

ELEVENTH MCEECDYA MEETING

15 April 2011, Melbourne

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs met today in Melbourne. The Council made a number of major decisions in relation to national education reforms.

Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs

Ministers took another step towards ensuring that Australian teachers entering the profession are of the highest quality by approving the *Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia*.

The program standards describe the key features expected of high quality initial teacher education. They set out entry criteria and conditions, program structure and content, as well as expected graduate outcomes. The procedures set out a nationally consistent process for the accreditation of programs, including panel establishment and composition, assessment by these panels, and the reporting of accreditation decisions.

The *Standards and Procedures* are a companion to the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*—released in February—which make explicit the knowledge, skills and attributes expected of graduates of nationally accredited programs. Together they reflect the commitment of Ministers to improving teacher quality.

Early Childhood National Quality Agenda Reforms

Ministers received an update report on implementation of early childhood education and care reforms under the National Quality Agenda. A draft of the proposed Regulations under the *Education and Care Services National Law* was released on 7 March. Ministers agreed to extend the consultation with the early childhood education and care sector until 29 April on transitional arrangements in the national regulations.

The Phase Two trial of the draft assessment and rating process was completed in March. An independent evaluation of the effectiveness and reliability of the trial process is currently underway. The evaluation report will inform further refinement of the assessment and rating process and documentation to ensure the robustness of the process prior to implementation in 2012.

NAPLAN Test Security and Protocols

In the lead up to this year's NAPLAN tests in May, Ministers received advice from ACARA on measures it has taken to strengthen the security around the tests and test procedures to minimise incidents. Measures being taken include:

- Considerable revision of the *National Protocols for Test Administration* to ensure that responsibilities at all levels of test handling—national (ACARA), State and Territory (Test Administration Authorities) and school (principals and teachers)—are clearly and prominently articulated and the consequences of failing to adhere to them are well understood. The protocols also now include a Code of Conduct, which clearly identifies behaviours considered inappropriate.
- A more detailed and nationally consistent approach to handling test incidents. Procedures on reporting of alleged incidents will work towards bringing national consistency to the process and clarity about how investigations will be carried out and the importance of following agreed protocols.

Australian Government Review of Funding for Schooling Update

Mr David Gonski AC, the Chair of the *Review of Funding for Schooling* panel updated Ministers on the progress of the review. Ministers were advised about the panel's reporting arrangements and plans for the publication of research. Mr Gonski is due to report to the Australian Government in late 2011.

MCEECDYA's commitment under the NEA to review funding and regulation of schooling

As part of MCEECDYA's commitment under the NEA to review funding and regulation of schooling, including outcomes of the Gonski Review, Ministers also endorsed a set of draft principles in relation to school funding and regulation across the government and non-government sectors. The principles propose that funding and regulation should facilitate and support improvement in the following areas:

- COAG targets and Melbourne Declaration goals
- Jurisdictional Flexibility
- Coherence between Sectors and across Systems
- Equity and Access
- Efficient and Effective Provision
- Parent Choice

Funding for National Digital Resources to Support the Australian Curriculum

Ministers agreed to funding for the ongoing maintenance of the national digital resources database to support the Australian Curriculum.

Future Workplan

Council considered a draft Work Plan for the new COAG Standing Council which would be provided as advice to COAG. It was agreed that the priorities for future work should include addressing the divide between rural and remote students and metropolitan students.