

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release Friday 5 May 2006

Australian Certificate of Education

A single Australian Certificate of Education (ACE) to replace the current 'dog's breakfast' of curriculum and assessment arrangements in the final years of secondary school across Australia is the main recommendation of a new report by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) commissioned by the Federal Government.

The report, *Australian Certificate of Education: Exploring a way forward* was released by Federal Education Minister Julie Bishop today.

Six recommendations are made including the introduction of a single Australian Certificate of Education that eventually would replace the existing nine Year 12 certificates currently awarded by the states and territories.

It urges the establishment of national 'subject panels' to identify curriculum essentials in mathematics, English, science and humanities subjects as well as the development of internationally-benchmarked achievement standards.

The report also calls for a greater focus on the development and assessment of 'employability skills' important to life and work beyond school.

The report's lead author and chief executive of ACER, Professor Geoff Masters said the changes called for in the report are necessary if Australia is to maintain a world-class education system into the future.

"It is hard to see how current differences from one state to another are in the best interests of students, their parents, universities or employers," Professor Masters said. "Currently there is no guarantee that students studying the same subject in different parts of the country are taught a common core of fundamental facts, concepts and skills in that subject. Students' subject results are reported in ways that make comparisons across states impossible and there is significant duplication of effort."

"Looking at what is happening across Australia, one begins to wonder if, in senior secondary schooling, we have differences for the sake of differences."

The report calls for clarity about core curriculum content to which all students should have access, regardless of where they live in Australia; the development of more comparable subject results at least in English, mathematics, and key science and social science subjects; and the investigation of ways of assessing employability skills in the final years of school.

The report is available from the DEST website at www.dest.gov.au

*****ENDS*****

Media enquiries:

Louise Reynolds

Corporate Publicity and Communications Manager

Phone: (03) 9277 5582 Mobile: 0419 340 058 Email: reynolds@acer.edu.au