rewards.

8.3 Since, as part of Recommendation One, Dr Ramsey envisages that the Institute of Teachers will, advise, inter alia, on “the qualifications, profile and experiences of teachers employed throughout the State” it seems logical that the Institute should also advise on teacher supply issues. Incorporating teacher supply analysis and monitoring in the role statement of the Institute will obviate the need for a separate “Joint Committee on Teacher Supply”.

8.4 Dr Ramsey’s proposals for the funding of the Institute of Teachers, as set out at page 148 of “Quality Matters” are not supported. The costs arising from the establishment and operation of the Institute of Teachers should be met by government. It would, however, be consistent with practice in the UK and USA for teachers seeking Institute Accreditation and re-accreditation to be responsible for the payment of a modest accreditation fee. This is the funding approach which applies to the English General Teaching Council.

8.5 With respect to the endorsing and dis-endorsing of courses and programs of teacher education, being both initial and continuing education programs conducted by Universities, care will need to be taken to incorporate, and not to duplicate, existing course approval and quality assurance procedures.
8.6 The proposal for the establishment of an Australian Graduate School of Teaching is not supported because its establishment is likely to reduce the opportunities for Faculties of Education in the various NSW universities to provide graduate programs in accord with the particular mission of those universities. Further, the validity and integrity of a Graduate School of Teaching distinct and detached from a Graduate School of Education is open to serious question. It is also noted that the funding and resourcing of universities is a matter of Commonwealth, and not State, policy.