



MEDIA RELEASE – **RESPONSE TO EDUCATION MINISTER'S SPEECH**

President of the HTAA, Nick Ewbank, applauded key points made by Commonwealth Education Minister Julie Bishop when opening the Association's National Conference at Notre Dame University, Fremantle on Friday. He supported her call for all Australian students to be exposed to a coherent and engaging history of their nation.

However, Mr Ewbank expressed reservations about the Minister's use of the occasion to launch a provocative attack on curriculum officers and history syllabuses from around the nation.

Responding to the Minister's proposals, Mr Ewbank warned of the dangers of centrally-imposed and potentially rigid courses of study. "Good curriculum is responsive to students' needs" he noted.

"We must recognise the need for a flexible curriculum, and trust the expertise of professional teachers to select, plan and deliver history curriculum that relates to students".

Mr Ewbank also questioned the timeframe the Minister identified for the development of a 'model curriculum', warning that rushed decision making, without the time for in-depth community consultation and reflection, could be detrimental to the effectiveness and sustainability of the Minister's proposals.

He noted that the Association was eager to be involved in History curriculum reform - "HTAA is well placed and keen to help turn the Minister's proposals into effective and workable courses in schools".

8 October 2006

Message ends.