



# ***EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE***

## **Members present:**

Mrs RN Menkens MP (Chair)  
Mr SA Bennett MP  
Mr MA Boothman MP  
Mrs YM D'Ath MP  
Mr RG Hopper MP  
Mr MR Latter MP  
Mr NA Symes MP

## **Staff present:**

Ms B Watson (Research Director)  
Ms E Booth (Principal Research Officer)

## **PUBLIC BRIEFING—REVIEW OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT NO. 2 FOR 2013-14, *SUPPLY OF SPECIALIST SUBJECT TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS***

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 5 MARCH 2014**

**Brisbane**

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Committee met at 10.31 am

**BRYAN, Mr Patrick, Executive Director, Workforce Initiatives, Department of Education, Training and Employment**

**HUNT, Mr Jeff, Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services, Department of Education, Training and Employment**

**McKELLAR, Mr Duncan, Assistant Director-General, Human Resources, Department of Education, Training and Employment**

**WALTON, Ms Patrea, Deputy Director-General, State Schools, Department of Education, Training and Employment**

**CHAIR:** Welcome. Before I start, I remind everyone present to please turn off your mobile phones or set them to silent. I also ask members of the media who might be recording these proceedings to adhere to the committee's endorsed media guidelines. Committee staff can provide a copy of the guidelines should you require one. Let me introduce members of the Education and Innovation Committee. I am Rosemary Menkens, the member for Burdekin and chair of this committee. Other committee members are Mrs Yvette D'Ath, the member for Redcliffe; Mr Steve Bennett, the member for Burnett; Mr Mark Boothman, the member for Albert; Mr Neil Symes, the member for Lytton; and Mr Michael Latter, the member for Waterford. Ray Hopper is absent because he is attending another meeting from 10 am, but he is expected back.

This public briefing relates to the Auditor-General's report No. 2 for 2013-14, *Supply of specialist subject teachers in secondary schools*, which was tabled in parliament on 15 October 2013. The report was subsequently referred to the Education and Innovation Committee for consideration and we intend to report back to the parliament once our consideration is completed. The Auditor-General's report examined how effectively the Department of Education, Training and Employment attracts and places specialist subject teachers in secondary schools to maximise the academic outcomes of students. The audit looked at the issue of supply and demand across specialist subject areas and secondary schools generally and identified a particular issue with science and mathematics.

Today we have asked officials from the department to brief us on the government's response to the report's findings and to talk about the initiatives the department has in place to improve its ability to attract and place specialist subject teachers. This briefing is a formal process of the parliament and parliamentary privilege applies to all evidence presented. Any person intentionally misleading the committee is committing a serious offence. Although this briefing is public, you are able to request through me as chair that any material or information you provide be kept private and you can object to particular questions. You might also wish to take questions on notice if you do not have information at hand.

The briefing today is being recorded and will be transcribed by Hansard. The transcript will be published on the committee's webpage when it is available. I now welcome from the Department of Education, Training and Employment Ms Patrea Walton, Deputy Director-General of State Schools, and congratulations on your new appointment, Ms Walton; Mr Jeff Hunt, Deputy Director-General of Corporate Services; Mr Duncan McKellar, Assistant Director-General of Human Resources; and Mr Patrick Bryan, Executive Director of Workforce Initiatives. If it is okay with you, Ms Walton, we might leave any questions we have to the end of your briefing. I now very gladly hand over to you, Ms Walton.

**Mr Hunt:** I will be making the opening statement, if that is okay, and then we will move to questions after that.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Hunt.

**Mr Hunt:** Good morning. The department welcomes the opportunity to discuss this important report with the committee and thanks you for your time today. As the chair has said, a number of my colleagues have joined me today so that we can have some robust discussion about the report as we go through the presentation. As I have mentioned, thank you for your time this morning and this report is an important report for the Department of Education, Training and Employment. This is an area of our operations that has been the focus of considerable effort and action within the department over many years. We know from research that the importance of having capable, knowledgeable and committed teachers in our classrooms to support and drive student learning outcomes is a key responsibility of the department and I am confident that overwhelmingly Queensland state schools are staffed with high-quality teaching personnel who are committed to supporting the learning of students in their schools every day.

However, the audit confirms what our own work and data has been suggesting over recent years in that there are challenges in sourcing teachers for some specialist teaching fields and in some locations. We are also aware that teachers over the course of their careers may be asked to teach in areas in which they do not hold a formal qualification. At the outset, it is important to note that there can be a number of reasons why this may occur that are not related to just matters of supply. It is not unusual, for example, for an experienced teacher to seek opportunities to teach in a new field where they have developed a professional interest. In these circumstances, teachers are often supported by the school leadership team through mentoring and professional development to follow that passion. School leadership teams know full well that the quality of the teacher in front of the class is the key to student learning outcomes and, as with any human resource decision in any industry, management will make decisions in the best interests of service delivery, which in our case is the quality of teaching and learning and the experience that our students have in school.

This is not to deny that often the need to teach out of field results from the challenges faced by some schools to source a teacher for a particular teaching discipline. But just like any industry, in workforce supply and demand terms, there are market forces at play. While employers will actively manage and influence the market, there remains a broad range of factors at play—economic conditions, applicant preferences, attraction and retention strategies, career aspirations, family circumstances and life decisions regarding leave, travel, marriage et cetera. I highlight these issues to demonstrate the dynamic and complex nature of the practical matters that impact on teacher supply and demand and the range of issues that the report addresses.

The supply and demand of quality teachers for schools is a key departmental priority and the department has worked closely with the QAO during 2013 throughout this audit process and was able to provide a range of supplementary data to that obtained by the QAO through its engagement with schools, principals and teachers. This is the result of much work that the department has done over many years. The evidence obtained during the audit aligns to that derived during DETE's ongoing strategic workforce planning processes and data analyses, with DETE's most recent analysis conducted in 2012 also identifying similar sorts of issues to those highlighted in the report—that some secondary teachers are teaching out of field. DETE has undertaken comprehensive supply and demand analyses and workforce snapshots in 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2012, as I have mentioned, and we are currently in the process of implementing a 2014 report. The QAO report provided us with the added opportunity to look at this work through the lens of a performance audit framework. Over the last decade we have used a whole range of attraction, retention and renewal strategies to ensure that schools have quality staff who are able to meet the needs of their student population in their local school context. During this time we should also remember that the curriculum, teaching pedagogy and learning technologies have also been changing and evolving.

If I can turn to the QAO report, the report stems from close consideration of the range of complex and interrelated issues identified by officers of the department and the QAO. The objective of the audit was to examine how effectively the department is attracting and placing specialist subject teachers in secondary schools to maximise student learning outcomes. The findings and conclusions indicate that supply matches demand, but when deeper analysis is undertaken some teaching areas experience oversupply and others undersupply, and there are also the geographical challenges in some parts of the state. The department actively manages and responds to these ever-changing circumstances using a range of strategies, workforce management tools, partnerships and planning which has placed Queensland well in relation to the challenges faced by some other educational jurisdictions in this regard.

The recommendations made in the report relate to really two broad areas. The first is teacher capability, which covers our need to capture more or better information about our workforce and to

provide teachers with access to better support. The second broad area is teacher supply and demand, and the need to strengthen strategies in shortage areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to improve local school, regional and state-wide workforce planning. DETE has already commenced work on the responses to each of the recommendations in the report and will continue to work with its stakeholders and partners to deliver on the intent of the report. We are working hard to actively manage our workforce supply and demand issues because we understand that this is critical to our service delivery. It is also clear that we operate in a national and global context and, as the report suggests and identifies, the market is competitive, so it is important that we also look at the national context.

It is important for the committee to understand that the findings of this report are not a phenomenon limited to Queensland. There is considerable data and research that indicates that challenges in relation to teacher quality and supply, especially for specialist teaching areas, exists internationally in most developed countries and in other states and territories within Australia. The Australian context was captured recently in a report prepared by the Productivity Commission on the school workforce which was requested by the Australian government on behalf of COAG. The Productivity Commission report found that across Australia there are ongoing imbalances in the supply and demand of different groups of teachers, with persistent surpluses of general primary teachers in metropolitan areas and at the same time shortages persisting in certain secondary subject disciplines and more difficult to staff geographic locations. The report found that some low socioeconomic status schools in urban areas also experience some difficulty and there are also some challenges with regard to special needs teachers as another area of focus. It is also interesting to note that the report highlights a number of Queensland strategies that are in place to address teacher supply and demand.

The report concluded that many of these imbalances, some of which are noted by the QAO, may impact student outcomes but that they seem likely to persist for some time, although future magnitudes are difficult to predict, and will be affected by a whole range of factors, including the impact of the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Amendment Bill through which from 2012 the Commonwealth no longer specifies how many undergraduate student places it will fund public universities to provide. Under this approach, there are limited mechanisms for employers to require universities to ensure the mix of graduates they produce annually reflects the demand in schools. The department, however, has developed a strategy to assist in this and I will outline that strategy shortly. I will also discuss the range of strategies already implemented by the department to manage these factors and new actions that we have been taking to develop other alternative strategies in response to the audit report. This has given our work a renewed focus for action and a clear direction with regard to where this action is required.

It is, however, important that I provide the broader context also around the targeted responses to the report's recommendations. So if I can just turn to the broader state context, DETE is committed to supporting the government's efforts to renewing the public sector and, in acknowledgement of Queensland's performance relative to the national average on a range of key education indicators, we are implementing a number of reforms to continue to build our education and training systems. The DETE renewal strategy, launched in late 2013 to improve our services and performance to generate better outcomes for Queensland students, is being driven through a new operating model for the delivery of our services which, I am pleased to announce, has been finalised following extensive consultation with senior staff. The new operating model establishes clearer roles and responsibilities across schools, regions and central office and will ensure our organisational structure is even more focused on improving outcomes for students and that we have the structure, accountabilities and resources in place to support our key priorities.

Like all agencies, DETE is working to improve services for Queenslanders through our responses to the recommendations provided by the independent Commission of Audit that was established following the 2012 state election and which resulted in A Plan—Better Services for Queenslanders, which sets out the state strategy for delivering whole-of-government and agency-specific renewal initiatives. One of the commitments of that strategy is the requirement for all public sector agencies to develop and publish a five-year strategic workforce plan. The purpose is to develop a coordinated, whole-of-government strategic workforce plan. DETE is working to respond to the recommendations of the Queensland Audit Office in concert with the expectations regarding the strategic workforce plan. This strategic workforce planning is occurring at the same time as the department commences implementation of two key or significant strategies announced during 2013 and aimed at boosting the quality, the capability and the capacity of the state's teaching workforce. The first is the Great Teachers = Great Results: A Direct Action Plan for Queensland Schools. This is a five-year, \$537 million action plan for Queensland schools. It is an investment that sits on top of

the approximately \$7 billion being spent each year on developing the young minds of our state and for the future, with a focus on directing funding and resources where they are needed most. The plan features 15 actions aimed at lifting standards of teaching and giving schools more flexibility to get on with their job, including supporting teachers with mentoring, training and resourcing; rewarding outstanding performers with career opportunities, scholarships and bonuses; allowing each school to have more say in how they are run; fast-tracking the careers of high-performing teachers; and creating new master teacher positions to ensure quality teachers are working where they are most needed.

The second strategy the department is implementing is A Fresh Start, improving the preparation and quality of teachers for contemporary Queensland school settings, which was released in June 2013 and includes a suite of interconnected strategic initiatives focused around issues of attracting the highest quality applicants into the teaching profession, ensuring that they have the essential skills, knowledge and experience required for the diverse real world of contemporary Queensland schooling and supporting their transition from preservice to beginning teaching. The strategy responds to recommendations of the teacher education task force and the Productivity Commission's report on the school workforce.

A Fresh Start directs attention to the preparation of teaching graduates with an emphasis on ensuring they emerge as even better placed and better prepared educators who know the content they need to teach and how to teach it, while Great Teachers = Great Results attends to the needs of our existing workforce by building a performance focused culture supported by effective monitoring and rewards systems for teaching excellence.

Importantly, the strategy provides a mechanism for seeking agreement with our universities over mutual expectations of teacher education programs. As universities are funded by the Australian government, teacher employers and, for that matter, state governments commonly have little leverage to influence university practices. Teaching graduates are, however, required to undertake set periods of professional experience in schools during their studies so as to qualify for teacher registration. So under A Fresh Start Queensland universities will be required to enter into professional experience partnership agreements with the department that will make explicit the range of expectations, including processes, that enable a mix of teaching graduates that better aligns with school and workforce needs and agreement with regard to the sharing of data to inform forward planning for both universities and school systems.

All three schooling systems are collaborating on the implementation of the strategy which we believe will have a significant and positive impact on the future supply of quality teachers for our schools. The department has long had a close collaborative and productive relationship with Queensland universities and other schooling sectors. This open and regular contact has positioned us well to develop joint understanding and strategies and to keep both employers and university providers informed of each other's needs and practices.

I turn to issues arising from the report. I previously noted that DETE has identified and been monitoring and managing these issues of teacher supply and demand over a lengthy period. A range of important strategies have been implemented, including the 'Make a difference. Teach' recruitment campaign which seeks to provide clear information to teaching aspirants about the teaching areas and locations where employment prospects are high. That is really to inform the market. We have revised the remote area incentive schemes to provide financial and other incentives for teachers to work in non-preferred locations. That is an important attraction and retention strategy for teachers in hard to fill geographic locations. We have seen the establishment of five teacher education centres of excellence to provide innovative and clinical models of teacher preparation. We have also worked on the provision of scholarship and grant programs to attract aspirants with high-demand skills or to areas of teaching shortage. We are also actively managing our recruitment and vacancy processes to ensure that applicants are aware of the vacancies we have and to assist them in career planning as they move into teaching. We are also working with our partners to explore alternative pathways into teaching.

The QAO report provides new impetus for DETE for further action through the five recommendations contained in the report. We have supported these five recommendations and see them to be achievable within the identified time frames. DETE is working not only to address these five recommendations but also to progress planned and related actions through its Great Teachers = Great Results and the A Fresh Start strategies that I have mentioned earlier. These will collectively strengthen the supply of qualified and quality teachers for our schools into the future.

So if I turn back to the broad themes of the report. Under the teacher capability recommendations, DETE is already cleansing systems data to ensure that schools and HR

practitioners across the state have access to better information. We are implementing the 2014 teacher supply and demand snapshot work. We are drafting change requests to IT systems that will be subject to funding approval but will enhance the processes internally in managing the range of data associated with managing teacher supply and demand. We are working closely with universities to map data and professional learning materials for out-of-field teachers to support that part of the recommendations in the report. We are continuing to support teachers through the rollout of our Curriculum into the Classroom modules to support teacher pedagogy and consistent content and curriculum delivery under the Australian curriculum. We are implementing The Fresh Start and the Great Teachers = Great Results initiatives. In relation to teacher supply and demand, we are working with schooling sectors and universities closely to better target strategies with demand around the STEM subjects. We are implementing scholarship programs and targeting these areas specifically, developing specific workforce plans for shortage areas in secondary as part of the department's broader workforce development and planning and implementing the 2014 supply and demand mapping process which will be key to our overall workforce planning and workforce management. Working with schools and regions to map supply and demand across the state within a more consistent framework is also a key initiative that comes out of the report. This will also give us better information to manage the employer side of the market and to inform the other market practices.

DETE will continue to work with our partners across professional associations, universities, statutory entities, employee and employer groups and across the schooling sectors and with our counterparts across the nation to ensure that Queensland schooling continues to benefit from the attraction and retention of high quality teachers. I trust that you can see that the range of activities that are mentioned in the report and that the government is undertaking and the department is implementing have committed the department to the range of initiatives that are highlighted in the report but also to support the intent of our work in this regard and that is to ensure the quality of supply for teacher applicants and teacher placements across the state.

I think this places us well in a challenging national and international context. Can I acknowledge and thank officers from the QAO for their close work with DETE on this report. I again thank this committee for their interest in this important part of our work. We are certainly happy to take questions and have some discussion about the range of initiatives that we have underway.

**CHAIR:** Thank you so much for that. You have certainly given a very detailed description of the efforts that I can see the department has been putting into this. I think it is not just a concern of Queensland; I think it is something of concern right across Australia. Are you able to provide the committee with any data on how many teachers currently do teach out of field? I did note though that you said that you were mapping the workforce. Do you have any current data that you can share with the committee?

**Mr Hunt:** We will take that on notice, if that is okay, in terms of the data. The report provides some information in that regard from their snapshot. We are doing a 2014 snapshot which will further refresh the information that we collected most lately in 2012.

**CHAIR:** Because that is flow-on from the data in the report which is now a little old?

**Mr Hunt:** I guess it is important for the committee to understand—and my colleagues from human resources at the end of table would certainly understand this—that the teaching workforce is a dynamic and ever changing landscape, as teachers come on and off the books, take leave for various reasons, transfer, take opportunities elsewhere—overseas and the like. It is an ever changing landscape. What the report highlighted was that there are some teachers who have been identified as teaching out of field. Some of that data might be as a result of the missing data gaps in our collection that was also highlighted in the report which will also be strengthened by the 2014 snapshot that we are undertaking. But certainly I will take the question on notice with regard to the exact numbers. Pat, did you want to make specific mention of anything?

**Mr Bryan:** No, I did not bring any exact numbers on that.

**Mr Hunt:** Almost everyone has a teacher in their family somewhere normally. Teaching is a craft that is both practical in its delivery and rich in its content. In terms of the teaching craft, as I mentioned in my introductory comments, a number of teachers do put their hands up to teach out of field because they desire a career change or a different focus in their work. This is as well as staff—principals, deputy principals and heads of department—asking teachers to teach in other areas because of the high level of competence or capability demonstrated by teachers at their local school. As a former principal, I can tell you that when you have a great teacher on your staff you

maximise the use of that great teacher because you know that they are delivering results for the students in your school and the parents love them.

**CHAIR:** Just to follow on from that. What is the role of the Queensland College of Teachers in the collection of data about the specialist qualifications of teachers?

**Mr Hunt:** The Queensland College of Teachers is responsible for the registration of teachers in Queensland. Their responsibility will be to make sure that the qualifications are appropriate for registration within this jurisdiction. They maintain a data set and they work with their board and their stakeholders. We work with them very closely with regard to data exchange and the support of information that will assist us both.

What my experience in the national context has shown me is that Queensland has a very collaborative educational community. We work very closely with our stakeholders—our universities, our statutory entities in the form of Queensland Studies Authority and Queensland College of Teachers, and the schooling sectors as well as our professionals associations such as the principal associations et cetera. We have a unique situation in Queensland, in my view, having worked with my counterparts interstate over many years. That gives us better information. As I said in my introductory comments, I think we have been very well placed in Queensland over a number of years because of the work that we have done in teacher supply and demand. Dating back over a decade I think the work the department has done has positioned us well.

We have not seen the dire situations where schools are unstaffed and those sorts of circumstances that some other jurisdictions have experienced over the last decade or 20 years. The Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment works very closely with the Queensland College of Teachers to make sure that those data exchanges are in place. That supports our work in this very important part of the department's activities.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for that, Mr Hunt.

**Mr BENNETT:** Without being too reflective on previous policy decisions both from federal and state governments about the university training models—and you mention A Fresh Start—you are obviously alluding to the fact that this is a fairly new process. You talked about the strategic partnerships you are now having. Hypothetically, is this where we should be putting some faith in terms of trying to address some of the specialist teacher shortages? Could you flesh that out some more? How would you expect the universities to do more engagement about the needs base or the shortages and where we see the specialist teachers coming from?

**Mr Hunt:** Thank you for the question. In terms of the work that we do with the universities, we come together during the course of each year with the deans of educational faculties in the universities to make sure that they understand from the employer's perspective the range of demands that are on us and for us to understand the supply and demand from their side. We have some early preliminary data to hand in the last few days from universities that shows that there is an uptick—if I can use that phrase—in the number of training teachers going into the shortage areas in secondary that were the subject of the report. That is very encouraging.

If I can extend that question over into the scholarship and attraction strategies that we are using as a department, we have also seen a significant increase in the number of applicants for the scholarship programs that we are offering which is targeted at the shortage areas and the geographic locations that are harder to staff. That indication is suggesting that our strategies around attraction are also starting to bite. It is important from our perspective as an employer that we are working with the university providers to make sure that the throughput from their perspective is assisting us in meeting our workforce objectives. They fully understand—and we have had discussions with them over many years about this—the oversupply of primary and early years teachers in particular and the undersupply of some specialist areas in secondary, such as the STEM subject areas, industrial design and technology and those sorts of things.

What we are seeing for the first time in a little while at least is the increase in the intake of the universities into those areas which is good for us when those students start to flow through into the workforce. That is the encouraging part from our side. Obviously, we are in a competitive market as well. I understand that the Catholic and independent schools will also be looking to increase output from universities to meet their workforce demands. But, again, the partnership that we have with the Catholic and independent schools is quite unique, in my experience, across the country. The partnership that we have with them is that we are sharing information with them about where we

have shortages so that we can go forward to universities with a united voice about where the shortages are and the areas of oversupply so that we can better manage and map this workforce process.

**Mr BENNETT:** We are rolling and starting to test Great Teachers = Great Results. That is around masters programs for teachers. We are hoping that that has a significant effect in that space as well. Is the department doing any testing on where you see that taking us?

**Mr Hunt:** Absolutely. The Great Teachers = Great Results initiative is a significant initiative in terms of not only the funding but its focus and the change of practice. What the Great Teachers = Great Results initiative is really signalling to us or strengthening is that the whole notion of teacher quality is the main game. We want to incentivise and encourage teachers to increase their own professionalism. We are offering up to 300 master scholarships so that teachers who have not engaged in postgraduate qualifications will be more encouraged to do so. Then it is also a part of the practical application of those higher qualified teachers into schools that need them the most. We would be targeting the placement of those master teachers into more needy schools. It is part of our broader strategy.

Why are we doing all of these things? It is to lift student outcomes. That is the main game here. We want to make sure that we have the highest quality of teachers in front of the kids that need them most to make sure that we are delivering the highest expectations and outcomes for the productivity of Queensland, essentially.

**Ms D'Ath:** I want to follow up on something. I know you said that the department is already doing the mapping exercise. I am particularly interested in the recommendation in the Auditor-General's report in relation to the support and professional development where teachers are teaching outside their field of expertise. The department or the government response initially was to undertake an assessment, then to develop the support material once you have undertaken that assessment. Where are you at with that time frame? I know the recommendation was to have that in place by June of this year. Where are we at with it?

**Mr Hunt:** Yes, that is an ambitious and an important piece of our work in this regard. We know that the teachers who are teaching out of field need support. Essentially, principals, heads of department and deputy principals are responsible for making sure, as the supervisors of those teachers, that they get the appropriate support mechanisms in place, but in addition to that the department is doing a whole range of activities to make sure that resources online are available to those teachers that do teach out of field. I will throw to Ms Walton to expand on the range of strategies that we are engaged in.

**Ms Walton:** When I first started teaching a few years ago, I first started teaching out of my specialist area. There was limited support and limited advice available to me at that time. The situation is quite different for not only teachers in state schools but also across the sectors. We have strategies in place to support teachers, particularly in the teaching of science and mathematics, who are teaching outside of their specialist area in order for them to develop their skill sets.

First of all, we have the Curriculum into the Classroom materials, which is a comprehensive suite of planning materials for teachers, resources for teachers, right down to individual lesson plans with assessment and individual resources tied to those lesson plans. We have also just recently shared those materials with the independent sector and the Catholic sector, so they have access to the same suite of materials that state schooling teachers have access to. We also provide models on how to teach, monitor and assess science and mathematics, provide resources to enhance teacher capability to deliver science and mathematics, and provide quality assured resources which are a very key part in a teacher's repertoire for students studying science and mathematics.

We are also, in partnership with the Queensland College of Teachers, developing some online modules because it is not always easy for teachers to access face-to-face professional development in rural and remote areas. These modules are designed to strengthen teacher capability in the key areas of mathematics and science. So we have how-to-teach mathematics and how-to-teach modules which will be available later in the year.

As I am sure the committee is well familiar with, the Queensland Studies Authority is conducting a series of state-wide workshops for heads of department around the topics of the



amendments to the science and mathematics syllabi, chiefly in relation to assessment tasks. Some professional development is also being provided. They are also providing guidance on the use of marks, as I am sure you are familiar with, and supporting schools around inquiry based assessment. In addition, they are providing online guidance and support regarding the review of senior mathematics and science subjects and changes to syllabus documents.

Another resource that is being developed for state schools is a contemporary practice resource which is on the learning place for teachers, which will include expert advice, individual expert advice and resources to help teachers with digital technologies through STEM subjects. I thought I would also share with the committee that each region provides a suite of professional development opportunities specifically targeted to the needs of teachers, curriculum leaders and coaches, and they are focusing on the implementation of the Australian curriculum, including mathematics and science which were some of the first content areas that we rolled out, specifically addressing high-yield pedagogical practices, monitoring and assessment.

**Ms D'Ath:** Ms Walton, can I clarify: you went through a whole lot of resources and support available to teachers now. Were they resource materials that were already available at the time the report was done or is this new work that is being done as part of this recommendation? What I am trying to do is clarify, has that needs assessment been done, as well as the sorts of things you have talked about? Have they come about as a consequence of the assessment and identifying additional needs? I know you talked about some things that are still in progress, like the online work as well, but of everything you have just told me about what has come about through assessment and development?

**Ms Walton:** The report was not our first awakening as to teachers teaching outside their subject area. With the introduction of the Australian curriculum, a decision was made to actually support teachers so that teachers were able to focus on the 'how to teach', not the 'what to teach'. As we know, the 'how to teach' is critical. Improving the quality of instructional practice is key to improving student learning outcomes. With full knowledge that we do have some teachers who are working outside their subject areas and with the introduction of the Australian curriculum, that is when the C2C rollout commenced.

This year sharing has occurred with the non-state sector, because we are all in this together. Whether you are in the state system, the Catholic system or the independent system, we have a shared responsibility around improving the quality of the instructional practice and, ultimately, improving outcomes for all students in Queensland. The rollout of C2C was not in response to the QAO report. We are very much aware that we have teachers teaching outside those critical areas of mathematics and science. What we have done this year is share that with the non-state sector. The partnership with the Queensland College of Teachers was not out of the QAO report, but this basic understanding that we knew we needed to do more to support teachers teaching outside their specialist area.

**Mr LATTER:** Taking on board your last commentary, Patrea, may I say that prior to this meeting we talked to Mike Byrne, the Executive Director of Queensland Catholic Education. Certainly he expressed his appreciation of getting access to C2C. On that note, I would pass on his appreciation to you. Mr Hunt, following on what Mr Bennett, the member for Burnett, was saying before, I note that you mentioned that you were also working with partners to identify alternative pathways to teaching in order to try to address some of the shortfalls for skilled or specialist teachers in this space. I am interested to know what sort of success, if any, you are having in that space at the moment and also if you could flesh out what alternative pathways you might have in mind for achieving outcomes in that space?

**Mr Hunt:** Thank you for the question. I guess at a broader level, this is not in some respects new work. Under the Queensland College of Teachers and the teacher registration provisions within Queensland, there is a provision called permission to teach. That is an alternative pathway, I guess, to have in shortage areas or for other reasons the capacity to appoint other people to teaching positions that might otherwise not satisfy the full requirements for registration. That gives us an avenue and many schools—and you may and I certainly have seen them over the years—have used creative ways to have specialist people in their classrooms. I think of places like Aviation High, where they have specialist aeronautical engineers or physicists or astrophysicists working with the school to deliver specialist parts of their programming. They do not always need to be teachers, but they may have a permission to teach or they may be shadowed or supported by qualified teachers.

I think in terms of the alternative pathways, it is a continuing discussion with our stakeholders. That would be my position with you in terms of that question at the present time. We will continue to

explore and there are a range of providers in the market that have a range of solutions that assist us or are willing to assist us in delivering alternative models of delivery. I think the modern schooling sector is a mixed model of educational services delivery. If you think about our modern high schools, I was out at Caboolture high school last week and they have a trade training centre. It is a significant building. It would take pride of place in any industrial estate in the country. It is a construction based trade training centre. The programs that are delivered through there are delivered through a mix of trade and teaching expertise that will assist in developing the skills and the opportunities for the young people in that community. Those are the sorts of models. I have talked about Aviation High and our gateway schools that have strong industry partnerships that bring in expertise from the community and the business sector. The trade focussed, VET focussed activity that happens in secondary schools are all parts of the alternative pathways of delivery of modern educational programs in secondary schools today. We will continue to work with industry, our partners in the VET sector, our partners across government and private providers in working with how we can best continue to meet the demands.

The other thing I would mention is that virtual schooling or the virtual classroom is a modern part of an educational service delivery model. We know that numbers of students from across the state participate in delivery through the Schools of Distance Education. Now that is not a model that is a mail-out of a packet of papers that you need to read and support yourself through. It is online delivery with a virtual classroom connecting students across the state with a teacher using online technologies to highlight theories, principles and practices relevant to the curriculum area. There are very modern and contemporary practices in place across the education service delivery. We will continue to do all those things and explore new opportunities, as I have said. I think that is a very exciting part of the secondary education program in this state. We have led the nation in terms of VET service delivery through schooling over many, many years. I think the strong pathways that that provides for young people into employment and further training and education is a real strength of our system.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. I have a follow-on question: the department's response to the Auditor-General's report noted that the remote area assistance scheme is being revisited, which I understand offers financial assistance to teachers who would be teaching in remote areas. Has there been any improvement in the number of specialist teachers from this actual change?

**Mr Hunt:** I think the test of that is that we can staff those positions in rural and remote locations. As we live in a more global village every day, the challenges of attracting people to remote locations is a unique and challenging part of our workforce management and our workforce planning. The report certainly suggests that as well. The attraction and retention strategies that go as part of that remote area incentive scheme, or RAIS as we call it, is significant in terms of being able to provide financial and non-financial benefits to staff in terms of their placement in those locations. We are currently working—it is quite topical. Overnight in my work I was viewing some soon-to-be-released video footage of an extension to our Make a Difference. Teach campaign for Make a Difference. Teach Rural. It highlights the stories of young people who have gone into remote locations and rural locations, either first-out teaching or mid-life transfers to sea change areas. One of the case studies is to Bowen, one is to Dalby, one is to a more remote location. They are extolling the virtues of community life in those rural and remote communities. That is supported.

One of the reasons we can attract young people and teachers of all ages to those communities is the benefits that we put into our remote area incentive scheme. We continue to work with our principals' associations and our employee representative groups also about the mix and the match of those incentives. Clearly, it is a significant financial investment for the department to use those incentives, but they are wide and varied in terms of financial, housing, airfares and accommodation-type allowances as well, as well as out-of-pocket expenses. There are a whole range of things that go to that, Chair, and we are very pleased with it. I think the delivery and the challenge for that program is to make sure that we can continue to attract and retain people in those locations. Whilst they are probably, it is fair to say, as the report indicates, more challenging to staff than some urban or metropolitan locations, we succeed in staffing those locations. If we have difficulty, then we have alternative models, as the question from Mr Latter also indicated, that we have in place.

**CHAIR:** Absolutely. As we understand it, it will be an ongoing challenge.

**Mr Hunt:** Absolutely.

**CHAIR:** That is Queensland right across, isn't it; across so many areas?

**Mr Hunt:** Absolutely.

**CHAIR:** Do we have some further questions?

**Mr BENNETT:** Certainly. I always take the opportunity to talk to the high representatives of our education system. You touched on some of the initiatives that are in place. Regarding the strategic workforce planning that you alluded to in your briefing, I would be really interested to hear some more of those exciting things that you have in place. I know it is an evolving strategy, but if you would care to share some of that I would be excited to hear about it.

**Mr Hunt:** In introducing an answer to that question, what we have in place is a network of human resource consultants across our regions. Without doubt, those are the people whom schools communicate with most frequently because they are the eyes and ears to the applicant pool, in many respects, for principals, deputy principals and heads of department who are seeking to fill positions. They know the workforce demands, they know who is available, and they can place, recommend and support schools in that regard.

The report recommends a greater connection between what is happening locally at the school level, what is happening at the regional level and how that pulls up to the state-wide level. As part of our strategic workforce planning activity, what we are doing is looking at the inputs—the applicants through universities or general applicant trends. There are graduate applicants and general applicants, general applicants being teachers who have taught elsewhere in the state, the country or the world and who are applying back to the department for teaching positions.

As I said earlier, we map all of that activity both from an intake perspective from universities so we know what the intake into university courses of different shades are—primary, secondary, specialist subject areas, et cetera. We know what the applicant output is and what the preferences are for people coming out of university or applying to the department as a general applicant, and we look at the resignation, the retirement, the leave-taking practices of the workforce as well as the age profile. So we know at a macro level what the nature of our workforce is.

What this department has done over the last couple of decades and in the last little while, in particular, is to actively manage the profile of the teaching workforce. We have had a whole range of strategies including the career change program that we ran at the end of 2012. That gives us an opportunity for renewing the teaching workforce as well. For teachers who do not want to be in a teaching role anymore, we are giving them an opportunity to exit the system with grace and dignity and to retrain into another career. That all allows us to bring the best and brightest through and that is what we are on about.

Our active work with universities is key to meeting our ongoing demand issue. That is why our work with the deans of faculties of education is critical. The data exchanges between ourselves, the Queensland College of Teachers and the other schooling sectors to make sure that at a macro level we know what we are dealing with are critical to our capacity to make sure that we are managing the teacher workforce supply demand issues as we go forward. As the chair has noted, as I noted in my opening comments and as the report notes, this is not just a Queensland thing. In a global context, I have a relative who has just graduated as a teacher in the United Kingdom and she recently e-mailed me to say, 'I would love to come to Queensland to work.' Obviously the weather in the Northern Hemisphere over our summer has not been particularly kind. Queensland is an attractive place for people to come and work as teachers. I guess we have benefited from that in terms of our workforce management and we continue to market our vacancies globally through online application and vacancy management.

I was reading last week that one of our regions sends text messages to teachers in their applicant pool on a weekly basis to say, 'Here are some vacancies that are on the books if you would like to consider them.' So there is a whole range of attraction strategies that as a department we are using to make sure that we can fill those hard-to-fill vacancies or hard-to-fill locations. Our workforce plan, moreover, will be about the strategic workforce planning that we need to do. Already we have the building blocks in place for the sorts of strategies that we need to be doing to guarantee supply as best we can in this sort of market. So scholarships and those sorts of practices are key. Those partnerships with universities and providers are key, and our knowledge of our own workforce and mapping of our workforce through their careers is key to us managing that. All of those things, as well as others, I am sure, will come out through our workforce management and planning strategy over the course of 2014.

**CHAIR:** Mr Hunt, as a follow-on from that question, you are actually marketing overseas. From a specialist teachers' point of view, is there any testing program that you put those teachers through before they enter our teaching system here?

**Mr Hunt:** In order to be able to teach in Queensland, teacher applicants need to satisfy the Queensland College of Teachers' registration requirements. So they are required to be able to satisfy the College of Teachers that they have the requisite qualifications and/or experience to be registered in Queensland.

In terms of the assessment process that we currently go through, we are well practised in the assessment processes of assessing teacher applicants for roles in our schools. It is not simply: make an application and go straight through. Experienced educators assess teacher applicants to make sure they are of appropriate standing and quality, and will represent the workforce well in the delivery of educational services. There is already a well-established practice. The committee is aware, I would imagine, of the consideration of on-entry assessment for teacher applicants. That continues to be a live issue in terms of our work nationally and within the state with regard to the sorts of entry practices that we engage with. We will consider that along with other things as part of our strategic workforce planning initiatives. Getting the partnerships with universities right is important because we would not like to stymie supply in the process by implementing parts of strategies that may not assist us in meeting the workforce demands.

**Ms D'ATH:** I have a follow-up question. On the workforce planning and broader application initiative, I note recommendation 5 talks about integration and coordination in its approach to the workforce plans. With both data collection and the integration and coordination of the workforce planning that you just talked about, can you explain how that is applied in relation to the expansion of the Queensland autonomous agenda? I apologise if I get any of my terminology wrong, but how will data collection and sharing of workforce planning work with the state schools that are choosing to be independent?

**Mr Hunt:** Significantly I guess is the short answer, but the long answer is that you are absolutely correct in terms of the Independent Public Schools initiative in this state. Those schools are given greater freedom in the selection of their staff. What we have done this year or started towards the end of last year was to liberate the teacher applicant information so that schools are better empowered to select the staff that best meet their needs.

I mentioned the HR consultants in regions a moment ago. They have a very close association with the principals in schools. I guess what we have done is probably unshackled the data around teacher applicants so that schools have greater visibility and greater access to that information through our systems so they can engage in direct recruitment and direct selection of staff. That is one of the key features.

The other feature is that we are still a system of schools. The director-general—I meant to mention earlier the apologies of the director-general for not being available today but he was otherwise engaged—has said that while we are entering an independent public schools era we have to not lose what is good about being a system as well. We certainly want schools to take up the ground of empowerment and autonomy and drive the educational outcomes from their own communities and have the capacity to do that in a free and fair way. That means taking responsibility for the decisions as well. If independent public school principals recruit staff, then they are responsible for the recruitment and management of those staff as well. We are in a transition period with regard to that.

In terms of workforce planning, the connection with regional HR consultants is even more critical in terms of the relationship between all schools and their HR consultants to make sure that the information they forecast as their future workforce needs over one year, three years or five years is able to be pulled up through the system so we can get a better demand versus supply mapping exercise. In essence, the Queensland Audit Office is highlighting the challenges for us. At the moment we have information in different systems. We have some information in our HR or payroll system. We have some information in our recruitment system. We have some information in our placement systems now. Because the people are dynamic and the workforce is dynamic, that system data is often dynamic as well. As you can imagine, each year a school publishes a new timetable based on student subject selection and that will change the workforce profile on an annual basis. What we are trying to pull up in that workforce planning through schools to the region to the centre is a better understanding and appreciation of how the demand side is being met by the supply side. In order to do that, in order to be able to go to universities and say, 'We think our forecast is for 200 more STEM teachers over the next five-year period,' or whatever it might be, we need to be able to collect that information and share that with the supply side—collecting from the demand side, sharing with the supply side and working together over a longer term. Because teacher qualification is typically a four-year qualification, we need to have long-term horizons in strategic workforce management. That is a part of our business. Pat, to my right, has been involved

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in that over the last 10 or 15 years in mapping our activities in that regard. That is what I guess has placed us well to date.

I think the report continues to remind us that we are in a challenging workforce environment and we need to keep actively managing it as we have. We fully intend to do that and that is why you will see advertisements like our Make a Difference. Teach campaign during the rest of 2014 as we build towards 2015, as we do each year. Teaching is a noble profession. As a former teacher, I am very proud to have worked in that profession and to continue to support that. I think the message of what teachers do every day in classes cannot be messaged strongly enough. I always find our campaigns to be fairly emotive because we have teachers who are clearly committed to their craft sharing their stories about working in the department and working in different parts of the state. That is one small part of a broader attraction strategy that helps us attract quality teachers to our workforce in this state.

**CHAIR:** I can certainly concur and agree with you on those sentiments of the commitment and professionalism of teachers. As our time is drawing to a close, this brings to a close this public briefing on the Auditor-General's report No. 2 for 2013-14 *Supply of specialist subject teachers in secondary schools*. I would like to thank everyone who appeared before us this morning and assisted us in the consideration of the Auditor-General's report. I can assure you that your contributions have been most valuable. I particularly thank you for being so accommodating of our request to bring this briefing forward to today. We really do appreciate that because I realise it was late notice.

I urge those with an interest in the work of the Education and Innovation Committee to subscribe to the committee's e-mail subscription list via the Queensland Parliament's website. Any further information we publish about the consideration of this report will be available on the website including our report when it is tabled. I now declare this briefing closed.

**Committee adjourned at 11.28 am**