APPENDIX 4: Discussion Outline

MCEETYA NEPM TASKFORCE

DISCUSSION PAPER ON
PERFORMANCE TARGETS

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. What meaning do you give to the term “targets”?
   Probe: Is that the meaning (jurisdiction) gives to the term? Is it the generally accepted
   meaning in education jurisdictions around Australia?

2. Thinking generally, what are the main arguments in favour of target-
   setting in education, and what are the main arguments against it?

3. What is driving the effort over target-setting in Australia?
   (Probe: How far has it gone? What are the objectives?)

4. What do you do with the results?
   Probe: People have seen it in terms of “rewards” or “punishments”. Is this helpful?
   Is there a better way to think about this question? What about comparisons?

5. When we think about target-setting in Australian education, are we
   thinking only about meeting national standards, or are we thinking about
   meeting international standards?
   Probe: Why?

6. Thinking about various areas of performance where targets might or
   might not be set: for example, improvement of student learning outcomes.
   How do you set targets for student outcomes?

7. The taskforce has listed six areas of student outcomes where targets may
   or may not be set. Are all of these amenable to target-setting, or are some not
   amenable?

   Literacy
   Numeracy
   Science
   Information technology
   Vocational education & training
   Student participation
8. And should there be a common set of targets for all jurisdictions, or should different targets be used in some circumstances?
   Probe: Which? In particular, indigenous, and Science. Why?)

9. Are targets used, or have they been used recently, for performance in improving student outcomes in any of those areas in (jurisdiction)?

If yes to Q9:

What were the circumstances in which they were introduced?
Was there a political imperative behind their introduction? When were they introduced? For what purposes i.e., what use was to be made of the resultant data? How was the introduction of targets received by various stakeholders – principals, teachers, parents, students, unions?

What has been (jurisdiction’s) experience with using targets? What, if anything, have been the benefits? What, if anything, have been the drawbacks? Have they done what it was thought they would do? Have they had unintended effects?

Has any evaluation been done on their effectiveness? If so, what were the results?

What would say was the main lesson (jurisdiction) has learnt from the introduction of target-setting?

10. What about target-setting for purposes other than improving student outcomes, for example, for school and system improvements? Is it useful to set targets for these purposes? Can they been seen as separate from student outcomes?

11. Is there any evidence you know of which tells us whether targets are effective or not effective in achieving either the purposes we’ve spoken about, or the particular purposes for which the targets you have in mind were set?

12. Can you point me to any important literature on this subject?
   Probe: What is it about those piece(s) that make them so important? Is there anything from this jurisdiction in particular?