

## **FROM THE CHAIRPERSON**

A message from Victorian Institute of Teaching Chairperson Don Paproth

Dear Colleague,

A few years ago I was having some stitches removed at my local medical clinic. I started chatting to the nurse and the inevitable topic of my occupation came up. That led to my asking her about registration for nurses.

Her response resonated with me. She said, "I am a registered nurse, and proud of it!"

It struck me at that moment that if I could hear teachers, from time to time, describe themselves as "registered and proud" what a great thing it would be for the profession as a whole.

When I recently attended the Department's long service awards function to recognise 40, 45 and 50 (yes FIFTY) years in the service, the pride of people in their professional career was obvious. We all have a right to feel that.

For some time now a major objective of ours has been to make registration also an accepted, unquestioned "part of the furniture". For many years teachers were one of very few professions that were not registered, and I have been through the benefits of regulation and registration in previous letters to you.

It was therefore particularly satisfying to hear two participants at a recent VRQA function announce themselves to the audience as "... a registered teacher ..."

We're seeing the positives of registration illustrated through our latest major project - the registration of all early childhood teachers. We are in the throes of a series of information seminars for early childhood teachers across the state: 27 sessions being run from Mildura to Bairnsdale.

It is fair to say that participants at the seminars are happy that they will soon be registered teachers and therefore a recognised part of a valued profession. There was some initial wariness - this is natural with any major change - but there is general approval for the concept and the anticipated outcome.

Early childhood teachers have been keen to engage with the Institute and over 2,349 have submitted an Intent to Register form, indicating they would like further information about registration as an early childhood teacher.

Their enthusiasm to be formally recognised as registered professionals has been apparent at these information sessions. Nearly 2,300 early childhood teachers have indicated they will attend a session, which is at least half of all teachers who will have to be registered by the Institute. One teacher even took time out of her holiday and drove from Wangaratta to the Box Hill session to make sure she heard about registration straight from the source!

The feedback from early childhood teachers is very much in the tone of 'we've been waiting a long time for this'. These teachers have expressed little anxiety about the process of registering and are ready and waiting for the application process to start, which is planned to happen in the second half of July.

We are very pleased with the way this project is progressing.

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#### Purpose Statement

At its May meeting, the Institute Council adopted a revised "Purpose" statement. After much positive discussion, Council decided to go with a simple statement which accurately describes our purpose:

"To regulate the teaching profession in Victoria in the public interest by enforcing high ethical and professional standards for teachers."

Council sees this as a worthwhile *raison d'être* and one that hopefully all new early childhood teachers will embrace.

I am sure that the nurse who removed my stitches would approve.

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#### New Institute website

One of our ongoing challenges is to make sure we communicate important information to teachers, principals and other key stakeholders as simply and clearly as possible. As part of this continuing commitment, I am very pleased to tell you about the launch of our new website next month. It has been designed to make your user experience quick and easy, with a comprehensive search function that will direct you straight to the information you need. I think you'll find it highly intuitive and easy to navigate, and I hope you make it your first port of call whenever you have a question for us.

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I try to make these letters to you of some general or topical interest and I am very pleased when I receive feedback from any of you, positive or negative. I write things that I think you might be interested in.

There is, however, another type of communication that comes directly from the Institute

to you – these come from the CEO, Melanie Saba, and contain information that you really do need to know. They are called "Principal Circular" and "Professional Practice". Please read them.

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As ever, I invite any principal who wishes to discuss an Institute matter to contact me directly at the Institute on 8601 6120 or by email at [Donald.Paproth@vit.vic.edu.au](mailto:Donald.Paproth@vit.vic.edu.au). I am also happy to speak to principal networks or other groups.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Paproth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Don Paproth  
Chairperson