

## **1. Professional Learning/Professional Development**

(Such programs could concentrate on either subject knowledge (content) or on pedagogy (teaching skills), or on both)

### **a. programs delivered by exemplar teachers at regional purpose-specific conferences**

Experiences from the Commonwealth History Project (CHP) strongly suggest that regionally delivered PD is most effective (in all jurisdictions other than the ACT) - not least because such PD reaches those with least regular access to PD activities.

These could be mediated/organised by HTAs in each state and territory (except the NT).

To do these properly can be (quite) expensive - about \$330 per day per participant teacher release; organising costs, including preparation time for presenter(s), and travel (and accommodation) to/in regional centres.

### **b. university (or other tertiary based) intensive professional programs**

Some universities are keen as part of their community outreach to run summer schools for teachers (a very common model in the USA, for example).

A model for this could be the ANU Summer School in History and Civics, run for the last five years. This summer school brought together teachers and academics, to the benefit of both. Teachers have an opportunity to undertake 'real' research and to be updated on recent learnings about Australian history; academics actually get to interact with teachers. Another benefit for teachers could be sharing experiences with colleagues from other jurisdictions.

These summer schools could run annually, in one or two venues per year.

This should be funded, so that travel for every participant, plus living and accommodation costs, is fully funded. (Teachers are often hesitant about giving up their own time AND having to pay for courses and travel.)

### **c. funding mentoring programs across schools**

Identified 'practitioners of excellence' (identified by education jurisdictions and HTAs conjointly?) could be paired with 'beginners' from other schools. Funding would provide visits to each other's schools (teacher release and travel costs), and some time for them to get together out of school time (teacher release and travel costs) for common planning and reflection.

**d. funding of (small) numbers of MA, MEd (or similar) one year scholarships**

Some education systems are more willing to allow their staff time off to refresh/update their teaching and knowledge. Commonwealth scholarships would make this sort of professional experience available to a wider range of classroom teachers.

Costs involved here would be say \$70 000 per participant per annum.

(This concept could also fit under 3. below.)

**e. funding for teacher internships in national (and state) institutions**

Institutions such as the NMA, NLA, AWM and NAA have an ongoing research function. Internships (over the summer break?) in these institutions could enthuse teachers in supporting students' efforts in conducting 'real' research during the school year.

Cost would be similar, per participant, for the summer school concept (b. above).

**f. funding to support HTAA national conferences**

A national conference is run every year. Participants typically fund 80-100% of their attendance costs – for example, the conference is in Perth this year will cost Eastern states participants \$800 flights + \$400 accommodation + \$250 conference registration = \$1450. If the Commonwealth was prepared to partially fund the conference, then registration costs could be minimised.

**2. Provision of Materials**

**a. provision (continuation) of an Australian history journal, pitched at a level accessible to students**

As part of the work of the National Centre for History Education (NCHE), an online journal *OzHistorybytes* has been provided as part of the Commonwealth History Project.

This can be either downloaded and copied for use by teachers in the classroom, or students can utilise it as part of their independent research.

I have no real idea of how much this would cost; if it was a stand alone project, costs would be considerable would be my guess, but if it formed part of a more general project in support of History teaching, it would, I'm guessing, be a minimal add on cost.

## **b. provision of a professional journal for teachers**

This could augment the sterling work current being done by HTAs in ‘spreading the word’ about good pedagogies and new interpretations etc via HTAs’ magazines.

A professional digest, concerning history pedagogy, was developed by the NCHE as part of the CHP.

## **c. Provision of specific Curriculum Materials**

This is listed as (c) because of the problematic history/nature of such materials in the last 15 years.

### Printed

The *Discovering Democracy* materials, for example, were, in their way, very good. Anecdotal evidence suggests (*very strongly*) that, while a copy was sent to every school, the actual penetration of the materials into the classroom was very limited.

If textbook style resources were intended, could (Commonwealth) funding run to, say, four sets (128 copies) of every text for every school?

Given the localised nature of school needs (ie if students are to do local history, the local history of the text would have to be – if it was content, not pedagogy, based – the local history in question), this could be a very expensive exercise.

The provision of printed materials is of course, also a philosophical question. Should the ‘free market’ be left to meet any perceived need?

### Web Based

While (remote) schools’ access to web-based materials is improving, there are still download speed/platform related issues, particularly those students most severely affected by the ‘tyranny of distance’.

The availability of high-quality web-based materials is ever increasing – for example, the NAA’s *Vroom*, AWM’s/DVA’s *Gallipoli* website. A lot of what is needed is already ‘out there’ – but not everyone knows about this ‘stuff’.

There is also a question of the pedagogical question about how these materials can be/should be used in the classroom.

### **3. *Morale Raising/Recognition of Excellence for/of Teachers***

#### **a. annual prize(s) to acknowledge outstanding teaching**

I believe that there is currently a national Science Teachers' prize of \$50 000 pa. Why not something similar for History teaching?

Another model that could be implemented could be that used for NEiTA (*National Excellence in Teaching* awards).

The (HTAA approved, and NCHE developed) *National Standards for Teachers of History* could be used as a starting point for developing criteria on which to base these awards.

### **4. *Raising the Profile of History in Schools and with Students***

#### **a. improve Commonwealth funding for existing competitions**

Currently, DEST and DVA fund two national competitions for schools students:

- the Simpson Prize (SP) – for Year 9 students, essay only, prize for each state/territory winner is a trip to Gallipoli
- the National History Challenge (NHC) - for all students Years 5 to 12; open format, based around an annual theme related to Australian History; prize is in every state/territory a nominal amount plus a trip to Canberra.

While the SP is very generous, NHC is run on a relative shoestring. Prizes in the NHC are small, and the running of it again relies on volunteerism to a fair degree (there are minimally funded project officers in each state).

#### **b. support other competitions**

HTAA is currently developing a *Schools History Competition* – this aims to increase participation, as it is a one off, multiple-choice type of competition (like the Maths Competition), unlike the NHC, which requires a sustained research effort.

While HTAA has invested in the concept, we are now at the stage of needing to find a sponsor to fund the development of the initial materials.

## **5. Miscellaneous**

### **a. Australian history Project Officers – Commonwealth funded**

These people (at least one per jurisdiction) could administer any Commonwealth-funded programs in each state/territory, and provide a ‘lighthouse’ for the teaching of History in their state. (Some states still have ‘curriculum consultants’ who fill similar roles, but not all do.) These officers could also be a liaison point for institutions providing teacher education, and, maybe, could contribute to History method courses in such institutions.

### **b. electronic communication**

All HTAs, HENA and jurisdictions (CEO, Independent Schools and Departments in each state/territory) could be asked to pool their email contact lists, to facilitate information interchange. This list would need to be maintained.

### **c. B Ed/Dip Ed scholarships for students doing History Method**

This could make *beginning* a teaching career specifically in History attractive. Cost could be equivalent to the HECS payable for a Dip Ed year (or some part of a B Ed).

### ***Final Comment:***

Many of the points above reflect experiences arising from current HTAA and CHP activities. I believe that there is an ongoing role for HTAs in providing professional learning, and there is certainly ‘space’ to maintain the activities of the NCHE. CHP in total (including NCHE activities) has cost the Commonwealth about \$4 m over 5 years; the HTA-based professional learning segment has been \$100 000 over 3.5 years. To reach *all* primary teachers in Australia, and all secondary teachers will take a substantially larger investment of funds.

The most effective (dare I say cost effective) way to improve teaching is not by producing bundles of new resource materials, but by skilling as many teachers as possible in history pedagogy and knowledge. Good (skilled) teachers will tend to produce materials to support their own teaching.

The CHP has been a ‘small ticket’ item for DEST, but has been very effective. It has, however, relied on a great deal of volunteerism (as do all HTA activities). With the aging of the teaching population, and new attitudes to volunteerism held by those entering the teaching profession, ongoing reliance on goodwill alone may have its dangers.

HTA members are experts in the field of successfully delivering both professional learning and learning for students in Australian history. HTA volunteers do not want extravagant consultant-like fees for their efforts, but they no longer want to feel that their (free) labour is being used to shore up the subject for which we hold a particular passion, but which society, more broadly, should support.