

## **Information statement**

### **21st MCEETYA Meeting**

**Darwin, 12 April 2007 to 13 April 2007**

### **Related files**

*No files present*

State, Territory, Commonwealth and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, met in Darwin on 12–13 April 2007 for the 21st meeting of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. The meeting was chaired by the Hon. Paul Henderson, MLA, Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Northern Territory, who is the Chair of MCEETYA for 2007. The main outcomes of the meeting are summarised below.

### **National Testing**

Work continued in 2006 on the development of national literacy and numeracy tests for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 beginning in 2008. A model for implementation of the tests through the establishment of a central testing agency was also developed. Ministers were asked to make decisions in relation to funding arrangements for the centre and on protocols for the use of data collected centrally.

As agreement could not be reached to provide adequate funding to support the national testing centre model of delivery, it was agreed that States and Territories will work together to run a national testing program in the most cost effective way, from 2008, consistent with requirements of the Schools Assistance Act 2004.

### **National Eligible School Starting Age**

Ministers decided not to proceed with the implementation of a national eligible school starting age given that:

- no educational benefit had been demonstrated;
- affected States and Territories would incur significant costs; and
- funding arrangements had not been identified.

It was agreed that State and Territory policies and practices would ensure that no child moving interstate will be disadvantaged in his/her progress through the school system by different State and Territory school starting ages and that the issue of student mobility would continue to be addressed through national processes including the Interstate Student Data Transfer Note and Protocol.

### **National Consistency in School Curricula**

Ministers made a commitment to work together to share high-quality curriculum material. They will also work together and with other relevant organisations, including the Catholic and Independent school sectors, to develop nationally consistent curricula that will set core content and achievement standards that are expected of students at the end of their schooling and at key junctures during their schooling, starting with English, mathematics and science. These standards will form the basis for the national testing and measurement program.

The MCEETYA Senior Secondary Reporting Working Group has been asked to advise Council on implementation of this decision in addition to its current work on ensuring student achievement is reported on the same scale and in a similar way nationally.

### **Performance Based Pay for Teachers**

State and Territory commitment to recognising and rewarding teachers through enhanced career structures was noted, and that different approaches will be adopted in doing this across States and Territories, and between and within government and non-government schools and systems.

States and Territories will continue to develop their strategies to enhance career structures and share good practice and will report back at the next MCEETYA meeting on different approaches to recognising and rewarding teachers through enhanced career structures.

Council did not support performance pay for teachers noting that the findings of an Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) study was inconclusive about the benefits and wider impact of performance-based pay for teachers.

### **School Non-Attendance**

Council has agreed that attendance data collected on measures recently developed by the Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce (PMRT) be used to monitor, analyse and report on student non-attendance as part of its response to a reference from the July 2006 COAG meeting on the issue of enforcing compulsory school attendance.

The School Attendance Working Group will use this data to determine the extent of non-enrolment and non-attendance at a national level and will develop and share best practice strategies for promoting school attendance.

The data will be reported to the National Student Attendance Unit

(NSAU) established in the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, as requested by COAG. Protocols for the use of this data would be agreed by AESOC for each release.

Council has asked the NSAU to give particular attention to the high incidence of school non-attendance by Indigenous children and to consider strategies that can be implemented by both States and Territories and national strategies that can be applied across the nation by the Australian Government.

As part of this, Ministers agreed to establish a process to enable the sharing of enrolment information across the State borders of South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory in order to address the issue of significant absenteeism in the Aboriginal homelands resulting from the movement of families between communities in this area

### **Greater Principal Autonomy**

Ministers acknowledged the primary role and professionalism of school principals in school governance and agreed that a significant priority for all Governments is ensuring that each school has a sufficient supply of high quality teaching professionals.

While calling on the Commonwealth to work with States and Territories to identify specific actions that will support principals in managing their workforce needs, Council also asked AESOC to report to the next MCEETYA meeting on the range of measures States and Territories have taken, or are proposed, to strengthen local autonomy of schools and their principals.

### **Health Workforce Issues**

Ministers met with members of the Australian Health Ministers' Council to discuss improving the supply and distribution of the health workforce to better meet community need.

Noting the reliance on university training for the supply of the greater proportion of the health workforce, Council agreed on a number of ways for the education and health sectors to work collaboratively to address workforce supply and distribution issues, including:

- consideration by the Australian Government of any State and Territory government views when making decisions on the closure of specialised or nationally significant courses;
- acknowledging that education providers and employers of health occupations have a significant role in determining the need for new health courses or changes to existing significant health

- courses;
- the provision of health priorities to universities by the Minister for Education, Science and Training to inform their bids for new places
- agreement to examine options in relation to designated national priority areas; clinical education; funding; and the unique requirements of smaller jurisdictions, through a group of health and education sector membership under the joint auspices of AESOC and AHMAC.

MCEETYA will hold further annual workforce meetings in March each year.

## **International Education**

Ministers will establish a Joint Committee on International Education (JCIE) to be the primary forum for governments to engage collaboratively in pursuing common strategic directions in supporting the sustainability of international education in Australia.

The JCIE will advise MCEETYA on international education matters and act as a central forum for information sharing relating to international education across sectors between the Australian and State and Territory Governments.