



Queensland College of Teachers **College Connection**

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New Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers

The Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts, Rod Welford, at the launch of the Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers.

Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers launched

The Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts, Rod Welford, officially launched the College's *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* in Brisbane on 1 March 2007.

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Chair's Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of *College Connection* for 2007. Accompanying this edition is a copy of the College's new *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers*.

The Professional Standards were developed through an extensive consultation process in the second half of 2006 and were launched by the Minister on 1 March 2007.

Documents such as the Professional Standards are an important way of recognising the outstanding work of our teachers, inspiring teachers to continue to challenge themselves both personally and professionally and ensuring that the general public is aware of the diverse work undertaken by teachers.

The launch of the Professional Standards is timely given the recent move in the State and national press away from 'teacher bashing' articles towards a constructive debate about education.

As we are all aware many people, including some politicians, are very quick to blame teachers for any perceived difficulties with our education system or society, citing test scores, reporting mechanisms and tertiary entry scores as evidence of the need for new curricula and teacher training requirements. Such calls are often based on ill-founded assumptions and are generally made without ever stepping into a classroom or without any experience of being at the 'coal face'.

The College welcomes the recently

released report from the University of Western Sydney, *Teaching and Leading for Quality Australian Schools: A review and synthesis of research-based knowledge*. The report summarises recent Australian and international research on quality teaching and school leadership. It reviews the evidence on the value of standards, the importance of quality teacher education and the best approaches to ongoing professional development.

The report emphasises the complexity of teachers' work and the contextual and dynamic nature of quality teaching. It identifies a range of professional attributes and practices that have a positive influence on student outcomes. These factors are clearly reflected in the College's new *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers*. As a further endorsement of the new QCT Standards, the report states that professional standards have been found to positively affect quality teaching and contribute to ongoing professional learning.

Another report published in February, the federal Parliament's *Top of the Class: Report on the inquiry into teacher education*, contains a number of recommendations which if implemented could considerably benefit the teaching profession by enhancing both preservice



Prof John Dewar QCT Chair

teacher education and ongoing professional development. Among other recommendations, the report calls for a special fund to establish collaborative approaches to practicum, induction and professional development; a national induction program including a reduced teaching load for beginning teachers; and better funding for preservice programs. Significantly, in a move providing further support for the direction already being taken by the College, the report recommends that all teacher registration authorities be encouraged to require participation in ongoing professional development as a condition for the renewal of registration.

During 2007, the College will continue to produce *College Connection*, to ensure all registered teachers are kept informed of national issues and of the work being undertaken by the College that will affect teacher registration.

Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers launched (continued from page 1)

The Standards mark a significant advance for the College and for teacher professionalism in Queensland. They provide an authentic articulation of teachers' work and the professional commitment they make to reviewing and enhancing their practice.

Mr Welford said that the Professional Standards 'capture the essence of teachers' work – its complexity and diversity – as teachers manage the learning and teaching process for individuals and groups of students'.

The Standards describe the knowledge, practice and values that teachers demonstrate as they deliver meaningful and high quality learning experiences for students.

'The Professional Standards are core to the College's registration policies and procedures and are relevant to a number of audiences', said Director John Ryan. 'For

teachers entering and remaining in the profession, they will provide benchmarks for registration and a framework for ongoing renewal. For teacher education institutions and pre-service teachers, the Standards form the basis of teacher education program approval leading to the provisional registration of graduates. Finally, and no less importantly, the Standards provide a means to demonstrate to parents, school communities and the general public the quality and professional commitment of teachers in Queensland'.

A copy of the *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* is included with this edition of *College Connection*. We invite you to engage with the Standards and to use them as a tool to reflect on your professional practice and to plan ongoing learning.

Further information on teacher registration and downloadable copies of the Standards are available on the College website (www.qct.edu.au).

Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers

The following is an edited version of the speech given by Ms Dianne Aylward at the launch of the *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* on 1 March 2007. Dianne is a Head of Department at Corinda State High School, a College Board member and a member of the College's Professional Standards Committee.

Reading and reflecting on the standards makes me feel honoured to be part of the teaching profession. Teachers take great pride in the professional values that underpin teaching practice, and we all recognise the complex and varied nature of our jobs.

As a member of the Professional Standards Committee I was able to witness and take part in the development of the new *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers*. During their development, I thought back to my first years of teaching and the process in the 1980s for moving from provisional to full registration. The standards were different back then. I became intrigued, so intrigued in fact that I searched for, and located, my Board of Teacher Education Principal's Report. Let me say that I did find a similarity – the address was a post box address in Toowong and is the same as that of the Queensland College of Teachers. Otherwise, so much has changed and evolved with the development of these standards. Back in the '80s, my report looked at some broad headings without detail. Of course those headings remain relevant, but I cannot help thinking how my peers and I then would have benefited from a richer and more detailed description of the work we were expected to perform. The current Professional Standards are comprehensive and diverse. They push the boundaries for all teachers to be the best that they can be.

The standards present two clusters of aspects key to our roles. Both are dependent on our commitment as professionals to review and renew our skills and knowledge. One cluster highlights teaching and learning with the student at the centre. It positions us as the knowledge workers that we are, preparing the knowledge workers of the future for their life roles.

The standards serve as timely prompts for us to consider and challenge ourselves about how we integrate aspects such as our core responsibilities for literacy and numeracy development, intellectual challenge for all students and how we understand, deal with and model diversity in all its forms. I am delighted to see the prominence and acknowledgement of a pivotal underpinning to the learning process that is the way teachers build, sustain and model effective relationships, with students, colleagues and the community, both within and beyond the school. I am convinced that the

standards have the capacity to enhance teacher professionalism and promote the very highest quality of teaching in Queensland schools.

I am fortunate to be about to embark on a school extension program to Heron Island with some extremely talented, motivated and excited young adults. I know that I will be striving, in every sense, to ensure that their learning experiences are intellectually challenging and engaging. Learning experiences will include examining the effects of climate change utilizing authentic and dynamic field research. Students will monitor the extent of coral bleaching and measure coral health using the coral-watch monitoring system developed in collaboration with the University of Queensland Centre for Marine Studies and colour experts at the Vision, Touch and Hearing Research Centre. Findings will be recorded in a way that their data can be viewed worldwide and longitudinally. The standards come alive and contribute effectively to professional practice as our teachers foster positive and productive relationships with the Heron Island Research Station Staff and the University of Queensland Centre for Marine Studies.

I can see the personal relevance of the standards in my current role and as I work with and support colleagues across the career continuum in my school to examine and strengthen professional practice.

By being part of the process for developing the Professional Standards I have been inspired to once again think further and reinvigorate my practices to ensure the best outcomes for our youth. I absolutely applaud the role that the standards can play in making our practice overt and public. I applaud the dedication and perseverance of Ros Bell and the writing group, and the energy and wisdom harnessed through the state-wide consultation process in producing this strong statement that captures so well the work of the teacher now and into the future.

It is now time for us as professionals – individually, in our school communities and within our professional networks – to make the standards live.



Diane Aylward.

College Helps Ensure Quality of New Graduate Teachers

During the consultation sessions conducted in late 2006 on the College's draft Professional Standards for teachers, teachers and principals expressed interest in understanding how the standards will be used in granting provisional registration for graduates of preservice teacher education programs.

The new *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* form the cornerstone for the College's decisions about registration. The standards were used to guide the development of the recently-released *Program Approval Guidelines* – the document that underpins the approval of preservice teacher education programs for Queensland universities. Graduates of approved programs are automatically eligible for provisional registration (subject to meeting other eligibility requirements). The College's Professional Standards Committee, representative of teachers and other key education groups, had oversight of the development of the guidelines.

Universities must demonstrate how teacher education programs will prepare graduates who meet the *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers*. Therefore, the *Program*

Approval Guidelines include a guide to the application of the standards, which orients the standards towards the level of preservice teacher education and interprets the standards for the purposes of provisional registration of graduates.

The guidelines also establish mandatory requirements for teacher education institutions and programs, in areas such as entry requirements, program design and professional experience. As part of the College's program approval process, universities provide a program submission that addresses all areas of the guidelines.

The College has established a number of Program Panels that undertake in-depth consideration of program submissions and engage in discussion with representatives of the relevant university before making a recommendation to the Professional

Standards Committee about approval. The Panels comprise representatives of teachers, employers, unions, universities and the College.

The approval process also has provision for programs to be reviewed when they have been in operation for a certain period of time. When this occurs, the College calls upon teachers and principals to provide feedback about the program and the performance of graduates in the field.

Having a standards-based approach to the approval of teacher preparation programs means that, from the very beginning of their involvement in the teaching profession, preservice teachers will be engaged in using the *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* as a framework to guide their development. The standards will be used by both university academic staff and supervising teachers in schools to make judgements about the knowledge, skills and abilities of preservice teachers, culminating in a final decision that enables them to graduate and gain provisional registration.

Graduates of programs approved through this new process should be well-positioned to take their place in Queensland schools as new members of the profession and ready to proceed further along the continuum of teacher professional learning and development towards full registration.

The *Program Approval Guidelines* are available on the College website under 'Teacher Education'.



Brisbane Catholic Education Beginning Teachers' Induction Day.

“RateMyTeacher” Rated Poorly

The Queensland College of Teachers has urged teachers not to respond to a controversial website where students rate teachers and post comments about staff performance.

“Our position is that responding to the RateMyTeacher website only gives it credence and provides it with further notoriety”, said College Director John Ryan.

“The site is open to vexatious complaints by anyone wanting to smear a teacher’s reputation and there is little censoring and no evidence-based checking on the comments which can be hurtful and derogatory”.

On the website, students rate teachers on a scale from one to five on easiness, helpfulness, clarity, popularity and overall quality.

The site allows comment on teacher performance and others can respond including parents and teachers.

Although the majority of ratings are positive there are many that aren’t.

The problem is almost anything can be said and there are few checks.

In Australia more than 8500 teachers from 1700 schools have been named on the RateMyTeacher website.

One Brisbane school had “Bob Hawke” listed as a history teacher and “Paul Keating” as an economics teacher. When a complaint was lodged the names were removed and a week later replaced with “Peter Beattie” and “Anna Bligh”.

There have been numerous complaints about the site by teachers and school administrators.

The Queensland Teachers Union President Steve Ryan would like the site blocked on all state school computers. But the website retaliates by listing schools that have banned it on its “wall of shame”.

The QTU supports the Queensland College of Teachers in advising members not to get involved in trying to counter the comments by replying on the website.

Terry Burke from the Queensland Independent Education Union agrees teachers should not rise to the bait, likening the site to text bullying.

The Queensland College of Teachers has written to the website managers requesting the site be shut down until the credibility of comments can be verified.

“The College takes such matters seriously and works actively to promote the quality and professionalism of teachers”, said John Ryan.

The site has rules which include prohibitions on the use of profane or vulgar words, and on the use of comments of a sexual nature or about appearance or disabilities. The site states that comments that do not abide by the rules will be deleted. Also any comments that make threats against teachers will be referred to the authorities through the use of IP addresses.

RateMyTeacher operates in seven countries including the United States, UK, India, New Zealand and Canada. It has generated widespread criticism and debate and is thriving on its notoriety.

Teachers are not the only target in the rating game as there are hundreds of websites specifically designed to rate anything from apartments to pets to politicians.

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Who says teaching is a low-status profession?

Associate Professor Greer Johnson – Griffith University

Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future ... (DEST, 2003) noted the importance of education to the future quality of life and standard of living in Australia. This report argued further that the education of the nation is achieved best by teachers and students working together in schools while supported and guided by education authorities and by the community at large. It is widely acknowledged that a teacher shortage is looming worldwide, especially in Science, Technology and Mathematics. However, the reality is that in Australia, retention of experienced teachers is a key concern and there is no easy way to attract and retain our brightest and best students in teacher education courses. The most recent inquiry, into the quality of teacher education, *Top of the Class*, released recently by a federal parliamentary standing committee, reports no definitive conclusions to this long standing public debate. This report cannot promote overall confidence in and about new recruits.

Research shows that although many teachers and teacher education students still claim to experience intrinsic rewards from their work with students and colleagues in schools, many perceive their work to be undervalued by the community. A recent research project offers a counter view. Rice (2005) argues that "surveys of the Australian public have shown that the majority views both schools and teachers positively, believing that teachers are dedicated to their students, and that schools in general achieve their educational goals

reasonably well" (p. 182). Teachers remain unconvinced. Frequent bad news stories and too few good news stories in the popular press only serve to confirm teachers' perceptions and exacerbate their dissatisfaction with teaching.

The immediate challenge is to find productive ways to close the gap between teachers' (lowly) perceptions of their status and the somewhat higher opinions of teachers' status reportedly held by the Australian community. When Rice (2005) conducted a qualitative study, collecting interviews with a small sample of Melbourne teachers to examine how they draw conclusions about their status, she found that structural and contextual factors, not just their conceptions of the public view, contributed to teachers' negative perceptions of their professional status.

The Queensland College of Teachers will be establishing a Promoting the Profession Advisory Group to assist with developing a plan to promote the teaching profession with the aim of encouraging quality entrants into the profession, enhancing the commitment of existing teachers and increasing public appreciation of teachers. The Advisory Group will provide input into the College's plan and assist in identifying possible ways for increasing public perceptions of the profession and encouraging colleagues to respond more positively to their own work.

A concerted effort to promote the profession may produce positive

realities. The recent introduction of the *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* (QCT, 2007) offers teachers substantive ways to talk about teachers as experts in education. Moreover, the Standards provide a much needed common ground between teachers and the community to discuss teachers and teaching. At present not enough teachers tell good news stories and doing so is encouraged by the College as a means of reconstructing from the inside teachers' professional stories about the positive effect of teachers on quality of life and standard of living in Australia.

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Promoting the Profession Advisory Group

The Queensland College of Teachers (the College) is establishing a Promoting the Profession Advisory Group to provide input to and feedback on the College's activities to promote the teaching profession during 2007 and 2008.

The College has identified that the focus of its promotion will include:

- encouraging quality entrants into the profession;
- enhancing the commitment of existing teachers; and
- increasing public appreciation of teachers.

The membership of the Advisory Group reflects the diversity of teachers and teaching contexts in Queensland and will include four self-nominated practising teachers drawn from the following groups:

- Early career teachers (less than five years teaching experience);
- Casual/supply teachers;
- Experienced classroom teachers (greater than five years of teaching experience);
- Leadership positions such as Heads of Department or Deputy Principals.

Further information, including the selection criteria and nomination forms, is available from the College's website at www.qct.edu.au or via email Mel.Bennett@qct.edu.au.

Australasian Forum of Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities (AFTRAA)

The Queensland College of Teachers is an active member of the Australasian Forum of Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities (AFTRAA).

The Forum consists of representatives from the teacher registration or accreditation bodies in each Australian state and territory and New Zealand.

AFTRAA has been charged by all state education Ministers with addressing teacher registration issues of national importance.

During 2007, AFTRAA will be undertaking a major project to develop a national framework and standards for preservice teacher education programs. The framework and standards will address issues such as minimum qualifications, practical experience and standards in relation to literacy and numeracy.

This work will provide a basis for mutual recognition arrangements whereby preservice programs accredited in one jurisdiction will be recognised in another state or territory or in New Zealand.

The College will continue to provide information on the work of AFTRAA.

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College Update

Current major projects being undertaken by the College include:

Redevelopment of the College's website

This project will redesign the appearance and functionality of the College's website so that it effectively promotes the College, offers a wider range of services than the current website; and proactively promotes the teaching profession. The College will provide further information on the new website in the August edition of *College Connection*.

Research Projects

The College has identified a number of research priorities for 2007, including:

- Models of Preservice Teacher Education using the *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* as a lens.

- Teachers' Professional Development Experience and Perceptions of Value, to be conducted in conjunction with other AFTRAA member organisations.
- Issues around assessing English language proficiency and meeting the professional standards for overseas-trained teachers from non-English speaking backgrounds.

School Showcase 2007

The College is providing opportunities for teachers and students in primary, secondary and special schools to display their work. The art work will be displayed in the public spaces and meeting rooms and may be included in the College's website and publications. For more details please contact schoolshowcase@qct.edu.au

Student Art Competition



The winning entry in the 2006 Student Art Competition: *Teachers ... along life's journey* by Jason Davis, AB Paterson College.

In 2006, the Queensland College of Teachers (the College), in partnership with EDSCO Education Supply Company, offered aspiring artists in secondary schools a unique opportunity to have their art work commissioned by the College and displayed in the public foyer of the College's office.

Teachers ... along life's journey, by Jason Davis, a Year 11 student at A.B. Paterson College, was selected from the many quality submissions received in 2006. Jason's school received a \$1000 voucher from EDSCO for educational supplies as well as approximately \$300 in materials to assist with the production of the art work.

The College is currently seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the 2007 Art Competition from individual students, groups or classes of students in Queensland secondary schools (Years 10 to 12).

The stimulus for the 2007 Art Competition is the following quote:

Teachers open our eyes to the world. They give us curiosity and confidence. They teach us to ask questions. They connect us to our past and future. They are the guardians of our social heritage... Life without a teacher is simply not a life.

Johnathan Sacks

EDSCO will again be offering a \$1000 voucher for educational supplies to the school attended by the chosen artist(s) as well as materials up to the value of \$300 to assist with the production of the art work.

For further information about the 2007 Art Competition please download the *Student Art Competition 2007 Flyer* and the *Expression of Interest Form* from the College's website at www.qct.edu.au

Expressions of Interest must be received by Friday 25 May 2007.

Have your say on *College Connection*

Distributed with this edition of *College Connection* is a survey form seeking teachers' views on this publication. Your comments and suggestions on the newsletter will help us tailor our future communication with teachers to meet your needs and interests. We want to know your preferences regarding content, format and mode of distribution of a College publication. We would greatly appreciate it if you could take the time to complete the survey – it should only take 15 minutes – and return it to us by **25 May 2007**. You can either fill in the printed form enclosed, or if you prefer, complete the form online (go to our website: www.qct.edu.au and follow the links) and either print it out or email it to us. Printed forms can be returned to us by post (QCT, Reply Paid 389, Toowong, Qld 4066) or fax (07 3870 5006).