



# ***EDUCATION AND HEALTH STANDING COMMITTEE***

## **INTERIM REPORT ON CHANGES TO THE POST COMPULSORY CURRICULUM IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**Report No. 1  
in the 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament**

**2005**

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Education and Health Standing Committee

Interim Report on Changes to the Post Compulsory Curriculum in Western Australia

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**INTERIM REPORT ON CHANGES TO THE  
POST COMPULSORY CURRICULUM IN  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**Report No. 1**

Presented to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by:  
**Hon T.G. Stephens, MLA**  
and deemed tabled on Thursday, 22 December 2005



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## **COMMITTEE'S FUNCTIONS AND POWERS**

The functions of the Committee are to review and report to the Assembly on:

- (a) the outcomes and administration of the departments within the Committee's portfolio responsibilities;
- (b) annual reports of government departments laid on the Table of the House;
- (c) the adequacy of legislation and regulations within its jurisdiction; and
- (d) any matters referred to it by the assembly including a bill, motion, petition, vote or expenditure, other financial matter, report or paper.

At the commencement of each Parliament and as often thereafter as the Speaker considers necessary, the Speaker will determine and table a schedule showing the portfolio responsibilities for each committee. Annual report of government departments and authorities tabled in the Assembly will stand referred to the relevant committee for any inquiry the committee may make.

Whenever a committee receives or determines for itself fresh or amended terms of reference, the committee will forward them to each standing and select committee of the Assembly and Joint Committee of the Assembly and Council. The Speaker will announce them to the Assembly at the next opportunity and arrange for them to be placed on the notice boards of the Assembly.



## **INQUIRY TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **INQUIRY INTO CHANGES TO THE POST-SECONDARY CURRICULUM IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

That the Committee examine, report and make recommendations on the proposed changes to the Years 11 and 12 curriculum. The Committee will pay particular attention to:

1. The merit and basis of the proposed changes;
2. The readiness of the education system for the proposed changes;
3. The financial implications of the proposed changes;
4. The effect of extending to upper secondary education the outcomes-based curriculum, assessment and reporting;
5. The effect of the amalgamation of TEE and non-TEE subjects and assessment; and
6. Any related matters that the Committee considers necessary to investigate.

The Committee will report its findings to the Legislative Assembly by 30 June 2006.







## **MINISTERIAL RESPONSE**

In accordance with Standing Order 277(1) of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, the Education and Health Standing Committee directs that the Hon. Alan Carpenter, MLA, Minister representing the Minister for Education and Training report to the Assembly as to the action, if any, proposed to be taken by the Government with respect to the recommendations of the Committee.





**Recommendation**

The Committee recommends:

- By the commencement of the Professional Development program in 2006, the Curriculum Council publish a timetable for the commencement of each Course of Study, including a detailed listing of what complete support material will be provided for each Course of Study and by what date the material will be provided;
- That the core support material be provided by the last day of first term in the year preceding the commencement of the Course of Study; and
- That any Course of Study due to commence in 2007 or later, for which the support material are not provided by the end of the preceding first term, be delayed until the following year.



# INTERIM REPORT ON THE READINESS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR THE CHANGES TO THE POST COMPULSORY CURRICULUM

## 1.1 Background

The Curriculum Council is responsible for the implementation of the Curriculum Framework, which was introduced in 1998 and is mandated for all Western Australian schools. The Council was established as an independent statutory authority under Section 5 of the *Curriculum Council Act 1997* and under that Act is responsible for:

- (a) *control, direct and coordinate the development of a curriculum framework for schooling;*
- (b) *approve a curriculum framework for schooling;*
- (c) *evaluate, review and revise as it thinks fit the curriculum framework;*
- (d) *determine and coordinate arrangements to be used or followed for the implementation of the curriculum framework;*
- (e) *identify priorities and develop, distribute and evaluate curriculum documentation and other material which facilitate implementation of the curriculum framework;*
- (f) *develop professional development plans necessary to support implementation of the curriculum framework;*
- (g) *establish, in accordance with the approved curriculum framework, the minimum requirements for graduation from secondary school and for the issue of a certificate of student achievement; and*
- (h) *establish, determine the criteria for, and administer, exhibitions and awards to be granted in recognition of student achievement.*<sup>1</sup>

The Curriculum Framework has been operating in the compulsory years (Kindergarten to Year 10) since its introduction, but was always intended to apply to all years K-12.

Between 2005 and 2009 a new Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) is being introduced for students graduating from school at Year 12. The new WACE will have up to 50 new courses that will replace all of the more than 400 current subjects in Years 11 and 12.

A number of changes will occur with the introduction of the new WACE. Some of the changes published by the Curriculum Council on its website and in its published documents include:

- About 50 new courses will replace all of the current Year 11 and 12 subjects. The new courses are intended to be based on the same range of fields of study offered at WA universities.
- There will no longer be three current types of subjects – Wholly School-Assessed (WSA), Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET). All subjects will be considered for the Tertiary Entrance Rank, TAFE entrance and other

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<sup>1</sup> *Curriculum Council Act 1997*, Section 9.

further education opportunities (there will still be some pre-requisites or recommended courses for certain subjects).

It is the Curriculum Council's intention that each new course will have a syllabus comprising:

- outcomes;
- essential content; and
- standards.

The Curriculum Council has stated that the focus of the change is that:

*...there be one consistent standard for all students, state-wide, which is intended to ensure that students, parents, universities, training providers and employers all receive meaningful information about a student's standards.<sup>2</sup>*

Features of the new curriculum include:

- A student's Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) will be based on their four best course results; and
- 50 per cent of a student's final result will be based on their performance at school and 50 per cent on exams.

There is one Course of Study already underway, namely Aviation Studies, with three others intended for commencement in 2006, and a further 19 Courses of Study in 2007. The rest of the Courses of Study are intended to be in place by 2009.

Some aspects of the new WACE will not change, including:

- There will still be exams, but instead of the TEE they will be the WACE exams, which will not be compulsory for students not intending to go to university;
- Students will still receive a graduation certificate (if they meet the requirements); and
- Opportunities to do VET (Vocational Education and Training) will continue, including the School Apprenticeship Link Program and School Based Traineeships. Students will also be able to do VET versions of courses.<sup>3</sup>

## **The timetable for change**

Schools will select which of the 50 courses to offer their students to meet their interests and needs within school resources. Schools will select between 20— 45 courses.

Students will generally choose five or more courses of study, including one from the English area (English; English as a Second Language; or Texts, Traditions and Cultures). Students will select units of study, from within a course, appropriate to their entry levels.

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<sup>2</sup> Curriculum Council of Western Australia, Available at: [www.curriculum.wa.edu.au](http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au), Accessed November 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Curriculum Council of Western Australia, Available at: [www.curriculum.wa.edu.au](http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au), Accessed November 2005.

**Figure 1.1 Timetable for Implementation of the new WACE**

<b>NEW COURSES</b>		
<b>Year 11 in 2005 Year 12 in 2006</b>	<b>Year 11 in 2007 Year 12 in 2008</b>	<b>Year 11 in 2008 Year 12 in 2009</b>
Aviation	Accounting and Finance	Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies
	Applied Information Technology	Agriculture
<b>Year 11 in 2006 Year 12 in 2007</b>	Biological Sciences	Australian Indigenous Languages
Engineering Studies	Chemistry	Automotive Engineering and Technology
English	Computer Science	Building and Construction
Media Production & Analysis	Drama	Business Management and Enterprise
	Earth and Environmental Science	Career and Enterprise
	Economics	Children, Family and Community
	English as a Second Language/Dialect	Dance
	Geography	Food Science and Technology
	History: Ancient and Modern	Health Studies
	Human Biological Sciences	LOTE: First Language
	Integrated Science	LOTE: Second Language
	Music	LOTE: Small Candidature Languages
	Physical Education Studies	Marine and Maritime Technology
	Physics	Materials Design and Technology
	Politics and Law	Mathematics - Chance and Data
	Religion and Life	Mathematics - Number and Change
	Texts, Traditions and Cultures	Mathematics - Space and Movement

	Visual Arts	Philosophy and Ethics
		Psychology
		Recreational and Environmental Studies
		Visual Communication Design

**Source: Curriculum Council Website**

## 1.2 Introduction

The Education and Health Standing Committee commenced an inquiry into the proposed changes to the post-compulsory curriculum in Western Australia in May 2005. Following adoption of the terms of reference on 4 May 2005, the Committee advertised widely calling for submissions from interested parties.

As a result, the Committee received 182 submissions, and has held 24 formal hearings up until the time of tabling this report.

The second term of reference adopted by the Committee sought to determine the readiness of the education system for the proposed changes.

There were a substantial number of submissions that addressed the merits or otherwise of the proposed curriculum, made comment on very significant issues including assessment, moderation and examinations and discussed other details of implementation. All of these detailed arguments will be considered in the Committee's final report. In this Interim Report the Committee will address only the issue of readiness.

Many of the submissions received by the Committee argued that the system is not ready for the changes. Concerns were raised about uncertainty caused by the lack of teaching materials, examples of examination papers and other resources. There were also comments made in submissions and evidence about Professional Development. This latter issue will be addressed more fully in the Committee's final report, as the implications are broader than simply being ready to implement Courses of Study and touch on issues related to the financial implications and the on-going development of the new curriculum.

As part of its support for Professional Development of teachers, the Curriculum Council has produced a Professional Development Plan for 2006, which is designed to inform teachers about the training available for the 19 Courses of Study commencing in 2007. While this Plan is welcome the fact that it was not published until November 2005 has left a number of teachers, already anxious about the impending changes, unsure about what support they can expect.

There were delays in getting the course material out to teachers of English, some of whom were reporting not having completed their Professional Development late in 2005. In evidence the Committee was told that:

*It was in that context that there was considerable discomfort about English teachers being required to put into practice next year a course of study for which they still have not seen exams and for which they did not receive professional development until late this year.<sup>4</sup>*

The anxiety felt by some teachers is exacerbated by a perception that the new curriculum is being developed, at least in part, on the run. This has increased the sense of unreadiness among some teachers.

In its submission to the inquiry, the Association of Independent Schools (WA), stated that many independent schools were supportive of the outcomes approach and the Curriculum Framework. However, it likened the development of the system to the Mandurah Railway line. It said:

*This was many years in the planning and, prior to starting construction, all plans were in place, the route mapped out, the locations for stations and related parking and road works were identified, and in time the tracks will be laid and construction will go according to the overall plan.*

*Only once all is complete will the trains start running and passengers use the rail line. In the case of this education project, there does not seem to be a final overall plan but rather the train is already in motion and decisions are being made as needed while the actual route is still being determined. The big issues have not been solved, yet here are a small group of students Aviation already in the system and next year many thousands will join them on a trip yet to be adequately mapped out.<sup>5</sup>*

A problem for any inquiry that is being undertaken in the development phase of a new system is that changes are regularly taking place. The Committee is aware that some of the concerns raised in submissions, received up to five months ago, may have been addressed in subsequent changes. However, regardless of these changes, the concerns of teachers and schools remain valid and there needs to be recognition that both the stress levels of teachers and the educational needs of students will not be served by Courses of Study being commenced with insufficient resources.

More than 100 of the 182 submissions received by the Committee have addressed this issue of readiness. More detailed analysis of the submissions will be included in the Committee's final report. In this interim report, it is the Committee's intention simply to deal with the core of the issue and to determine what should happen now to ensure that Western Australian students and teachers are not disadvantaged by the changes.

In order to determine readiness, the Committee has sought to identify which criteria may be used to define readiness, and what timetable needs to be met. Throughout the inquiry the Committee has had a number of criteria for readiness suggested, in submissions and in formal evidence.

The Department of Education and Training (DET), in response to a question from the Committee, suggested that the criteria for 'readiness' are whether:

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<sup>4</sup> Mike Keely, President, State School Teachers' Union of WA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 23 November 2005, p 3.

<sup>5</sup> Submission from Association of Independent Schools (WA), 30 June 2005, p 5.

- new understandings and content in the relevant course(s) affect the delivery of the course of study for schools/teachers and students;
- an effective learning program for a unit(s) of a Course of Study can be developed;
- the content is appropriate for the unit(s);
- the focus for each unit is meaningful;
- the needs of experienced and relatively new teachers in implementing the course are met;
- the Scales of Achievement and their respective Aspects are effective in enabling teachers to distinguish between levels; and
- the Scales of Achievement can be used to assess students.<sup>6</sup>

In correspondence to the Committee, the Curriculum Council told the inquiry that:

*...it is important to note that preparations for the new system have resulted in teachers, more than ever before, having adequate time and extensive support to be ready to implement the new WACE. It was signalled in 1998, with the introduction of the Curriculum Framework and the beginning of the post-compulsory education review, that change was on the educational horizon.<sup>7</sup>*

Further, the Curriculum Council told the Committee that:

*...curriculum guides were developed for each Curriculum Framework learning area outcome across all phases of schooling so teachers know what they need to teach for each. These guides have been distributed to every teacher in Western Australia. In addition to the guides, the teachers have been provided with either Curriculum Framework progress maps or the Department of Education and Training's Outcomes and Standards Framework to support them in measuring student achievement of the outcomes. In preparing teachers to implement the new English course there are collectively over 250 pages of support materials.<sup>8</sup>*

The Committee acknowledges that teachers have received substantial material for the Courses of Study that are being implemented in 2006, however not always in a timely fashion. The Committee also recognises that many of the teachers who have felt unready are in the science and mathematics areas which are not due to commence until 2007 or 2008. However, the lack of certainty has led to substantial levels of anxiety among teachers and a perception of a system being implemented before it is fully developed.

The Minister for Education and Training established a Ministerial Taskforce on Issues Surrounding Proposed Changes to Post-Compulsory Education in May 2005, chaired by Mr Greg Robson, to investigate concerns expressed about the proposed changes to the curriculum in Years 11 and 12. In its report, published in July 2005, the Taskforce recognised the importance of support to teachers, and that the support must be of practical assistance rather than simply reinforcing the need for change. It stated that:

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from Department of Education and Training, 3 November 2005, p 2.

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Curriculum Council, 15/11/2005, p 2.

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Curriculum Council, 15/11/05, p 2.



*The Curriculum Council will need to continue to play a central role to ensure common messages and to establish the base for material support. In particular, it must be acknowledged that the implementation support must move quickly from the emphasis on the general rationale for change and a focus on developing a broad awareness about the changes. Teachers will need a great deal of practical support especially in the area of assessment.*<sup>9</sup>

In supporting the findings of the Taskforce, the Minister for Education stated that:

*"I am well aware that professional development for teachers is necessary to help them better understand the benefits and assist with the implementation of the new courses...Assessment and support materials for teachers will be brought forward as a priority."*<sup>10</sup>

In accepting the report and endorsing all of its recommendations, the Minister announced an allocation of an extra \$19m to implement them. This has led to a substantial increase in the material being made available to teachers and schools. It has also led to a commitment from the Government that:

*"There will also be fully funded professional development, a pupil-free day in term one next year, paid teacher relief, more rigorous evaluation and closer monitoring of the implementation will also accompany the introduction of new courses."*<sup>11</sup>

The Minister for Education has explicitly acknowledged the importance of support for teachers. In a speech to the Secondary School and College Principals Forum in July 2005, she said:

*Teachers need reassuring that there will be adequate support materials and professional development to enable them to confidently implement the changes.*<sup>12</sup>

Further the Minister strongly indicated that

*The support materials and professional development must be available well before the new courses commence.*<sup>13</sup>

The Committee has been advised that since then the Curriculum Council has worked with all school sectors to address the recommendations articulated in the Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Issues Surrounding Proposed Changes to Post-compulsory Education.

The Committee is given to understand that the Taskforce has continued to closely oversee the implementation, assessment and resourcing of the new subjects and to assist in making any necessary adjustments to ensure it is carried out successfully.

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<sup>9</sup> Report Of The Ministerial Taskforce On Issues Surrounding Proposed Changes To Post-Compulsory Education, July 2005, p 11.

<sup>10</sup> Media Statement, Minister for Education, 29 July 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Speech to the Secondary School and College Principals Forum, 29 July 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

Since the Taskforce Report the level of resourcing has increased to assist in the development of support materials to help teachers in preparing for the implementation of the new courses of study. The professional development program has been developed in line with different school development dates, aimed at minimising the disruption to schools.

Teachers have also been given extra professional development days to help them plan for the successful implementation of the new courses.

### 1.3 Support Material

The Committee cannot be too prescriptive about what needs to be available for teachers in order to ensure their readiness. Different Courses of Study may require different support material, and may put different emphasis on the same support material. Support material may include such things as:

- sample tasks
- a student brief pro forma
- a sample evidence plan
- an evidence plan pro forma
- sample schemes of assessment
- a scheme of assessment pro forma
- a detailed sample program
- a program pro forma
- exemplars of student work
- sample examination questions

According to the English Teachers' Association in evidence before the Committee, some of the materials that are required for teachers to be ready include:

*“... sample programs of study, sample schemes of assessment, sample tasks that suit the assessment types and the course of study...”<sup>14</sup>*

The Science Teachers' Association of WA (STAWA) also told the Committee that teachers need clear support material. In evidence, the President of the Association, Ms Julie Weber, told the Committee that:

*There should be some specific guidance about what to teach ... they also need some examples of the different types of assessments for students. I am not talking about setting the exams but we have to assess as we go along to see how students are going and what we need to do. Eventually the teachers will want a copy of an exam so they can see what they are aiming to take their kids to if their students will be doing units 2A and 2B and want to sit the exam.<sup>15</sup>*

The issue of support material has also been recognised by the Ministerial Taskforce. The report stated that:

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<sup>14</sup> Ms Kelly Klymiuk, President, English Teachers Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 23/11/05, Session 2, p 9.

<sup>15</sup> Ms Julie Weber, President, Science Teachers Association of WA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 23/11/05, Session 3, p 7.

*Concerns have also been expressed by groups of teachers about the need for support materials and a wide range of practical examples of assessment tasks, marking rubrics and annotated work samples to assist them in this area. In particular there have been some examples where the sample assessments provided to teachers have not been sufficiently illustrative of a particular level.<sup>16</sup>*

The Task Force also indicated that many teachers have said that they will need additional resources to ensure that they can implement the courses of study effectively. While some positive feedback was received about the quality of most of the resource packages for English, Media, Engineering and Aviation, the Courses of Study due to be underway by the end of 2006, there have been suggestions for improvement.

As important as the form and nature of the support material, is the timing of when it is provided to teachers.

In evidence to the Committee, Mr Andrew Syme, the Headmaster of Scotch College told the Committee that research indicated that:

*...a minimum of 12 months was required for materials to be made available to schools, and for clarity about the final position and things to do with assessment and examples of work. However, we are now heading towards late August for implementation in February of media and English, etc, and those things are not available.<sup>17</sup>*

He also said in the hearing that:

*In the original post-compulsory review, commitments were made by the Curriculum Council about the provision of materials, examination information and examples of assessment 18 months before the implementation.<sup>18</sup>*

In his evidence before the Committee in October 2005, the Director General of Education, Mr Paul Albert, made a very clear and unambiguous statement about readiness. He said:

*...we are not prepared to support the introduction of a new course if that new course is not ready for introduction. We have made that very clear to the Curriculum Council.<sup>19</sup>*

He also told the Committee that:

*It makes sense to delay a specific course of study that is not ready.... my strong view, is that if a course is not ready - that is, the assessment materials are not ready and there have*

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<sup>16</sup> Report Of The Ministerial Taskforce On Issues Surrounding Proposed Changes To Post-Compulsory Education, July 2005, p 7.

<sup>17</sup> Rev A. P. Syme, Headmaster, Scotch College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 August 2005, p 2.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Mr Paul Albert, Director General of Education, Department of Education and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 October 2005, p 11.

*been some delays or whatever with the schedule for the development of teachers - the readiness factor would apply. That is the issue and that is when you would delay.*<sup>20</sup>

Mr Albert also went on to say in a response to the question of when such material should be provided, that:

*I would want it at least a year beforehand...*<sup>21</sup>

The Department acknowledged in evidence to the Committee that there had been some problems with the readiness of the English Course of Study which is due to commence in 2006. In evidence, Ms Lois Joll, Acting Director of Post Compulsory Academic Standards and Support, told the Committee that:

*There is no question that they were not ready. ... They are now... My understanding is that English has put out a sample exam paper and that all of them are now ready.*<sup>22</sup>

The Committee has heard from a number of witnesses that support material needs to be provided by the end of first term in the year preceding the commencement of a Course of Study. The Committee supports the view that it is unreasonable to expect teachers to prepare their programs and to approach a new system with any confidence without both the Professional Development and the necessary support material being provided in a timely manner.

Although the English Teachers' Association acknowledged that materials had been provided now and that it was reasonably comfortable with the current position, it also acknowledged that the timing of the support could be improved. In evidence, the Committee was told that:

*"I think we would have been better served if the sample materials and the sample exam had been received six months prior to when they were released... Eighteen months prior to implementation."*<sup>23</sup>

This is consistent with the initial undertaking of the Curriculum Council and it is clear to the Committee that this timeline has not been met. It is likely that a significant amount of the anxiety and stress on teachers could have been avoided if support material was provided earlier.

This view was also expressed in submissions. Wesley College said in its submission to the Committee that:

*Timelines for implementation of the new English Course of Study were not met they did not get the material 18 months prior as decreed. This has put English teachers under enormous pressure.*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p 13.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p 14.

<sup>22</sup> Ms Lois Joll, Acting Director, Post Compulsory Academic Standards and Support, Department of Education and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 12 October 2005, p 14.

<sup>23</sup> Ms Kelly Klymiuk, President, English Teachers' Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 23 November 2005, p 10.

<sup>24</sup> Submission, Wesley College, 30 June 2005, p 2.

Although not due to commence their Courses of Study until 2007 and 2008 respectively, the Science and Mathematics teachers' professional associations also considered the issue of getting support material in time to be important. In evidence before the Committee, the spokesperson for the Mathematics Association of Western Australia, Ms Noemi Reynolds, said of support materials that:

*"I think most members would be happy to have the stuff at least one year before they have to begin implementing it."*<sup>25</sup>

Ms Weber of the STAWA also indicated that the teachers needed this information in sufficient time to approach their programs with confidence. She said:

*They really need to have them the year before the courses actually come in. For those science subjects coming out in 2007, they would need to have those things next year so they could start planning their courses.*<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the problems of timeliness, there has been something of an ad hoc and fragmented approach in Western Australia to the provision of material. In NSW, in 1999 before the first year of the new assessment system became operational (2001) the Board of Studies produced for each subject an "Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplement"(EARS) to show teachers and students what a new examination paper would look like and how it would be assessed. The EARS document included a specimen paper, marking guidelines and the draft course band descriptors. These were available before 2000 for teachers and students to access. The CD-ROMS were distributed to teachers within a few months of the first exam so they could see samples of student scripts aligned to the performance bands (the standards) which of course were not available until after the first candidates had sat the exam in 2001<sup>27</sup>. The CD-ROMs entitled "*NSW HSC Standards Packages*" were prepared for every Course of Study and contained:

- An examination paper that shows each question students were required to answer or task they were required to perform;
- Marking guidelines that show the criteria applied to allocate marks to the student responses in line with the quality of responses;
- Syllabus;
- Band descriptions that summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding typically demonstrated by students who achieve each band;
- Samples of student responses for all compulsory questions and some of the optional questions on the examination that illustrate the nature and quality of the responses typically produced by students whose marks in the examination placed them at the

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<sup>25</sup> Ms Noemi Reynolds, Mathematics Association of WA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 16 November 2005, p 9.

<sup>26</sup> Ms Julie Weber, President, Science Teachers Association of WA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 23/11/05, Session 3, p 8.

<sup>27</sup> Information from NSW Board of Studies, December 2005.

borderline between each pair of bands. The material is organised in such a way that if a particular section or question is selected, and then a particular borderline selected, it will be possible to view or hear the responses of a sample of students at that borderline;

- Tables and graphs for questions where students are required to select an answer, such as multiple choice and true/false items. These tables provide statistics on the response patterns of students. The material is organised in such a way that for the groups of students whose marks are equal to the borderline between two bands, the percentage of each group that selected each of the responses A, B, C and D is given; and
- Exemplar samples of non-multiple choice items. The 2002 Standards Packages include in a separate area an exemplar sample for all questions and options where a suitable exemplar sample is available.<sup>28</sup>

In discussions with a range of education professionals in NSW, both in the Board of Studies and the schools sectors, these integrated and detailed information packages assisted greatly in the reasonably widespread acceptance of the change. While the packages were expensive, costing in excess of \$6 million to produce for the two years they covered, the advantage appears to have been a teaching cohort that has approached change with confidence. This was particularly marked as the changes in NSW were implemented very quickly, with the full roll out of the new system being in place within three years of its announcement.

It is not suggested that the Curriculum Council in Western Australia has not provided similar material. A review of the Council's website, as well as the packages sent to teachers and provided during Professional Development days, have provided a lot of the same material. However, it appears to have been provided piecemeal as it has been developed. This may have been largely due to the staggered approach to implementation, which has been a different approach to that taken in NSW. This issue of implementation may be considered in more detail in the Committee's final report.

The advantage of the NSW approach is the fact that all of the material was provided at once for all of the Courses of Study. It was, in effect, a consolidation of the material in an easily accessible form. This did not leave teachers in certain subject areas uncertain about what their courses would look like, while others felt ill-informed and anxious.

It is clear from the evidence before the Committee, both in submissions and in formal hearings, that the meeting of timelines of support material is vital for the success of the new post-compulsory curriculum. Teachers feel understandably uncertain about teaching new Courses of Study when the content and samples of what the work will look like are not available to them a few months prior to the courses starting.

The Committee understands the position put by the English Teachers' Association that more would be lost than gained by delaying the Courses of Study due for commencement in 2006. However, it is the Committee's strong view that teachers of Courses of Study being brought on

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<sup>28</sup> NSW HSC Standards Packages, 2002, English Advanced.

stream in 2007 should not have to “fly blind” for as long as those teaching the three Courses of Study commencing in 2006, or indeed those teaching Aviation which is already in place.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee recommends:

- By the commencement of the Professional Development program in 2006, the Curriculum Council publish a timetable for the commencement of each Course of Study, including a detailed listing of what complete support material will be provided for each Course of Study and by what date the material will be provided;
- That the core support material be provided by the last day of first term in the year preceding the commencement of the Course of Study; and
- That any Course of Study due to commence in 2007 or later, for which the support material are not provided by the end of the preceding first term, be delayed until the following year.





