

EDUCATION POLICY

ACTU Congress September 1989

1. OBJECTIVES

Rights to Education

1.1 Congress asserts:

(i) that education is an issue of great national importance;

(ii) that everyone has a right to education provided by the Commonwealth and the States in co-operation which should be free, compulsory and secular;

(iii) that each child should experience the diversity and understand the workings of society and share equally in its opportunities;

(iv) the quality of education should not be dependent on wealth, social class, location or the wealth, interest or indifference of the local community;

(v) education should always be amongst the highest priorities of governments;

(vi) education should be directed to the full development of the human personality, the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and should promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all people;

(vii) education should meet the needs and aspirations of the diverse groups in Australian society especially groups who have been historically disadvantaged; and should promote greater social equality;

(viii) education should meet both the common and special needs of all members of society;

(ix) education should meet the needs of national economic and social policies and the development of stronger links between education and industry.

1.2 Congress supports a national approach to education (and training) and therefore supports the concept of national registration for teachers and national frameworks for curriculum in schools. In this way the rights of the receivers of education are protected and enhanced.

1.3 Congress supports the view that the education system should provide skills appropriate to employment and welcomes the developing convergence of broad and vocational education through the application of generalised but vocationally relevant studies.

1.4 Congress rejects:

(i) Any structure of education which stratifies on the basis of social class;

(ii) The imposition by governments of centralised curricula which restrict the capacity of schools to develop programmes which are responsive to the needs and aspirations of their students;

(iii) The use of IQ tests in schools in ways which reinforce forms of social discrimination;

(iv) Authoritarian forms of discipline especially those which involve physical or psychological violence;

(v) Mass testing programmes which do not provide educationally useful information and which encourage schools to restrict curricula to a narrow range of readily measurable objectives.

Participation and Access

1.5 Governments should be responsible for providing adequate resources to enable access to appropriate educational programs at different times in people's lives, especially in a period of rapid technological and economic change.

1.6 Congress supports the program to substantially increase the retention rate of young people through to the completion of Year 12. Increased retention rates in schools places pressure on schools themselves, requiring adequate resources to support restructuring of schools and curriculum. Post secondary institutions (TAFE and higher education) also require adequate resources to cater for increasing numbers of students.

1.7 Congress supports:

(i) the need to link retention with training and employment opportunities;

(ii) accessibility to schools and institutions at any time in a person's life;

(iii) the removal of unnecessarily restrictive entrance requirements to tertiary education and a broadening of entrance criteria;

1.8 Participation by people in decision-making which effects their lives is a democratic right, improves the effectiveness of decision-making and education outcomes, and brings to decision-making the expertise and perception of those involved, and encourages their commitment.

1.9 Congress reaffirms the principle that governing of all educational institutions should provide for appropriate participation by all parties directly concerned, including staff, parents, students and relevant community groups, including the organised trade union movement.

1.10 Governments have a responsibility to evaluate the structures and processes they set up and support, and to ensure that democratic participation from the classroom to the national level is facilitated.

2. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNMENTS

2.1 The education system in Australia is funded and administered by the Commonwealth and State/Territory Government institutions and non-Government authorities. The nature of the system requires a high level of co-ordination and appreciation of complex inter-relationships.

Commonwealth Responsibility

2.2 Congress believes the Commonwealth:

(i) has a responsibility for national planning in education to provide the essential social infrastructure for democratic and equitable cultural, social and economic development;

(ii) has a responsibility for funding education systems, directly or indirectly (revenue grants and/or taxation expenditure);

(iii) while increasing in real terms direct education grants has severely cut general revenue grants resulting in restrictions on State/Territory funding of government schools.

National Board of Employment Education and Training

2.3 Congress welcomes the establishment, in 1988, of the National Board of Employment Education and Training as a mechanism for providing independent and timely advice to the Federal Government on employment, education and training policies and programs, youth affairs, national research priorities and the co-ordination of research policy as well as matters arising under the legislation of the Employment, Education and Training Ministry.

2.4 NBEET provides a framework for an integrated approach to employment, education and training issues which is essential if trade union goals are to be achieved.

2.5 The participation on the Board and its Councils of providers of education and training, business and unions, as well as interested bodies in the community must be preserved.

2.6 The ACTU should continue to provide for union representatives on the Board and its Councils (Schools Council, Higher Education Council, Employment and Skills Formation Council, Australian Research Council) to consult regularly to ensure effective and co-ordinated input.

2.7 Congress notes that a proper relationship between the NBEET and the Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training is essential to the Board's efficient operation and calls on the Minister to ensure that the Department maintains a co-operative relationship with the NBEET.

2.8 Congress welcomes the establishment of the Women's Employment, Education and Training Group (WEETAG) as an

important source of advice to the Minister on matters affecting women in the policy areas of employment, education and training. WEETAG should also provide a consultative and representative mechanism to enhance the responsiveness of government programmes.

2.9 In order to fulfil these broad-ranging functions, Congress calls for WEETAG to be provided with:

- (i) a more representative structure to include representatives of unions and relevant women's organisations;
- (ii) resource levels which allow for adequate staff support and for effective functioning.

Commonwealth/State Co-ordination

2.10 Congress expresses concern that the current major mechanism for national planning and co-ordination, the Australian Education Council, is inaccessible to interested bodies such as teacher unions, parent organisations and the broader union movement, and has no developed mechanisms for consultation and information provision. At a time when it is addressing issues of increasing importance to the nation as a whole the AEC has an often unwieldy, ad hoc and uncommunicative decision-making process.

2.11 Congress calls on the Commonwealth and States/Territories to put priority on developing proper processes of consultation and information provision in the operations of the AEC.

Industry Training Structures

2.12 In the context of the national agenda for Award restructuring in all industries and the important role of tripartite Industry Training Structures in this, Congress calls for:

- (i) Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments co-operation on the rationalisation and standardisation of State/Territory industry training structures, including ensuring effective communication and representation between the State/Territory Structures and the National Training Board;
- (ii) All new Industry Training Structures to have the active involvement and support of Unions, Industry and Government in order to effectively implement national training strategies;
- (iii) Adequate Government and Industry funding of training bodies to provide for the administration, research and liaison functions essential to implementing the training agenda;
- (iv) The development of national skills schedules and standards in respect to core skills to allow flexibility at a State/Territory level to enable authorities and industry to retain responsibility for curriculum approval, and accreditation of training courses and providers within the

defined national framework;

(v) Nationally agreed articulation arrangements between related courses, whether they be provided by higher education institutions, TAFE, Adult Education centres, Schools, private providers or industry-based providers;

(vi) Nationally agreed mechanisms for assessing and recognising skills formed through on and off the job work and life experience, or through informal education.

3. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

3.1 In the area of early childhood education Congress:

(i) supports the access of all children to Government owned and community controlled early childhood education as a basic right;

(ii) believes that pre-school education should be integrated with the school curriculum;

(iii) recognises that the various State Governments are at a different level in terms of delivery;

(iv) expects that high quality standards be maintained in all centres;

(v) believes that the needs of special groups should be met.

4. SCHOOLS

The Role of Schools

4.1 The fundamental economic and industrial restructuring occurring in Australia today places new demands on our schools and on the teachers who work in them;

4.2 Congress believes that the aims of a liberal democratic education system and the aims of economic restructuring are not necessarily at odds. The Australian trade union movement supports an education system that values initiative, creativity, a positive approach to change, rational inquiry, analytic ability, problem-solving skills, a commitment to learning as a life-time activity, effective communication, group work-skill and democratic decision-making;

4.3 Congress believes that the development of such an education system will produce a skill base which is broad, in the sense of being widespread throughout society.

4.4 Barriers that deny women and girls access to mathematics, science and technical subjects, or that prevent the working class or those from ethnic minorities from completing Year 12 or gaining access to tertiary education, or that condemn those already in the workforce to remain in low-skill or unskilled jobs or unemployment must be removed.

The Role of Secondary Education

4.5 Congress notes and endorses the policy in this area as determined by the ACTU Executive. (Attachment 1)

Continuing Education for Teachers

4.6 Congress notes and endorses the policy in this area as determined by the ACTU Executive. (Attachment 2)

Schools and the World of Work

4.7 Congress notes the emergence of increasing links between schools, TAFE and industry. These initiatives are to be supported in that they contribute to the development of an education system that is responsive to the World of Work and sees education as a life-long process.

4.8 Congress supports the development of properly planned and implemented "work experience programs" that increase the relevance of the school experience to the work environment.

5. PRINCIPLES OF FUNDING

Resources for Government Schools

5.1 Congress affirms the importance of a public system of education which is open to all members of the community without regard to religious belief, competitive achievement, sex, ethnic background or economic status.

5.2 Further, Congress regards the commitment of the Commonwealth Government to the raising of standards in public schools as essential for the following reasons:

(i) The priority accorded to education amongst the social goals is of national concern;

(ii) Education spending makes a direct contribution to economic growth;

(iii) The whole nation is affected by the existence of sub-standard education in any part;

(iv) The population is mobile and the effect of low standard education is not confined to the State or system offering it;

(v) The Commonwealth has direct constitutional responsibility for certain special groups such as migrants and Aborigines.

5.3 Congress calls on the Commonwealth Government to meet the needs of schools through its own funding efforts and through negotiated agreement with all State/Territory Governments for resource improvement in schools.

5.4 Congress notes that in relation to funding:

(i) that the entire trade union movement is committed to ensuring that all Governments have a primary obligation to

the establishment and maintenance of a government school system of the highest standard;

(ii) that government schools and TAFE have substantial unmet needs: the resourcing of schools that service the children of Australia's workers; Aboriginal education; migrant and multi-cultural; disadvantaged schools; education for technological change and the overriding need to systematically move towards an education system based on the objective of equal education outcomes.

5.5 Congress urges the ACTU and its affiliates to take whatever responsible action is required to have that primary obligation reflected in funding arrangements at State and Federal levels.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY

6.1 Congress believes that public registers of information on the income and expenditure of funds by private schools, should be established, so that private schools are financially accountable for the expenditure of public funds.

6.2 Congress believes that such schools be required to disclose information on:

(i) All income and expenditure from public and private sources;

(ii) Levels of fees charged;

(iii) All assets;

(iv) Non-school property resources.

6.3 In respect of private schools:

(i) There should be strengthened provisions for registration of private schools;

(ii) All facilities that have been provided by public monies should be open to public use outside school hours;

(iii) If sale of existing private schools to the public system occurs, the value of past public investment should be discounted;

(iv) There should be no diminution of publicly owned capital resources for education;

(v) The existing public investment in the schools and other capital components of the private school sector should be ascertained and publicised.

7. NEW PLACES IN SCHOOLS

7.1 Congress notes that in forming policies on new places, the Government should take into account the need to avoid duplication of schools, to avoid waste in public expenditure, and to avoid "adverse effects" (impact) on

existing public schools.

7.2 Congress believes that an unfettered and unplanned expansion of places must have a significant negative impact on enrolments, the curriculum provision, and the resources available.

7.3 Accordingly, Congress calls on the government to ensure:

(i) that policies which undermine the government system are not pursued;

(ii) that the principle of impact be the basis of government policy;

(iii) that new schools are subject to enrolment recommendations;

(iv) that new places in developing areas be subject to planning by Commonwealth and State/Territory authorities and that the ACTU and the public education organisations (teacher unions and parent organisations) be involved in this planning. In all developing areas a comprehensive free public school system must be provided and the provision of new private school places should not be able to undermine such a public system.

(v) in all planning on new places the public must have the right to make submissions to the Department and the right to appeal against decisions.

8. MAINTENANCE OF PRIVATE EFFORT

8.1 Congress expresses concern at the failure of many non-government schools to maintain their private effort in their funding requirements.

8.2 Accordingly, Congress calls on governments to acknowledge that the application of the needs basis of funding has often resulted in this failure to maintain private effort and that governments have a responsibility to address this problem.

9. TAFE

Role of TAFE

9.1 Congress notes that in relation to the role of TAFE:

(i) that the new economic and industrial environment requires the development of an education and training culture;

(ii) that Technical and Further Education (TAFE) has a key role in the massively increased provision of vocational education and training which must accompany the award restructuring process;

(iii) that TAFE should provide broad-based vocational education, training and further education. TAFE's role in

providing both initial and recurrent education is critical. Opportunities for structured training, retraining and further education in TAFE should be easily accessible to Australians in and out of the workforce and irrespective of age;

(iv) the important role TAFE plays in assisting disadvantaged and minority groups in the community and supports the extension of these vital programs. The ACTU therefore rejects any policies which define TAFE narrowly or which attempt to force TAFE into meeting short-term utilitarian goals at the expense of its charter.

10. EXPANSION OF TAFE

10.1 Congress believes that a strategic plan for the expansion of TAFE must be developed to meet the future requirements of Australia. Such a strategic plan will need to address vastly expanded networking arrangements of "on the job" and "off the job" skill formation with significant new characteristics of how these arrangements are made.

10.2 There will need to be flexible and effective use of the most advanced equipment, greatly enhanced emphasis upon innovation, creative solutions to new forms of work organisation and group skilling requirements and interaction with and between enterprises providing intermediate inputs and final outputs into the market.

10.3 There will also need to be greater emphasis upon a "systems" approach and these "systems" will need to be understood in the widest sense including the interaction of customer requirements with product development, business administration streams of skill and those related to production and service streams and the multi-skilled or group skilled requirements of technical systems.

10.4 The strategic plan should incorporate vertical articulation of learning with credit transfer and bridging courses that readily allow flexible adaptation to changing circumstances particularly to more highly qualified and value-added employment.

10.5 Congress calls on the Commonwealth and State Governments to recognise that increased industry based training, while essential, cannot negate the requirement to rapidly expand public TAFE systems in terms of buildings, equipment, and staff. Congress recognises that TAFE expansion must be considered on a tripartite basis and carried out with closer industry-TAFE links.

TAFE Funding Arrangements

10.6 Funding mechanisms must ensure that:

(i) initiatives such as the Australian Traineeship System are guaranteed funding for sufficient periods as will allow for teaching of the programs by qualified TAFE staff;

(ii) funds flowing to TAFE from industry will be monitored by, and expended within the guidelines of, the relevant

State TAFE authority;

(iii) capital works and equipment replacement programs are updated on the basis of a national stocktake. Industry/TAFE sharing arrangements should be an integral part of the (triennial) replacement/expansion program;

(iv) TAFE staff have satisfactory working conditions and remuneration, have meaningful career paths, and participate in on-going development activities including regular industrial release secondments;

(v) sufficient non-teaching TAFE staff are available;

(vi) students services are improved and made universal;

(vii) increased attention is given to the needs of minority and disadvantaged groups. The Employment and Skills Formation Council of NBEET must assume responsibility for co-ordinating and implementing national policy with respect to the Aboriginal community and their access to TAFE courses. Similarly, special programs for women and girls, especially those from migrant backgrounds, should be funded by the Commonwealth.

TAFE and Industry-Based Training

10.7 Congress:

(i) notes and welcomes that industry based training is being rapidly increased;

(ii) states that in the development of new and greatly expanded Vocational Education and Training arrangements it is of overriding importance that it results in a flexible but unified Training System which integrates the TAFE system with necessary in-house programs. The development of parallel training systems is unacceptable;

(iii) asserts that substantial training and/or retraining programs carried out by industry based personnel, must be accredited and the personnel should meet teacher vocational qualification (but not necessarily teacher training) and industrial experience requirements;

(iv) states that the interchange between TAFE and industry personnel should be greatly increased in both directions and where appropriate "industry trainers" should be assisted to move into the TAFE system and become TAFE teachers after no more than two years in a solely instructional role;

(v) asserts that Governments should increase their financial commitment to the development and administration of more effective accreditation procedures, curriculum research and development and comprehensive articulation arrangements between industry and training institutions. As many of these functions will be carried out by State and National level industry training bodies, adequate funding levels must be available to ensure these functions can be undertaken effectively.

Private Technical and Further Education

10.8 Congress recognises the increasing incidence of private technical and further education. Congress sets the following as principles which must underpin the provision of such Technical and Further Education in the private sector:

- (i) The establishment of a proper relationship between technical and further education and the TAFE system which recognises the primary role of the TAFE system;
- (ii) The establishment of accreditation mechanisms between public and private providers of technical and further education. Such mechanisms should deal with the accreditation of curriculum, credit transfer and maintenance of standards;
- (iii) Appropriate relativities in salaries and conditions between public and private providers;
- (iv) Establishment of appropriate Award Rates for persons employed by private providers;
- (v) Appropriate registration procedures for all providers of Technical and Further Education;
- (vi) Tripartite (industry/union/employer) negotiation of the need and focus for private sector training;
- (vii) Such training must meet publicly certified standards and be consistent with the development of high level skill acquisition which enhances career opportunity and development.

11. ROLE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

Life Long Education and Opportunities

11.1 The concept of education as a limited period of institutionalised instruction is totally rejected.

11.2 The objectives of social justice, the dictates of technological and structural change, changes in work organisation, the movement towards greater leisure (either voluntary or involuntary) all indicate a need to view education as a life long process.

11.3 To increase access, further education should:

- (i) provide courses on a flexible basis including full time, part time, evening, weekend and correspondence courses;
- (ii) locate programs in Colleges, in workplaces, in community centres, in local libraries and neighbourhood houses;
- (iii) extend the range of bridging and preparatory courses;
- (iv) ensure student fees and course costs are not increased;

- (v) extend child care facilities.

Adult Literacy and Basic Education

11.4 Congress notes that:

- (i) an estimated 10% of the Australian born population have minimal reading and writing skills which would enable them to undertake training and higher education;
- (ii) in addition many adults (migrants and Australian born) lack the writing, maths and study skills which would enable them to undertake training and higher education.

11.5 Congress urges Commonwealth and State Governments:

- (i) to extend the development and co-ordination of resources for adult basic education, including adult literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL);
- (ii) to consolidate and extend the infra structure for planning and co-ordinating literacy, ESL and adult basic education;
- (iii) to provide increased recurrent funding for adult literacy so that programmes have continuity and the individual rights of workers in this area are not further reduced.

12. HIGHER EDUCATION

Role of Higher Education

12.1 Congress believes that higher education should be a balanced system which seeks to respond to the social and economic needs of the Australian community by:

- (i) promoting social equality and co-operation, and racial, sexual, political and religious tolerance;
- (ii) assisting in the economic development of Australia through technological innovation, scientific enquiry and basic and applied research work;
- (iii) responding to the needs of the labour market by providing broadly based training for specialists, professionals and technicians;
- (iv) providing students with an understanding of the social and ecological systems in which we live and their duties, obligations and rights within it;
- (v) encouraging critical social enquiry;
- (vi) developing links with the TAFE system and in-house training programs to enhance skills acquisition and to encourage life-long education.

Federal Government Role

12.2 The role of the Federal Government in higher education

should be:

- (i) as the principal source of funding for the system;
- (ii) to plan, co-ordinate and oversee the development of higher education in order to ensure an even and equitable spread of resources in all regions;
- (iii) to maintain and expand a strong public higher education system and to ensure that public subsidies do not flow to private higher education institutions;
- (iv) to ensure that access to higher education for disadvantaged groups is enhanced;
- (v) to ensure that higher education meets Australia's social, economic and cultural needs;
- (vi) to provide financial support for students;
- (vii) to regulate education export and institutions' commercial activities;
- (viii) to consult with education interest groups, unions and the community through properly established consultative bodies.

Equality and Access

12.3 The ACTU notes the particular difficulties faced by rural students, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and women in traditionally male areas of study as well as those faced by disadvantaged groups in general.

12.4 Congress notes further that these problems are exacerbated at post-graduate or higher degree level, and that students from privileged backgrounds are substantially over-represented in high-status professional courses.

Measures to Increase Equality

12.5 Congress calls upon the Government to show increased commitment to equal access to higher education through:

- (i) clear requirements to be placed upon institutions, through the education profile process, to improve programs designed to enhance equality of access;
- (ii) requirements for institutions to publish reports on the measures which they have taken in this area;
- (iii) requesting the Higher Education Council to conduct in 1990 a review of existing selection and entry criteria;
- (iv) encouraging institutions to review curricula and course structures;
- (v) increasing funding for equity programs available through DEET or the HEC;
- (vi) creating a clearing-house in DEET for information on equity programs;

- (vii) co-ordinating equity initiatives;
- (viii) encouraging liaison with schools, TAFE and industry to develop alternative modes of entry to higher education courses;
- (ix) increasing the level and availability of AUSTUDY allowances;
- (x) immediate steps to implement the National Plan of Action for Women in Tertiary Education.

13. HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

Enrolment Growth

13.1 Congress welcomes the Federal Government's 1988 commitment to significantly increase funding for growth in enrolments in higher education funding over the 1989-91 triennium. Congress notes that increases in the number of eligible students will not allow for growth in the rate of transfer from school to higher education. Congress calls upon the Government to examine means of funding growth in higher education without recourse to inequitable and regressive user-pays schemes.

Funding Levels

13.2 Congress notes further that:

- (i) funding for libraries, capital works, technical support staff, computing facilities equipment and student services has declined significantly over the last decade;
- (ii) student/staff ratios have declined over the last decade to the point where Australia is now well below the OECD average.

13.3 Congress calls upon the Federal Government to maintain and upgrade funding for higher education to beyond the present triennium.

Resource Allocation

13.4 Congress:

- (i) notes that a new funding model for higher education is currently being developed and supports a model which ensures that all higher education institutions are able to provide the highest quality education with equity;
- (ii) notes that cost-based bidding between institutions may be a feature of new funding models for higher education and believes that any element of cost competition should be monitored.

HECS

13.5 Congress:

(i) endorses the ACTU Executive decision of May 1988 opposing the Higher Education Contribution Scheme;

(ii) calls for expansion of the exemptions to HECS granted by the Government, in order to ameliorate potential inequalities and anomalies;

(iii) calls for continuous and careful monitoring of the impact of HECS upon enrolments. Economic Contribution of Higher Education

13.6 Congress notes the substantial contribution to economic growth and development made by higher education. Congress strongly supports and encourages the development of co-operative relationships between industry and higher education which:

(i) provide a framework for private sector financial support for the public system;

(ii) promote productive and useful liaison between higher education and private and public enterprise;

(iii) are essential to the process of award restructuring in industry.

13.7 Congress draws attention to the structural and financial impediments to the full realisation of higher education's role in this area and calls for industry contributions by employers to support curriculum development in higher education to accommodate changes in labour market conditions and award restructuring.

13.8 Congress believes that the Federal Government must play an active role in ensuring the adequacy of safeguards in the area of appropriate regulation of commercial activities.

14. RESEARCH

14.1 Congress:

(i) believes that the principal role of higher education in supporting Australia's research effort should be to provide a broad research base in all areas of knowledge;

(ii) recognises the important link between teaching and research in higher education and calls upon the Federal Government to ensure that funding arrangements are designed to strengthen this link;

(iii) believes that higher education institutions should play a significant role in technology transfer and the related development of skill formation and industrial organisation.

15. GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

15.1 Congress believes that the governing bodies of higher education institutions should reflect the publicly supported

nature and purposes of these institutions. Half the membership of governing bodies should therefore be drawn from outside the institution to provide for broad community representation, including unions. Industry interests in relation to the course profile of the institution should be represented on its governing body, both by employer and union representation.

15.2 Academic and general staff unions, and student unions, should be represented in governing bodies. Principles of industrial democracy should operate throughout higher education institutions.

16. HIGHER EDUCATION RESTRUCTURING

16.1 Congress supports the Federal Government's decision to abolish the distinction between universities and colleges of advanced education, thereby creating a unified national system of higher education.

16.2 It is noted, however, that the resulting amalgamation and restructuring of institutions has caused a degree of disruption to planning in higher education and creates uncertainty and instability within the higher education labour force and Congress calls upon the Government to provide the necessary commitments and assistance to institutions so that the working conditions are stabilised. Congress does not support involuntary redundancies of higher education staff in this context.

16.3 The ACTU also believes that the current breadth of higher education provision, in relation to:

- (i) course type;
- (ii) level of courses;
- (iii) selection and entry policies;
- (iv) available modes of study;

is desirable in that access and opportunities for students are enhanced and must be maintained.

17. PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

17.1 Congress strongly opposes public subsidies to private higher education institutions outside the unified national system on the basis that such institutions promote inequality, undermine orderly planning in higher education and threaten the quality and standing of Australian higher education as a whole.

17.2 In particular, Congress rejects Government subsidisation of private institutions through:

- (i) AUSTUDY;
- (ii) postgraduate allowances;

(iii) research grants through the Australian Research Council;

(iv) taxation concessions.

18. EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

18.1 Congress recognises the importance of providing equal access to all levels of the education system.

18.2 Each individual should have access to education and training free from any form of discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, gender, age, marital status, religion, political opinion, economic status or sexual preference.

18.3 Programs should be adequately funded which provide assistance to those who are educationally disadvantaged. Congress recognises that particular disadvantage exists in relation to:

- (i) Low income families;
- (ii) Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders;
- (iii) Women and Girls;
- (iv) People from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds;
- (v) People in rural and isolated areas;
- (vi) People with disabilities.

18.4 The problems facing disadvantaged groups vary according to the specific groups. Nevertheless, there are common measures which can be applied to implement strategies for equality.

18.5 These common measures include:

- (i) the development of adequate national data bases;
- (ii) the commitment to integrate programmes;
- (iii) recognition that funding is required to assist disadvantaged groups to achieve equity in educational participation and outcomes;
- (iv) the application of non-discriminatory and counter discriminatory curriculum and educational practices;
- (v) the provision of support programmes and involvement of the community identified as disadvantaged;
- (vi) professional development and support programmes for educators;
- (vii) the recognition of educators and support staff working in areas relevant to equity measures in education and training as of equal standing with "mainstream educators";

(viii) the development of careers advisory services at all levels of education and training for disadvantaged groups;

(ix) entry programmes which take into account a range of criteria.

19. LOW INCOME FAMILIES

19.1 Congress recognises that economically disadvantaged groups do not have the same educational opportunities and outcomes as the economically secure.

19.2 Congress calls for:

(i) improved funding to the Disadvantaged Schools Programme and to the Equity Programme in Higher Education;

(ii) the development of comprehensive education for all to Year 12;

(iii) increased participation in higher education, with special emphasis on improved links with disadvantaged schools, TAFE and non-government training institutions and arrangements for credit transfer;

(iv) the development of improved financial support for students and families on low incomes;

(v) the removal of financial disincentives to improving educational qualifications;

(vi) the development of adult training programmes, especially for disadvantaged groups.

20. ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

20.1 (The term Aboriginal should be taken to include Torres Strait Islander)

20.2 Congress recognises the introduction by the Federal Government of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Aboriginal Education Policy. The policy should significantly improve the education opportunities available to Aboriginal adults and children.

20.3 Congress notes that in implementing the policy (refer 20.2) the following concerns must be met:

(i) increase participation, retention and graduation rates for Aboriginals at all levels of education to the level attained by the broader community by the end of this century;

(ii) establish negotiating and consultative mechanisms acceptable to the Aboriginal community;

(iii) increase the participation of Aboriginal students in professional and trade courses to equal their proportion of the Australian society by 1995;

- (iv) significantly increase the numbers of Aboriginal teachers in classrooms;
- (v) eliminate racism in curriculum and attitudes and incorporate into education programmes a curriculum of Aboriginal studies from pre-school to tertiary levels;
- (vi) provide bi-lingual and bi-cultural educational programmes for Aboriginal people;
- (vii) provide special funding for student support, curriculum development and enclave and other forms of education support.

21. THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

21.1 Despite improved retention rates, Congress notes that women and girls are still educationally disadvantaged and that their educational outcomes do not provide them with the same employment advantages as men and boys.

21.2 Measures that are required to enhance the educational opportunities of women and girls include:

- (i) implementation of the National Plan of Action for Girls in Schools, implementation of the National Plan for Equity in Higher Education, urgent development and implementation of a National Plan for Women and Girls in TAFE and urgent development and implementation of a National Plan for the Education of Women;
- (ii) the elimination of sexism in all areas of education, training and retraining; the development of counter-sexist curriculum and adequate support for the implementation of these measures;
- (iii) increased participation of girls and women in non-traditional areas of study and the reform of curriculum and teaching methods in those areas. In particular, measures should be developed to increase the participation of girls in maths, sciences and technology based subjects and courses; in trade qualification courses; in the technological professions and in post-graduate study;
- (iv) trade union support for special entry of girls and women into non-traditional employment areas;
- (v) special assistance to women who have interrupted employment to undertake educational and skills upgrading;
- (vi) the provision of child care for women undertaking education.

22. PEOPLE FROM NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUNDS

22.1 Congress supports multicultural education which involves the recognition, support and promotion of the cultural and ethnic diversity of Australia and calls upon Federal and State governments to fund educational programmes which enhance the understanding of our common and shared

experience in Australia and the diversity of our languages, cultures, values and beliefs.

22.2 To promote multicultural and migrant education Congress calls for:

(i) a comprehensive Federal programme of professional instruction in the English language in the first two years of arrival of non-English speaking immigrants to minimum vocational proficiency (level 3 of the Australian Language Proficiency Rating Scale).

Such instruction should be provided by a combination of:

- (a) full-time in the first six weeks of arrival;
- (b) free instruction during periods of unemployment; and/or
- (c) paid leave during working hours;

(ii) provision of English speaking language to the level of Australian competence for all students from non-English speaking backgrounds, combined with bi-lingual instruction;

(iii) promotion of community languages other than English;

(iv) support for competency based assessment of overseas qualifications and targeted bridging programmes;

(v) increased participation for disadvantaged groups of non-English speaking backgrounds in trade qualification courses and higher education.

23. EDUCATION IN RURAL AND ISOLATED AREAS

23.1 Congress recognises that for the 5 million Australians living outside metropolitan areas access to education and training is of critical importance. Congress notes that Aboriginal and Islander students make up a large proportion of students and potential students in some rural areas and calls for the development of joint programmes to address the problems facing Aboriginals combined with the problems of rural isolation.

23.2 Congress calls for:

(i) appropriate education programmes in rural areas including the use of effective distance and open learning systems;

(ii) an increase in retention rates to Year 12 equal to that in urban areas and for an equivalent increase in transfer rates to higher education;

(iii) accommodation support for students in rural areas which should be as close as possible to students' homes to Year 12 and for students studying in TAFE; (iv) AUSTUDY eligibility at the living away from home rate should be available to students from rural areas who require additional study to complete or repeat Year 12 in a

metropolitan centre or to undertake additional study to meet entry requirements for Higher Education institutions.

24. EDUCATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

24.1 Congress recognises that people with disabilities should have access to the range of services available to the community at large.

24.2 Congress calls upon Federal and State governments to ensure:

- (i) the earliest identification of the disabling condition;
- (ii) comprehensive programmes of remediation, therapy, habilitation, rehabilitation and education and training;
- (iii) adequate support to the development of programmes to assist disabled students to participate in an atmosphere of mutual respect within the mainstream education systems at all levels of education;
- (iv) the removal of barriers to physical access to educational institutions;
- (v) the development of technological educational aids.

25. CREDIT TRANSFER

25.1 One of the most urgent requirements confronting the Australian education system is the need to develop a system of accreditation, credit transfers, and skills recognition which provides real access to further training and career advancement.

25.2 A system of credit transfer must establish a comprehensive relationship between schools, TAFE, and higher education courses which provides the opportunity for people undertaking training to gain credits which enable systematic progression to the highest levels.

26. EDUCATION EXPORT

26.1 The ACTU believes that the export of education services can make a positive contribution both to Australia's balance of payments and to the education system. Congress notes that education export activities are a feature of school, TAFE-level and higher education institutions in both the public and private sectors.

26.2 Australian institutions' involvement in overseas education marketing has however, in some instances been characterised by a number of negative features and tendencies, namely:

- (i) lack of co-ordination between individual institutional and State/Territory marketing programs and export drives;
- (ii) insufficient attention to quality, standards and

suitability of courses for overseas client groups;

- (iii) inadequate accommodation, welfare and support services for overseas students;
- (iv) financial instability of some private providers;
- (v) involvement of some institutions in questionable immigration arrangements on behalf of students;
- (vi) deleterious effects on educational quality, access and stability for Australian students as resources and staff are diverted to marketing activities;
- (vii) lack of provision of adequate English language preparation creating difficulties for teachers as well as students themselves;
- (viii) increased workloads and changes in duties and work requirements for education workers;
- (ix) in the public sector, unco-ordinated and uneven distribution of profits from export income;
- (x) insufficiently controlled fee-setting and collection arrangements.

26.3 The ACTU believes that these issues point to the need for a strong Federal Government role in co-ordination and regulation of education export activities at all levels. It therefore calls upon the Commonwealth to:

- (i) establish firm agreements with State and Territory Governments which both delineate responsibilities and create an unambiguous role for the Commonwealth in regulating this area;
- (ii) take a more active role in regulating education export.

26.4 In the public sector, income generated from education export should be regarded as ancillary and additional to public funding. Congress strongly opposes any moves to reduce public education funding to offset income from commercial activities including education export.

27. PEACE AND DISARMAMENT STUDIES

Congress supports the development of peace and disarmament studies as outlined in ACTU International Affairs policy.

28. DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

Congress recognises the importance of increased community understanding about Australia's international role, especially in the areas of aid and development programmes with nations of the Third World.

29. WORKER EDUCATION

Paid Study Leave

29.1 Congress:

- (i) affirms that "the need for continuing education and training related to scientific and technological development and the changing pattern of economic and social relations, calls for adequate arrangements and calls for leave for education and training to meet new aspirations, needs and objectives of a social, economic, technological and cultural character", as recognised in ILO Convention No. 140;
- (ii) believes that the right to paid education leave should be provided by the employer to all employees for the purpose of training at any level;
- (iii) believes paid educational leave should be available for courses conducted by TUTA, the ACTU and its State Branches, individual unions and any other recognised trade union training body in Australia.

Education in the Workplace

29.2 Congress notes advances made in provision of educational opportunities to workers in the workplace by the establishment of an education committee in a number of workplaces.

Union Education Officers

29.3 To assist in the development of appropriate programmes and to promote a higher level of education activity in the union movement, the ACTU supports the appointment of union education officers by unions in a position to do so.

30. RIGHTS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

30.1 Congress recognises the valuable contribution to the Australian community by education workers.

30.2 Congress notes that educational workers have general working conditions similar to those of other workers. Congress also notes, however, that there are certain special conditions pertaining to educational workers.

Congress:

- (i) declares its support for moves and initiatives taken by educational workers to extend decision making;
- (ii) supports moves by educational workers to participate in the process of curriculum development in schools and other education institutions;
- (iii) declares that education workers should be associated with the elaboration and application of policies and general principles regarding education, including the training needs of the education industry;

(iv) declares that education workers should be active participants in the decision making process pertaining to the setting of conditions of employment.

Conditions

30.3 Congress endorses moves to improve the working conditions of educational workers through:

- (i) adequate paid lesson preparation time;
- (ii) study leave every seven years;
- (iii) reduced formal contact teaching hours, for TAFE workers, to pursue duties other than teaching in order to properly secure the interests of students;
- (iv) the introduction of flexible working patterns where appropriate;
- (v) removal of discriminatory salary and promotional impediments;
- (vi) reductions in class sizes and teaching loads;
- (vii) the introduction of suitable means of compensation for educational workers affected by arduous or unpleasant conditions;
- (viii) the removal of any hazardous or dangerous substances, articles or otherwise which might be of danger to workers or students.

Security of Employment

30.4 Congress:

- (i) affirms the right of all educational workers to security of employment;
- (ii) maintains that educational workers have a basic right to participate in decisions affecting their industry and their employment conditions;

Teachers in Non-Government Schools

30.5 Congress believes:

- (i) that the right of teachers and other workers in non-Government schools to organise as unions should be fully recognised by employers and Governments;
- (ii) that Federal and State Governments should make the payment of Award wages and conditions a pre-requisite for any non-Government school receiving public funds;
- (iii) that the rights of teachers in non-Government schools to privacy, to the protection of their civil liberties and to be free of unreasonable and oppressive conditions of work, should be fully recognised by employers;

(iv) that teachers in non- Government schools are entitled to the protection of Federal and State Anti-discrimination legislation, in particular where such legislation refers to the rights of women;

(v) that the curriculum in non-Government schools should meet all standards laid down by State Educational Authorities.

Attachment 1

1. THE ROLE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

1.1 Congress supports the Federal Government drive to create a high level Year 12 retention and graduation rate in secondary schools through the provision of equality education.

1.2 Congress believes Year 12 should be seen and promoted as achieving an adequate preparation of young people for life in general and for the world of work in particular with the inescapable interaction of both these factors as a basis of life-long skill, education and training.

1.3 Congress calls upon Federal and State Governments to ensure that credits should be given for courses or part courses achieved by students at all levels. Accreditation procedures should be developed to ensure maximum portability across institutions/States at all levels of participation.

1.4 The objective should be that completion of Year 12 should become the principal entry for either higher education degrees, associate diplomas; or trade or equivalent certificate courses.

1.5 Whilst retention to Year 12 completion is to be achieved and earlier leaving discouraged there will be some who despite all efforts will leave earlier. In such cases alternative opportunities need to be provided to gain wider education and training by other appropriate means. Modified traineeships could provide one such alternative whilst at the same time also providing upon completion an entry point to trade certificate or equivalent other post compulsory courses dependent upon opportunity and competence alongside of those who complete Year 12. Ongoing consideration will need to be given to developing effective ways and means of minimising disadvantages suffered by some groups in society in terms of access and success at all levels of education and training.

1.6 Consideration would be required as to how this alternative can be inter-related and cross-accredited to secondary schools or TAFE or both and to employment with education and training time.

1.7 Preparation of entry into higher education degrees, associate diplomas and trade or equivalent certificate courses should be designed so as to enable a person to proceed via credit transferability through to university degrees given both competence and the opportunity to do so.

1.8 Congress supports the comprehensive secondary school system extending to completion of Year 12 with the provision of sufficient diversity to meet varying requirements. However, we oppose the creation of segregated "select" high schools based on the pursuit of elitism for its own sake.

(i) Because they would lead to elitist outcomes for higher education selection;

(ii) They artificially segregate young people at an age where the rate of uneven development for individuals cannot provide definition;

(iii) They artificially segregate young people away from group education and leadership skilling whereby adequate project work for those who at one point of time display advanced learning and competence can assist and facilitate others; thus providing mutual advantage. (World class management in all fields now demands that the most competent have to achieve the maximum contribution of others. Thus segregation impairs development in all cases.)

1.9 In the event, a large retention rate must inevitably mean that the vast majority of Year 12 school leavers will proceed through the world of work.

1.10 On completion of Year 10 students must be given the opportunity both to choose and pursue a broad general education at Years 11 and 12 and also to develop within that context their interest in relation to broadly conceived vocations. This to be understood and provided in terms of a growing convergence of broad and vocational education through generalised but vocationally relevant studies, through work experience possibilities and through studies of the world of work.

1.11 This preparation and subsequent chosen development needs to be broad-based in terms of cognitive, creative decision-making, flexible innovation, work organisation, communication, inter-personal, social relationship and citizenship skills as well as broad-based in terms of science, technology and dexterous skills relevant to any chosen vocation. The vital secondary years should provide a sufficient range and balance of theoretical and practical knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs and aspirations of all students.

1.12 The preparation for choice by Year 10 completion requires growing understanding about the nature of various industries and vocations, their socio-economic and political context, what is done by them, how it is done, what general and inter-related knowledge is required, what skills are required, and what is the interaction between various vocations and society.

1.13 This preparation should be realistic, addressing national needs and presenting a challenge to young people to be prepared to grasp hold of problem areas so as to change them whilst providing a broadly-based education that can allow for future adjustment and mobility.

1.14 Where "hands on" work experience occurs as part of

post-compulsory schooling there should be thorough consideration of all the implications prior to programs being established.

1.15 Comparable and recognised certifications based upon standards, qualifications and assessment need to be achieved. The certification process must reflect the diversity of the secondary school curriculum.

1.16 Vocational and career assistance needs to be provided along with other aids. The development of a proper knowledge of the role of industries should include an understanding that technology, skill and work organisation advances are needed to achieve world-class excellence.

1.17 A degree of diversity and flexibility needs to be allowed within curricular formulation to ensure adaptability and mobility as well as meeting individual needs within a common framework.

1.18 The structures, processes and support systems of post-compulsory schooling should be appropriate and have the necessary flexibility to ensure access including re-entry through to the end of Year 12 for people with varying financial, family, cultural, employment and other circumstances.

1.19 The provision of quality education including curricula developments as outlined above necessitate teacher training and retraining changes and opportunities.

1.20 The ACTU position should be made known to the current and proposed government inquiries.

Attachment 2

2. CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS

2.1 Congress notes the current policy directing the Commonwealth which will require a highly skilled Education and Training Workforce. Accordingly, Congress calls upon the Commonwealth and States to invest, together with industry, in continuing training for teachers.

2.2 Congress notes that teachers in both public and private schools receive usually three (primary) or four (secondary) years initial training. It is an anomalous situation that three-year trained teachers are employed as fully trained teachers but then often have salary and promotion barriers which do not exist for four-year trained teachers. Many three-year trained primary teachers are in the process of upgrading to four-year status.

2.3 Congress notes with alarm the effect of HECS on those teachers wishing to upgrade their qualifications.

The position of continuing training for teachers varies widely, but recent reports, e.g., Teachers Learning, have indicated a very poor and patchy effort on the part of employing authorities. The Commonwealth has itself contributed to this malaise by abolishing its Professional Development Program in 1986.

3. AN APPROACH TO THE RESOURCES QUESTION

3.1 Congress notes that the Commonwealth Government has a clear interest in the quality of teachers in schools. Through resource agreements with system authorities in schools, it has indicated its acceptance of some responsibility for the ongoing training of teachers. Whilst this should not be the limit of Commonwealth responsibility, nevertheless Congress believes the major responsibility for the continuing training of the education workforce must reside, in the case of schools, with the employing authorities. Thus, Congress believes that the best way to advance and improve the issues of the continuing education of teachers is to develop the notion of a partnership of contributors - the Commonwealth, employing authorities and teachers themselves.

3.2 Congress calls upon the Commonwealth to develop specific bilateral resources agreements with employing authorities to ensure that such agreements address expenditure on continuing training for teachers.

3.3 Resources will be required additional to those in the current general recurrent program for schools and additional to current funding levels to TAFE and higher education. The recommendations outlined below should be seen in the context of such bilateral agreements, with the Commonwealth providing through its recurrent funding and the higher education system the basis for an agreed level of resource commitment to in-service education from employing authorities. This then represents the concept of a funding partnership.

3.4 Accordingly, Congress calls upon the Commonwealth to:

- (i) Establish appropriate administrative arrangements between schools, systems and higher education institutions (HEI's).
- (ii) Implement a program of discipline reviews in teacher education (e.g., music education, physical education).
- (iii) Move progressively towards four-year initial training for all school teachers.
- (iv) Increase the capacity of HEIs to devote more resources to in-service courses and to develop the appropriate balance of and articulation between pre-service and in-service courses - award and non-award.
- (v) Improve links between funding partners in designing both award and non-award courses.
- (vi) Designate information technology as a key centre for teaching and research in 1990 and investigate the establishment of Centres of Information Technology with a teacher development mission.
- (vii) Investigate the more effective use of Commonwealth Education Centres as a means of providing teacher in-service

education.

- (viii) Provide opportunities for long-term release to industry / commerce and / or public sector.
- (ix) Support award restructuring, especially the proposal for an Advanced Skills salary scale with support for teacher professional development.
- (x) Develop bilateral resource agreements between Commonwealth and employing authorities requiring commitments to resources for teacher development.
- (xi) Consider negotiated improvements of funding beyond 1992 for those authorities demonstrating commitment to teacher development from both Commonwealth and authority sources.