



# Teacher Registration in the Australian Capital Territory

community**consultation**paper

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## Message from the Minister

This community consultation paper provides the opportunity for the community to discuss and consider the merit of having a teacher registration system for the ACT.

It seems that any registration system needs to balance the flexibility to respond to a changing education environment with maintaining consistent high standards and ongoing public confidence in the profession. Any system must also be demonstrably cost effective.

It is important to note that currently each sector within the school education system has its own methods for screening applicants for teaching, providing ongoing support for meeting early career demands, and providing ongoing evaluation of a person's suitability to teach.

I appreciate the collaborative involvement of the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT, the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Catholic Education Office, the Australian Education Union, the Independent Education Union, the University of Canberra, the Australian Catholic University and the Department of Education and Training.

I would strongly encourage input from across the community on this important issue.



Andrew Barr MLA  
Minister for Education and Training

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## Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce this consultation paper canvassing the issue of teacher registration. The purpose of this paper is to seek input from the teaching workforce and the wider community of the ACT on the issue of registering teachers in the ACT.

The issue of teacher registration was raised most recently through the ACT Standing Committee on Education's report *Teaching in the ACT: Shaping the Future* (2004). The report included a series of recommendations to improve the quality and status of the teaching profession in the ACT. The report recommended that the ACT Government establish a teacher registration board.

The Government has determined that it would continue to monitor national developments, including *Teaching Australia* (formally known as the National Institute of Quality Teaching and School Leadership) and that it would explore the issue of teacher registration further through community consultation. It is intended that this issue be considered in the context of providing quality teaching for students of the ACT and gaining a better understanding of community expectations on the meaning of quality teaching.

The ACT Department of Education and Training in conjunction with the Canberra-Goulburn Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT, the Independent Education Union and the Australian Education Union, the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University has established a Reference Group for this project. The role of the Reference Group will be to continue to explore the issue of teacher registration and to guide the consultative

process. This Group takes over from the work of the Interim Reference Group, which comprised representatives from the non-government and government sectors and teacher unions, and was instrumental in the development of this paper.

This paper will provide the platform for a range of consultation activities with stakeholders to be undertaken during 2007. The desired outcome of this consultation is to provide advice to the ACT Government on teacher registration and related issues that influence the quality of teaching in all ACT schools.

Consultation with the community is to be conducted during the months of May 2007 to November 2007. This period of consultation will provide feedback to help inform the Government's decision.

I therefore encourage the community and teaching professionals to take this opportunity to provide input on the appropriate way forward for the ACT handling the issue of teacher registration. Please note that responses to this consultation paper need to be submitted to the Department by **Friday 28 September 2007**. I look forward to seeing a wide range of comments being provided and to assist the government to make a decision that will best serve the interests of the ACT community.

Michele Bruniges  
Chief Executive  
Department of Education and Training  
April 2007

# Introduction

The purpose of this consultation paper is to explore the issue of teacher registration. This issue is being considered in the broader context of promoting quality teaching in ACT schools and in the context of a national reform agenda that focuses on the accountability of education systems, schools and teachers.

Across government and non-government sectors, the ACT needs to prepare, recruit and retain high quality people to teach students of today and the future. The ACT needs high quality professionals to meet ongoing changes to the teaching workforce and the demands of a competitive employment market.

All Australian states and the Northern Territory have infrastructure in place for the registration or accreditation of schoolteachers. The ACT currently relies on each sector, i.e. independent schools, the Catholic system and the government system, to apply an appropriate level of rigour in the recruitment of suitably qualified and skilled people for teaching positions.

It is important for the ACT community to deliberate on whether the ACT should adopt a more formal registration mechanism, and if so, what should this look like and do. It is an issue that warrants due consideration and participation both by those within the profession, those who receive the services of the profession and those in the community who have an interest in education.

The first part of the consultation paper presents the issues related to teacher registration, including:

- The Policy Context
- What is Teacher Registration?
- Current Arrangements
- Why have Teacher Registration?
- The Possible Elements of Teacher Registration
  - Teacher Education
  - Professional Standards
  - Professional Development
  - Professional Conduct
  - Status of the Profession
  - Mutual Recognition
  - Criteria for Registration
  - Composition of Registration Body
  - Costs of a registration scheme.

Included in this consultation paper is a **Community Response Form**, which is designed to facilitate participation and contribution to the debate about teacher registration. Responses to this paper, combined with views gathered through face-to-face community consultation processes, will help inform recommendations to the ACT Government.

Details of pre-employment and employment arrangements that are currently used by employers of school teachers in the ACT are set out in **Appendix 1**.

In **Appendix 2** there is a range of **possible models** of teacher registration for consideration. This is done on the basis that if it were agreed that a registration system is necessary for the ACT, then we would need to consider an appropriate model in terms of what we expect the registration process to achieve. This will of course depend to some degree on the feedback provided on the issues discussed in the first part of the paper.

## The Policy Context

In August 2004, the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Education presented a report titled *Teaching in the ACT: Shaping the Future*. The report made a series of recommendations to improve the quality and status of the teaching profession in the ACT. The Committee believed it essential that more be done in providing public assurance that all persons engaged in teaching students in ACT schools possess appropriate professional and personal attributes. Recommendation 6.22 of the Report:

*recommends that the Government establish a teacher registration board as a matter of priority and make registration a compulsory requirement for all teachers in the ACT as soon as practicable.*

The then Minister for Education and Training indicated in a statement to the ACT Legislative Assembly in December 2005 that the purpose of any registration process would be to provide assurance to the community that the profession is operating to an appropriate set of standards and that people working in the teaching profession are appropriately qualified and competent.

It noted that teacher registration or accreditation is a requirement in all states and territories except the ACT.

# What is Teacher Registration?

Registration is a process whereby a teacher is “licensed” to teach in a particular jurisdiction. Registration is normally conferred by an independent professional body after an assessment of an applicant’s qualifications, experience and suitability for the role. Registration in one form or another is required to teach in all other Australian states and territories except NSW, where an accreditation system is in place.

The terms registration and accreditation are both used to cover issues of recognition of the qualifications, suitability and experience of members of the teaching profession in other jurisdictions.

*Registration* is considered to be the process of accepting that certain levels of suitability in qualifications and personal character are appropriate before a person undertakes the role of teacher. This is the term used in all states, except NSW, the Northern Territory and in New Zealand.

*Accreditation* In basic terms accreditation differs from registration in that it measures a person’s capacity to perform the role of a teacher based on professional standards. This is the term used by NSW. Within the context of teacher registration, accreditation can also refer to the approval of programs – for example, the approval of tertiary education courses that lead to teaching qualifications.

## What Currently Happens in the ACT

All ACT education sectors currently have systems in place to establish and monitor the professionalism and probity of the teachers they employ.

The ACT Department of Education and Training makes offers of employment to teachers on the basis that the applicant satisfies the following pre-employment requirements:

- required teaching qualifications
- a criminal history record check
- be an English language speaker
- Australian Citizenship/Permanent Residency.

For permanent appointment to the ACT Public Service, teachers must also undertake a medical assessment to ascertain health and fitness and undergo a twelve-month probationary period. They are also covered by a Code of Professional Practice – which outlines the expectations of professional and ethical conduct for teaching staff.

There is an annual performance management cycle in place, known as Professional Pathways, which is a quality assurance process that is linked to professional development requirements.

Teachers in the government system are also subject to the ACT Public Service Code of Ethics, which sets out the standards of probity and behaviour that all ACT public servants must comply with. Breaches of the Code of Ethics may result in disciplinary action.

The Catholic system and independent schools have their own set of pre-employment checks and professional codes. These are similar in most respects to the ACT Government arrangements.

Details of these arrangements are set out in Appendix 1.

## Why Have Teacher Registration?

The threshold question is how might a registration process add value in assessing and maintaining the probity and professionalism of ACT school teachers, above and beyond the current systems of pre-employment checks?

Registration is likely to involve the certification that a teacher has the skills and attributes to teach in the ACT, by a body with expertise that is independent from the government of the day, from teacher employers and teacher educators – these groups may be perceived to have special interests in the employment of teachers (although these groups could be represented on the registration body). Such an arrangement would help minimise any perceived conflicts of interest and thus could enhance and safeguard public confidence in the professionalism and integrity of the teaching profession in the ACT.

A registration system would provide a uniform professional standard for all ACT school teachers, irrespective of which sector they are employed in. It would accord ACT teachers the same professional status as their colleagues in most of the other states and territory. It could assist teacher employers in the ACT in their capacity to continue to compete with most Australian jurisdictions in the employment market in attracting and retaining high quality teachers.

Finally, a teacher registration system could be used to maintain and enhance the ongoing skills and integrity of the ACT teaching profession. Linking registration to ongoing professional development could ensure that teachers continue to update their skills. It could also provide, through

the possible option of deregistration, a final sanction against misconduct or professional incompetence.

On the other hand, even the simplest registration scheme would require a supporting administrative structure, and the broader and more comprehensive the registration process, the more complex this structure will need to be. Arguments in support of registration will need to take into account the need for appropriate funding arrangements, including the extent to which the teachers being registered should contribute to the cost.

- How can teacher registration improve and assure the quality of education in the ACT over and above current arrangements?

## The Possible Elements of Teacher Registration

The case for teacher registration also depends on what we expect a registration process to be able to deliver. This section discusses both the core elements of a registration process and some of the broader professional and performance elements that could also be included in it.

### *Teacher education*

This term covers the education and preparation of students to become teachers, at the undergraduate and graduate level. Teacher education ensures that suitably qualified people gain entry into the profession. Research undertaken by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) indicates that there is a correlation between the quality of entry-level teachers and their teacher education leading into the profession.

The MCEETYA document *A National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching* (2003) outlines the attributes that would be expected of teacher education graduates. There are close relationships between the standards required for teacher registration and the standards of achievement of teacher education graduates. There is a need to align professional entry-level requirements to teach in ACT schools with teacher education courses conducted by tertiary education institutions.

Because of the importance of initial and continuing teacher education, any process of developing a registration scheme for ACT teachers needs to involve teacher educators. Consideration should also be given to what

advice might be given to the Minister on the accreditation of teacher education courses.

- What should be the relationship between a registration body and the local universities that conduct teacher education courses?
- What accreditation process for teacher education courses should a registration body conduct?

### *Professional standards*

*“Professional standards for teaching describe the skills, knowledge and values for effective teaching. They capture key elements of teachers’ work, reflecting their growing expertise and professional aspirations and achievements. Standards make explicit the intuitive understandings and knowledge that characterise good teaching practice and enable this to be widely shared within the profession.”*

A National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching, November 2003.

The purpose of standards is to ensure that there is a framework that enables effective entry of beginning teachers into the profession and provides scope for ongoing professional direction, renewal, support and performance.

The issue of teacher standards has been considered at both the national and local level. Teacher professional associations, employers, unions and teacher registration/accreditation authorities have been active in these debates.

The 2003 MCEETYA *National Framework For Professional Standards for Teaching* is premised on the identified and agreed national requirement “to continuing efforts to define and promote quality teaching”. The MCEETYA framework describes four career dimensions (graduation, competence, accomplishment and leadership) and four professional elements (professional knowledge, professional practice, professional values and professional relationships). Education Ministers have agreed that it is a priority to use the framework as a key point of reference in aligning entry-level standards across Australia and New Zealand.

A number of professional bodies, such as the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, have developed teaching standards and the teacher registration bodies have been working to align their standards with a national focus. *Teaching Australia* is seeking to develop national professional standards for the levels of advanced teaching and school leadership.

# Community Response Form

The purpose of this consultation is to ascertain the views of the ACT community and the teaching profession about ways in which a more formal registration process for teachers might have a positive impact on the profession and on the consequent quality of learning in all ACT schools. Responses need to be submitted by **Friday 28 September 2007**.

Please indicate your personal or professional interest in the issue of teacher registration. You may tick more than one box

Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other School-based Employee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Union Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>
P&C Representative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of the Public	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Stakeholder (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate by placing an "x" in the relevant box below if you **do not** consent to your submission being published on the project website

If you have completed this response on behalf of an organisation/committee/board/professional association or any other body, please complete the details below

Name	<input type="text"/>
Position	<input type="text"/>
Organisation	<input type="text"/>
Contact Details	<input type="text"/>

## Scope and functions of a registration body

How important would each of the following functions be for an effective ACT model of teacher registration?

	Not Important	Impartial	Important	Most Important
	Please mark the relevant column (X)			
Ensuring beginning teachers have appropriate qualifications and experience				
Maintaining and monitoring standards of more experienced teachers				
Promoting the status of the teaching profession				
Establishing codes of professional conduct				
Accreditation of teacher education programs				
Providing mutual recognition (for registration and de-registration)				
Establishing teaching standards				
Other (please specify)				
<b>Comment</b>				

## Options for a registration process in the ACT

What are your views on the five possible models for a registration process that were canvassed in the paper?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Maintain status quo				
Registration process integrated into current arrangements				
An independent body with limited functions				
Outsourced to a teacher registration body in another state				
An independent body with a wide range of functions				
<b>Comment</b>				

## Issues for the teaching profession

Please rate the importance of each of the following issues in the context of the discussion of teacher registration.

	Not Important	Impartial	Important	Most Important
	Please mark the relevant column (X)			
Quality of teacher education programs				
Beginning teacher standards				
Status of the teaching profession				
Protecting the safety and well-being of children				
Ongoing teacher professional learning				
Maintaining and monitoring standards of more experienced teachers				
Codes of professional conduct				
Compliance with professional standards and codes of conduct				
Mutual recognition (teachers registered in one state or territory able to teach in another)				
Other (please specify)				
<b>Comment</b>				

## The value of teacher registration

How and to what extent would a registration system enhance the teaching profession in the ACT.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Please mark the relevant column (X)			
Enhance public confidence in the integrity and credibility of the teaching profession				
Give ACT teachers a similar professional status to their interstate colleagues				
Set a single professional standard for all teachers in the ACT				
Enhance the ACT's ability to attract and retain teachers				
Encourage ongoing teacher professional development				
Provide enhanced sanctions for unprofessional behaviour				
Other (please specify)				
<b>Comment</b>				

# Who should be represented on a teacher registration body?

How important do you think it is that the following stakeholders be represented on a registration board?

	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Most Important
	Please mark the relevant column (X)			
Teacher Employers				
Teacher Educators				
Teacher Unions				
Parent and Community Groups				
Teacher Professional associations				
Teachers				
Others (please specify)				
<b>Comment</b>				

## Your conclusions

Having considered the questions in this response form, we hope that you are in a position to make some final comments on whether the ACT should introduce a registration process for its teachers in government, Catholic and independent schools and what such a registration process might look like.

This section of the response form also enables you to raise additional issues that need to be addressed in the ongoing consultation process.

### Additional comments, questions or issues

- Should the use of professional standards be included as part of a registration process?

### *Professional learning*

The Discussion Paper for ACT Government Schools (2004), *Teachers: the key to student success*, suggests “for teachers to maintain excellence they need to be reflective practitioners. They need to deepen and refresh their own knowledge base and engage in professional learning with their colleagues.” Teachers take responsibility for their own professional learning and for contributing to the knowledge of the profession, within the context of their employer expectations, industrial agreements and codes of professional practice.

While employers and teachers share responsibility for career progression and professional learning, there is scope for a registration body to contribute to an integrated approach to professional learning and its relationship to performance standards. This is a way of maintaining and enhancing the currency of developments across a profession and of generating common frameworks for professional learning across the school education sector. Ongoing registration may be dependent on the evidence of continuing professional growth.

- Should renewal of registration be dependent upon the fulfilment of professional development requirements? If not, what mechanism should be in place to ensure that all teachers are updating their knowledge and skills to improve educational opportunities for students?

### *Professional conduct*

The MCEETYA *National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching* includes professional values as an essential element: “teachers uphold high professional ethics with regard to their own conduct and that of others, and respect their students and value their diversity. They act professionally at all times in their dealing with their students, peers, members of the profession and members of the community”.

Current ACT employment practices require pre-employment checks including a criminal history check. Registration/ accreditation authorities across Australia and in New Zealand include this requirement as part of the registration process.

The concept of professional conduct, once a teacher is employed, may be considered an employer responsibility,

to be handled in the domain of industrial matters. Yet the concept of professional conduct is a core element of any profession. Upholding the reputation of the profession is another potential area of involvement for a registration authority. Linked to the professional issues of standards and development, the concept of professional conduct can provide coherency to individual career management and workforce development.

In Australia, some registration/accreditation authorities have powers to investigate complaints about professional conduct and to de-register members if complaints are upheld. Other authorities have limited powers or no powers to investigate complaints or impose disciplinary measures, although they are able to de-register members who have been found guilty of offences under other legislation. In discussing the possibilities for teacher registration in the ACT, consideration needs to be given as to whether the ACT body should have any powers in this area.

- Should the matter of professional conduct be under the province of a registration body?

### *Mutual recognition*

The purpose of mutual recognition is to reduce the barriers and costs of movement across jurisdictions for people who are registered for a particular occupation or profession. Mutual recognition is supported by Heads of Government agreements across Australia and through the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement. This arrangement applies to all Australian jurisdictions, that have teacher registration.

If people are registered in their ‘home’ jurisdiction then they are entitled to be registered for the same occupation in other participating jurisdictions. The registration authorities of the other Australian jurisdictions and New Zealand have established a body to share information and to develop collaborative arrangements on teacher registration issues. This body is known as the Australasian Forum for Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities (AFTRAA).

- Should the ACT model for teacher registration incorporate the consideration of mutual recognition?
- Is the mobility of teachers between jurisdictions important for a registration process? If so, how could a registration process used by the ACT contribute to the mobility of the teacher workforce to other Australian jurisdictions?

## *Criteria for registration*

The introduction of any registration scheme needs to take account of the wide range of qualifications that teachers currently hold in performing their day-to-day roles. This is important to ensure that arrangements are in place to protect the status of those currently employed.

To that end, there may need to be some structure or tiering of registration for teachers. This could enable coverage for those:

- entering the profession
- with ongoing teacher responsibilities
- who have taken on non-teaching roles but seek to maintain their professional status
- involved in casual employment as a teacher
- who have retired from the profession but seek to maintain an interest in the profession
- who have specified expertise and are studying to become teachers.

Most Australian jurisdictions have a system of provisional registration for new entrants into the profession. Others have 'approval to teach' which does not involve formal registration. This category covers those without formal teaching qualifications, but who have a significant teaching role in schools (for example, a trainer from industry). Some jurisdictions have both of these categories.

Jurisdictions also vary the length of time for which teachers are registered or accredited (from one to five years). This may also vary depending on whether the teacher is a new entrant to the profession or an experienced teacher.

- What teaching or potential teaching groups should the registration process cover?
- What types of registration should be available?
- What is an appropriate time period for a registration to remain current?

## *Composition of registration body*

Consideration also needs to be given to the composition of an authority's governing body. Such membership is generally representative of professional, employer and educational interest groups. Consideration also needs to be given to the size and structure of a body (for example, supporting committees) and whether members are appointed, elected or both. There would also need to be consideration as to the duration of member representation.

Given the nature of this issue there is likely to be a requirement for representation from relevant stakeholder groups including:

- practicing teachers
- employers
- unions
- professional associations
- tertiary education institutions, and
- community groups.

- What is the appropriate composition of a registration system's governing body?

## *Costs of a registration scheme*

As with the introduction of any infrastructure, in this case a professional registration scheme, there are costs associated with a registration process. The establishment of any scheme will require a fee structure to be in place from the date of commencement. As is standard practice for professional registration in all sectors, the registrants would meet the cost of registration.

Something else to consider is whether the ACT jurisdiction would want to maintain its own teacher registration infrastructure or whether there is greater efficacy in aligning registration processes to that of a state or territory jurisdiction.

- How would a teacher registration scheme be funded in the ACT?
- Consequential to such funding arrangements what is the capacity of a body to deliver registration services to its constituent group?

## Concluding Remarks

The content of this paper addresses matters in the context of upholding the quality and status of the teaching profession.

Underpinning that, the preceding issues have been identified as being central to the debate on the feasibility of introducing a teacher registration scheme for the ACT. These issues have linkages and can fit into the overarching categories of:

- Issues for the profession in relation to registration (teacher education, professional standards, professional learning, professional conduct, status of the profession, mutual recognition)
- Approaches to teacher registration (guiding principles, possible models for teacher registration - scope and functions, criteria for registration)
- Governance and administration (accountability, composition of authority, costs of registration)

These categories will assist in providing a framework for further community consultation, through workshops and forums.

Other issues may arise from this process that may need to be more fully explored in the future. Should that occur, appropriate mechanisms can be put in place for consideration of those issues.

### RELATED PAPERS

- *Roles and Responsibilities of Professional registration bodies and a Model for the ACT*, Australian Education Union ACT Branch 2005
- *Teacher Registration – ACT*, Independent Education Union ACT/NSW, 2005

### REFERENCES

- *A National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching*, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, November 2003
- *Teachers for the Future – The Changing Nature of Society and Related Issues for the Teaching Workforce*, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, September 2004
- *Evaluation of the Mutual Recognition Schemes*, Productivity Commission October 2003
- *Report to the Minister on the Establishment of an Institute of Teachers*, NSW Institute of Teachers, June 2003.
- *Review of the Powers and Functions of the Board of Teacher Registration*, Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, June 2004
- *A Proposal to Register Teachers in Tasmania* – Tasmanian Department of Education and Training Discussion Paper August 2000
- *Teacher Registration in Western Australia*, WA Department of Education Services June 1999

### Websites

New Zealand Teachers Council  
<http://www.trb.govt.nz>  
Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory  
<http://www.trb.nt.gov.au>  
NSW Institute of Teachers  
<http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au>  
Queensland College of Teachers  
<http://www.qct.edu.au>  
South Australian Board of Teacher Registration  
<http://www.trb.sa.edu.au>  
Tasmanian Teachers Registration Board  
<http://www.trb.tas.gov.au>  
Victorian Institute of Teaching  
<http://www.vit.vic.edu.au>  
Western Australian College of Teachers  
<http://www.wacot.wa.edu.au>

# Appendix 1

## Current Employment Arrangements

### *Independent Schools*

It is important to note that in providing the following information that each independent school has responsibility for its own employment arrangements and as such it is possible that some arrangements may not apply to some schools.

Pre-employment Requirements: Each school does the screening of employees.

- checks are undertaken for criminal history checks and suitably for working with children.
- the English language requirement is determined by each school
- each school determines the nature of teacher training qualifications, although provisions in the Education Act 2004 require teaching staff to be qualified to a level appropriate to their teaching responsibilities – this is a requirement for the school gaining registration.

#### *Early Service:*

Within schools there are probationary periods and reviews of performance during that period. This period may last for twelve months, although can be a shorter period depending on demonstrated competence of an individual. Some staff in some schools may be employed on a contract basis, which can change the nature and length of the probation.

### *Catholic Education Office (CEO) – Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn*

The CEO is subject to the same legislative requirements for school registration as those arrangements noted for Independent Schools. Pre-employment Requirements: Before the CEO makes any offer of employment, all applicants must satisfy the following eligibility conditions:

- Suitably qualified teachers must complete an application for registration form and submit this with copies of the qualifications to the CEO.
- Applicants are required to attend a System interview at the CEO or an Archdiocesan School. This interview is required to satisfy the employer's expectation that the applicants are suitable candidates for employment in an Archdiocesan Catholic School. At this interview, the applicants' qualifications are checked to ensure they are suitable teaching qualifications. Referees for all applicants are contacted to verify the applicants' employment history.

- The CEO completes a one hundred (100) point check of identification.
- Applicants are required to complete the Prohibited Employment Declaration (PED) form and The Working With Children Screening Check form to ensure they are not persons prohibited, by law, from working with children.
- Applicants are required to provide evidence that they are an Australian Citizen or a person who holds a suitable working visa.

#### *Early Service:*

- Newly appointed graduate teachers are provided mentoring and additional support in their first two years of teaching. Supervisors provide a written report of progress to the employer at the end of the newly appointed graduate's first year of service.
- All teachers are provided with a copy of "Teaching in Catholic Schools – A Statement of Principles" and the System's Children Protection Code of Professional Standards for all employees.

#### *Casual Teachers:*

All casual teachers undergo the same registration process as teachers applying for registration for permanent and temporary employment. Casual teachers are required to undertake at least one day's employment in each school year to maintain their registration. If they fail to meet this requirement they must reapply before being registered to undertake casual work in the future.

### *Department of Education and Training*

Pre-employment Requirements: Offers of employment are made on the basis that the applicant satisfies the following pre-employment requirements:

- a criminal history record check.
- requirement for an appropriate level of English language proficiency
- Australian Citizenship/Permanent Residency
- teaching qualifications e.g. four year trained - Bachelor of Education or Bachelor Degree and Diploma of Education.

For permanent appointment to the ACT Public Service applicants must also undertake a medical assessment to ascertain health and fitness.

Probationary period – teachers are assessed for a 12-month period from the date of their appointment. This assessment is undertaken against set criteria. Successful completion results in permanent appointment as a teacher. Unsuccessful completion of the probation can include action from an extension to the period of assessment to termination of employment.

Performance Management - All principals, and school-based teachers who are permanent officers, develop an annual plan as a basis for reviewing and developing their professional performance and engaging in performance feedback. These plans align system, school and individual goals. Both programs are structured around three stages - planning conference, mid-cycle review, and summary review.

Code of Professional Practice - outlines expectations of professional and ethical conduct for teaching staff and provide a guide for professional practice. All teachers are expected to have read, understood and abide by the code.

Refer to the department's website:  
<http://www.det.act.gov.au> for further information.

## Appendix 2

### Possible Models for Teacher Registration

*These models are provided to promote discussion and do not preclude the adoption of other approaches. Nor do they suggest that any decision to move towards a registration model has already been taken.*

#### **Model 1: maintain status quo**

This model means allowing the three sectors, independent schools, Catholic schools and the government school system, to continue to take sole responsibility for the quality of their workforce and the mechanisms in place to manage the quality.

**Considerations:** Retaining the status quo is to accept that current employment practices by government and non-government education sector employers address the issues of registration already and are able to maintain the accountability and standards of the teaching profession.

This model may not, however, raise the status of the profession or give the community the confidence it needs; may be seen as owned by employers rather than by the profession; may be considered 'second-class', given that other Australian states and territory have registration bodies; provides no ongoing registration requirements; provides no automatic registration in other states and territory (mutual recognition).

#### **Model 2: a registration process**

Under this model, the accountability and standards of the teaching profession would be more effectively aligned across the government and non-government sectors.

A small regulatory unit could be established within the Department of Education and Training to guide collaborative work related to teacher education, professional standards, professional development and professional conduct for both the government and non-government sectors. This work would include the identification of requirements for initial registration and for maintaining registration.

Policies endorsed by the Government and Minister could be implemented through regulations or amendments to the *Education Act 2004*. A register of teachers could be maintained, and agreed approaches (e.g. on entry

level standards) could be administered through existing processes.

**Considerations:** This model would require minimal legislative change to the *Education Act 2004*. The characteristics of this model are already embedded in current collaborative practices although there is scope for generating further opportunities for work across the sectors (both employers and teachers) in the area of enhancing the careers of the teaching profession. The infrastructure costs for this model would be associated with the intended role of work function established within the Department.

#### **Model 3: an independent registration body with limited functions**

This model would move the teacher registration process at arm's length from employers. Such a body could be established through amendments to the *Education Act 2004* or through its own Act with minimal statutory responsibilities. A body, representing stakeholder groups, would be established and would report to the Minister.

The functions of this registration body could be limited to:

- registering persons under the requirements of the Act
- reviewing policy on registration and related issues (including professional standards)
- undertaking relevant reviews and projects
- making reports and recommendations to the Minister.

**Considerations:** This model allows for formal recognition of the registration process, as well as the scope for a body to be representative of both the profession and employers and have independence. Such a model could operate on the basis of being collaborative with other Australian jurisdictions and New Zealand and in particular for the portability of registration for teachers through mutual recognition. Scope of the body's function and costs of establishing and maintaining an independent entity may limit what it can do in areas such as professional standards and raising the status of the profession.

Administration of the body's policies could be undertaken either through a group set up in the ACT (within the ACT Department of Education and Training) or independent of it.

Under this model the Minister would report to the Legislative Assembly as required.

#### ***Model 4: outsourced to a teacher registration body in another state or territory***

This model would represent similar powers as outlined in Model 3 however the variation would be a split in the decision-making and administrative responsibilities. While the ACT would maintain the independent body of representatives it would seek to use the administrative functions of another jurisdiction. Such an arrangement would be established through amendments to the Education Act 2004 or through its own Act with minimal statute. The body, representing stakeholder groups, would report to the Minister.

Taking the outsourcing further, the ACT could seek another jurisdiction to undertake all decision-making and administrative responsibilities. The ACT could enter into an agreement that enabled a nominated person to represent the views of the ACT on the other jurisdiction's decision-making forums.

**Considerations:** The advantage of this model is that the outsourcing would enable access and use of existing expertise and infrastructure. The disadvantages would include the need to align ACT administrative requirements with those of the interstate body with a possible consequent loss of control over ACT policies.

Under this model the Minister would report to the Legislative Assembly as required.

#### ***Model 5: an independent body with a wide range of functions***

A body, representing stakeholder groups, would be established and would report to the Minister. A small administrative group, independent of employers, would be established.

The functions of this registration body could include:

- registering persons under the requirements of the Act
- reviewing policy on registration
- promoting the teaching profession
- developing and improving professional teaching standards
- maintaining a code of professional ethics for teachers
- liaising with teacher educators and monitoring the quality of teacher education programs
- monitoring and supporting the professional learning of teachers
- regulating professional conduct
- undertaking relevant reviews and projects
- making reports and recommendations to the Minister.

**Considerations:** This model offers the full range of professional functions; is independent of employers and government processes, with the potential to establish high status with the community and teachers; representative of stakeholders; meeting mutual recognition requirements. It may create some issues around the roles and responsibilities of the registration body with those of the employers. Given the infrastructure requirements for this model there would be a greater requirement for funding to sustain the intent and design of this model.

Under this model the Minister would report to the Legislative Assembly as required.

## Consultation and Comments

- Throughout the middle period of 2007 a series of workshops and focus groups will be conducted seeking workforce and community input.
- The Community Response Form provides an opportunity for comments to be submitted on the key issues identified in this paper.
- Submissions to this consultation Paper are being sought from interested stakeholders but need to be submitted by close of business **Friday 28 September 2007**. Submissions can be sent to:

Project Manager  
Teacher Registration Project  
Department of Education and Training  
PO Box 1584 Tuggeranong ACT 2901

- Email address: [TeacherRegistration@act.gov.au](mailto:TeacherRegistration@act.gov.au)
- Departmental website: <http://www.det.act.gov.au> for further information.