

Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs

Communiqué

28 September 2009

Brisbane

Meeting today in Brisbane, Ministers continued to progress reforms aimed at Closing the Gap in Indigenous education, improving the quality of early childhood education and care and improving the quality of teaching and schooling across the country.

Education Ministers agreed to take forward an Indigenous Education Action Plan to drive improvement through the key areas of readiness for school; attendance; school leadership and quality teaching; literacy and numeracy; parental and community engagement and pathways to real employment opportunities.

Ministers agreed that the school transparency measures will help establish an evidence base and a clear line of sight between the targets that have been set and the measures that are working.

The Indigenous Education Action Plan captures the national effort towards achieving the targets set by all governments to Close the Gap between the outcomes of Indigenous Australians and other Australians.

Ministers agreed to engage Indigenous leaders and stakeholders in the preparation of the final version of the Indigenous Education Action Plan.

All Ministers are committed to supporting high quality teaching and school leadership. Ministers recognised that teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student engagement and achievement and that improving teacher quality requires both school leadership from principals and new approaches to teacher recruitment, retention and reward.

Ministers today agreed to the establishment of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership.

It will take responsibility for rigorous national standards and for fostering and driving high quality professional development for teachers and school leaders, working collaboratively across jurisdictions and engaging with key professional bodies.

The roles of the new Institute will be to:

- develop and oversee a set of national standards for teaching and school leadership and implement an agreed system of national accreditation of teachers based on these standards; and

- promote excellence and national leadership in the professional development of teachers and school leaders.

States and territories have been invited to submit proposals for establishing and locating the new Institute. All jurisdictions agreed unanimously to the make up of the board membership of the new Institute.

Ministers acknowledged the progress towards an exciting development for Australia. In December 2009, communities across Australia will be able to see a picture of how their children are developing before they reach school. The Australian Government investment of \$21.9 million to 30 June 2011, along with the support of States and Territories, has enabled the first ever national implementation of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI). Ministers today clarified arrangements to ensure the proper and effective use of the AEDI data and to a strategy that will support the effective dissemination and utilisation of the data. Access to this sort of information will assist communities to better support optimal early childhood development and to target their responses to those children who are at risk of disadvantage.

Ministers received a report on the progress of the Early Childhood Education and Care quality agenda, including feedback from the consultation. COAG considered this matter in July 2009 when it issued a Regulation Impact Statement for consultation.

The reform agenda in this area is broad and detailed, encompassing options for new regulatory arrangements as well as ways to improve the quality of Long Day Care, Family Day Care and other early childhood settings in the years ahead. All jurisdictions remain committed to the quality agenda and final recommendations will be taken to COAG later this year.

Ministers today received their first report from the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). This report confirmed that national curriculum in the first four key learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history is on track for implementation in schools from 2011.

Professor Barry McGaw, Chair of the ACARA Board reported good progress and national collaboration in developing the new National Curriculum and has consulted extensively with the education community to ensure the development of a rigorous and world-class national curriculum from kindergarten to Year 12. Dr Peter Hill, the newly appointed CEO of ACARA also attended the meeting.

Ministers took further steps forward to provide greater transparency and accountability of the performance of Australian schools to ensure that every Australian child receives the highest quality education and opportunity to achieve through participation in employment and society.

Ministers made a series of decisions on information to be provided for likeschools through a national website. Information will paint a picture of the context in which a school operates, including the characteristics of its student population, teacher numbers and other important student outcomes.

Ministers also reaffirmed that reporting of school resources is a high priority and noted the work underway to collate comparable data.

Chair

The Hon Dr Jane Lomax-Smith MP, Minister for Education (SA)

The Hon Andrew Barr MLA, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Children and Young People (ACT)

The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education, Minister for Employment & Workplace Relations, Minister for Social Inclusion (AG)

The Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Child Care, Minister for Youth (AG)

The Hon Verity Firth MP, Minister for Education and Training (NSW)

The Hon Linda Burney MP, Minister for Community Services (NSW)

The Hon Paul Henderson MLA, Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Training (NT)

The Hon Geoff Wilson MP, Minister for Education and Training (QLD)

The Hon Jay Weatherill MP, Minister for Early Childhood Development (SA)

The Hon Heather Butler MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier representing the Hon David Bartlett MP, Premier of Tasmania, Minister for Education and Skills (TAS)

The Hon Bronwyn Pike MP, Minister for Education (VIC)

The Hon Maxine Morand MP, Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development (VIC)

The Hon Elizabeth Constable MP, Minister for Education (WA)

Professor Barry McGaw, Chair Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Board

Dr Peter Hill, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

Apologies

The Hon Graham West MP, Minister for Youth (NSW)

The Hon Malarndirri Barbara Anne McCarthy MLA, Minister for Children and Families (NT)

The Hon Gerald McCarthy MLA, Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Multicultural Affairs and Education, Minister for Young Territorians (NT)

The Hon Anne Tolley MP, Minister for Education, Minister for Tertiary Education (NZ)

The Hon Paula Bennett MP, Minister for Social Development and Employment, Minister for Youth Affairs (NZ)

The Hon Karen Struthers MP, Minister for Community Services and Housing (QLD)

The Hon Tom Koutsantonis MP, Minister for Youth (SA)

The Hon David Bartlett MP, Premier of Tasmania, Minister for Education and Skills (TAS)

The Hon James Merlino MP, Minister for Youth Affairs (VIC)

The Hon Donna Faragher MP, Minister for Youth (WA)

The Hon Robyn McSweeney MP, Minister for Child Protection, Community Services (WA)