

FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

A message from Victorian Institute of Teaching Chairperson Don Paproth

Dear Colleague,

I recently received a letter from the Council President of a school in Victoria which was critical of one of the Institute's policies.

This was not what you would call 'unusual' because we do receive criticism from time to time. I know it's hard to believe, but we do. However this one was different – we were being criticised for being too lenient!

The matter concerned the 'non-practising category of registration for teachers' under which a teacher may maintain their registration for an extended period whilst not teaching. Currently teachers returning to teaching from non-practising registration have requirements attached to their return. They must meet professional practice requirements, including evidence of days teaching and hours of professional development activities, and are given a limited period of time to make the transition from non-practising registration back to teaching.

The school was concerned that a teacher could return to ongoing paid employment without any assessment of competency or evidence of professional development prior to returning to a school and '...without a period of time for updating of teaching practice or professional development ...'

The letter stated its case very clearly and concisely when it said:

'A teacher who is teaching school students must be current in their knowledge and practice. Parents, students, and members of the community all expect this as a measure of the expertise of a person working in the teaching profession ...'

The letter then urged the Institute to review the notion of 'non-practising teacher registration'.

I have made contact with the President to discuss the matter and to compliment her and the school's initiative in bringing the matter to our attention. It was also pleasing in a perverse sort of way to be chided for being too soft when we are usually beaten up for being flint-hearted and difficult to deal with.

I was especially pleased to see a school really taking the issues of teacher competence, currency and professional development seriously.

As it happens, the Institute is currently reviewing the concept and construct of the non-practising classification. This letter in question gave further impetus to the review, but the important thing here is that the issue is acknowledged.

I have made it clear in the past that I am very happy to discuss any matter relating to Institute policy or practice with principals or school councils at any time. I am also ready to speak to principals' groups anywhere at any time. The Institute Council would like to engage directly with the profession as much as possible.

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Finally on behalf of the Institute I would like to take this opportunity to say farewell and thank you to Minister Peter Hall. As the Minister responsible for the Teaching Profession, Minister Hall has provided us with outstanding support and guidance during his time as Minister.

We wish him well in his retirement.



Don Paproth
Chairperson