DES File No 40:068

8 April 2003

Mr Tony Hinton
Commissioner
MRA Review
Productivity Commission,
P.O. Box 80
Belconnen ACT 2616

Dear Mr Hinton

I write as the Chairperson, and on behalf of, the Interim Board of the Western Australian College of Teaching.

The College is being established to maximize the quality of teaching in Western Australian schools. As part of its role it will

- provide a professional body for the Western Australian teaching profession
- establish requirements for on-going registration of teachers, and
- advise universities on appropriate pre-service teacher education.

The College, of course, has other functions but these are not relevant to this current study.

Legislation is currently being drafted to establish the College and at present an Interim Board, appointed by the Minister for Education, is overseeing this process.

The Interim Board notes the terms of reference of the Productivity Commission's Study of Mutual Recognition. In particular, it would like to address those terms of reference relating to

- increasing workforce mobility between Australian States and Territories and New Zealand, and
- considering whether changes to the MRA and TTMRA and the related legislation, or the implementation thereof, are required to improve their operation.

While the Interim Board of the Western Australian College of Teaching is supportive of a nationally consistent regime of teacher registration standards and for the recognition and portability of registration between States and Territories, it is of the view that this should not be at the expense of those States and Territories which have greater requirements for teacher qualifications than other registration authorities.

The current nationally accepted requirement for a teaching qualification is a four year course of study in an approved institution of teacher education. The Interim Board does not support a reduction to this which may see something less than a four year requirement adopted as part of the mutual recognition process. We would see this as in fact undercutting existing standards, thereby undermining the objects of the legislation itself.

The Interim Board recognises that some forms of statutory regulation of occupational legislation are at present exempt from the MRA and TTMRA. The Board is keen to preserve such exemptions where they uphold necessary professional standards of training and practice. As such we are opposed to changes to the MRA and TTMRA legislation which would open those Agreements to the inclusion of occupational categories currently overseen by statutory registration authorities.

Yours sincerely

BRIAN LINDBERG
Chairperson
Interim Board of the Western Australian College of Teaching