

## Information statement

### 18th MCEETYA meeting

Canberra, 12 May 2005 to 13 May 2005

### Related files

*No files present*

State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers with responsibility for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, met in Canberra on 12-13 May 2005 for the 18th meeting of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, (MCEETYA). The meeting was chaired by Ms Katy Gallagher, Minister for Education and Training, Australian Capital Territory and Chair of MCEETYA for 2005. The main outcomes of the meeting are summarised below.

## Indigenous Education

Ministers have made improving the outcomes for Indigenous students their top priority for MCEETYA over the next three years.

The decision was made following a one-day forum conducted as part of the meeting, which specifically looked at strategies for improving outcomes for Indigenous students. Presenters at the forum were:

Mr Chris Sarra, Education Queensland and former Principal of Cherbourg State School, Qld. Dr Nola Purdie, Principal Research Fellow, Australian Council for Educational Research. Ms Linda Burney MP, Member for Canterbury, NSW Associate Professor Gary Partington, Co-ordinator of Research and Teaching at Kurungkurl Katitjin, the School of Indigenous Australian Studies at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. Dr Bob Boughton, Senior Lecturer, School of Professional Development and Leadership at the University of New England.

MCEETYA will establish a working party of senior officials, chaired by Western Australia, to develop mechanisms of closer collaboration, improved funding arrangements and effective programs to improve the outcomes for Indigenous students. The working party will consult with Indigenous communities and will consider early intervention programs, retention strategies, mentoring, teacher preparation strategies and local Indigenous community involvement.

## Strategic Priorities

In addition to the top priority of improving the educational outcomes for Indigenous students, MCEETYA has established the following areas of

priority for collaborative work in the next three years:

- Career Development & Employment
- Early Childhood Education & Care
- Improving Teacher & School Leadership Capacity
- Information & Communication Technologies in Schools
- Nationally Consistent Curriculum Outcomes
- Pathways for Post-Compulsory Youth
- Performance & Reporting
- Resourcing

Council recognised that work on early childhood and care will need to be done through collaboration with the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference and the Australian Health Ministers' Conference and their current administrator groups.

MCEETYA also recognised the national roles that the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) and the Australasian Forum of Teacher Registration & Accreditation Authorities (AFTRAA) play and requested that AESOC consult with these bodies to bring their work into alignment with MCEETYA's strategic priorities.

Another meeting of MCEETYA will be held prior to the end of the year, most likely in November, to establish MCEETYA priorities for collaboration on youth issues and to discuss key issues for higher education. The higher education element of the meeting will take the form of a forum, similar to the Indigenous forum held at this meeting, with guest speakers and open discussion of ways to work collaboratively on improving the quality of our higher education system.

## **Literacy and Numeracy Testing**

MCEETYA has approved the trial of new common testing instruments in literacy and numeracy in the first half of 2006. The trial will cover Years 3, 5 and 7 and be conducted in a sample of schools in all States and Territories. Ministers also made a range of decisions to advance the national measurement and reporting agenda, including that Year 9 benchmark standards will be developed and endorsed by MCEETYA for introduction in 2007.

The common testing instruments for years 3, 5 and 7 have been developed as a means of improving the comparability of results between States and Territories, overcoming a number of technical difficulties associated with equating results from the different tests currently used across Australia.

If the trial is successful, States and Territories will have the choice of

administering the instruments as either a random sample test in addition to the state-based tests, or as a full cohort test replacing the existing tests. This choice is to ensure national comparability with respect to both the test instruments and to the analysis of the results, while at the same time enabling jurisdictions to retain ownership of the reporting of students' results. The proposal is sufficiently flexible to enable jurisdictions to choose to conduct marking and further analysis of students' tests independently or as part of a consortium of jurisdictions and sectors.

Included in the trial will be an examination of:

- The rigour of the proposed national tests;
- The suitability of the Statements of Learning for the development of national tests at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9;
- Whether the proposed national tests provide sufficient diagnostic information to judge the effectiveness of teaching and learning and to improve students' educational outcomes;
- The development of new standards to cover the full range of student achievement, including students who meet the minimum benchmark standard and those who are proficient; and
- A revision of existing benchmark standards to ensure that they represent the minimum acceptable standard without which a student will have difficulty making sufficient progress at school.

### **Refugee and Humanitarian Entrant School Children**

Ministers have asked AESOC to develop early intervention strategies that recognise and support recently-arrived refugee and humanitarian entrant school children and young people with very low levels of literacy and sometimes no experience of schooling.

The move is in recognition of the radical change in the make up of Australia's refugee and humanitarian intake over the past few years, with around 70 per cent of those entering Australia through the off-shore humanitarian intake coming from Africa. Entrants from Africa tend to face more complex barriers to settlement than people from other source regions, as a result of higher levels of trauma, poverty, larger families, rural backgrounds, lower levels of education and English proficiency. They are also likely to have spent long periods in refugee camps before coming to Australia.

The challenges faced by young refugees are often compounded by the fact that they are forced to cope with the traumas of their recent past at a particularly vulnerable stage in their personal development. Those who arrive in Australia unaccompanied by family or a significant adult,

and those who have endured extended periods in refugee camps before entering Australia, are at particular risk.

### **Criminal History Checks for People seeking Work with Children in an Educational Setting**

Education Ministers will seek the support of their respective Cabinets for a proposed model on the inter-jurisdictional exchange of criminal history information on persons seeking to work in educational settings. The model, developed by MCEETYA following consultations with other stakeholders, seeks to provide a consistent approach to overriding the spent conviction legislation or policy in each jurisdiction to enable the exchange of police information, between Australian law enforcement agencies, for the purpose of education-related employment screening.

The proposed model would not seek to substantially alter existing arrangements for education-related employment screening in any jurisdiction, or to create additional requirements for the collection of information. However, it would ensure that information currently available to screening bodies was national information, nationally available.

### **Online Curriculum Content**

Ministers have made a further three-year commitment to invest in the procurement of online curriculum content for all schools in Australia and New Zealand. MCEETYA's goal is that online curriculum content be used in all schools to increase learning effectiveness and support a modern, enterprising, knowledge-generating society. In the period 2006-2008 the initiative will aim to procure a further 4000 items of high quality, globally recognised online content.

### **National Student Destination Survey and Unique Student Identifier**

The Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce (PMRT) has been asked to examine the feasibility and appropriateness of the implementation of a national student destination survey for students completing Year 12. Student destination data has been recognised as a valuable indicator of the outcomes of schooling and many jurisdictions conduct, or are considering conducting, destination surveys of students in the year after completing Year 12. The main advantage of consistency between different jurisdictions' surveys will be the capacity to compare destination outcomes between jurisdictions. This is of particular interest to Commonwealth agencies, including the Productivity Commission. It is also of interest to jurisdictions provided that the

interpretation is fair, in that it can identify issues that may assist review of school services, e.g. career advisory services.

The PMRT will also examine the feasibility and appropriateness of introducing a Unique Student Identifier (USI) supported by an Identity Management framework. The most important benefit of a USI is that it would provide the capacity for a comprehensive view of individual current and historical student information, based on data potentially drawn from a number of sources. This capacity has the potential to lead to better tailoring of intervention strategies, and better coordination of responses from a variety of service providers within and between agencies. If adopted nationally the USI would provide a number of potential advantages across jurisdictions. It would be a mechanism for building a life-long record of individual student education and training information that is not lost when transferring across sectors and jurisdictions.

## **Consumer and Financial Literacy**

MCEETYA will establish a working party, to be chaired by NSW, to develop a framework for consumer and financial literacy. This move is in response to extensive research in Australia in the last few years which has shown the need to build financial literacy skills for young people to avoid future generations becoming burdened by excessive debt and other financial problems.

Research also indicated that while there are opportunities for teaching financial literacy skills, there is not a formal course of study in any jurisdiction, there is no systematic approach to its teaching and there are few up-to-date resources that are linked to curriculum. The primary purpose, therefore, of a national framework will be to influence national consistency and coherence amongst consumer and financial literacy resources for young people. The secondary purpose of the framework will be to provide a framework to the writers of the national Statements of Learning, particularly for 'Mathematics' and 'Civics and Citizenship', in order to support the incorporation of aspects of consumer and financial literacy in the Statements.

## **Education and The Arts**

MCEETYA is developing a joint statement on strengthening and expanding the links between education and the arts in Australia in conjunction with the Cultural Ministers' Council. The Statement will contribute to improving the cooperation and coordination of government activities as they affect cultural activities, particularly those for children and young people. The Statement will also complement both the

National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century and MCEETYA's existing declaration *Stepping Forward - improving pathways for all young people*.

The development of the statement is in recognition that social and economic progress in Australia is increasingly dependent on a well-informed and active citizenry, consisting of individuals able to communicate well, think originally and critically, adapt to change, work cooperatively, remain motivated when faced with difficult circumstances, able to connect with both people and ideas and capable of finding solutions to problems as they occur. These skills constitute a capacity for innovation, which young people can only develop through the interdisciplinary understanding attained through education in the arts, the humanities and social sciences, and other cultural and ethical domains as well as in maths, science and technology.

### **National Environment Education Statement for Schools**

MCEETYA has endorsed *Educating for a Sustainable Future: A National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools* to be distributed to all Australian schools. The statement provides a nationally agreed description of the nature and purpose of environmental education for sustainability through all years of schooling, including a vision and a framework for its implementation. The statement is intended for teachers, schools and their communities, education systems and curriculum material developers. The statement will assist in understanding the role of environmental education in creating a more sustainable future.

### **National Statement and Plan on Languages Education in Australian Schools**

The [National Statement and Plan on Languages Education in Australian Schools](#) has been endorsed by Ministers and will be distributed to schools and stakeholders. The Statement provides an overarching framework for State, Territory and Australian Government activities while the Plan-covering the period 2005-2008-reflects an agreed commitment by all Ministers of Education to act together to address areas of common concern. The Plan aims to:

- establish long-term directions for languages education;
- advance the implementation of high quality and sustainable programs;
- maximise collaboration in the use of national, State and Territory resources; and
- provide flexibility in implementation by individual jurisdictions.

### **Information and Communication Technologies in Schools**

Two documents have been endorsed by Ministers for distribution:

The [\*Pedagogy Strategy\*](#), provides strategic principles and an agreed framework for developing innovative pedagogies that exploit the opportunities made available through the use of ICT in learning. The Strategy provides an overview of the professional support and leadership required to ensure teachers develop the knowledge, competence, skills and confidence to exercise professional judgement in utilising ICT to create new learning possibilities for students.

Broadband data communication services are a critical element to the successful utilisation of ICT. The *Bandwidth Implementation Plan 2004-05* is designed to integrate with the *National Broadband Strategy* and provides the detail of work to be undertaken under each action of the National Bandwidth Action Plan released in 2003.

## **Credit Transfer and Articulation**

### [Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation](#)

MCEETYA has adopted a set of Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation which will be used as a basis for consultation with the higher education and VET sectors about their information provision on credit transfer and articulation. The Australian Universities Quality Agency and the VET quality agency, to be established, will be asked to take a more active role in auditing credit transfer and articulation practice against the national principles.

MCEETYA will also undertake a national study of the current practices in credit transfer and articulation between VET and higher education, mapped against the Good Practice Principles. The study will identify gaps in practice and make recommendations for initiatives to drive further improvement.