Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry

To
The Education and Training Committee
Parliament of Victoria

For
Parliamentary Inquiry into Effective Strategies for Teacher Professional Learning

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Approved: Martin Murley General Manager, Strategic Developments Curriculum Corporation
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Accepted: Joan Holt General Manager, Curriculum Projects Curriculum Corporation
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Contact details

Name          Joan Holt
Position      General Manager, Curriculum Projects
Telephone    +61 3 9207 9600
Email         joan.holt@curriculum.edu.au

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1 Introduction

Curriculum Corporation is pleased to have the opportunity to submit this response to the Victorian Parliament’s Education and Training Committee inquiry into effective strategies for teacher professional learning. Curriculum Corporation recognises the importance placed on education and training by the Victorian Government and the Victorian community.

Curriculum Corporation occupies a unique position in Australia’s educational landscape. Curriculum Corporation is an independent education support organisation established to assist education systems in the improvement of student learning outcomes. The company develops, promotes and disseminates curriculum and assessment services and resources that are both innovative and tailored for all learning needs. It also specialises in educational project management in national and international markets.

The objects for which the company is established retain a high level of currency, and are summarised below:

- managing projects referred by the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)
- facilitating collaborative curriculum activities as endorsed by Board members and in consultation with State and Territory agencies and accredited authorities
- encouraging more effective use of resources through elimination of unnecessary duplication of effort in curriculum development and the provision of information services
- acting as a vehicle for the Australian Government to provide support for agreed national initiatives and programmes endorsed by Ministers
- establishing close working links with national bodies established by MCEETYA.

Owned by all Australian Ministers of Education, CC reports to a Board comprising the Directors-General (or representatives thereof) of each education system, the Catholic and Independent education sectors, the New Zealand Ministry of Education and the peak national teacher and parent bodies.

Curriculum Corporation’s work is guided by the following organisational vision and mission:

Corporate Vision
To lead national approaches to curriculum for the improvement of student learning

Corporate Mission
To collaborate with the education community to provide exemplary curriculum, assessment, project management and consultancy products and services.

1.1 Our work - collaboration

All of Curriculum Corporation’s major work is collaborative project work, and reflects both the company’s purpose as outlined in the company objects, and the importance of its governance structure with strong links to every education system and sector.

Curriculum Corporation delivers curriculum and assessment services and products in core areas such as literacy, numeracy, mathematics, science, civics and citizenship and history. Complimenting this, Curriculum Corporation has also delivered professional learning services and resources to schools, and supported curriculum innovation within school clusters across Australia in mathematics, science,
technology and values and boys’ education.

Curriculum Corporation has been entrusted by the ministers to manage key national initiatives that require the management of national collaboration in political environments which are often sensitive. For example, in December 2006, the Australian Education System’s Officials Committee (AESOC) commissioned Curriculum Corporation to manage the National Assessment Program - literacy and numeracy. Two other examples of nationally collaborative projects are described below.

1.1.1 Statements of Learning

At MCEETYA in 2002 Ministers expressed concern about the degree of divergence in curriculums, particularly considering the number of students and their families who move between states in each year. They requested advice about how greater consistency could be achieved. Curriculum Corporation was asked to undertake this work on behalf of AESOC and MCEETYA. This work was identified as one of the nine MCEETYA priorities. In 2002-03 Curriculum Corporation led the research to determine the extent of commonality and divergence, producing a report for MCEETYA, Curriculum provision in the Australian States and Territories 2003.

This was followed by extensive work to establish national ‘Statements of Learning’, and subsequent activities throughout 2004-2006 in managing the collaborative development of Statements of Learning in English, Mathematics, Civics and Citizenship, ICT and Science, and consulting with States, Territories and the Australian Government to gain consistency. This work was completed in the first quarter of 2006.

The Statements of Learning define the knowledge, skills, understandings and capacities that all young Australians, no matter where they live, should have the opportunity to learn. They form the basis of achieving all Ministers’ aims of greater consistency among curricula and represent a significant step forward for Australia, providing the first nationally agreed curriculum statements. The statements will be implemented within State and Territory curriculums from 2008.

1.1.2 The Learning Federation (TLF)

TLF develops and supplies to all Australian and New Zealand education jurisdictions (including the government, Catholic and independent school sectors in Victoria) highly quality-assured interactive learning objects based on the latest research. In addition, an extensive collection of digital resources - video, image, audio and text - have been sourced from Australia’s leading cultural institutions and described by authoritative educational metadata.

The TLF initiative has been integral to establishing common standards for the development of online curriculum content of educational soundness, metadata and accessibility, and has clarified and determined intellectual property arrangements in this new field. Relationships have been developed with cultural institutions to enable the provision of significant cultural content as part of the initiative, and delivery protocols and mechanisms have been brokered with education systems and sectors to enable access to content at the school level via the system- and sector-operated ICT infrastructure.

July 2006 marked the commencement of the third phase of the Le@rning Federation initiative, a three year project under Curriculum Corporation’s management, to further develop online curriculum content for use in Australian and New Zealand schools. Further information on The Le@rning Federation is available at http://www.thelearningfederation.edu.au.

1.2 Project work with a focus on teacher professional learning

The Corporation develops, manages and delivers teacher professional development, with models ranging from online communities of practice to train-the-trainer programs, and from national conferences and seminars to facilitating mentor arrangements for schools with higher education or community entities.
Currently Curriculum Corporation manages three major national teacher professional learning projects for the Australian government. These are Success for Boys Project Stage 2, Values Education Good Practice Schools Stage II project and the Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics (ASISTM) Project; in each project teacher professional learning is intrinsic to the project activity. Currently 3500 (around one third) of Australian schools receive managed grant funding to implement teacher professional learning activity in these designated project areas.

Through these projects Curriculum Corporation links to thousands of schools across Australia, these links in turn contributing to our understanding of life at the education ‘coalface’. Curriculum Corporation staff working across these projects communicate with academics and teachers on a daily basis, linking schools with universities to improve teaching and learning outcomes, mentoring, and continued professional learning.


The Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics (ASISTM) Project aims to bring about real and permanent improvements to the ways in which science, technology and mathematics are taught in schools. This Australian Government Project runs for a seven-year life span.

A significant ‘Injection’ of funds is made available to clusters of schools to improve quality and seed innovations in teaching and learning project areas. Programme funds are allocated into projects after a very rigorous selection process. The project is supported by a national and state reference groups and academic partnerships with professional learning a significant part of all projects.


This Australian Government Project aims to improve boys’ educational and social outcomes.

Stage 1 involved the development of an evidence-based teacher professional learning programme in partnership with an academic consortium.

Stage 2 involves managed funds provided directly to schools for programme implementation. This includes a component of locally-designed activity to follow on the implementation of the professional learning programme. Schools can buy in the services of a consultant and are strongly supported through a Curriculum Corporation Help Desk. This project works in collaboration with State Coordinating Officers and jurisdiction nominees on a national reference group.

**Values Good Practice Schools** [http://www.valueseducation.edu.au](http://www.valueseducation.edu.au)

In this Australian Government Project, funding is used to seed the establishment of good practice in a new curriculum area in school clusters. It aims to support, capture and disseminate good professional practice in school-based values education projects. A Curriculum Corporation officer works in collaboration with a University Associates Network to implement the programme. Curriculum Corporation works with State-based values education officers to support the professional learning of teachers.


MindMatters is a national mental health initiative for secondary schools funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. It is implemented by the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC) and Curriculum Corporation. APAPDC employs project officers in all States and Territories to facilitate professional development workshops. The role of Curriculum Corporation is to manage the MindMatters website and lead the National MindMatters Education Committee. The committee membership is drawn from high level representatives of each of the State and Territory Education Departments and the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.


Curriculum Corporation has an expert testing and assessment team which specialises in the linking of measurement and outcomes to teacher professional learning. This is best expressed through the Assessment for Learning project whose purpose is the professional learning of teachers.
The Assessment for Learning website was commissioned by the Curriculum Corporation Board and underpinned by research about formative assessment and its capacity to improve student learning. The website provides teachers and education leaders with the tools to conduct professional development on formative assessment and provides exemplary formative assessment tasks for use in the classroom. The website is supplemented by DVDs which show different aspects of formative assessment in action in the classroom. Curriculum Corporation has also provided train-the-trainer professional learning in States and Territories.

**Annual Curriculum Corporation conference**

The conference delivers an agenda for the Company’s owners on key education issues and helps lead the thinking in education related matters at a national level. Curriculum Corporation also delivers conferences and on-line publications to support other initiatives such as the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme.

**Series or ‘one off’ specific focus professional learning delivery**

Curriculum Corporation's has used a number of different approaches to professional learning, including weekend and after hours’ series, one-off workshops and day events, often working in conjunction with professional associations. The principal audience is school-based educators - leaders and classroom practitioners. Current research is matched with practical pedagogical applications. The focus of presentations and activities has been in two general areas; the use of new technologies to genuinely improve student learning, and current research in literacy pedagogies and information literacy. These foci mirror the company’s support of MCEETYA priorities which also parallels the company’s publishing plan developing professional resources in these areas.

**Professional journals**

National professional journals published by Curriculum Corporation include EQ Australia, a magazine focusing in a different topic each quarter with articles by leading educators, Connections, which provides quarterly editions with practical ideas, strategies and topical information for teacher librarians, and Curriculum Leadership, which produces 40 weekly online editions per annum covering policy and topical issues of interest to school leaders.

**1.3 Resources associated with professional learning**

Curriculum Corporation develops resources in many areas where Government policy, student performance or educational research indicates there is a need for improvement, or where there may be a gap in curriculum or resource provision. Teacher professional learning associated with these resources is critical to successful change.

**Asia Education Foundation resources [http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/)**

The AEF is a foundation of The Asialink Centre at The University of Melbourne and Curriculum Corporation and receives core funding from the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) was established in 1992 as a national organisation to promote the studies of Asia in Australian schools.

The AEF works in partnership with government and non-government education agencies, universities, philanthropic foundations and the corporate sector to:

- promote and support the study of Asia across the curriculum
- develop Asia-related print and electronic materials
- promote the study of Asia through professional learning
- educate the broader community about the importance of young Australians engaging with Asia.

As part of its strategic work the AEF identified the importance of MCEETYA endorsement of the initiative. After a period of consultation The National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with
Asia in Australian Schools was endorsed by MCEETYA in 2005

To provide schools with practical classroom materials, Curriculum Corporation had developed for the AEF a suite of 75 resources. Recently the focus of the resources has changed from ‘country-based’ texts to practical documents to support studies of Asia implementation across the curriculum. The AEF Scope & Sequence documents for English, SOSE and The Arts are ‘how it looks in the classroom’ resources. They are practical multi-layered advice for curriculum developers, classroom teachers and school leaders.

The Teacher and School resource - a guide for implementing The National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools is an example of a resource which supports school leaders and school champions to manage the change involved in implementing an initiative in their school. It supports the provision of local teacher professional learning.

The AEF supports the use of all resources and a range of other change mechanisms though its state-based advisors who, among other activities, work with principals, teachers and curriculum branches. They are the recipients of train-the-trainer training conducted by the AEF, and in turn conduct professional learning in their own States and Territories.

Global Education

In this project Curriculum Corporation develops specialised curriculum resources for AusAID, an agency of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. While advice can be provided to support teacher professional learning delivery, Curriculum Corporation is not directly involved in the delivery of teacher professional learning. The teacher professional learning occurs through state-based officers managed through the agency who in turn provide advice and feedback on the resource development.

Civics and Citizenship education

Curriculum Corporation developed a comprehensive suite of curriculum resources in Civics and Citizenship Education for all Australian schools under the Discovering Democracy program. State-based teacher professional learning officers fostered implementation and take-up of resources concurrently but separately to Curriculum Corporation’s work. At the conclusion of the initiative Curriculum Corporation manages a Civics and Citizenship website, produces an electronic newsletter and manages annual Celebrating Democracy Week activities including running a national student forum called Every Voice Counts.

Values education

Curriculum Corporation managed a project (Values Education Curriculum Resources and Website Project-2005) to develop an initial set of school resources to support the Australian government’s initiative in Values Education. A Values Education website and a mixed media kit were developed.

A further three-year program of curriculum and professional learning resource development in now in development:

- Stage One (2006) - curriculum and professional learning resources to support the integration of values education across all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) in the school curriculum, and resources that support schools integrate values education in their school mission/ethos, organisation and policies
- Stage Two (2006-2007) - curriculum and professional learning resources to support schools integrate values with student behaviour and social skills
- Stage Three (2007-2008) - curriculum and professional learning resources to support schools explore values in intercultural and global contexts.

As noted above, there are values education officers based in all States and Territories funded under a separate project by the Australian Government. These officers work across systems and sectors in their State/Territory to support values education in a range of State and sector specific ways. They also support the uptake of the resources produced by Curriculum Corporation through professional learning activities.

It should also be noted that the resources themselves are informed by the learning derived from the on-the-ground project-based professional learning that occurs in the Values Good Practice Schools
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

This project involved the development of curriculum resources and the delivery of associated teacher professional learning about the importance of sustainable and cooperative trade and economic development in our region.

1.4 Roles and recent experience of CCI

Curriculum Corporation International (CCI - the International Development Division of Curriculum Corporation) supports and manages all international activities of Curriculum Corporation. It collaborates with various State and Territory Education Departments, including the Department of Education (DOE) in Victoria. It participates in open tenders funded by AusAID, ADB, World Bank and other donors. It also hosts study tours and training for teacher, policy makers and educational leaders, mostly from the developing countries. Recent examples of a few projects emphasizing Teacher Professional Learning include:

1) Samoa - provision of technical assistance to the Department of Education in Samoa (under the ADB) towards development of National Standards for Teacher Competence, Teacher Accreditation, Rewards & Incentives, Teacher Retention program, Human Resource Management Capacity, and Organisational Responsibilities for Teacher Development.

2) Indonesia - provision of specialised training programs (under AusAID) for higher education lecturers and administrators in implementing effective examinations, and in developing program planning which incorporates international best practices, quality assurance, and change management processes.

3) Iran - provision of technical assistance (under UNICEF) to the Ministry of Education in developing capacity for school teachers (primary and secondary) towards Teacher Training Module Development and training of trainers and mentors.

CCI’s experience also includes ICT in Education (Thailand); Peace Education (Sierra Leone); TVET Scoping Study (China); Review of Curriculum Materials (Papua New Guinea) and several other initiatives across Asia-Pacific region. Possible future projects are likely to include: Education Reform (including Teacher Development) in Bangladesh and Mongolia; Teacher Training and Study Tour (with DOE, Victoria) for Kyrgyz Republic teachers; and a UNICEF funded project in Mongolia on the review of Curriculum in relation to Rights of Child as enunciated in the UN Convention on Rights of Child.

2 Responses to consultation questions

Curriculum Corporation is vitally interested in this important inquiry and the questions and opportunities it raises for the Government, community and the profession.

To prepare this response Curriculum Corporation sought comments from a number of experienced educators from across the company, each with practical experience in the classroom, as well as expertise and knowledge of working directly with schools through curriculum projects of national significance. This consultation group considered all inquiry terms of reference and in particular those addressed specifically to the Company in correspondence.

We trust this response proves useful to the Committee’s deliberations, and look forward to further opportunities to participate in the inquiry when presenting to the Committee.
2.1 Question 1 - the role of CC in ongoing professional learning of Vic teachers

Curriculum Corporation has an ongoing role in the professional learning of Victorian teachers in a variety of ways. An example is through its direct support of current major national projects, including Success for Boys, Values Education Good Practice Schools (VEGPS) and Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics (ASISTM). Approximately 1,020 Victorian schools receive managed funds to support the implementation of important teacher professional learning in the key curriculum areas related to these major projects. There are 522 ASISTM project across Rounds 1 to 3, 32 VEGPS project; 466 schools across Rounds 1 and 2 in the Success for Boys project.

The professional learning within these project takes place in a variety of ways, for example through undertaking a project focused on a specific innovation or improvement; through professional learning shared within and between clusters; through clusters using funds to buy in expertise to run specific professional learning related to the innovation/improvement; and through partnerships with universities/academics or other institutions such as CSIRO.

A large part of the Corporation’s work involves developing curriculum and assessment materials to support the teaching and learning process in new curriculum areas such as civics and citizenship, using ICTs in key content areas, or the Studies of Asia. However, the development of cutting edge and engaging curriculum resources and the successful implementation of new curriculum and assessment initiatives are best achieved when the delivery of teacher professional learning is integral to the process. It is our view that without teacher professional learning any curriculum or assessment change initiative will struggle; some face-to-face interaction with the profession is required if the project is to succeed.

After initially being entirely the States’ responsibility to provide professional learning to support uptake of TLF content, it is now accepted that Curriculum Corporation provide presentations, workshops and keynotes at Victorian professional teacher association conferences and regional and cluster networks. In addition, TLF runs small projects with teachers from Victoria and the other States and Territories to produce exemplar teaching resources that use interactive learning objects and digital resources (for descriptions and samples go to: [www.thelearningfederation.edu.au/showcase](http://www.thelearningfederation.edu.au/showcase)). The most recent such project was run with AATE (Aust Association for the Teaching of English). TLF also assists and leverages off the professional learning activities of national projects through demonstrating the scope and use of relevant TLF resources.

As can be seen by the description of the projects in the previous section, most major national projects have a component of teacher professional learning designed to compliment resources and maximise their take up, or to provide opportunities for networked learning in relation to a new initiative. There are a range of possible models and each model is customised to suit the initiative.

Models that support resource development include:

- State-based officers working within an education system but with cross jurisdictional responsibility
- Working with principals
- Working with parents
- Provision of train-the-trainer professional learning to key state officers
- Provision of presentations and workshops at conferences - awareness raising
- Provision of Professional Learning Resources - best done in conjunction with some form of face-to-face
- Focus groups/reference groups or trialing during development - increases buy-in and raises awareness
- Whole school approaches
- Teacher champions
- Websites acting as a hub for a professional community which are centrally supported with regular content updates and provide opportunities for networking with tools such as forums. Sharing via these technologies is particularly useful after face-to-face opportunities have been provided.
2.2 Question 2 - different types, approaches and delivery models of professional learning and how they are matched to specific objectives (including your experience with online professional learning and VET in schools)

Curriculum Corporation is aware that there is a significant and growing body of research which informs understanding of teacher professional learning. The Department of Education and Training Victoria has an agreed set of seven principles for teacher professional learning in effective schooling. Similarly principles have been published by the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria in their document Principles of Effective Professional Learning. The Australian Government through its Quality Teacher Programme has developed a substantial body of research, prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research, outlining the links between teacher professional learning and student learning outcomes. Currently a major update of the national study PD 2000 has been commissioned by the Australian Government.

The purpose of teacher professional learning is to ensure that teachers have the knowledge, skills and capacity to fully prepare students for the complexities of life in the 21st Century. In Australia the education system is a vital component of a productive and effective society. The many challenges facing the education community’s desire to improve student outcomes include managing:

- the effective use and integration of Information Communication Technologies
- the changing world of students (social networking)
- the increased knowledge about the learning process
- issues of environments and globalisation
- discrepancies in achievement and disadvantage between certain groups in our society
- the capacity of systems to raise the standards of underperforming students, teachers and schools
- an aging teacher work force and issues of teacher attraction and retention.

At all levels of education, the school, region, system or state, these are significant challenges. Within this broad mix, the importance of an updated and highly skilled professional workforce to confront these challenges can not be overestimated.

Teacher professional learning aims to influence the professional community to try new initiatives and improve knowledge and capacity. To do this it needs to be classroom focused and built around a ‘Community of Practice’ as a vehicle for communication between teachers. Support by a professional community, including an on-line community, is vital for optimum teacher professional learning.

Effective teacher professional learning must be researched-based with a basis of ‘solid content’. It needs to show teachers possible changes in student learning for long term improvement. Teacher professional learning needs to support and embed variations in a teacher’s daily practice. This is best recognised by building ‘buy in’ to challenge attitudes and beliefs and to help change values. Central to successful teacher professional learning are engagement, ownership, evidence and structure.

As part of our work Curriculum Corporation manages collaborative projects in many areas where Government policy, student performance or education research indicates there is a need for improvement, or where there may be a gap in curriculum or resource provision. The purpose and nature of the imperative require an innovative and creative approach to define the area, work with stakeholders and drive take up. Teacher professional learning is one very important lever for change in addressing the issues Curriculum Corporation manages through its projects.

At a minimum level teacher professional learning is supported by the establishment of collaborative reference groups who provide quality assurance to projects, monitor the uptake, and advise the project. Often teacher briefings about an initiative occur. In addition, teacher professional learning provided through partnerships with teacher professional associations at peak body or local level, or through local teacher professional learning advisors, can also be facilitated.

In addition, TLF provides a range of opportunities, locally and nationally, using different approaches and delivery models for professional learning, including:

- Face-to-face workshops, conference presentations and stand alone resources (e.g. Quarterly content releases on DVD)
Online Group spaces with discussion forums and opportunities for sharing and reflection on work in progress, alternative strategies and new pedagogies. These are found to be particularly after face-to-face PL activities.

Without teacher change and understanding no focus area will be successful - sometimes we work with the ‘teacher champion model,’ but increasingly whole-school approaches in areas such as student health and wellbeing, values and studies of Asia are seen as being more sustainable.

Curriculum Corporation’s experience in teacher professional learning project activity indicates there are some core components of successful teacher professional learning. These include:

- school enthusiasm to participate in projects
- funding and time for learning
- support from school leadership and system leadership
- initiatives that are research or evidence-based and supported with quality resources.

There is no ‘one size fits all’ model or simple solution to complex education issues. Sustained, long-term teacher changes occur when teachers are interested in pursuing improvements in student learning in a supportive and well-resourced environment.

2.3 Question 3 - any challenges in the delivery of professional learning

Challenges that Curriculum Corporation has observed in project schools include that:

- Unless school leadership is interested the initiative will struggle
- A rapid rate of turn over in schools of teacher professional learning leaders means continuity and succession planning are significant issues
- New initiatives arise and foci alter more quickly than they can be embedded in curriculum and student learning and wide spread teacher practice; hence schools are stretched to take on new initiatives and prioritise what is important for their communities with limited resources
- The pace and unrelenting nature of change is leading to ‘burn-out’; increasing number of demands placed on schools as the world becomes a busier, more complex and less coherent environment
- Schools feel they are expected to provide more for a changing audience, and in their view with less resources
- A culture where the teacher professional learning only reaches the interested champions rather than the whole school does not embed the initiative.

Curriculum Corporation is well aware of the importance of quality resources, but on their own resources are not teacher professional learning - when the two work in tandem there is a powerful recipe for sustained change. Curriculum Corporation encourages the use of a curriculum mapping to ensure best fit for their resource. This strategy means that across the state, or nation, the resource comes with advice about the most suitable Key Learning Area for inclusion and the appropriate group of teachers to target with the resource.

Curriculum Corporation works with its clients to encourage strategies to ensure resources are embedded in the daily practice of teachers, as it is our view that teacher professional learning is a key driver of change in schools. It is also our view that project funds provided to schools without some external support for teacher professional learning struggle to achieve desired outcomes.

2.4 Question 4 - any case studies of best practice of professional learning

Success for Boys teacher professional learning programme:
Curriculum Corporation believes that this project is operating at a high level of satisfaction. This view is based on the extensive feedback provided by the project stakeholders, in particular the schools involved in the project. A key success feature of the project is that the professional learning programme is developed from evidence-based research. All funded clusters are expected to implement teacher professional learning using the programme materials; the materials are very well structured and schools must complete the core module and at least one other module (schools are provided with hard copy, CD Rom and a website).

Schools apply for funds as a way of demonstrating interest and commitment for the initiative rather than an automatic provision of funds. Grant funds allowing time for teacher release is a vital feature of the projects as the funds support planning and implementation time. External project support is provided in a range of ways; targeted support via a help desk at Curriculum Corporation, shared networking occurs via an on-line Forum, support is provided in some states via a State Co-ordination officer, accountability requirements (reporting) focus schools on programme outcomes and evidence, and a good mix of project-structured and school-structured activity is allowed for ownership of the project.

Educational change takes time and change in practice precedes change in teacher belief. Effective change needs to be student-centred, but teachers need to be a key part of the initiative. Multi layered and multi platform approaches work well and the value of localized networks or clusters is evident. With programmes such as Success for Boys the timing of the ‘moral imperative’ is very important as schools and teachers need to see evidence that the need for the initiative is vital. It is at this point that system pressure and directives are keys to success; without leadership at the system level it is very difficult for teacher professional learning to be effective. A climate of whole school change and growth leads to long-term change. Research suggest that a ‘tipping point’ will happen when enough change agents within a school are convinced of the worth of the initiative.

Leadership enables teacher professional learning. An investment in principals’ understanding of and commitment to any curriculum initiative will ensure that the changes flourish, not flounder. While curriculum change can be achieved in many ways, and can be instituted by enthusiastic individuals, the school leadership team plays an essential role in shifting the emphasis to whole school commitment.

In summary it is clear that for teacher professional learning there is no one size fits all model; in fact, different strategies from system-wide to school level are essential. In addition, multiple approaches need to acknowledge that different strategies apply for early adopters versus late starters.

2.5 Question 5 - opportunities for greater cross-sectoral links between industry, training institutions, education faculties and schools in the delivery of professional learning

In most of Curriculum Corporation’s major projects there is a cross-sectoral link built into project design. University partnerships can be a feature in a range of ways and this construct is determined at the project initiation stage. Models include:

- The University Associates Network (UAN) for VEGPS projects where UAN members request involvement, are working on research in the area and are matched with a cluster directly via Curriculum Corporation.
- An Academic advisor in Success for Boys who provided the basis of the research-based material programme development
- Consultants, including university partners, who are employed directly by the cluster to support the project
- Academics providing expert guidance and support to projects
- Teacher Associates from universities providing content expertise.

When Curriculum Corporation wishes to broker such relationships it will work through peak organisations such as the Deans of Education. Curriculum Corporation has worked with many of the education faculties across country. Schools often need partners to broaden their reflection. We believe these work best when schools directly invite the partner in and agreement is reached before the project starts about roles and relationships.
Our experience suggests that for this style of partnership to maximise the effectiveness of the resources it requires a coordinator located within the managing agency is essential. As well, there is need for a clear commitment from both partners to the process to ensure it is value for investment and meets project aims. Universities in particular can help with data analysis, be sources of advice, build capacity and knowledge and provide research understanding. Universities can learn about working in and with schools as well as bringing knowledge and education value to schools.

It is our view that supporting project management of a school or cluster based innovation/improvement initiative and value-adding educational expertise are different requirements and therefore require different strategies within these kinds of teacher professional learning initiatives.

### 2.6 Question 6 - current state, national and international trends in teacher professional learning (including the role and experience of CC International)

**International trends**

These are changing times in education systems around the world. With the start of the new millennium, many societies are engaging in serious and promising educational reforms. One of the key elements in most of these reforms is the professional development of teachers. Countries are finally acknowledging that teachers are not only one of the ‘variables’ that need to be changed in order to improve their education systems, but they are also the most significant change agents in these reforms. So, there is a double role of teachers in educational reforms, being both subjects and objects of change. This makes the field of teacher professional development a growing and challenging area, and one that has received major attention during the past few years.

This new emphasis has been welcomed by teachers and educators, both in the developed and developing countries, as it represents a much needed appreciation of teachers' work, and also promotes the concept of teaching as a profession. However, it is our experience that there is a lack of adequate teaching standards and a unified and common approach to teacher development and teaching standards.

Some of the current thinking and emphasis in the international arena in terms of teacher professional learning includes emphasis on the following:

- Roles of teacher as teacher and manager (ability to manage resources, decentralised education system);
- Acquire global learning competencies;
- Lifelong learning;
- Understanding of global issues and national priorities (Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), UNESCO's priority - Education for All (EFA) etc);
- Having international experience, knowledge of international communication concepts & business ethics;
- Understanding of Equity in education; and
- Attitudes which include openness for international collaboration, adaptability to change, tolerance for ambiguity, and participatory approach.

Australian Aid: Promoting Growth and Stability (called the White Paper) is directed towards, among others ‘investing in people’ (i.e. education). The White Paper outlines how the Government will approach the projected doubling of Australia’s aid budget from its 2004 level to around $4 billion annually by 2010, as announced by the Prime Minister in September 2005. This will mean doubling Education sector aid in the next ten years. Teacher Professional Development focus is high in all of Australia’s Education projects and also in other donor supported interventions (DFID, ADB, World Bank and UN). Almost 90% of the donor assisted projects in the Education sector contain a component on teacher development and preparation of a unified National Framework on Teacher Development, a trend that is increasing.
2.7 Question 7 - any specific gender requirements in teacher professional learning

CC is unaware of any research related to gender as a requirement of teacher professional learning. The Success for Boys programme provides a well-researched framework for teachers and schools to address issues related to boys’ performance and success in schooling.

We believe that specific knowledge of key issues affecting student outcomes such as gender issues, working with indigenous students or students with special needs requires expertise and knowledge from the providers. All teacher professional learning, including programmes, activities, resources, trainers and constructs should be informed by and aware of issues relating to inclusively and diversity.

2.8 Question 8 - any other aspects of the terms of reference of interest to the inquiry

From our experience in working with curriculum projects in schools, it is our view that clusters can be valuable contributors to any teacher professional learning. A pre-existing relationship means that trust between partners is already established. In addition agreed purposes and aspirations can enable clusters to flourish. The Innovation and Excellence Co-ordinator model used in Victoria appears to be a strong underpinning for teacher professional learning activity.

3 Finally

In our work, Curriculum Corporation is of the view that it is crucial for initiative success to work with key education stakeholders. Simply summarised these represent the major groups of: systems / jurisdictions, Principals, Deans of Education, Parents and Teachers. It is our view that cohesion between and across these groups will support cohesion across any initiative. The continuum of classroom experience of teachers also suggests that involvement by the regulatory authority will value add to teacher professional learning.

New technologies have the capacity to improve teacher professional learning. Examples of these include the development of exemplars, ‘Digital stories’ in the report In Teachers’ Hands: Effective Literacy Teaching Practices in the Early Years of Schooling (project managed by Edith Cowen University) and the UK’s Teachers TV, a digital television channel dedicated to teacher professional development; UK’s first television channel to provide almost all of its programmes online (see www.teachers.tv). In the Learning Federation project, a coast-to-coast networking project involving the Australian Association of Teachers of English uses a digital social communication tool to write about experience and encourage networking and professional growth.