



Hon Mark McGowan MLA  
Minister for Education and Training; South West

DO07/437687

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Mr Brian Lindberg :  
Chair  
Board of the Western Australian College of Teaching  
Level 2, 165 Adelaide Terrace  
EAST PERTH WA 6004

Dear Mr Lindberg

#### **DEREGISTRATION OF TEACHERS**

I understand that at the Western Australia College of Teaching (WACOT) Board meeting scheduled to take place 5 December 2007, it is proposed to deregister those teachers who have not paid membership fees to the WACOT prior to 4pm 4 December 2007 with effect from close of business Friday 7 December 2007. This would have required unregistered teachers to cease teaching in schools from that date.

I understand that the WACOT Board is reconsidering its position.

As Minister for Education and Training, I am exercising my right to provide the WACOT Board with advice that may be relevant to its deliberations.

In my view, any decision to deregister teachers during the transition phase of WACOT's establishment would be rash and cause significant disruption to the Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors.

You will be aware of the significant challenges the education system has faced during the course of this year to ensure adequate levels of teaching staff in classrooms. The Government has been proactive in its support of a number of initiatives designed to improve future teacher numbers, to attract teachers from interstate and overseas, and to retain the teachers we currently have in the education system.

These initiatives include:

- A significant expansion of scholarship programs;
- Salary increases for graduates entering public education;
- Special packages for retired teachers seeking to return to teaching;
- The introduction of 'Transition to Retirement' (Phased Retirement) arrangements;

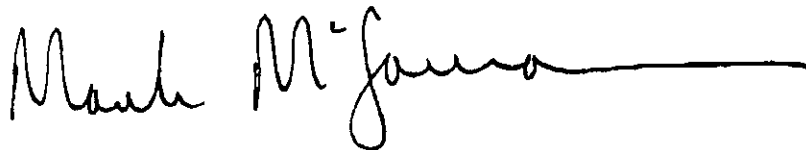
- Special arrangements during 2007 for 'hard to staff public schools';
- The launch of an ongoing campaign to attract teachers, and influence the career choices of potential teachers;
- Interstate and overseas recruitment campaigns;
- The return of qualified teachers to classrooms; and
- The biggest pay offer to the teaching workforce in the State's history.

In addition, Professor Lance Twomey has been commissioned to head a taskforce looking at long term initiatives in education and training. Furthermore, a number of recommendations from the Gerald Daniels Australia report into Department of Education and Training recruitment and workforce planning processes have been – or are in the process of – being implemented.

It has been encouraging that the WACOT Board, in its deliberations throughout the year, has been mindful of potential impacts on schools in its consideration of the timing of deregistration of teachers. I understand that significant effort is being made to ensure that all teachers have the opportunity to pay the required fees.

I strongly urge – and so advise - the Board to be mindful of the potential disruption to schools in determining when deregistration should occur.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark McGowan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**HON MARK MCGOWAN MLA  
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING; SOUTH WEST**

03 DEC 2007

Your ref: DO07/437687

The Hon Mark McGowan MLA  
Minister for Education and Training  
197 St Georges Terrace  
Perth WA 6000

Dear Minister McGowan

Thank you for your letter of advice of 3 December 2007 provided pursuant to section 14(1) of the *Western Australian College of Teaching Act 2004* (the Act). Your letter will be considered by the Board at its meeting on 5 December 2007.

The Act requires that the Western Australian College of Teaching (the College) administer a system of teacher registration. The Act recognises that an effective registration system requires all teachers to be registered and section 46 of the Act provides for the cancellation of the membership of those who do not maintain their registration by paying the annual membership fee.

This is not dissimilar to similar provisions that may be found in legislation regulating other professions such as doctors, nurses and lawyers.

The College considers that administering an effective registration scheme under the Act ultimately supports the profession in Western Australia in much the same way as the Minister is hopeful of positive outcomes for the education sector coming from the initiatives listed in your letter of 3 December 2007.

The 2007 annual membership fee invoice process commenced with the issuing of invoices in February, followed by two reminder notices and a closing date of 24 October 2007. The cancellation of the memberships for non-payment of fees was not taken at this time as the Board was mindful of the potential impact on students and school administration and the fact that some teachers were concerned about paying their fees when elections to the Board had not yet occurred. After much deliberation and in consideration of these issues, final notices requiring payment of outstanding \$70 annual fees by 4.00 p.m. of the 4 December 2007 were issued.

The Board resolved to consider at its meeting of 5 December what action it might take regarding the non-payment of fees. In deliberating on this difficult issue and delaying taking action until this time the Board:

- acknowledged the claim of teachers that an election of teacher members to the Board had not yet been held but that the result would be known on 11 December;
- took into account the teaching shortage that was being experienced in some parts of the State and the effect cancellation may have on school operations should teachers become unavailable during school term;
- expended significant effort in updating contact details on the College's database, cross referencing the database to available employer data and providing all teachers with ample notice and opportunity to pay the required fees;
- was mindful of the need to be able to contact teachers and employers prior to the commencement of the school holidays should any cancellations of memberships be effected;
- recognised that teachers are difficult to contact over that school holidays and that employers need to be able to plan their staffing for 2008; and
- is complying with its statutory duty to register all teachers under the Act, whilst endeavouring to exercise the powers under the Act in a socially responsible manner in the best interest of the profession and the community.

The Board is mindful that Western Australian schools have undergone numerous changes during the year and are labouring under many pressures that are not associated with teacher registration – such as curriculum issues. The Board is most reluctant to add the burden of having to find staff during the last week of the school term. The Board calculates that less than 1200 teachers will have their registration cancelled and that of that number, about 90% are not teaching in schools. Of those who are teaching in schools currently, it is estimated that the majority do not plan to teach in 2008.

In preparing for its meeting on 5 December 2007, the Board has considered all of the above and the desirability of proceeding with the cancellation of the membership of those teachers who had not paid the \$70 annual membership fee effective from the 14 December 2007.

Thank you for your advice on this important issue. As noted above, the Board shares your concern for the pressures schools face.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Lindberg', written in a cursive style.

BRIAN LINDBERG  
CHAIR