



# Literacy and Numeracy Review: The Final Report

**Literacy and Numeracy Review Taskforce: The Final Report**

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## FROM THE CHAIR

The Taskforce shares the community's belief that literacy and numeracy are the foundation of a good education. Strong literacy and numeracy skills developed in the early childhood and primary years open up opportunities for a richer personal, academic and community life.

We are aware that Western Australian children perform creditably on national and international assessments of literacy and numeracy. We are also aware that the Department of Education and Training has strong programs supporting the development of literacy and numeracy in public education. The concern remains that some children are not reaching the minimum standards. It is particularly with these children in mind that we were asked to undertake this Review.

We have consulted widely with community and professional stakeholders. On the basis of this consultation, we believe that it is in our children's best interest that the Department invests in changes in five areas.

We believe that the Department should strengthen the role of the early years of education in preparing children for literacy and numeracy. The recommendations we have made in this area are consistent with the findings of the Rowe Report (*Teaching Reading: National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy, 2005*).

The second set of proposals for change concern teachers and teaching. Quality teaching does not occur by accident. Teachers make a significant difference to students' learning, and we think the Department should make a greater investment in what teachers know and how they teach.

It is in our children's best interests that the Department recruits teachers with the personal and professional skills required for literacy and numeracy teaching in the early childhood and primary years. Country communities consulted during the Review particularly recognised the need to have beginning teachers who have the practical skills, understandings and experience in working with children with learning difficulties.

We also believe that planning, assessment and evaluation of literacy and numeracy initiatives in schools could be improved by further investments in the professional knowledge of current and aspiring school leaders.

Finally, we believe that the Department's decision-making and accountability processes should be based soundly on evidence. This section of the Report outlines the need for evidence-based planning across the system that prioritises particular approaches to literacy and numeracy and allows the community to see the improvement that flows from the Government's investment in public education.

The Taskforce received a great deal of advice on what would make a difference to the learning development of children not reaching minimum standards in literacy and numeracy, particularly Indigenous children,



“Schools are among the most important of all community resources.

For this reason, the Taskforce was keen to involve WA's urban, rural and remote communities in discussions about the long-term improvement of literacy and numeracy in our schools.”

Professor Bill Louden  
Chair, Literacy and Numeracy Review  
Taskforce



children for whom English is a second language and children with learning difficulties. This body of advice has been incorporated into our recommendations.

The focus of this review was to develop recommendations for children's literacy and numeracy development in the early childhood and primary school years in public schools. However, two further areas emerged strongly from the consultation process and we feel compelled to put them forward for consideration. The first is the coordination of support services for children aged zero to four years. The second is the need for new ways of thinking about literacy and numeracy development in the lower secondary years.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bill Loudon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Professor Bill Loudon**  
**Chair, Literacy and Numeracy Review Taskforce**

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## TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Provide advice to the Minister for Education and Training on barriers to student achievement in literacy and numeracy.
2. Provide advice to the Minister for Education and Training on action that can be taken to improve literacy and numeracy levels of students in schools.
3. Examine the teaching of reading, writing, speaking and listening in the early years of education (kindergarten to Year 3).
4. Examine the recommendations of the Rowe Report (*Teaching Reading: National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy, 2005*) and other relevant reports, identifying their significance to Western Australia.
5. Investigate the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy programs already in place in WA schools.
6. Examine the implications for pre-service and in-service training for early childhood teachers and primary teachers.
7. Consult widely on directions recommended from the Review.



## LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

The Review Taskforce followed a two-stage process – public submissions and consultations with experts and stakeholder groups, followed by State-wide community consultation.

In Stage 1 of the Review process:

- An independent Taskforce was appointed by the Hon. Minister for Education and Training.
- Four working parties were formed. The working parties brought together people with experience and expertise in community leadership, literacy and numeracy research and policy, classroom teaching, school leadership, teacher preparation and professional learning. Forty one people participated in the working parties. At least half the participants on the working parties were community members.
- A reference group representing 33 stakeholder groups was established to advise the Taskforce.
- Public submissions to the Review were invited. Forty eight submissions were received.
- A website was developed to inform the community about membership and focus of the Review, submissions received and the consultation process.

In Stage 2 of the review process, 700 individuals and representatives of community organisations gave comprehensive feedback on the proposals in the Preliminary Report during forums held in:

- |             |              |                     |
|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| • Albany    | • Geraldton  | • Perth (Beechboro) |
| • Bunbury   | • Kalgoorlie | • Port Hedland.     |
| • Broome    | • Narrogin   |                     |
| • Fremantle | • Northam    |                     |

A Westlink broadcast was also conducted for those people in country and remote areas who were unable to attend a face-to-face forum. In addition to feedback collected during the forums, more than 500 responses to the proposals were received.

The Taskforce used the feedback from the consultation sessions to shape the final recommendations in this report.



“Improvement in literacy and numeracy is too important to be owned by any one group.

The dynamic force of different ideas, focused cooperatively, will help address improvement in the system.”

Konrad de Kerloy  
Senior Partner, Freehills



## OVERVIEW OF FOCUS AREAS

Responses by the community to the proposals in the Preliminary Report of the Review identified five key focus areas.

**1. The early years**

Access and participation of children in high quality early childhood programs provides a strong foundation for positive future learning. Early identification and intervention of children experiencing difficulties are essential elements of a high quality program.

**2. Support for teachers**

Teachers' access to quality advice and professional learning is vital in making a difference to children's learning.

**3. Beginning teachers**

Beginning teachers in early childhood and primary schools need to have sufficient skills, understanding and experience in literacy and numeracy.

**4. Leadership**

Current and future school leaders require access to quality advice and professional learning to build their capacity to lead literacy and numeracy thinking and practice.

**5. Decision-making**

Systematic use of evidence enhances informed decision-making at all levels of the organisation.



## Focus 1 The early years

The early years provide the foundation for children's literacy and numeracy learning. Submissions to the Taskforce stressed the importance of early identification of children experiencing difficulties in learning.

The Taskforce considered the recommendations of the Rowe Report. We affirm the importance of early identification and intervention. With appropriate intervention strategies, many children who might otherwise have difficulties go on to make sound progress.

The Taskforce accepted this advice and considered several options to improve access, participation, early identification and additional support for young learners.

### "We asked the community about..."

- improving access and participation in kindergarten and pre-primary in schools with low rates of participation and achievement in literacy and numeracy;
- developing additional resources for teachers of kindergarten and pre-primary children; and
- coordination of services for children aged zero to four years.

### "The community said..."

The Review's focus on the early years of education was endorsed by participants in the community consultation forums. Strong support was given to a proposed increase in the number of kindergarten and pre-primary places in schools which have low rates of participation and achievement in literacy and numeracy.

The option of compulsory attendance was often raised at the forums. Although there was some support for this idea, the balance of opinion was against making either kindergarten or pre-primary compulsory. Participants in the forums did not generally support the proposal to increase kindergarten provision from 11 to 25 hours per week.

The appointment of an outreach coordinator to manage the access and participation of four and five year olds was seen as a positive step in linking schools and the community. The ability to contact families with young children and to discuss with them the benefits of pre-school education was seen as invaluable. This was considered particularly relevant for Indigenous communities.

There was very strong community support for the development of oral language, not just in kindergarten and pre-primary but across all the primary school years. Preparation of additional oral language resources was seen as a positive step in standardising the way in which oral



"Early education is an essential step on the path to lifelong learning.

These experiences have to be the best we can create for all children."

Professor Steve Zubrick  
Institute for Child Health  
Research



language is approached in schools. Greater access to speech therapists was also seen as important. Many participants stressed the importance of strategies for teaching children with home languages other than Standard Australian English.

Pre-primary diagnostic assessment of awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness) and other pre-reading skills were strongly supported. Follow-up support for children with difficulties was seen as crucial to the success of any screening program.

The proposal for Year 1 on-entry diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy skills provoked considerable comment. Informing parents at an earlier stage was seen as a step towards strengthening partnerships between parents and teachers. Much of the comment concerned the form the assessment would take and who would be responsible for it. Overall the proposal was supported, with some suggesting Year 1 was too late and others calling for assessment to occur throughout a child's schooling.

Although the coordination of services for children aged zero to four years falls outside the Terms of Reference for the Review, it was an important issue for many people who attended community forums. Some felt it was worthy of a review in its own right.

Participants supported a whole-of-government approach to increasing families' awareness of the services that are available, and the development of guides and workshops for families to use in supporting children's early literacy and numeracy development.

### **“The Taskforce believes...”**

There was strong support for many of the proposals in this focus area. These include increasing pre-school access in areas of need, the appointment of outreach coordinators in these schools, new oral language resources, and early oral language diagnostic assessment.

Provided that the proposed on-entry assessment is simple to score and provides clear diagnostic information for teachers, the Taskforce believes that the benefits of this proposal will be substantial.

The Taskforce recognises that the balance of opinion is against increasing the number of hours in kindergarten from 11 to 25 per week.

### **“The Taskforce recommends...”**

1. Increasing the number of local kindergarten and pre-primary places in schools with low rates of participation and achievement in literacy and numeracy.
2. Appointing outreach coordinators to support school-community links in targeted schools.
3. Developing additional resources for teachers in:
  - oral language, including awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness), phonics and vocabulary, and strategies for teaching children with home languages and dialects other than Standard Australian English;
  - pre-primary diagnostic assessment of awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness) and follow-up support for children who may later have difficulty in learning to read; and
  - Year 1 on-entry diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy skills.
4. Although outside the Terms of Reference for the Review, the Taskforce asks the Minister to consider improving coordination of whole-of-government services for children aged zero to four years and the role of the Department of Education and Training in such an endeavour.



“The key is to ensure those students and their families who begin at a disadvantage, don’t get further behind the longer they’re at school.”

Kim Scott  
Author



## Focus 2 Support for Teachers

Throughout the review process, teacher quality was often identified as a critical factor in children's learning. This conclusion is consistent with international research evidence, and reinforces the Taskforce members' conviction that further investments in support of literacy and numeracy teaching are necessary.

Clear and consistent advice about what is essential for children's literacy and numeracy development is required. So, too, is professional learning that will encourage and support teachers to bring such advice alive in their classrooms.

### “We asked the community about...”

- what the kindergarten to Year 7 syllabuses should contain;
- developing additional resources in writing skills for Years 4 to 7; and
- widening access to quality professional development resources.

### “The community said...”

There was strong support for kindergarten to Year 7 syllabuses that describe the knowledge, skills and understanding expected of children in each phase of schooling.

Some participants in the forums supported syllabuses that would provide structure and direction for teachers, especially graduate, re-entry and inexperienced teachers. This, they suggested, would increase uniformity across the system.

Others expressed the view that the syllabuses should give teachers choice about how to achieve the knowledge, skills and understanding children require. Teaching methods, it was argued, should not be mandated. Teachers should be able to improve children's learning using different methods in different contexts.

It was also suggested that syllabuses should link to current curriculum materials, such as the *Outcomes and Standards Frameworks* and Curriculum Council's *Curriculum Guides*.

There was overwhelming support for a writing resource for teachers of children in Years 4 to 7 that included grammar, punctuation and spelling. It was suggested that the resource should include stimulation and motivation for writing and be supported by a professional learning program for teachers.

The importance of strong library programs was raised in submissions and at the community forums. The proposal to stipulate a minimum time allocation for literacy and numeracy teaching received a mixed reaction.

Approximately half of those who provided feedback thought a minimum time allocation would provide consistency and structure across the schools. A similar number of people raised concern about what was meant by minimum time, how would it be monitored and whether it would reduce the opportunity for integrated learning time.

Managing an already 'crowded curriculum' was raised as an area of concern for schools. Comments focused on the need to provide support on how literacy and numeracy can be addressed within all learning areas.

The proposal for widening access to the *Getting it Right* programs and the *Aboriginal Literacy Strategy* received strong support. Comments reflected teachers' belief that these resources are making a difference in schools. However, we were cautioned that wider access should not dilute the resource. It was also suggested that the conditions in which the *Aboriginal Literacy Strategy* is successful should be made clear if the strategy is to be extended.

The community responded positively to widening access across the State to *First Steps in Literacy*, and *First Steps in Mathematics*. However, concern was expressed by community members working with English as a Second Language and English as a Second Dialect children, that a generic resource may be unable to meet the needs of all children.

Some concern was expressed about the capacity of the system to respond to staffing requirements for these programs. The availability of suitable *Getting it Right* teachers for country schools and the drain of *Getting it Right* on school resources, were mentioned as items to be considered.

### **"The Taskforce believes..."**

The community consultation confirmed the Taskforce's view that more explicit syllabuses should be provided, new resources for writing in the later years of primary school should be produced, and access to quality professional development should be increased.

Although the proposal to stipulate minimum daily teaching time in these syllabuses was not universally endorsed, the Taskforce believes the benefit of ensuring adequate opportunity to learn exceeds the risk that it may fragment learning.

The Taskforce also recognises that the goal of providing explicit syllabuses must be balanced against the possibility that such syllabuses may be unsuited to some student, teacher or school contexts. This issue can best be addressed through the production of quality classroom-level support materials that teachers can use or modify for their context.



"The focus of any literacy and numeracy initiative should be on helping classroom teachers to become even better teachers."

Numeracy Working Party



### **“The Taskforce recommends...”**

5. Preparation of kindergarten to Year 7 syllabuses that include:
  - explicit statements of essential knowledge, skills and understanding to be developed in each phase of schooling, including what should be learnt in oral language, awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness), phonics, reading, writing, viewing, spelling and grammar; and what should be learnt in mental and written mathematics, the use of calculators, number, measurement, chance and data, patterns, space and problem solving;
  - practical classroom activities designed to assist all children to reach literacy and numeracy learning targets; and
  - a stipulated minimum time allocation for literacy and numeracy.
6. Developing professional learning resources for teachers to improve the teaching of writing in Years 4 to 7.
7. Widening access to the professional learning and support programs *First Steps in Literacy*, *First Steps in Mathematics* and *Getting it Right*.
8. Widening access to the Aboriginal Literacy Strategy, subject to the outcome of an independent evaluation of the strategy.



### Focus 3 Beginning Teachers

Recent national reviews have made a variety of suggestions about the reform of teacher education. The Taskforce's public consultation paper focused on the narrower issue of preparation in the area of literacy and numeracy.

Three issues were identified – new graduates' personal literacy and numeracy skills, their understanding of subject content in English and mathematics and their practical experience in working with children who have difficulties.

We formed the view that the Department of Education and Training should satisfy itself that new graduates have sufficient skills, understanding and experience in literacy and numeracy teaching, before they are considered for employment.

#### **"We asked the community about..."**

- the Department selecting new graduates who have strong personal literacy and numeracy skills, understanding of subject content, and practical experience in working with children who have difficulties.

#### **"The community said..."**

Overwhelmingly, community feedback confirmed the importance of new graduates' knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy.

Strong statements were made about the need for beginning teachers to know the subject content of English and mathematics. It was also suggested that new graduates should have completed English as a Second Language and English as a Second Dialect units as part of their pre-service education.

Many participants argued that requirements for employment should be broader than literacy and numeracy, including classroom management, interpersonal and information technology skills and knowledge about child development.

Throughout the consultation process the quality of new graduates emerged as an issue of particular importance in country areas where the majority of new teachers begin their careers. Participants in these areas were also concerned about the adequacy of support for new graduates once they were employed by the Department.

Concerns were also expressed about the impact that higher requirements for employment might have on graduate recruitment. Overall the need to ensure quality teaching for children was considered more important than these concerns.



"Parents and employers need to feel confident that schools are working to the same standards.

We need a set of essential learning elements that apply to all schools throughout the State."

Anne Russell-Brown  
National Community Partnerships  
and Sponsorship Manager, Alcoa  
Alumina Australia





It was widely agreed that strong links between the Department, teacher education programs and the WA College of Teaching would be beneficial in ensuring new graduates are suitable for employment by the Department.

### **“The Taskforce believes...”**

The Taskforce proposals on the employment of new graduates were strongly supported. It is important that new teachers are properly prepared for the essential tasks of literacy and numeracy teaching.

### **“The Taskforce recommends...”**

- 9. The Department ensures it selects graduates for appointment in the early childhood and primary years who demonstrate:**
  - **strong personal literacy and numeracy skills;**
  - **understanding of the content of mathematics and English syllabuses; and**
  - **practical skills in working with children who experience difficulties in literacy and numeracy.**

## Focus 4 Leadership

The Taskforce was impressed by the quality of leadership in the schools we visited, and by the importance of leadership in closing the gap between high and low performing children in literacy and numeracy.

Principals and teachers in these schools were experts in teaching literacy and numeracy. They were clear about school goals, effective at building teams and expert at allocating resources to achieve these goals. They were also well informed about the use of assessment data in planning, teaching and program evaluation.

The ageing of the teaching workforce may impact on school leadership. As the current generation of school leaders move towards retirement, we believe that the Department will need to invest in the development of the next generation of school leaders.

### “We asked the community about...”

- the development of current leadership capacity in planning, monitoring and evaluating progress in literacy and numeracy; and
- the importance of increased scholarship support in the formation of the next generation of educational leaders.

### “The community said...”

It was widely agreed that more support for the development of school leaders was essential to ensure long term improvements in literacy and numeracy. It was also emphasised that whole school planning is essential to ensuring effective coordination of resources.

Many participants at the consultation forums recommended that a whole-school planning resource be developed. They felt the use of a common framework would allow well managed schools to grow. Also, less effective school leadership teams would gain a framework to help them develop appropriate planning, analysis and evaluation skills.

Participants strongly supported increasing the availability of post-graduate scholarships in areas of need. It was also stated that the Department needs to formally acknowledge and reward completion of post-graduate studies and provide real incentives, such as increased pay and promotional opportunities.

Concerns were expressed that support for the next generation of school leaders should be broader than outlined in the consultation forum and include opportunities for study tours, mentoring, work shadowing, symposiums, summer schools and action learning projects.



“Teachers have a great influence on children’s learning – they have the potential to make an enormous difference to the communities they work in.”

Cedric Wyatt  
Chief Executive Officer, Jigalong  
Community Inc



### **“The Taskforce believes...”**

The proposals relating to the development of the organisation’s leadership were supported, but rarely rated as a top priority in the community consultation process. It is important, however, that the Department has a plan to support the development of the next generation of school leaders.

Alongside school-based action learning and other strategies, we believe that prospective school leaders should have opportunities for formally taught and assessed course work as an essential part of any plan to build the knowledge base of school leaders. We believe that the Department should, at least, share the cost of such post-graduate learning.

### **“The Taskforce recommends...”**

- 10. Developing the capacity of leaders to implement whole-school approaches to plan, monitor and evaluate progress toward literacy and numeracy targets.**
- 11. Increasing scholarship support for teachers undertaking post-graduate education in:**
  - **improving the performance of children at risk of low literacy and numeracy achievement; and**
  - **improving the effect of school-based assessment, evaluation and resource allocation on literacy and numeracy standards.**
- 12. Acknowledging completion of post-graduate studies through increased pay and promotional opportunities.**

## Focus 5 Decision-making

The Department is committed to improving literacy and numeracy. The Taskforce received a range of advice about the patterns of decision-making behind this commitment.

At the individual school level, it was identified that some schools were more successful than others in coordinating resources from local, State and Federal government sources into seamless support programs. Other schools found that multiple funding sources and reporting requirements interfered with orderly planning and effective implementation.

We were told that, at a system level, the Department would benefit from the publication of medium and long term plans for improvement of children's literacy and numeracy.

We were also told that adopting a more evidence-based approach to trialling and implementation of strategies designed to improve literacy and numeracy would increase professional and community confidence in the Department's decision-making processes.

### “We asked the community about...”

- requiring schools to report on how they coordinate their resources to improve literacy and numeracy;
- the Department's planning for literacy and numeracy ; and
- the use of evidence in departmental decision-making.

### “The community said...”

Participants at the community forums were divided over the proposal requiring schools to report annually on how literacy and numeracy resources are coordinated.

There was wide agreement that a whole-school approach to the coordination of resources is required to allow schools to make progress towards targets. Approximately half of the participants said that formal reporting would be helpful in coordinating resources. Others argued against the proposal, warning that more reporting would not necessarily lead to greater effectiveness.

Strong support was received for the proposal that the Department adopt an implementation standard for the development of all resources before system-wide implementation. The prevalent view was that standardising the implementation process for new initiatives would ensure schools would know that these initiatives worked and had value. Participants in the community forums also supported the use of evidence to inform teaching practice, but felt there was a need to clearly articulate what constitutes 'evidence'.



“Leadership within schools is an essential component of successful whole-school planning. The Department must ensure adequate professional learning in culture change and change management is available to those who take up leadership positions.”

Literacy and Numeracy Review  
Reference Group



It was suggested that the implementation standard be applied to professional development programs as well as printed resources. It was also suggested that current programs such as *First Steps* and *Getting it Right* be reviewed to determine their effectiveness in improving student achievement.

Some participants argued that research and data can be manipulated and the Department would need to take this into account when adopting an evidence-based approach to decision-making. It was suggested that longitudinal data should be used to inform decisions, rather than data obtained from short term trials.

A small, yet mixed response was received to the proposal that an independent educational audit function be established. Some participants at the community forums believe this will lead to greater acceptance of programs and initiatives by schools. On the other hand, some said that current internal review processes were valid and informative.

There was support for the development of a five year plan with a 10 year outlook for public schools with emphasis placed on the need for the plan to be capable of regular review. The length and outlook of the plan was seen to provide stability.

The proposal that the Department explicitly set targets for improvement was endorsed, particularly for low achievers and Indigenous children. Strong advice was received to ensure that targets for Indigenous children are identified within the literacy plan and not as a separate document.

While being supportive of setting targets, participants in the forums suggested that targets need to be realistic, attainable and reviewed regularly with adequate support provided to schools whose children do not reach the benchmark. Identification of financial resources and professional learning required to meet the targets was seen as crucial.

### **“The Taskforce believes...”**

The effective coordination of resources for literacy and numeracy initiatives is a major challenge facing schools. In the most effective schools, a whole-school literacy or numeracy plan incorporates the coordinated use of these resources.

The use of evidence in the Department’s decision-making needs to be more systematic. An implementation standard should be applied to all new educational interventions, including those that flow from this report.

Although the proposal for an independent educational audit function was not widely discussed at the forums, and not always supported, the Taskforce believes that a strong case exists for this proposal. Significant public funds are invested in materials development and support programs, and the community can reasonably expect that such initiatives are independently evaluated and audited.

### **“The Taskforce recommends...”**

- 13. Developing a five year literacy and numeracy plan with a 10 year outlook for public schools identifying:**
  - **targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy performance;**
  - **targets for improvement among Indigenous children;**
  - **financial resources required to achieve these targets;**
  - **professional learning required to achieve these targets;**
  - **curriculum, assessment and reporting initiatives to be developed; and**
  - **funding for research, trials, evaluation and implementation of all new curriculum, assessment and reporting initiatives.**
- 14. Requiring schools to demonstrate effective coordination of resources as part of school accountability processes.**
- 15. Adopting a standard for the development and implementation of all literacy and numeracy interventions. This standard should require research, trialling and independent evaluation before system-wide implementation.**
- 16. Establishing an independent body with the capacity for investigating, monitoring and reporting on system performance in literacy and numeracy.**



**Mount Lockyer Primary School** attracts funding and resources from a variety of different sources to support improvement in children’s literacy and numeracy achievement.

Taskforce members visiting the school were impressed with how the school coordinates these resources through their school planning. Mt Lockyer uses a strong evidence-base to inform a whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy progress in identified areas of need.

During the visit it was obvious that all staff operate on the understanding that everyone is responsible and accountable for whole-school improvement.

Mt Lockyer was one of several impressive schools visited by the Taskforce





## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### The early years

1. Increasing the number of local kindergarten and pre-primary places in schools with low rates of participation and achievement in literacy and numeracy.
2. Appointing outreach coordinators to support school-community links in targeted schools.
3. Developing additional resources for teachers in:
  - oral language, including awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness), phonics and vocabulary, and strategies for teaching children with home languages and dialects other than Standard Australian English;
  - pre-primary diagnostic assessment of awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness) and follow-up support for children who may later have difficulty in learning to read; and
  - Year 1 on-entry diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy skills.
4. Although outside the Terms of Reference for the Review, the Taskforce asks the Minister to consider improving coordination of whole-of-government services for children aged zero to four years and the role of the Department of Education and Training in such an endeavour.

### Support for teachers

5. Preparation of kindergarten to Year 7 syllabuses that include:
  - explicit statements of essential knowledge, skills and understanding to be developed in each phase of schooling, including what should be learnt in oral language, awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness), phonics, reading, writing, viewing, spelling and grammar; and what should be learnt in mental and written mathematics, the use of calculators, number, measurement, chance and data, patterns, space and problem solving;
  - practical classroom activities designed to assist all children to reach literacy and numeracy learning targets; and
  - a stipulated minimum time allocation for literacy and numeracy.
6. Developing professional learning resources for teachers to improve the teaching of writing in Years 4 to 7.
7. Widening access to the professional learning and support programs *First Steps in Literacy*, *First Steps in Mathematics* and *Getting it Right*.
8. Widening access to the *Aboriginal Literacy Strategy*, subject to the outcome of an independent evaluation of the strategy.



## Beginning Teachers

9. The Department ensures it selects graduates for appointment in the early childhood and primary years who demonstrate:
  - strong personal literacy and numeracy skills;
  - understanding of the content of mathematics and English syllabuses; and
  - practical skills in working with children who experience difficulties in literacy and numeracy.

## Leadership

10. Developing the capacity of leaders to implement whole-school approaches to plan, monitor and evaluate progress toward literacy and numeracy targets.
11. Increasing scholarship support for teachers undertaking post-graduate education in:
  - improving the performance of children at risk of low literacy and numeracy achievement; and
  - improving the effect of school-based assessment, evaluation and resource allocation on literacy and numeracy standards.
12. Acknowledging completion of post-graduate studies through increased pay and promotional opportunities.

## Decision-making

13. Developing a five year literacy and numeracy plan with a 10 year outlook for public schools identifying:
  - targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy performance;
  - targets for improvement among Indigenous children;
  - financial resources required to achieve these targets;
  - professional learning required to achieve these targets;
  - curriculum, assessment and reporting initiatives to be developed; and
  - funding for research, trials, evaluation and implementation of all new curriculum, assessment and reporting initiatives.
14. Requiring schools to demonstrate effective coordination of resources as part of school accountability processes.
15. Adopting a standard for the development and implementation of all literacy and numeracy interventions. This standard should require research, trialling and independent evaluation before system-wide implementation.
16. Establishing an independent body with the capacity for investigating, monitoring and reporting on system performance in literacy and numeracy.



“Identified needs must be resourced in meaningful ways if the implementation of this review is to be effective.”

Community member  
Bunbury public consultation  
forum

## APPENDIX 1 TASKFORCE MEMBERS



### Professor Bill Loudon (Chair)

Professor Loudon is Dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Western Australia. During 2005, he was a member of the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy Committee established by the then Minister for Education, Science and Training, Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson.

He has published widely on educational change, science education and literacy. His publications include seven literacy and numeracy reports commissioned by the Australian Government, the most recent of which are *Prepared to Teach: An Investigation into the Preparation of Teachers to Teach Literacy and Numeracy (2005)* and *In Teachers' Hands: Effective Literacy Teaching in the Early Years of Schooling (2005)*.



### Anne Russell-Brown

Anne Russell-Brown recently joined Alcoa World Alumina, Australia, as National Community Partnerships and Sponsorship Manager. Her brief is to further develop Alcoa's Partnering Stronger Communities program.

Previously, Anne was State Manager of Mission Australia. Her responsibilities included providing leadership to over 260 staff located in the metropolitan, South-West and Goldfields regions. During her seven years with Mission Australia, Anne became a popular spokesperson on a range of community welfare issues including youth homelessness, substance abuse and family wellbeing.

In October 2004, she was named the WA Telstra Business Woman of the Year and was the winner of the Hudson Community and Government category. Anne is the mother of three adult sons, all of whom were educated in public schools.



### Kim Scott

Kim Scott is an author who has worked extensively in education and the arts and is an active participant in Noongar language regeneration projects. He is a member of the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council's Wagy! Kaip Working Party.

His most recent book, *Kayang and Me*, was written collaboratively with Hazel Brown, and is based on the oral history of her Aboriginal family. Kim has also published two novels and a children's book. His second novel, *Benang*, won the WA Premiers' Literary Prize 1999, the Miles Franklin Award 2000, and the RAKA Kate Challis Award 2001.

Kim is a descendant of people indigenous to the South-East coast of Western Australia and is proud to be among those who call themselves Noongar. He lives in Coolbellup with his wife and two sons.

### **Konrad de Kerloy**

Konrad de Kerloy was educated at Trinity College, Perth and the University of Western Australia, from which he graduated in 1983 with degrees in jurisprudence and law.

He has been a partner of Freehills, one of Australia's largest law firms, since 1989. He is a senior member of the firm's national litigation practice, specialising in commercial litigation and corporate insolvency. Between 1995 and 1997 he served on the firm's Board of Management.

Konrad has authored or co-authored a number of articles on law-related topics, most recently (with Katja Levy) in the University of Western Australia Law Review: *The High Court's Human Sacrifice to the Altar of High Policy: An Alternative Solution to the Slaughter*, Vol. 32, No. 2, December 2005, p.145.

Konrad is married with four children, three of whom are attending primary and high schools and one of whom has commenced tertiary studies.



### **Professor Stephen Zubrick**

Professor Zubrick is the Head of the Division of Population Sciences at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and Professor, Centre for Developmental Health, Curtin University of Technology.

Before joining the Institute in 1991, Steve worked for many years in Western Australian hospitals and outpatient health and mental health settings. His research interests include the social determinants of health and mental health in children, youth suicide and large-scale psychosocial survey work among non-Indigenous and Indigenous populations.

Steve has been extensively involved in the Western Australian Child Health Survey and the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey, particularly Volume 3 of the latter, *Improving the Education Experiences of Aboriginal Children and Young People*.



## APPENDIX 2 MEMBERSHIP OF WORKING PARTIES

### Literacy in the early years of education

<b>Professor Steve Zubrick</b>	Chair
<b>Lynn Christie</b>	Executive Officer
<b>Margaret Allen</b>	Chief Executive Officer, State Library of Western Australia
<b>Barbara Bosich</b>	Member, Curriculum Council
<b>Vicki Brockhoff</b>	Teacher, Ellenbrook Primary School, Department of Education and Training
<b>Kevin Gillan</b>	Director, Kimberley District Education Office, Department of Education and Training
<b>Dr Suze Leitão</b>	Senior Lecturer, Curtin University
<b>Jean Rice</b>	Principal Consultant, Early Childhood Education, Department of Education and Training
<b>Dr Mary Rohl</b>	Language Education Associate Professor, Edith Cowan University
<b>Rosemary Simpson</b>	Principal Consultant, North-East Language Development Centre, Department of Education and Training
<b>Leah Vogler</b>	Principal, Tuart Hill Primary School, Department of Education and Training

### Writing in the upper primary years

<b>Kim Scott</b>	Chair
<b>Kerry McCaffrey</b>	Executive Officer
<b>Alison Aldersea</b>	Teacher, Willandra Primary School, Department of Education and Training
<b>Kerry Coyle</b>	Sub-editor, West Australian Newspapers Holdings Limited
<b>Robert Fry</b>	President, WA Council of State School Organisations
<b>Dr Glenda Raison</b>	Lecturer, Curtin University
<b>Simon Reid</b>	Principal, Cloverdale Primary School, Department of Education and Training
<b>Professor Judith Rivalland</b>	Associate Dean of Languages and Literature and K7 Program Director, Edith Cowan University
<b>Majella Stevens</b>	A/Manager, Standards and Moderation, Curriculum Standards, Department of Education and Training
<b>Julie Woodhouse</b>	Director, Mid West Education District, Department of Education and Training

## **Evidence-based improvement**

<b>Konrad de Kerloy</b>	Chair
<b>Adam Scott</b>	Executive Officer
<b>David Ansell</b>	Director, Retention and Transition Implementation, Department of Education and Training
<b>Dr Simon Clarke</b>	Deputy Head, Senior Lecturer, Graduate School of Education, University of Western Australia
<b>Jocelyn Cook</b>	Manager, Educational Measurement, Curriculum Standards, Department of Education and Training
<b>Tony Cooke</b>	Consultant, Tony Cooke Consulting
<b>Kim Dullard</b>	Director, Fremantle-Peel Education District, Department of Education and Training
<b>Karen Duncan</b>	Teacher, Gwynne Park Primary School, Department of Education and Training
<b>Greg Smith</b>	Principal, Port Kennedy Primary School, Department of Education and Training
<b>Stephen Yates</b>	Principal, Charthouse Primary School, Department of Education and Training

## **Numeracy in primary schooling**

<b>Anne Russell-Brown</b>	Chair
<b>Kerry McCaffrey</b>	Executive Officer
<b>John Hogan</b>	Director, Redgum Consulting Pty. Ltd.
<b>Rod Lowther</b>	Director, West Coast Education District, Department of
<b>Kath Moore</b>	Teacher, School of Isolated and Distance Education, Department of Education and Training
<b>Beth Powell</b>	Senior Lecturer, Education, Murdoch University
<b>Glenys Reid</b>	Principal Curriculum Officer, Standards and Moderation, Department of Education and Training
<b>Cris Sandri</b>	Principal, Highgate Primary School, Department of Education and Training
<b>Dr Paul Swan</b>	Senior Lecturer, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup Campus
<b>Cedric Wyatt</b>	Chief Executive Officer, Jigalong Community Inc.

## APPENDIX 3 MEMBERSHIP OF REFERENCE GROUP

**The following people represented their organisations on the reference group:**

<b>Karla Tucker</b>	Aboriginal Education Training Council
<b>Karren Philip</b>	President, Australian Association of the Teaching of English
<b>Beth Hands</b>	President, Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, WA
<b>Mike Keely</b>	President, Australian Education Union
<b>Sam Taylor</b>	President, Australian Literacy Educators Association
<b>Jenny Jay</b>	Early Childhood Australia Inc
<b>Denise Grassi</b>	Educational Computing Association of WA Inc
<b>Lisa Tucker</b>	Vice President, Level 3 Classroom Teachers Association
<b>Donna Miller</b>	Mathematical Association of Western Australia
<b>Clare Buising</b>	Treasurer, Modern Language Teachers' Association of Western Australia
<b>Grania McCudden</b>	President, School Psychologists Association
<b>Lucy Rahaly</b>	Society and Environment Association of WA
<b>Lance Byfield</b>	Parents and Teachers of Gifted Children Professional Association
<b>Alex Solosy</b>	The Western Australian College of Teaching
<b>Grant O'Sullivan</b>	Western Australian Primary Principals Association
<b>Jenny Cole</b>	President, Western Australian Education Support Principals and Administrators' Association
<b>Alison Woodman</b>	President Western Australian Secondary Schools Executives Association
<b>Jeff Hird</b>	Western Australian School Library Association Western
<b>Phil McNamara</b>	Western Australian Secondary Teaching Administrators' Association

**The following staff members of the Department of Education and Training represented their directorates on the reference group:**

<b>Alan Dodson</b>	Director, Policy Planning and Accountability
<b>Bruce Roper</b>	Manager, Services and Implementation, Indigenous Participation and Achievement Standards
<b>Di Rees</b>	Principal Education Officer, Literacy, Standards and Moderation
<b>Di Tomazos</b>	<i>Getting it Right</i> Officer, Numeracy, Standards and Moderation
<b>Glenis Bray</b>	Area Director, Early Childhood Education
<b>Heather Elmer</b>	Principal Consultant, Indigenous Participation and Achievement Standards
<b>Jayne Johnston</b>	Director, Professional Learning Institute
<b>Jeanette Hasleby</b>	Director, Behaviour Standards and Well Being
<b>Jeanette McLean</b>	ESL/ESD Curriculum Officer, Standards and Moderation
<b>John Brigg</b>	Manager, Inclusive Education, Inclusive Education Standards
<b>Kathryn Sparks</b>	Principal Project Officer, Syllabus Development and Resources
<b>Naomi Ward</b>	Manager, Behaviour Standards and Well Being
<b>Pam Sherrard</b>	<i>Getting it Right</i> Officer, Mathematics, Standards and Moderation
<b>Richard Sanders</b>	Senior Policy Officer, Inclusive Education Standards



## APPENDIX 4 MEMBERSHIP OF SECRETARIAT



**Maryanne Coombs**  
**Manager**



**Adam Scott**  
**Project Coordinator**



**Wendy Hewitt**  
**Project Officer**



**Lynn Whiteside**  
**Principal Curriculum Officer**  
**Early Childhood**



**Kerry McCaffrey**  
**Project Coordinator**

## APPENDIX 5 PROPOSALS IN THE PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE TASKFORCE

1. Improving access and participation in kindergarten and pre-primary education by:
  - increasing the number of local kindergarten and pre-primary places in schools with low rates of participation and achievement in literacy and numeracy;
  - increasing kindergarten provision from 11 to 25 hours per week in these schools; and
  - appointing outreach coordinators to support school-community links in the targeted schools.
2. Developing additional resources for teachers in the following areas:
  - oral language in the kindergarten and pre-primary years, including awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness), phonics and vocabulary and strategies for teaching children with home languages and dialects other than Standard Australian English;
  - screening for awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness) in pre-primary and follow-up support for children who may later have difficulty in learning to read;
  - on-entry diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy skills in Year 1; and
  - writing skills in Years 4 to 7.
3. Including the following elements in the kindergarten to Year 7 syllabuses:
  - explicit statements of essential knowledge, skills and understandings to be developed in each phase of schooling, including what should be learnt in oral language, awareness of sounds in words (phonological awareness), phonics, reading, writing, viewing, spelling and grammar; and what should be learnt in mental and written mathematics, the use of calculators, number, measurement, chance and data, patterns, space and problem solving;
  - a range of practical classroom activities designed to assist children to reach literacy and numeracy learning targets; and
  - a stipulated minimum time allocation for literacy and numeracy tasks.
4. Widening access to quality development of resources for all teachers of kindergarten to Year 7, particularly:
  - *First Steps in Literacy*, *First Steps in Mathematics* and *Getting it Right*; and
  - *Aboriginal Literacy Strategy*, subject to the outcome of the evaluation.
5. Ensuring the Department selects graduates for appointment in early childhood and primary education who demonstrate:
  - strong personal literacy and numeracy skills;
  - understanding of the mathematics and language content in syllabuses; and
  - practical skills in working with children who experience difficulties in literacy and numeracy.
6. Increasing scholarship support for teachers undertaking post-graduate education in:
  - improving the performance of children at risk of low literacy and numeracy achievement; and
  - improving the effect of school-based assessment, evaluation and resource allocation on literacy and numeracy standards.
7. Developing a resource to build the capacity of school leadership teams to plan, monitor and evaluate progress toward literacy and numeracy targets; and  
 Requiring schools to report annually on how resources are coordinated to achieve progress toward literacy and numeracy targets.
8. Formalising the explicit and systematic use of evidence in the Department's decision making by:
  - adopting an implementation standard for the development of all resources that includes research, trialling and independent evaluation before system-wide implementation; and
  - establishing an educational audit function to investigate, monitor and report on system performance in literacy and numeracy.
9. Developing a five year literacy and numeracy plan with a 10 year outlook for public schools, identifying:
  - targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy performance;
  - targets for improvement amongst Indigenous children;
  - financial resources required to achieve these targets;
  - professional development required to achieve these targets;
  - curriculum, assessment and reporting initiatives to be developed; and
  - funding for research, trials, evaluation and implementation of all new curriculum, assessment and reporting initiatives.
10. Adopting a whole-of-government approach to:
  - provide consistent developmental services for children aged zero to four years; and
  - developing guides and workshops for families and childcare workers to use in supporting children's early numeracy and literacy learning.

