

## **SACE FIRST YEAR EVALUATION**

### **EVALUATION BRIEF**

#### **1. Purpose of SACE First Year Evaluation**

The purpose of the SACE First Year Evaluation is to analyse and interpret the initial effects of the new arrangements for the SACE following its first year of full operation and to identify areas where improvements should be introduced.

The SACE First Year Evaluation is not an audit of the 2011 SACE results. It will use the results and other information to analyse and interpret the first year of the SACE.

As defined in the SACE Board of South Australia Act, the responsibility and authority for determining the completion requirements and policies of the SACE reside with the Board as the governing body of the SACE Board of SA.

Just as the Board has previously based the SACE completion requirements and policies on the outcomes of the SACE Review and the advice of the SACE Review Implementation Steering Committee, it will undertake the SACE First Year Evaluation through a process that engages the Minister, the three school sectors in South Australia and the key stakeholder groups with an interest in the SACE.

#### **2. Strategic Context**

##### **2.1 Implementation of new SACE**

During the period 2009-2011, the SACE Board has progressively implemented the new arrangements for completing the SACE. In 2009 the first Year 10 students studied the Personal Learning Plan under the new arrangements, and at the end of 2011 the first Year 12 students were awarded the new SACE.

The new arrangements for the SACE are based on the South Australian Government's Review of the SACE and its subsequent acceptance of the Review Report's recommendations at the end of 2006. The Review Report recommended a number of reforms to strengthen the capacity of the SACE to recognise the achievements of the full range of students and the different places in which they can learn. It focused on the capabilities that young people need for life and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The SACE Board has based the approval of the SACE completion requirements and policies on the advice it received from the SACE Review Implementation Steering Committee consisting of the heads of the three South Australian school sectors, the Chief Executive of DFEEST and a nominee of the Vice-Chancellors from the South Australia universities.

The SACE Board has further worked to ensure the SACE is consistent with the Government's policies to improve school retention and to increase the school education age to 17 and the Government's School-to-Work Strategy.

The SACE contributes to the achievement of key targets in the South Australian Strategic Plan.

The SACE Board also provides the curriculum, assessment and certification for the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training.

## **2.2 SACE Board commitment to SACE evaluation**

The SACE Board is committed to the evaluation of the SACE as an essential element of its legislative responsibility to ensure the SACE meets the diverse needs and pathways of the full range of students completing their senior secondary education in South Australia.

The SACE Board's strategies for monitoring and evaluating the SACE are used to identify and implement improvements to the SACE. They incorporate the analysis of qualitative and quantitative information. They are based on consultation with SACE key stakeholders.

In 2012 the SACE Board will undertake the SACE First Year Evaluation to identify and analyse the initial effects of the new arrangements for the SACE and to determine where it would be appropriate to implement improvements. This analysis will take into consideration the time that is needed for the effects of change to become clear.

In recognition of the strategic context in which the SACE First Year Evaluation will occur, the SACE Board will appoint an Evaluation Panel that will operate under the auspices of the Board to oversee the SACE First Year Evaluation and to bring a high level of independent experience and expertise to the operation of the evaluation.

In addition to focusing on the evaluation of the first year of the new arrangements for the SACE, the Evaluation Panel will also advise the Board on further evaluation activity that should be undertaken based on its findings.

## **2.3 Government commitment to SACE evaluation**

In response to the 27th Report of the Social Development Committee of Parliament in 2008, the then Minister for Education and Children's Services agreed that an independent evaluation of the new SACE should take place within two years of the first cohort of students graduating under the new SACE arrangements.

The Minister stated at the time that the SACE Board would undertake the independent evaluation and would report on the outcome in its Annual Report.

The Minister further stated at the time that evaluation should relate to both the seven principles developed in the Report of the SACE Review to underpin the new SACE and the set of legislative principles outlined in the SACE Board Act, upon which the operation of the SACE must be based.

The SACE Board's commitment to undertake the SACE First Year Evaluation in 2012 respects the Minister's agreement.

The SACE Board has decided to undertake the evaluation in the year immediately following students completing the SACE under the new arrangements for the first time, so that it can address any areas of concern that have emerged during the implementation process.

## **2.4 Implementation of Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum**

The SACE Board has publicly given its in-principle support for the development and implementation of the Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum as endorsed by the Ministerial Council.

It has also publicly stated that the earliest possible time that the SACE Board will be in a position to implement the first four subjects of the Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum in the SACE is likely to be 2015 for Stage 1 subjects and 2016 for Stage 2 subjects.

The timeline for the introduction of any improvements to the arrangements for the SACE will need to take into account the articulation of these changes with the timeline for the development, preparation and implementation of Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum subjects in the SACE.

## **3. SACE First Year Evaluation Panel**

### **3.1 Role of Evaluation Panel**

For the SACE First Year Evaluation, the Board as the governing body of the SACE Board of SA. will establish an independent Evaluation Panel to gather, analyse and interpret relevant information and data about the SACE, following the first year of its new arrangements.

The Evaluation Panel will use this information and data to identify how the new arrangements have contributed to the policy purposes of the new SACE.

The Evaluation Panel will use this information and data to identify improvements that can strengthen the SACE. It will identify any areas of concern that have been raised during the first year of the SACE operating under the new arrangements, including but not limited to the new compulsory requirements of the SACE, the relationship between the Research Project and Year 12 subject enrolments, and the operational impact of the SACE for schools and the SACE Board.

The Evaluation Panel will report to the Board on how and when any improvements would best be introduced.

The Evaluation Panel will determine the methodology for gathering the information and data about the first year of the new SACE arrangements. It will take steps to ensure that the evaluation methodology gives stakeholders of the SACE the best opportunity to present information of importance to them.

### **3.2 Evaluation Panel Terms of Reference**

The Evaluation Panel operates under the auspices of the Board to undertake the following responsibilities:

- a) To determine the evaluation strategy for the SACE First Year Evaluation with reference to the SACE Reform Principles in the SACE Review Report and to the Legislative Principles in the SACE Board of SA Act.
- b) To determine the most effective means of including the perspective of students in the evaluation process.
- c) To consult with key stakeholders about the first year of the new arrangements for the SACE, including the establishment and operation of an Evaluation Reference Committee consisting of nominees from, but not limited to:

- the three South Australian school sectors (AISSA, CESA and DECD);
  - secondary principals associations of the three school sectors;
  - South Australian parent organisations;
  - the Australian Education Union;
  - the Independent Education Union;
  - the Council of Education Associations of SA (CEASA)
  - the South Australian Universities;
  - Aboriginal Education;
  - South Australian Training and Skills Commission;
  - DFEEEST; and
  - Business SA.
- d) To consult with the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training and Charles Darwin University about the new arrangements for the Northern Territory Certificate of Education.
- e) To identify areas of concern that have been raised during the first year of the SACE operating under the new arrangements, including but not limited to, the new compulsory requirements of the SACE, the relationship between the Research Project and Year 12 subject enrolments, and the operational impact of the SACE for schools and the SACE Board.
- f) To gather relevant information and data relating to the new arrangements for the SACE.
- g) To analyse and interpret the information and data it receives to identify and analyse progress towards the achievement of the principles of the SACE and the intended and unintended consequences of the new arrangements for the SACE.
- h) To take into appropriate account the relationship between the SACE results and the university entry selection process operating in South Australia and the Northern Territory.
- i) To advise the Board on improvements to the arrangements for the SACE that are consistent with the SACE Reform Principles outlined in the SACE Review Report and the Legislative Principles defined in the SACE Board of SA Act.
- j) To advise the Board on matters that should be considered in the introduction of any improvements to the arrangements for the SACE, including the most effective implementation timeline.
- k) To advise the Board on future and ongoing evaluation activity in relation to the SACE.
- l) To provide progress reports and a final report to the Board according to the defined timeline.

### **3.3 Evaluation Panel membership**

The Evaluation Panel will comprise the following members:

- Mr Bill Cossey AM (Convenor);
- Professor John Bennett;
- Ms Miriam Silva;
- Dr Petra Lietz (ACER).

The membership of the Evaluation Panel combines a depth of knowledge and experience relating to the place of senior secondary education in the South Australian context and professional expertise in the analysis of the effectiveness of new initiatives:

- *Mr Cossey* possesses a depth of understanding of the place of education in the South Australian society and economy through his work with the South Australian Strategic Plan Audit Committee and the Social Inclusion Board. He possesses extensive experience in evaluation and review processes, including the schooling sector. He currently convenes the Skills Industry Board Executive Officers Group and the Higher and Further Education Task Group.
- *Professor Bennett* is currently Conjoint Professor in the School of Education at the University of New South Wales, where his focus is on curriculum, assessment and measurement, and their impact on schools. Previously he was the Chief Executive of the New South Wales Board of Studies. At the national level he has undertaken evaluation, review and development projects in assessment and certification in Queensland and at the international level he has provided advice and assistance to Government assessment and credentialing authorities in New Zealand, Scotland, Brunei, Qatar and Indonesia.
- *Ms Silva* is currently the Deputy Chair of the Training and Skills Commission in South Australia and has overseen the development of the strategic connections between the SACE Board and the Commission in the recognition of Vocational Education and Training qualifications in the SACE, including such allied initiatives as the introduction of the Training Guarantee for SACE students. She has a depth of senior management experience in major businesses in the commercial and financial sectors, including the introduction of major change initiatives.
- *Dr Lietz* is a Principal Research Fellow at the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER). Dr Lietz has been a Consultant for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Since joining ACER, she has worked on a number of national and international projects in evaluation and data analyses. Her specific role on the Evaluation Panel will be to provide independent advice on evaluation methodology and data analysis.

#### **4. Governance arrangements relating to SACE First Year Evaluation**

**4.1 Role of Board:** Under the SACE Board of SA Act, the Board is the governing body responsible for the SACE and possesses the legislative responsibility and authority for determining the completion requirements and associated policies of the SACE. The Board is responsible for the approval and implementation of the outcomes of the SACE First Year Evaluation.

**4.2 Role of Minister for Education and Child Development:** One of the legislative principles of the SACE Board of SA Act is the cooperation and collaboration between the Board, the Minister and the school education sectors. Accordingly the Board has committed to implementing the Minister's agreement to undertake an evaluation of the SACE within the first two years of the first cohort of students graduating under the new arrangements for the SACE.

**4.3 Role of Evaluation Panel for the SACE First Year Evaluation:** The Evaluation Panel operates under the auspices of the Board to oversee the evaluation strategy and to bring a high level of independent experience and expertise to the operation of the strategy. The Chair of the Evaluation Panel will provide public statements about the SACE First Year Evaluation.

**4.4 Role of SACE Board Chief Executive and organisation:** The SACE Board is not a member of the Evaluation Reference Committee. However the Chief Executive will provide the Evaluation Panel with information, data and administrative services that will assist it in fulfilling its terms of reference.

### **Timeline for SACE First Year Evaluation**

The following is the proposed timeline for the SACE First Year Evaluation. Each step in the sequence is directly dependent on the preceding steps.

February 2012	Evaluation Panel begins preparation of evaluation strategy in consultation with key stakeholders.
March – May 2012	Evaluation Panel manages SACE First Year Evaluation.
June – July 2012	Evaluation Panel presents Evaluation Report to Board. Board provides a statement to the education community and wider community about the implementation and associated timeline for improvements to the SACE with specific reference to the Evaluation Report.
March, 2013	Board presents a final summary of SACE First Year Evaluation and its outcomes in the SACE Board 2012 Annual Report.

Paul Kilvert  
Chief Executive

17 February 2012

Attachments:

- 1 (a) Principles to guide the reform of the SACE, *SACE Review: Final Report*
- 1 (b) Legislative principles from *SACE Board of South Australia Act*

## ATTACHMENT 1 (a)

### Extract from ‘Success for all’, Ministerial Review of Senior Secondary Education in South Australia, SACE Review: Final Report.

#### **Towards a new SACE for all**

##### **Overview**

*The core term of reference given to the Review Panel was to: ‘achieve a curriculum and assessment framework that will meet the diverse needs of all students and result in high and more socially equitable levels of retention, competition and pathways beyond school’ and, in that context, ‘Identify the characteristics of a relevant and contemporary certificate of education’*

*The first part of the Chapter responds to that reference by identifying seven Principles to guide the reform of the SACE and senior secondary education in South Australia. The Principles are based in large part on the analysis presented in Part A of the report, and affirm the need for the SACE to be:*

- **flexible and responsive** to the needs of individual students and groups of students
- **credible** in terms of rigour of the learning process, the standards used to assess students’ achievements, and the reliability of the certificate’s attestation to what SACE graduates know and can do
- **inclusive** of all students, cultures and study pathways so that success for all is the prevailing dominant culture
- **connected** to learning that precedes it, to work and study destinations beyond it, and to local and global communities
- **worthwhile** in terms of benefits perceived by students
- **futures orientated** so that students have the capacities to not only survive in a globally competitive world, but to shape it
- **supportive** of quality learning and teaching.

*The Panel believes that the new qualification will be seen as a credible certificate in its own right—one that is fresh, relevant, forward looking, dynamic, and rigorous; and valued by students, employers, unions, higher and further education providers, and the communities in South Australia, the Northern Territory and other states and territories and overseas—and therefore a qualification that fulfils the Panel’s core brief.*

Extract from page 83, Success for all: SACE Review Part B.

ATTACHMENT 21 (b)

**Extract from SACE Board of South Australia Act 1983**

**5—Legislative principles**

The following principles will apply in connection with the operation of this Act:

- (a) all young people are to be encouraged to obtain a formal education qualification that helps them to live and participate successfully in the world as it constantly changes, after taking into account their goals and abilities;
- (b) it is recognised—
  - (i) that young people acquire skills, values and knowledge associated with their education through their individual endeavours and through a range of learning experiences and in a variety of situations that may include, as well as schools, workplaces and training and community organisations; and
  - (ii) that young people require a range of skills and knowledge, including literacy and numeracy skills, to assist them to succeed in the wider community;
- (c) the qualification that is awarded by the Board should—
  - (i) acknowledge the skills and knowledge that have been acquired through formal education and training and other learning processes; and
  - (ii) reflect rigorous standards and community expectations; and
  - (iii) be consistent with an appropriate Australian qualification framework;
- (d) cooperation and collaboration between the Board, the school education sectors and the Minister are to be recognised as fundamental elements to achieving the best outcomes for students seeking to qualify for the SACE.

*Extract from SACE Board of South Australia Act, Part 1, Section 5.*