

Focusing on Learning: Report of the Review of Outcomes and Profiles in New South Wales Schooling

New South Wales. Department of Education and Training Coordination, 1995 (Chair: Ken Eltis)

Overview of the document

113 page report of the Review of Outcomes and Profiles in New South Wales. The Review was established in April 1995 by the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. John Aquilina to enable current progress on the implementation of profiles and outcomes in New South Wales schools to be reviewed and future directions considered. Twenty-one recommendations are made relating to issues that emerged during the review covering areas such as: the relationship between outcomes and syllabuses, assessment and reporting, implementation, curriculum content, equity, teacher education, community involvement and professional development. A key recommendation is that the Board of Studies no longer be required to incorporate the National Profiles directly into NSW syllabuses.

Keywords

Outcomes and Profiles; assessment and reporting; syllabuses; equity; curriculum content; teacher professionalism; community involvement; National Statements and Profiles; National Curriculum Framework; Key Competencies; Key Learning Areas.

Terms of Reference

The Review of New South Wales Outcomes and Profiles was established with three areas for investigation:

1. The quality of curriculum documents that utilise outcomes and profiles, including:
 - a) their consistency with principles of high quality subject content and best practice teaching methods.
 - b) the need to ensure that syllabuses are written in a language that is appropriate and natural to the particular subject and are easily understood and interpreted by teachers, students and parents.
2. The appropriateness of the current implementation arrangements for outcomes and profiles in NSW, including:
 - a) The speed of change required by the timeline.
 - b) Implications for schools of new assessment and reporting arrangements as well as their effects on teachers' work.
3. Recommendations for further action and review in the above areas, including relationships between curriculum development, teaching and learning outcomes in schools, and teacher training and development.

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provides a summary of the review's recommendations as follows:
- Recommendation R1: "That in relation to curriculum content:
 - the Minister affirm the prime role of NSW syllabuses in describing the curriculum content – knowledge, skills and understandings – in each subject area;
 - the expected learning outcomes in syllabuses be the basis for the development in the school setting of: teaching programs for school and classroom use, and data on students' learning achievements, including samples of students' work." (p. i)
- Recommendation R2: "That NSW syllabuses be developed according to the following framework:
 - syllabus outcomes, to be explicit statements of the knowledge, skills and understandings expected to be learned from teaching programs developed from NSW syllabuses. These would serve a number of purposes: to provide a reference for schools and teachers in developing their teaching and learning programs; to help schools and teachers, in negotiation with school communities, to develop and apply manageable assessment and reporting strategies for individual students; and to enable, through sample surveys, system monitoring at state and national levels;

- statements of syllabus outcomes for each of the five stages of compulsory schooling (i.e. Years K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10) to be developed by the Board of Studies for each subject, and replace the current use of such terms as “profiles” and “levels” in NSW;
- the Board of Studies no longer be required to incorporate the National Profiles directly into NSW syllabuses.” (p. i)
- Recommendation R3: “That in terms of national curriculum initiatives, NSW should:
 - on the basis of its experience with outcomes and syllabus development, influence the development of further national initiatives in curriculum collaboration;
 - continue to contribute to national objectives in curriculum, through participation in national studies and surveys of learning outcomes;
 - refer the findings of this Review to other Ministers, through the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, and to the Curriculum Corporation, to assist in the evaluation of the national curriculum framework.” (p. ii)
- Recommendation R4: “That priority be given by the Board of Studies and relevant authorities to developing syllabus outcomes and support materials that meet the needs of the full range of students, including those who need additional support to complete their schooling successfully.” (p. ii)
- Recommendation R5: “That to accompany syllabus documents and to emphasise the potential significance of a focus on outcomes as an approach to teaching and learning, support documents be developed containing units of work and work samples, across the five stages, and indicating how the units of work and work samples relate to corresponding material contained in national profile statements.” (p. ii)
- Recommendation R6: “That for the *English K-6 Syllabus*:
 - the existing syllabus continue to be implemented in 1996 and 1997, with Functional Grammar no longer being mandatory;
 - the experience of schools in using the English K-6 syllabus is to inform a revision of the syllabus by the Board of Studies, which will review and reduce the number of outcomes and lead to the development of a replacement syllabus and support document(s) based on stages, for introduction in 1998;
 - the Board of Studies to review the use of “Functional Grammar” in English K-6 with a view to: supporting the functional approach to language that underpins the syllabus; replacing the “Functional Grammar” terminology with conventional terminology; and developing a document to include sources for teachers relating to conventional grammar and its use in the classroom;
 - in the process of developing and trialling the replacement syllabus and support document(s), full consideration occur with teachers and schools.” (p. iii)
- Recommendation R7: “That, in order to bring the *Mathematics K-6 Syllabus* into conformity with the NSW Education Reform Act 1990:
 - a suitable range of manageable outcomes be derived from the current syllabus for each of the stages in terms of knowledge, skills, and understandings;
 - work be undertaken with teachers to develop and trial these outcomes so that they are based on best practice;
 - syllabus outcomes be provided in a support document, which indicates how they might assist teaching, assessment and reporting in Mathematics K-6;
 - the preparation of these outcomes be completed during 1996, with professional development to occur in preparation for full implementation in 1997.” (p. iii)

- Recommendation R8: “That, the Board of Studies:
 - continue to develop syllabuses as they are due for revision, with a limited number of syllabus outcomes as they relate to stages, using a process of thorough consultation with teachers and schools;
 - release these syllabuses to schools beginning with the following suggested schedule:

English K-6	1998
Mathematics K-6	1997
PDHPE	1997, for optional implementation 1998/1999, for full implementation
HSIE	1998, for optional implementation 1999/2000, for full implementation;
 - consider the integration of Citizenship Education as part of this development work;
 - investigate the possibility of developing a small number of generic outcomes across the primary curriculum, which would encompass all key learning areas. (p. iv)
- Recommendation R9: “That as they come up for review, for each of the Year 7-10 Syllabuses in the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography:
 - a limited number of outcome statements, related to stages and derived from individual syllabuses, be developed to focus on knowledge, skills and understandings;
 - illustrations of the standard of performance relating to outcomes be provided in support documents to guide teachers’ understandings, these to be in the form of work samples, units of work and other exemplars, and include indications of how the work samples and units of work relate to corresponding material in the national profile statements;
 - the relationship to the School Certificate subject descriptors of the syllabus outcomes, especially of Stage 5, be clearly established, with revision of the current descriptors where necessary;
 - the integration of Citizenship Education be considered as part of this developmental work;
 - that realistic timeframes be set for the development of these syllabuses to enable teachers, school and academics to contribute fully.” (p. iv)
- Recommendation R10: “That as an integral part of the developmental work for *Science 7-10*, a Science Symposium be held, involving teachers, including country teachers, academics, and others with professional interests in this area, to give advice on:
 - the content and approach of the Science 7-10 Syllabus;
 - revision of the current draft Science 7-10 Syllabus;
 - links between Science 7-10 and the Science 11-12 Syllabus.” (p. v)
- Recommendation R11: “That where any syllabus comes up for review, outcomes be derived from the syllabus for each stage. Work samples and other units of work should also be prepared as part of the support materials, and include indication of how the work samples and units of work relate to corresponding material in the national profile statements.” (p. v)
- Recommendation R12: That:
 - until they are reviewed, those syllabuses issued incorporating national strands and outcomes be used according to the best judgement of teachers;

- those syllabuses now in draft form incorporating national strands and outcomes be reviewed, consistent with Recommendation 2.” (p. v)
- Recommendation R13: “That in relation to assessment and reporting practices:
 - schools and their communities be responsible for devising their own procedures, with opportunities for community members to express views and indicate their expectations in relation to reporting, taking into account issues such as:
 - the need for assessment and reporting practices to be time-efficient, and not detract from teaching and learning;
 - acknowledging differences in terms of the development of individual children;
 - the general well-being of the student;
 - standards of comparison to enable parents to know how their children are progressing;
 - diagnosis of areas of strength and need, including those where students might be given additional support;
 - support be given to schools during 1996 through the provision of thoroughly considered guidelines and options, which assist in the development of reporting procedures, and give indications of what constitutes valid, reliable, informative and manageable reporting to parents.” (p. v)
- Recommendation R14: “That to contribute to the professional development of teachers, schools across the State be invited to participate in the development of syllabus outcomes and support documents by offering examples from their own experience and by trialling materials developed in 1996 and 1997.” (p. vi)
- Recommendation R15: “That materials be developed to explain clearly the intentions, purposes and rationale for introducing outcomes, so that schools can be informed and assisted in developing their own approaches to the incorporation of syllabus outcomes into the teaching and learning programs.” (p. vi)
- Recommendation R16: “In the provision of professional development:
 - there should be very strong input from a range of schools, based on identified “best practice”;
 - support materials be written so that adequate provision is made for teachers to identify and discuss implications for their own circumstances;
 - schools be the focus for delivering professional development, to ensure that the principal and staff can determine how initiatives relate to their existing needs, priorities and their workload;
 - diverse and flexible strategies, including the use of technology, should be adopted to cater for all teachers, including those in small schools and remote areas;
 - schools be encouraged to work with one another and with other relevant groups (universities, professional associations, community groups) as they explore new approaches and determine what is best for them in their own context.” (p. vi)
- Recommendation R17: “That the Minister ask the Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of Teaching to consider ways in which teacher education institutions can be assisted to give student teachers adequate preparation with regard to current syllabuses and their implementation, including assessment and reporting.” (p. vi)

- Recommendation R18: “That in relation to the community’s role in professional development:
 - that the community participate in the preparation and delivery of materials for use in schools with their communities;
 - that schools be encouraged to ensure wider community participation in the development of strategies that enhance understanding of new syllabuses.” (p. vii)
- Recommendation R19: “That the Board of Studies review its procedures for developing and trialling syllabus and support documents so that productive input from teachers and academics with expertise in the area(s) is assured at all stages.” (p. vii)
- Recommendation R20: “Having noted the benefits of collaboration between school sectors and professional and community groups that is evident from the operation of the National Professional Development Program, that Commonwealth and State Governments should continue to support this type of collaboration in their consideration of present and future NPDP submissions.” (p. vii)
- Recommendation R21: “That in future NPDP work more opportunities be provided for schools to gain direct access to funding to support local initiatives to incorporate outcomes into teaching/learning and assessment programs.” (p. vii)

1. BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

- Notes that the review of outcomes and profiles in NSW schools was announced in April 1995 and that at this time the Minister said he was committed to major aspects of a profiles and outcomes approach and that “Syllabuses should specify the content to be learned; clear standards should be set for each level of schooling; and student progress should be reported to parents in terms of whether those standards were being achieved.” (p. 1)
- Notes that despite this the Government was concerned about plans for implementation, including: “the quality of some of the outcome statements, which are imprecise and lack content, the amount of work expected of teachers in recording student performance and implementing the approach, and the speed of implementation.” (p. 1)
- Notes that a range of definitions have been used in relation to profiles and outcomes and discusses the initial definition developed in response to the NSW Education Reform Act, 1990; the introduction of outcomes and profiles based on the National Framework; and the adoption of the Department of School Education in NSW in May 1994 of an outcomes and profiles approach.

2. PROFILES AND OUTCOMES IN EDUCATION: HISTORY AND RESEARCH

2.1 Introductory

- Notes that the introduction of outcomes and profiles was the result of a Ministerial decision in October 1993 that the outcomes from the National Curriculum Profiles should be integrated into NSW syllabuses.

2.2 The National Agenda and New South Wales

- Refers to the 1988 Commonwealth Ministerial Statement issued by Dawkins, Strengthening Australia’s Schools which called for cooperation from all systems in developing a national focus on: “the purposes, objectives and priorities of schooling, increasing school retention, education and equity, a common curriculum framework, a common approach to assessment, priorities for improving the training of teachers [and] maximising investment in education, including determining ways to enhance

cooperation, joint undertakings and remove unnecessary differences in schooling across Australia.” (p. 6)

- Traces developments following the Dawkins Statement, including the resolution of the AEC to strengthen collaboration, the Hobart Declaration, the development of the National Curriculum statements, the AEC working party on student achievement which advocated profiles, the AEC curriculum development projects and the approval of the Statements and Profiles and the statement of support for the use of the National Curriculum materials in NSW by the Minister in 1993.

2.3 The New South Wales Scene

- Outlines the educational rationale for the adoption of the outcomes and profiles in NSW and notes that some difficulty was encountered in connecting the national outcomes to NSW syllabuses due to “conflict between the eight levels of ‘typical achievement’ of the national profiles and the six stages of NSW syllabuses.” (p. 10)
- Notes that the Board issued outcomes and profiles documents independently of their syllabuses, for consultation, the results of which were released in May 1995.
- Notes that “The Report stated that while there was general support for the inclusion of outcomes in syllabuses, many difficulties had been highlighted in responses including the interpretation of the outcomes, the consistency of standard of the levels, outcomes and pointers between and across subjects, and their appropriateness to the subject. The Report also stated that some respondents requested access to the research supporting the development of outcome-based syllabuses in New South Wales. It was at this point that the incoming Minister for Education and Training announced his review.” (p. 11)

2.4 The Impetus for Outcomes

- Notes that the Education Reform Act of 1990 and the development of National Profiles provided the impetus for the NSW decision to introduce national outcomes through Board syllabuses. Notes that these developments partly relate to the drive for national economic efficiency and a global emphasis on accountability.
- Notes that schools in the 1990s have been required to “adopt business-style approaches to accountability and management. Knowledge is often spoken of as an industry” and output is measured in quantifiable terms. (p. 11)
- Discusses the contemporary period of rapid change and the associated search for certainty, the greater accountability required of teachers in the context of economic competitiveness and the belief that reform in teaching and learning can be brought about by focusing on measurable outcomes. Notes that “The drive to achieve equity has also become outcomes-based. Where educational sociologists twenty years ago saw the middle class concept of knowledge as the cause of failure in non-socially advantaged groups, today the cause is seen more by some as the failure to deliver essential learning outcomes to disadvantaged groups.” (p. 12)

2.5 The Research Base for Outcome-based Education

- Overviews research on outcome-based learning, noting that “the question remains whether there is a strong research base that bears out the claimed benefits of establishing a large number of outcomes coupled with detailed assessment and reporting mechanisms at a number of levels.” (p. 12)

2.6 Conclusion

- After noting that “the research picture is inconclusive” (p. 12) and canvassing further debates over outcome-based approaches, the chapter concludes by stating: “We are left with the beliefs and judgements of education professionals and policy-makers. A common view of the leadership of school systems and authorities and professional associations in this state and nationally is that there are at least potential benefits from a systematic approach to outcomes and profiles in schooling: coherence between curriculum, assessment and reporting; assistance for teachers, students and parents to develop and apply explicit teaching and learning strategies; provision of a common language to improve communication between professionals and to focus system support for teachers and schools. This common framework also potentially provides an external standards reference for teaching and reporting, and for reporting and accountability in a number of local, state and national settings.” (pp. 21-22)

3. THE REVIEW PROCESS

- Details the membership of the Review Panel, notes that further advice was provided by an Educational Community Committee, outlines the processes of data gathering, and explains other elements in the review such as submissions, meetings with central agencies and regional representatives, and presentations by education experts.

4. REVIEW FINDINGS

Introductory

- Notes that this section of the report presents findings from the various data-gathering processes undertaken for the review.

4.1 Basic Understanding

- Notes the following under subheadings:
 - Shared commitment and concerns: “In all submissions, school visits and public meetings, it was apparent that teachers share a strong commitment to improving teaching and learning, mingled with concern at the increasing complexity of teaching and demands on teachers’ time.” (p. 29)
 - Effective use of teachers’ time: “Respondents varied in the degree of importance they placed on classroom interaction with children compared to other responsibilities such as assessing, recording and reporting their progress.” (p. 30)
 - Effective Teaching Methods: “Respondents differed in what they understood to be effective teaching. Many who supported an outcomes approach did so because they saw it as a paradigm-shift from teacher-centred to student-centred learning and/or from content-centred to process-oriented teaching.” (p. 30)
 - Difficulties Accompanying Outcomes and Profiles: “The great majority of respondents, advocates as well as opponents of outcomes, were concerned about difficulties they had experienced with them, ranging from workload to the quality of the outcomes and the quality of training. Some understood these difficulties as teething problems to be expected in the early stages of such a major reform in education...Others saw them as endemic to the outcomes and profiles approach and believed that the present difficulties would increase as implementation became more general...The question of whether the situation would be likely to get better or worse if the approach with outcomes and

profiles in New South Wales continued unchanged became a crucial one for the Panel in its investigation.” (p. 31)

- Change understood as “action research”: “One view among respondents was that a major change should not be introduced into schools until the needs, methods and materials of the change had been trailed. Others advocated that change be tested in practice and amended as use shows necessary. Some officers of the Department of School Education referred to this as the “action research model of change”. A perceived difficulty with this approach is that the inadequacies and shortcomings in statements of outcomes and levels may have affected the credibility of the curriculum documents with teachers, and by implication, the whole outcomes approach.” (pp. 31-32)
- Differences Between Primary and Secondary Schools: “In general, primary school teachers were more positive about the outcomes approach than their secondary colleagues. Both were equally concerned about workload, assessment and reporting issues and time taken from teaching, but secondary school teachers also focused on subject-related concerns.” (p. 32)
- Understanding of the Basic Terms: “Fundamental differences in the understanding of the basic terms used in relation to outcomes and profiles were apparent in the submissions. This lack of clarity or consensus has led to different perceptions and difference practices throughout the State.” (p. 33)
- Outlines respondents’ various descriptions of ‘outcomes’, ‘strands’, ‘levels’, ‘pointers’ and ‘profiles’.

4.2 Curriculum

- Notes the following relating to content and rigour: “Most respondents saw the need for an appropriate balance of rigorous subject content and process. Views differed markedly, however, on the extent to which the various curriculum documents met such ideals. In this regard, a distinction needs to be drawn between syllabus and support documents produced in the period 1991-1993 and the 1994-5 documents, which incorporate outcomes from the National Profiles. Generally speaking, respondents were supportive of the 1991-1993 documents, even if certain points of detail and omission were criticised.” (p. 38)
- In relation to the documents produced by the Board in 1994 and 1995 notes that:
 - The outcomes and profiles approach is fully supported by the Department of School Education as “an approach which values both content and process.” (p. 38)
 - The Department of School Education also outlined in its submission to the Review Panel what it saw as major issues needing to be addressed in its further work on the development of the K-10 syllabus outcomes, including: K-10 continuity, quality and rigour in the outcomes statements, consistency of standards across all KLAs, inclusion of levels statements, presentation of the outcomes framework within syllabuses, attitudes and values outcomes, and the quality of pointers.
 - Some submissions expressed criticisms of the recent documents – arguing that they were “content free and that the outcome statements were often vague, inconsistent and arbitrary, and oriented towards processes rather than understanding” while others stated strong support for an outcomes and profiles approach. (p. 39)
- In relation to language notes that “Many respondents stated the need for curriculum documents to use technical language appropriate to the subject matter. Others stressed

the importance for syllabus documents to be made as clear as possible in their language so that students and parents can understand them.” (p. 39)

- Discusses the extent to which the present syllabuses are written in a language that is easily understood by teachers, and concludes that “at this stage of the implementation of outcomes and profiles, there remains considerable confusion about its terminology and language.” (p. 40)
- In relation to the relationships to the National Statements and Profiles notes that:
 - By July 1993 National Statements had been produced in all KLAs and that these statements were intended to inform curriculum developments and not meant to be syllabus documents in their own right.
 - The National Profiles were completed by the end of 1993: “Given the speed with which they were produced, it is not surprising that their quality has frequently been brought into question.” (p. 40)
 - The influence of the National Profiles has been decisive in NSW but the National Statements on curriculum development comparatively less so, although the Strand structure in the Profiles is largely borrowed from the National Statements.
 - “A number of submissions, from quite diverse perspectives, commented on the generally unfavourable influence of the National Profiles (and of some Statements), and indicated doubts about their quality” (p. 41).
 - “It has to be said that there are doubts about the quality, content, rigour, interpretation and validity of NSW curriculum documents produced since 1993 as a result of the impact of the National Profiles, and to some extent, the National Statements. The Panel was therefore led to question the wisdom of continuing to tie syllabus development and revision so closely to the National Profiles.” (p. 41)
- In relation to the levels, notes that one of the assumptions underlying the National Profiles is that “student learning and achievement can be described using a matrix of levels, strands, and substrands together with their associated pointers” (pp. 41-42) and makes the following points:
 - “Expert advice provided in a presentation to the Review Panel indicated that much still needs to be done about validation and levels in the National Profiles, and that earlier work had been limited in scale and scope.” (p. 42)
 - “In New South Wales, education authorities generally adopted the Outcomes and Profiles structure, subject to fine-tuning of detail, and concentrated on issues of implementation.” (p. 42)
 - Some submissions expressed confidence that in time a common understanding of outcomes and levels would be reached while others expressed doubts the educational validity of the assumptions embedded in the question of levels and their use.
- In relation to the Key Learning Area (KLA) structure notes that:
 - “The Education Reform Act (1990) defines six Learning Areas for primary education and eight for secondary education.” (p. 43)
 - That the advent of the National Statements and Profiles introduced a complication into the notions of Key Learning Areas and courses.
 - “Discrete subjects were absorbed into the National Statements and Profiles in a variety of ways, sometimes spread across several strands. This resulted in a loss of identity and integrity which appears to have been keenly felt by teachers and others.” (p. 43)

- Arguments pertaining to the unique quality of disciplines not being recognised adequately through outcomes for single KLAs were made in some submissions by senior teachers. “The merit of these arguments is such that the Panel was led to consider whether KLA outcomes were appropriate, and more generally, the interrelationship between studies in cognate disciplines which are grouped together in a single KLA such as Human Society and its Environments or Creative Arts.” (p. 44)
- In relation to strand structure states that: “A number of submissions to the Review raised questions about the strand structure, either directly or by inference. Respondents sometimes criticised the ‘atomisation’ of disciplines, and the loss of cohesion due to the large array of discrete outcomes...Comments on the strand structure were in accordance with those relating to the difficulties of applying National Profiles to those within New South Wales syllabuses.” (p. 44)
- In relation to equity notes that: “A range of equity issues was raised with the Panel through submissions, school visits and hearings. A number of submissions...stated that an outcomes approach promoted equity because it individualised teaching, and could take account of matters such as personal and cultural background. Outcomes were also seen as enabling students to progress with their learning, and to be able to take responsibility for their individualised learning.” (p. 45)
- In relation to currently implementable documents, discusses English K-6 (noting that it was this syllabus which had received the most work in implementing the outcomes and profiles), ESL scales, Aboriginal Studies, Visual Arts, Music 7-10, Human Society and its Environments (HSIE) K-6, and Early Learning Profiles.

4.3 Teaching and Learning

- Provides an overview of submissions relating to teaching and learning. It is noted that submissions emphasised the value of teacher professionalism, the impact of an outcome-based approach on pedagogy (some enthusiastic, others arguing that it does not ensure curriculum quality), the impact of outcomes-based approaches on students and classroom practice, and teacher education.

4.4 Implementation

- States that “In the submissions and in hearings conducted with various organisations, it was very apparent that the pace with which outcomes (and profiles) were being introduced across the different sectors, varied greatly.” (p. 58)
- Notes that Department of School Education has moved more quickly than the non-government sector.
- Discusses timelines for implementation and factors that have had an impact on implementation including the funding available for in-servicing through the NPDP.
- Notes that submissions which mentioned the impact on teachers’ workload largely focused on changes in assessment and reporting.
- Discusses community contributions and understanding, including the difficulty of community-school collaboration, noting one submission which stated that: “The community is seen as the recipient rather than the participant in the implementation of outcomes and profiles.” (p. 65)

4.5 Assessment and Reporting

- Notes that “Problems and issues associated with assessment and reporting featured very strongly in the data gathered as part of the Review. For many teachers, in both

primary and secondary schools, there was a clear perception that the outcomes and profiles was assessment rather than curriculum driven.” (p. 66)

- Notes that assessment and reporting are the issues associated with most concern about outcomes and profiles.
- Discusses the confusion about how assessment and reporting might be managed as part of an outcomes and profiles approach.
- Notes teacher confusion of the profiling processes.
- Notes a general agreement that the primary purpose of assessment is student learning and that “Considerable disquiet was expressed about the appropriateness of outcomes being imposed on syllabuses and then being used as a basis of assessment.” (p. 69)
- Mentions difficulties that have arisen in relation to reporting to parents and that there is a need for more consultation within the community to consider this issue.
- In relation to System-Wide and National Monitoring states that “Some schools are concerned that the focus on the outcomes and profiles approach is related more to accountability at a system/State wide level than on improving teaching and learning in classrooms.” (p. 73)

4.6 Industry and Employment

- Discusses the implications of the outcomes and profiles for industry and employment, noting that: “The key issue relating to industry and employment is the nature and format of student reports as exit credentials. The Review Panel was advised that most employers are in small business and that they generally prefer ‘reports that provide an assessment based on comparative ranking’. The adoption of criterion referenced-reporting would require education of employers and the use of clear and unambiguous language.” (p. 74)
- Discusses key competencies and notes that “The Review Panel appreciates the importance of developing linkages between the outcomes of schooling and pathways into vocational education and training. Properly developed Key Competencies may be one way of contributing to this. The Panel has some disquiet, however, about some aspects of the processes being undertaken by the Pilot Project [being undertaken in New South Wales with 45 secondary schools]. In particular, it has concerns about the criteria that are being used to judge whether the Key Competencies are being achieved, and how they have been arrived at.” (p. 75)

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Presents the recommendations, as in the first part of the document, with further discussion relating to the confusion with outcomes and profiles, the relationship between syllabus outcomes and curriculum documents, support documents, teacher workload, the introduction of new syllabuses and support documents, the implementation cycle, teacher professionalism, assessment and reporting, teacher education, system issues, national reporting, and future work in evaluation and research.