

Australian Council of Deans of Education
Press Release

Focus reform on educators

Educators must be at the centre of Higher Education reform, according to the Australian Council of Deans of Education. In its submission to the Higher Education Review, ACDE argues for much greater recognition of the role that teacher education and training plays in the knowledge economy. If education is truly to be the defence of the nation, educators must be highly trained, well paid, and well resourced, whether in cities or in regional and remote areas. ACDE calls for:

- preparation and training in teaching skills to be readily available to all academics;
- recognition of the link between quality teaching and quality research, rather than the creation of specialist teaching positions;
- designation of research priorities in the social sciences and humanities as a matter of urgency;
- preservation of Education faculties in regional and remote universities;
- substantial improvement of salaries, conditions and career paths of academics.

ACDE also argues that reform should not be used to narrow the focus on funding. The Council calls for a substantial increase in Commonwealth funding, with a view to lifting Australia into the top third of OECD nations. Such investment is necessary if the rhetoric of education being the defence of the nation is to be fulfilled. ACDE also recommends further ways of enhancing investment, including:

- collaborating with the states to raise overall public investment in Higher Education;
- altering the taxation regime to boost industry investment;
- making HECS more progressive;
- establishing lifelong learning accounts;
- establishing training levies.

The Council stresses that private investment must be used to enhance, rather than substitute for, high levels of public investment. Genuine reforms are needed, but an overall vision of education is also required. If education is the engine of the new economy, then educators must be at the centre of reform, and public and private investment must both rise dramatically.

The Deans are available for comment.

Contact: Dr Andrew Harvey
Executive Officer.
Mobile: 0408 571 821.
Email: andrew.harvey@rmit.edu.au
Website: <http://acde.edu.au>