The Le@rning Federation Phase Three Plan

Summary of responses and action to be taken

1. Respondents

Responses were received from
- o   The Australian Government
- o   Department of Education and Training, Victoria
- o   National Catholic Education Office (NCEO)
- o   Department of Education and the Arts, Queensland
- o   Department of Employment, Education and Training, NT
- o   Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA)
- o   Ministry of Education, New Zealand
- o   *David Katz, Department of Education and Training, WA
- o   Simon Fenton-Jones
      * This response was submitted as a personal response noting that it did not represent the formal position of the WA Department

An additional email was received from the AEU asking if teachers were able to respond. The CEO replied assuring the AEU that all responses would be considered and that teachers were able to access the Plan from the website.

Note: The summary of responses that follow are organised according to the sections of the Phase Three Plan Consultation Draft. Only the sections where comments were made have been listed.

2. Overall impressions

All comments received expressed general approval for the directions proposed in the Plan and a commitment to support AESOC's approval of the Plan as a way forward. Most however had specific suggestions for amendment or asked questions of clarification.

3. Mission section

3.2 Targets

There were some questions raised about the targets. It should be noted that these targets were set my the Ministers in their Online Content Investment Agreement and the plan has since been amended to make this clear.

In particular the meaning of the first target and the balance between learning objects and digital resources to be procured was raised by several respondents. There was concern expressed by many respondents about the target concerning teacher-developed materials. Issues surrounding copyright, intellectual property, the possible complexity of interoperable standards and peer reviewing and the amount of support needed for teachers at the jurisdiction level were the major issues raised. One jurisdiction further stated that its emphasis would be on sharing between schools within the jurisdiction before inter-jurisdictional sharing would be considered.

Many respondents stressed the need for extensive consultation with jurisdictions on the nature of the teacher-developed materials and the processes to be put in place to achieve this target.

3.3 Values

All responses to this section applauded the general thrust of the values that underpin the Plan. There were some suggestions for rewording which have been incorporated into the document to be considered by AESOC. The document has been amended to reflect these suggestions.

3.4 Sustainability

One jurisdiction commended the development of standards and templates for use by cultural organizations as a useful strategy for sustainability.

3.5 User group

The inclusion of VTE students as part of the user group and access for parents was raised by one jurisdiction.

3.7 Market development

The need to ensure that, during Phase Three, an effective dialogue is established with all significant developers of digital content to ensure maximum benefit is gained from investment in content, training and infrastructure was raised by one respondent. This response also suggested that industry forums could be conducted by TLF as a means of achieving a sustainable market.

4. Online Curriculum Content section

There were questions raised about the nature and format of the 4000 items of content to be procured and if stakeholders were to be consulted about this.

4.1 Scope

There was widespread support for the development of broader curriculum coverage. There was support for the inclusion of educationally sound items that incorporate the ability for students to produce evidence of learning for assessment.

4.2 Content formats

While this section was generally endorsed there were requests for further information. The need for jurisdictions to be thoroughly consulted particularly on the nature of assessment items was stressed by two respondents.

4.3 Sources of content

The commitment to a broader range of content sourcing, including improving extant content and working with jurisdictions to build the capacity of teachers to use, propagate and contribute online content to the pool was made by one respondent. Another supported the notion of teachers contributing learning sequences integrating online content as valuable resources for teacher professional learning.

4.4 Diversity

The expansion of the project to include a diversity of technologies was supported by one jurisdiction.

4.5 Needs of Indigenous communities

There were two requests a change in the reference to language needs of Indigenous students. This has been implemented in the version of the Plan to be considered by AESOC. The expansion of research into the suitability of TLF content for Indigenous students was supported.

4.6 Consultation

Several respondents commented on this section. All were supportive of the formation of the TLF Consultative Committee with both ICT/ curriculum and technical expertise to replace the Exchange Consultative Committee. The importance of role of the Contact Liaison Officers (CLOs) was mentioned in many responses. There were questions of clarification asked about this section, in particular the role of consultation in determining the content priorities. One respondent expressed concern that there needed to be a strategic focus that Curriculum Area Reference Groups (CARGs) and Expert Focus Groups (EFGs) alone could not provide. One respondent requested that the number of schools involved in testing and trialing online content be expanded.

5. Intellectual property management

One respondent requested that regional and state/public cultural content should be included in this section. This is the intention of TLF.

Several respondents noted that IP and copyright issues must be resolved on all TLF content shared across jurisdictions. The question of implications with IP as Curriculum Corporation takes over the management of the project was raised.

6. Quality Assurance

The move towards SCORM compliance was supported by one respondent. Another, on the other hand, requested clarification about this. This response also raised the issue of existing content and its SCORM compliance.

Other respondents commended TLF's Quality Assurance Framework with some concern expressed that regular consultation will need to continue to ensure compatibility with schools' operating environments. It was also noted that the maintenance of the QA framework was not included specifically in the deliverables.

7. Deliverables

The general thrust of the deliverables was supported. Most responses to this section requested further detail about the deliverables, in particular the deliverables relating to research, assessment and the central repository with cautions that the detail will need to be worked out in collaboration with jurisdictions.

As noted by some responses, it is the intention that the deliverables will be refined annually providing additional detail. Consultation will play an important role in determining the deliverables as requested by several respondents.

Summary of consultation responses to TLF Phase Three Plan, Consultation Draft.

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8. Critical success factors

All respondents were happy with the listed critical success factors although there were some requests for detail about how these were to be addressed. Several jurisdictions raised the issue of uptake by schools and one suggested a national collaborative approach be taken to increasing the number of schools and teachers using the content.

9. Technical systems

There was general support for this section and the concept of a the content registry.

10. Research

There was general support for the research role of TLF including the proposed investigation of the role of new technologies. There were some requests for further detail on planned research activities.

One respondent stressed the need to ensure the research is not all qualitative and, while supporting the investigation of links internationally, comment that there must be a continued focus on the needs of Australian students. There was a suggestion of a research symposium, perhaps as a strand within an existing research conference. Another responded requested that the research included a focus on how the quality of TLF content could be further improved.

11. Networks and relationships

This section, including the proposed international symposium to discuss issues related to the implementation of online curriculum content, was supported, again with some questions of clarification.

12. Risk analysis and Management strategy

There were some specific comments about the assessment of the likely impact of some specific risks. The Plan has been amended accordingly. Otherwise the section, including the mitigation strategies were endorsed. One respondent suggested that there was an additional risk of the possibility that there would not be a viable ongoing supply of high quality, standards compliant content and suggested that the strategies used to engage the commercial content market will need to be broadened.

13. Budgets and Funds Administration

There was general support for this section with a caution from the Australian Government that, at the time of writing, there had been no final confirmation of the quantum of the Commonwealth's contribution to the Initiative.

14. Governance

The governance arrangements including the proposed links to MCEETYA Taskforces and the AESOC policy sub-group were supported.

15 Definition of terms

There were some suggestions for an addition to the list of terms and a request for a clearer definition of the term 'jurisdiction'. These amendments have been made.