



## **JOINT MINISTERS' COMMUNIQUE**

Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for Education and Training meeting in Brisbane for the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs have agreed to progress a number of significant education initiatives.

The following motions were unanimously passed by all members of the Council.

### **National literacy and numeracy testing**

National literacy and numeracy testing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 will begin in 2008, following agreement between the Ministers to work together on the national tests, reporting scales and how the tests will be implemented.

The states and territories will also work with the Federal Government to provide advice to parents, directly and through schools, of their eligibility for the Reading Assistance Voucher program.

### **Literacy and Numeracy Reform**

Agreement was reached on three priority areas for national collaborative action that have the greatest potential to lift literacy and numeracy outcomes across Australia.

The three priority areas are teacher preparation, capacity building and assessment.

The Federal Government, States and Territories will work with the Deans of Education, Teacher Accreditation Authorities and Teaching Australia to ensure that beginning teachers are being adequately prepared with the skills and knowledge to lift literacy and numeracy outcomes.

The Ministers will also request a report on the strategies that build a capacity in teachers, including professional development, to improve student outcomes.

The report will also look at the national assessments being developed for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 to ensure they are strengthened so that progress in proficiency standards can be reported in addition to minimum benchmarks.

### **National Standards for Year 12 Curriculum and Assessment**

The Ministers agreed to continue to work on the feasibility of greater consistency of reporting for senior secondary results.

To ensure consistency of results of senior certificates across the country, a working party will examine if a quality assurance mechanism could be set up.

### **Indigenous Education**

Ministers agreed to improve Indigenous education outcomes by agreeing to a major series of recommendations that encompass the full range of Indigenous education experience, from early childhood to transition to training, employment and higher education.

The recommendations, contained in the paper [\*Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008\*](#) include:

- School-community partnerships in schools with significant Indigenous student populations
- Development of professional learning programs for school leaders and teachers to help improve outcomes for Indigenous students

- Strategies to retain and attract quality principals and teachers to schools in Indigenous communities

The importance of early childhood education in improving Indigenous children's "school readiness" and successful participation in primary school was discussed by the Ministers and they agreed to examine the implementation of two years pre-school education for Indigenous children.

The aim of the plan would be that by 2012 all Indigenous children would have access to two years of high quality early childhood education before their first year of formal schooling.

### **Common School Starting Age**

The Ministers agreed to further examine a common minimum school starting age. The financial implications of a common school starting age of 4 years and 6 months will be investigated, together with whether this would have an educational benefit when compared with starting ages currently in place.

### **English as a Second Language for New Arrivals**

The Ministers recognised the importance of English Language Skills in improving workforce participation and the life chances of new migrants. It was agreed that the Australian Government would work with States and Territories to examine how to improve outcomes for New Arrival students.

### **New higher education protocols**

[A new set of protocols](#) governing the structure of higher education in Australia was agreed to by the Ministers.

The new protocols will offer a greater degree of flexibility in the way in which institutions are established and recognised. The protocols also introduce a new class of specialist universities.

### **Signatories to this Statement:**

Minister for Education and the Arts (QLD) – The Hon. Rod Welford MP (Chair)

Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training – The Hon. Julie Bishop MP

Minister for Education and Training (NSW) – The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt MP

Minister for Education and Training (VIC) – The Hon. Lynne Kosky MP

Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education (SA) – The Hon. Paul Caica MP

Minister for Education and Children's Services (SA) – The Hon. Dr Jane Lomax-Smith MP

Minister for Education and Training (WA) – The Hon. Ljiljanna Ravlich MLC

Minister for Education (TAS) – The Hon. David Bartlett MHA

Minister for Employment, Education and Training (NT) – The Hon. Syd Stirling MLA

Minister for Education and Training (ACT) – Mr Andrew Barr MLA

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