

Enhancing formation, professional learning and career pathways in Lutheran schools

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Executive Summary

This is a report outlining a concept for a strategy to enhance educational practice in Lutheran schools. This report culminates several months of consultation to establish the feasibility for adjusting the current formation and professional accreditation programs that are currently delivered for teachers appointed to Lutheran schools in Australia. These are sound programs in design. Examples from the regional offices have also been provided that demonstrate instances of effective delivery of both of these programs.

There is a problem, however, in the unevenness of scale of uptake, and timely completion of these programs. Engagement and compliance with the accreditation initiatives is largely reliant upon the importance given to them by school leadership in individual schools, availability of resources and the scale of costs incurred. Rural and remote schools experience considerable inequity in this regard. They incur greater expense in assisting teacher participation in the programs for travel, accommodation and teacher replacement. Furthermore, they often risk losing these very teachers a few years after completing their accreditation, when their teachers are recruited in urban schools and colleges, which benefit from both the training and the extra years of teaching experience.

This report has attempted to address how the existing approach to Lutheran formation and faith-led teacher development programs can be modified to address the inequity, poor uptake and overdue completions. It has also sought to find ways that will motivate staff for longer-term engagement in professional learning and formal studies to create a more highly trained workforce and to create a milieu of research-led practice in Lutheran schools. To this end, SA universities were approached to ascertain how the 'in house' Lutheran accreditation programs might be accredited towards further studies towards Masters degree qualifications. The universities approached were very accommodating and sought to work together to ascertain and negotiate standards and scope for accreditation of a Graduate Certificate in Religious Education or Lutheran Education. They indicated willingness for teachers to build on their 'in house' Lutheran accreditation program, and use subjects in University Masters level programs to achieve a Masters degree. This approach to post graduate studies would significantly reduce the cost to individual teachers in achieving a Masters degree given that a full-time semester value of the studies would be attained through an industry (Lutheran education) based program, compared with the cost of a Masters program taken entirely in a university. In some circumstances, the combination of the Lutheran accredited graduate certificate plus the university studies could qualify for entry into Education Doctorate and PhD programs. These conditions have the potential to motivate staff to pursue further professional qualifications, resulting in a more highly qualified teacher workforce. This is not only a goal of LEA, but also a national goal more generally. These conditions would also provoke opportunities for classroom, school and system-wide educational research and educational innovation.

The following recommendations are made:

Recommendation 1: Leadership commitment to formation

That as an element in the dissemination of *Growing Deep*, all principals need to be systematically appraised of the importance of formation and of the place and delivery of *Pathways spiritual* to accomplish this. Ideally, principals should commit to providing a substantial focus on the induction for all new staff each year before the school begins. A further teacher development time should also be allocated in the ensuing six months in which new staff are supported by a designated experienced staff member who has both levels of accreditation (At and Ac).

Recommendation 2: Timely At and Ac completions

That expectations for the uptake and completion of the At and Ac accreditation programs be more explicit and that they be commenced during the first year of employment with explicit completion time frames. Once again a commitment should be sought from school principals

that this will be a priority for all new staff who should have a plan for completing At and Ac and potentially for undertaking further studies.

Recommendation 3: More rigorous assessment of At and Ac programs

That At and Ac continue to be guided by supportive ongoing formative assessment, but culminate with more rigorous summative assessment procedures that separate formative guidance from summative assessment, the latter attesting to completion of *Pathways* and *Equip*.

Recommendation 4: Graduate Certificate (Lutheran Education)

That the BLEA affirm a determination for the further development of the concept of a professional learning pathway leading to a Graduate Certificate (Religious/Lutheran Education) to be developed based on the existing programs (*Pathways* and *Equip*).

Recommendation 5: Evaluation strategy

That an evaluation strategy be developed from the outset focusing on the impact of any significant changes in line with what is proposed for changes to formation, professional learning for accreditation and that formative evaluation be included to enable modifications in the pilot phase. In addition a more summative evaluation plan be devised drawing upon the frameworks of key educational evaluation theorists Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2008,2014) and Guskey (2000 and 2014).

Recommendation 6: Recognition and reward for what is important

That a working group be established to consider ways to acknowledge, celebrate and promulgate exemplary Christian practices and leadership as well as innovative educational achievement among school staff and students that is in keeping with core values of a Lutheran ethos. The aim of this initiative is to reinforce the importance of the distinctiveness of a faith-led Lutheran education.

Recommendation 7: A draft implementation plan and budget be tabled at the BLEA in June 2016.

The LEA Director of Formation is asked to draft an implementation plan to be tabled at the BLEA in June 2016.

The Report

Project context and description

Lutheran education in Australia aspires to be distinctive in terms of the educational experience it provides its students. A critical factor in assuring and enhancing this educational experience is its staff community. LEA has clearly articulated the importance for all staff to be fully aware of what is expected of them in helping to contribute to the achievement of the values aspired to by the Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) leadership and, furthermore, what they might expect when working in a Christian community. Currently, there are well developed, in-house formation and professional learning programs to assist staff to achieve accreditation as teachers (At), as Christian Studies teachers (Ac) and as leaders (Al). It is expected that all teaching staff will achieve At within the first three years of employment and staff teaching Christian Studies will also achieve Ac within three years. These programs have been designed through robust discussion and consultation as to what is important in contemporary faith-led education and how it might be achieved.

The problem

In order to maintain and enhance the distinctiveness of Lutheran education it is important that staff are sufficiently inducted into Lutheran values and ethos. For this to occur their engagement in ongoing spiritual and theological formation and professional learning is central to their contribution in the promulgation of the values and ethos of Lutheran education. Furthermore, engagement in ongoing professional education is important for all teaching staff in order to deliver an education suited to the 21st century.

It is understood, however, that the uptake and completion of existing Lutheran teaching and Christian Studies accreditation programs is less than optimal. A number of initiatives have been developed to address the problem, but little has changed. It is proposed that a more intentional and cohesive plan, focusing on and supporting the long-term career development of school staff, might encourage greater engagement and completion.

The current program of professional learning is uneven in its delivery, less than optimal in its uptake across the system, inequitable in its costs and, to some extent, unsustainable. The schools themselves are quite unevenly equipped to undertake the formation and professional learning programs. Significant factors in delivering quality programs include: school location, centrality and remoteness, size of school, distance from regional office, as well as capabilities, background and accessible support from school leadership. Compliance and uptake in some places is unacceptably low due to insufficient resources and capacity to deliver, especially in rural and remote locations.

The project

Recognition of the issues outlined has led to the instigation of a new project that is intent on ensuring initial and ongoing formation of all school staff at every level, more extensive and timely accreditation completions and generating a deliberate, systematic and equitable professional learning and career pathway for teaching staff in Lutheran schools. In doing so, the goal is to ensure that the design and provision of faith-led formation and professional learning programs meets the distinctive national standards for Lutheran education. The intent is also to align with the contemporary national educational environment, including the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) and the emergence of innovative technologies that help overcome the challenges of distance. The new developments should take into account the expertise, achievements and needs particular to each of the three LEA

regions and individual schools. The ultimate aim is enable the delivery and meta-design of the in-house professional learning to:

1. Provide robust induction to the values of Lutheran Education and expectations of new staff before teaching commences,
2. Assure quality delivery and impact, comprehensive uptake and timely completion of the At and Ac programs,
3. Be of such a standard that it can be externally accredited so that staff are able to chose to gain credit towards a recognised university based higher degree (e.g. Masters of Education, Masters of Educational Leadership, Education Doctorate and /or PhD).

Foremost in this vision is a desire to underscore the importance of ongoing teacher spiritual and faith formation. In addition, a fundamental intent of this vision is enabling enhanced educational quality in Lutheran schools through ongoing professional learning and research-led educational delivery in which its processes are highly evident, recognised and rewarded. To this end, this project has been initiated by LEA to assess what changes are needed and feasible to address perceived problems of uptake, resourcing and career building. The project is divided into two phases.

Phase 1 seeks to review and consider the strengths of the existing formation and professional learning programs and to identify what changes are needed and what is feasible to progress a plan for enhancement so that future programs will:

1. Enhance and build on the quality of the existing *Pathways* and *Equip* programs, providing formation and professional learning of a more consistent quality nationally to achieve the aspirations of LEA
2. Ensure that staff are engaged with the intent of professional learning rather than be merely compliant
3. Be inclusive and recognise and support the contribution of all staff in Lutheran schools
4. Be equitable especially in regard to the financial and distance constraints of small and remote schools
5. Be easily transferable between schools
6. Become university accredited for teachers who elect to engage in further higher education qualifications through partnerships and affiliations with ALC and Australian universities
7. Identify methods of delivery that are feasible, effective, equitable and sustainable drawing upon existing strengths, attributes and resources of LEA and support timely completion
8. Be cohesive, incrementally developmental and thus able to be adapted to address the diverse entering capabilities and dispositions of the staff as they are recruited into Lutheran schools
9. Be grounded in an ongoing cycle of evaluation and evidence based renewal and innovation so that the professional learning programs meet the ever changing needs of LEA and support its aspirations to provide high quality, faith led education for its students, that align with national standards and initiatives and is appropriate for 21st century.

Phase 2 of the project will respond to the aspects of the proposal that the Executive Director identifies as endorsed by the Board of Lutheran Education Australia (BLEA) for potential for implementation. Based on this endorsement, Phase 2 of the project will develop an implementation plan including costing for IT and staffing infrastructure. This will result in a second report to the LEA Executive Director encompassing feasibility studies related to indicative staffing, staff training, infrastructure and IT affordances and costs.

Project deliverables

- A conceptualisation of ongoing professional learning in LEA that incorporates whole of institution development based on the values expressed in the document *Leadership and Spiritual Formation* (June 2015) and that embodies research and evidenced led learning, teaching and leadership
- A reconceptualisation of the current in-house *Pathways* and *Equip* programs as a work-based higher degree program (Boud, 2001), that have been subjected to consultation with multiple higher degree institutions in terms of how they might accredited them as units in higher education post graduate degree programs.

- A proposal for ways in which the current *Pathways* and *Equip* program might be developed, delivered and assessed as discrete academic units of study in order to be accredited as a progressive study program from Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma to Masters degrees that can be taken up in multiple institutions
- A plan for face-to-face and online delivery and assessment of in-house modules that has been costed and has a timeline for implementation and accounts for the diverse needs of Lutheran schools in Australia
- An established advisory group with representation from each region who will be ongoing champions and moderators of the program of professional learning across LEA

Phase 1 Project Report

Review and conceptual design process

The following report of phase 1 of the project is a discussion document for the LEA Executive Director to present to the Board (BLEA). This report addresses and provides recommendations for:

- Mechanisms for ongoing enhancement of the Lutheran teaching workforce and pedagogical practices through formation and professional learning,
- Alternative program design, content and assessment,
- The roles of LEA, ALC and schools leadership in establishing and maintaining continuous and comprehensive workforce development.

This phase one document is largely conceptual and does not include detailed information of implementation and costing. Key features of the concept have been discussed in consultations with the key staff responsible for *Pathways* and *Equip* in the regional offices, ALC (University of Divinity) and three universities, ACU, UniSA and Flinders University, to determine the feasibility.

It is important to note at this point that the realisation of any recommendations of this project is highly dependent on a concurrent consultancy that focuses on governance of Lutheran education. This latter project is led by Dr Maureen Cleary and is soon to be reported to the Executive Director and Board. In undertaking the project reported here, it is apparent that the governance of Lutheran education is multi-factored, lacking clear lines of leadership and authority and this would make the implementation of this initiative difficult, to say the least. Throughout this current investigation of feasibility for change, it has been difficult to identify the structure and infrastructure that would enable and ensure a consistent implementation of changes agreed upon by the Board. It was not possible to identify who in the system might be universally recognised as possessing the authority to direct, monitor and evaluate the change. Until this confusion of leadership and authority is clarified and the relationships between the different organisational groups, such as schools, regional centres, LEA and ALC are explicitly articulated and generally accepted, it would be very difficult to implement a change that would represent rigour and provide a level of assurance of learning and standards to any accrediting bodies.

Current Lutheran formation and professional learning

The Lutheran education system in Australia comprises 84 schools nationally. Annually, approximately 250 new staff from quite diverse teaching backgrounds and prior experiences in education and Lutheranism are recruited each year to its schools. The majority of the student enrolment resides in large R-12 colleges in the Queensland sector, based in both Brisbane and in the rural areas. The majority of schools, however, are located in urban and rural South Australia, where there is a growing network of small primary schools as well as larger R-12 colleges. To a lesser extent there are Lutheran schools in Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia and Northern Territory.

Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) is committed to the mission and ministry of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) through supporting quality, Christ centred education'. It operates on behalf of the LCA in partnership with early childhood centres (ECCs), schools and regions in pursuit of this vision. Following on from this statement of purpose, LEA understands itself to have the remit to develop and deliver resources for ongoing professional learning in Lutheran schools that are delivered in concert with Australian Lutheran Collage (ALC affiliated with University of Divinity), the three Lutheran education regions (Qld, SAWANT & VicNswTas) and Lutheran schools. These programs are designed to ensure that the core ethos of Lutheran education is understood and taught. To achieve this, two core Lutheran professional learning programs, *Pathways*, aimed at spiritual and theological formation, and *Equip*, aimed at preparing Christian Studies teachers, have been designed in a collaborative enterprise

between LEA and the three regional offices. These programs are delivered in schools supported by the regional offices across Lutheran education. The first program is *Pathways* to introduce new staff to Lutheran theology and its unique education ethos. This program aims to contribute to staff awareness regarding the core values that differentiate Lutheran education from other educational systems. Upon its completion, teaching staff are accredited to teach in Lutheran schools. The other program is *Equip*, which builds on *Pathways* to prepare staff to be teachers of Christian Studies in Lutheran schools and accredits them to do so. Currently, school principals, chaplains and local pastors are expected to take a robust leadership role in delivering these two programs along with the LEA regional staff.

Beyond faith formation in schools, LEA is also actively engaged in the development and enhancement of leadership in its schools. To this end there is an established agreement with Australian Catholic University and ALC in regard to education for leadership training via a Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Leadership. There is also an alliance with the Australian Lutheran College (ALC) in North Adelaide which brings with it an alliance with University of Divinity (based in Melbourne) in which ALC provides a core theological unit in the ACU Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Leadership, namely Education and Theology in Dialogue. ALC also offer a Masters of Education and Theology. LEA has also recently launched *Growing Deep*, which is a framework for leadership and formation in schools and early childhood services.

ALC provides undergraduate initial Lutheran teacher education through units of study focusing on Lutheran education and taught by ALC staff in the double degree Bachelor of Arts/Science / Bachelor of Education on Lutheran education largely through universities such as Flinders, UniSA and ACU Banyo. At Flinders, until recently, it was possible to include these units within the double degree program, but this capacity has been lost in a recent reaccreditation processes. This means that at Flinders currently there is no 'within study load' program for pre-service formation of teachers for the Lutheran education system. There is, however, a new opportunity for ALC to revisit and return to the inclusion of the Lutheran education units within the final pre-service teacher education program at Flinders University, in a new five-year, double degree program to Masters level.

Accreditation of *Pathways* and *Equip* in higher education

With the preceding issues aimed at achieving deeper engagement, more consistent delivery and high quality assurance of learning, LEA aspires to be better placed to negotiate accreditation of selected aspects of *Pathways* and *Equip* as units in a work-based learning degree (Boud 2001). It is envisioned that a career pathway is mapped starting with an in-house Lutheran Education Graduate Certificate into a university based Graduate Diploma, Masters (Lutheran Education at ALC), Masters of Leadership (various Australian universities UNISA, Flinders, ACU, QUT) or other Masters specialties (Special Education, Gifted Education, International Baccalaureate, Educational Technology, Performing Arts, Theology, Sports Coaching, Music Education, School Counseling etc.). With sufficient research education units, these degrees which would qualify graduates to enter into research higher degree including Education Doctorates (Ed Doc), which is an essentially practice-focused Doctoral program, and PhD programs of research.

The advantages in this approach is the potential for:

- Enhancement the staff educational profile
- Enhancement of the educational quality through research led teaching
- Reduced costs burden on the teaching staff should they choose to undertake higher degree study. If a minimum of three units and potentially four units is delivered in-house this will incur less higher degree fees to achieve a Masters in Education
- Lifts the existing teaching and Christian Studies accreditation from a system status to a qualification that is transferable beyond Lutheran schools
- Increased capacity for classroom based, school based and system based research to inform evaluation, enhancement and innovation in Lutheran schools

These opportunities would significantly contribute to an enhanced culture of scholarship and research within LEA and the schools themselves. In addition, scholarships could be established for staff to address special interests of the LEA system and schools.

Engagement with the higher education sector

To promote and develop this vision for Lutheran education in the 21st century, discussions have occurred with individual universities to consider the feasibility of accreditation. Considerations of forms of possible partnerships with LEA with a range of universities in the delivery of continuing professional learning is important to the success of this project. Furthermore such an exploration is timely and aligns with the current Australian political climate in higher education that advocates greater engagement between Universities and their related industries.

In the first instance the universities consulted included:

- ALC with its affiliation with the Lutheran Church and University of Divinity,
- University of South Australia that already has a well established engagement with Catholic education system in the initial teacher education program and in graduate education,
- Flinders University that has a past history of Lutheran education, taught by ALC in its initial teacher education program that can now be restored,
- Australian Catholic University that already partners with ALC in the delivery of leadership development in a Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Leadership. ACU also has campuses in several states, Qld, NSW, Vic and soon in SA

It is also proposed to consult with:

- Queensland University of Technology as there is some established links with LEQ
- Charles Sturt University for its theology and presence in rural areas.

This initial outreach is not intended to preclude other universities, but in the first instance each of the universities named have prior history with similar endeavours with either Lutheran education or Catholic education and thus are familiar with faith-led education. Furthermore, should seeking accreditation prove desirable to LEA's plans for formation and professional learning initiatives, in the first instance, it will be important to pilot initiatives with a selected group of universities. This limited approach is preferred so that systematic evaluation can be conducted and modifications made that will increase the feasibility and sustainability in a low risk environment. Ultimately such an approach would improve success if and when it is more fully rolled out.

Questions for discussion put to the universities have included:

- How open are they to enter into a dialogue regarding a partnership with LEA in which in-house professional learning programs regarding Lutheran theology and Christian education pedagogy are accredited in a pathway leading to Graduate Certificates, Masters and Doctoral degrees?
- What range of models and pathways can they suggest?
- What prior experience have they had of similar types of work-based learning accreditation and what can be learned from this?
- What would be some core requirements to establish any form of agreement for the accreditation of in-house professional learning towards a recognised Masters Degree?
- What have they to offer in terms of continuing professional learning for teachers and leaders in Lutheran schools?

Thus far, consultations with both University of South Australia and Flinders University have resulted in indications of willingness to enter an accreditation process. They have also expressed a desire to undertake this in concert with each other to ensure comparability in standards in the accreditation process. Both institutions have endorsed the merit of partnering with LEA to devise flexible and diverse programs of study leading to Masters qualifications and beyond. Flinders has also suggested that once Lutheran staff had achieved Masters and Doctoral qualifications, these staff could enter into supervisory partnerships with Flinders academics in guiding the research of Lutheran staff enrolled in university higher degree

programs. There was also an offer to deliver some course work on school sites of an evening where clusters of staff were enrolled when it came to university subjects.

Drawing on these early indications from these discussions regarding possibilities for future collaborative partnerships, it is reasonable to conclude, that within South Australia, local universities are open and encouraging, demonstrating considerable promise in regard to implementing the vision outlined. It now remains to seek further consultation with Queensland University of Technology, Charles Sturt University and Australian Catholic University.

Challenges to be addressed

The review of the current context carried out in dialogue with the three regional offices and with ALC as well as a document analysis of the current programs several issues have become apparent. Of necessity, these challenges must be considered generating any new plan for formation and accreditation.

1. **Diverse staff entering backgrounds:** Principals and teacher bring quite diverse backgrounds and starting points when come to lead, teach and work in Lutheran schools. These staff play a pivotal role in fostering the climate of school values and practices. A careful assessment of the staff backgrounds should be made on appointment as the basis for a plan for how each staff member might engage with the LEA formation and professional learning program. The plan should include a proposed time frame and regular formative review. This is in keeping with national teacher development initiatives, not only for early career teachers but also across teachers' careers.
2. **National and regional induction of principals:** To ensure that the ethos of Lutheran faith is to be the lighthouse factor of their schools is a high priority, regardless of any other changes to be contemplated. Many principals, chaplains and local pastors are expected to take a lead in the delivery of *Pathways*; however, many have had no or little induction to the program and its intent. Their induction to the program and their deep involvement is both desirable and essential factor now, regardless of any new proposed changes.
3. **Uptake and timely completion of teacher accreditation:** The uptake and completion of *Pathways* and *Equip* require considerable consistent management. It is unrealistic to expect principals, chaplains and pastors to include the management and delivery of *Pathways* and *Equip* as well as ensuring staff compliance, let alone deep engagement, along with their other responsibilities. Therefore, it is suggested that a school based role of Coordinators of Professional Learning (CoPL) who are champions of *Pathways* and *Equip*, be established and have due recognition. Their responsibilities in this regard could be partial work allocation within a teaching or middle leadership role. It is possibly feasible for all large Lutheran schools and colleges to include this role in the duties of a middle management post. Where there are location-based clusters of small schools, a regional CoPL, sponsored by the schools involved, could be appointed. This role and its financial implications will be addressed later in this report.
4. **A system of recognition and reward:** Acknowledge, reward and promulgations of Christian practices and leadership among student and staff and achievements in innovative educational practice in relation to Christian studies and Christian practices is a powerful communication and encouragement of what is important in Lutheran schools. Furthermore, establishing a facility to share these achievements system-wide so that they can be acclaimed and taken up elsewhere, enables good practices to become embedded into the system and not solely dependent on the individuals that have developed them.
5. **Utilising existing expertise:** Many of the basic resources and capabilities for making positive changes reside within LEA, ALC, the staff in regional offices and in schools. However, these are all quite independent units where collaboration is based on personal inclination. Unambiguous leadership and clear lines of authority and clear partnership agreements are needed. In the first instance a deliberate and enhanced partnership between LEA and ALC should be established with clear terms for engagement on a common endeavour. Similarly, explicit partnering and engagement between LEA and the regional centres need to be established.

6. **Pedagogical capacity building of chaplains and clergy:** ALC has a special role in preparing clergy and chaplains in guiding this formation program and the teaching of Christian Studies. ALC has a potential role in contributing to the delivery of the Graduate Certificate in Religious Education and in their capacity to engage in research to help understand better how to help teachers and students deal with their questions of faith and spirituality. School chaplains and local clergy need education regarding their pedagogical role in schools in addition to their theological knowledge. This is what Shulman (1986) would call ensuring that they have pedagogical content knowledge (knowing how to teach theology), which is distinctively different from being experts in Lutheran theology. They need to know how children's spiritual thinking changes over time and what they can do to make it safe for students and teachers to question their beliefs without feeling they are to be marginalised because they have doubts.
7. **Development and evaluation:** It has become clear that many plans have been made to address the problems outlined regarding engagement, and completion of formation and accreditation, yet these same problems persist. An evaluation strategy needs to be established from the outset of any new plan for change so that the root causes of the non-compliance can be identified and addressed.

These issues will be addressed more fully in the subsequent proposed changes.

A model for LEA professional learning

Proposed changes to *Pathways* and *Equip*

Both *Pathways* and *Equip* are well-established programs that are delivered with commitment and care by the regions. Any changes are not intended to restrict current good practices or even to suggest that everything must be done the same way. What is desirable is to leverage the good practices and to upscale them across the Lutheran Schools delivery systems to enhance their uptake and achieve a more even quality. Very little adjustment, apart from careful attention to the assessment processes to assure standards, will be needed to be able to support the proposal to seek accreditation of three units of in-house subjects to contribute to a university graduate certificate qualification that requires four units of study. The potential changes will bring *Pathways* and *Equip* into alignment with *Growing deep* and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) and are outlined in the following points.

Pathways

1. There should be initial formation (*Pathways Spiritual*) delivered as an induction to Lutheran ethos and values to all new staff. This induction process should be distinguished from on-going professional learning and from the more formal accredited education program. Formation is a basic requirement to ensure that all are aware of the primary ethos of Lutheran theology and education and, as such, should be required, but not assessed. *Pathways Spiritual* fits this well. All staff requires initial formation, including teachers, administrators, chaplains and principals.
2. *Pathways Theological* and *Vocational* should be combined to form one initial assessable unit in a Graduate Certificate (Lutheran Education) and will be accredited by the Universities as outlined above. It should be assessed through a portfolio system, which will be described further in the following section. As a result *Pathways (Theological and Vocational)* will now require clearly articulated learning outcomes that can be aligned with Level 8 in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and that underpin the modules within the *Pathways* program. *Pathways (Theological and Vocational)* also will require assessments that align with the learning outcomes that should be both reflective and enquiry based, linked to the school and classroom environment.
3. *Pathways (Theological and Vocational)* should be equivalent to the current full three days and completed within the first year of service. Together with pre-attendance reading and enquiry activities and post-attendance online and follow-up activities, this should be equivalent to a semester unit in a university. Some content and activities can be online, but, because of its intrapersonal and interpersonal nature, the preferred method of

delivery is face-to-face. Effective and sustainable online affordances will be recommended in a second stage of this project.

Equip

1. *Equip* (Christian Studies) could constitute two additional assessable units to ensure parity with *Pathways*. Similar to *Pathways*, clear learning outcomes will be required for each unit. Assessments that align with the learning outcomes and include pre-attendance reading, reflection and enquiry and well as post-attendance follow up activities will need to be developed with accompanying clear assessment-as-learning tasks and assessment criteria. Similar to *Pathways*, these assessments will be portfolio based and should build one upon the other. Again some of the learning will be through (1) on-line independent learning, (2) school based activities and collaboration with other teachers and staff and (3) face-to-face classes.
2. To reduce costs to schools for replacement of staff and to reduce the amount of travel, *Equip* (units 1 & 2) should be the equivalent of six days face-to-face and complemented by additional online learning activities.

Electives

An elective is suggested for the fourth and final unit in the GCLE. A range of electives could be identified and/or developed to address the diversity of staff entry backgrounds, capabilities, roles in Lutheran education and personal career aspirations. Ideally these could include:

1. A unit from ALC Education and Theology in Dialogue (a smaller version of the existing unit in the existing Leadership Development Program (LDP))
2. A unit on research led teaching and educational research methods to support school based or classroom based research educational innovation, evaluation and dissemination
3. A supervised independent unit, involving an enquiry or educational innovation development, evaluation and dissemination
4. A unit from any university Masters or Graduate Certificate program pertaining to theology, religious education, educational leadership or any related discipline pertaining to their role in Lutheran education.

If units were undertaken in a university in order to complete the Graduate Certificate, these would be undertaken at the personal cost and time of the staff member. Some costs would be incurred to design and deliver any in-house programs.

Beyond formation, accreditation and in-house Graduate Certificate

The vision for a revitalised formation and professional learning that has been described includes possibilities beyond this initial Graduate Certificate. They include:

1. Combining the Graduate Certificate in Lutheran Education (GCLE) with a Post Graduate Certificate of Educational leadership (LDP) to contribute to gaining a University Masters degree in Educational leadership through ACU.
2. Combining the GCLE (18 points of study, with a Post Graduate Diploma in Research Methods (36 units of study) (at Flinders University, for example) to obtain a Masters of Education that would lead to enrolment in an Education Doctorate or PhD Program that would hopefully encourage research led teaching and school leadership.
3. Combining the GCRE with four units of Masters course work (e.g. International Baccalaureate, Special Education, Educational Assessment), to gain a Masters in Education in a specialised area. To progress to a PhD or Education Doctorate some Universities would require additional 18 points of research methods if research was not included in the specialisation subjects studied.

The additional studies undertaken by staff in university courses would be at their own expense. The advantage is, however, that, having completed the GCLE, staff will only pay a portion of the cost of a Masters degree, as Universities would accredit the studies completed in the Lutheran 'in house' programs for which staff currently do not pay.

Facilitation and support

The role of Coordinators of Professional Learning (CoPL), indicated in the previous section of this report are important. This role formalises a much needed school champion role for the uptake, support and timely completion of both *Pathways* and *Equip*. While not envisaged as a full time role, if appropriate it could be encompassed in a larger within school responsibility for ongoing professional learning roles that already exists in some of the larger Lutheran schools and colleges. The CoPL formation and Christian Studies responsibilities in this regard could be work allocation within a teaching or middle leadership role, for example Leader of Christian Studies roles. Where there are location-based clusters of small schools, a regional coordinator role, sponsored by the schools involved, could be appointed. Potentially a levee of \$5-\$10 per student could underwrite any additional costs in establishing these posts and would help to alleviate the existing financial burden on small rural and remote schools. In summary:

1. The duties of the CoPL will be to (i) facilitate and ensure initial formation/induction of new staff to Lutheran education (*Pathways Spiritual*, required but not assessed), (ii) ensure on-going formation within schools (involving the principals, chaplains and pastors), (iii) monitoring, fostering and guiding staff engagement in *Pathways* and *Equip* (iv) undertake formative assessment of portfolios (v) eventually become involved in a national system of portfolio assessment of *Pathways* and *Equip* portfolios.
2. All CoPL will require induction to their new role, ongoing support and continuing professional education, some of which may be able to be accredited as a university unit in their own career advancement.
3. This role has the potential to be a leadership career pathway for classroom teachers and could lead on to greater leadership roles in the system, contributing to enhanced succession planning.

Portfolios-based assurance of learning achievement

The GCLE will be attained by the submission of a portfolio that has been developed through participation in the formation and professional learning program, namely, *Pathways*, *Equip* plus an elective. Currently a portfolio is used for *Equip*. What is being proposed, however, is a more formal approach to portfolio assessment and is a tool that is now being integrated in the development and evaluation of teaching performance nationally via the Governments new Australian Professional Standards for Teaching (APST). Adoption of this approach would be timely and contribute to staff mobility within the Australian Education systems. It may also potentially provide a tool to assist in achieving accreditation from the Australian Institute Teaching Standards and Leadership (AITSL) for the Lutheran education in-house professional learning program and assist teacher in NSW School gain recognition for accreditation required by Board of Studies of Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES NSW).

The portfolio assessment system would have two stages of assessment:

1. Formative assessment

The designated formation and professional learning enabling staff in the schools and school clusters would guide the portfolio development in a formative assessment process. The assessment will be against the learning outcomes and at the same time tailored according to each staff member's entry capability and further learning needs and role in Lutheran education. This will be an ongoing guiding process to support staff members in articulating and evaluating their own learning.

2. Summative assessment

The summative assessment would be conducted only once the four units have been completed and the evidence of all the learning for all four units against the learning outcomes of the GCLE has been generated. The portfolio will contain:

- i. Concrete evidence in learning and teaching artifacts and achievements that align and illustrate attainment of the learning goals.

- ii. A commentary in which staff outline what the submitted artifacts illustrate or evidence regarding their learning achievements in relation to the GCRE goals.

A moderation process would be introduced by ensuring each portfolio is assessed by two members of an independent panel of expert assessors, who have been trained for the role. Initially the expert panel comprise those who have carriage for the delivery and leadership of formation and professional learning in the schools as well as the experts already in the regional centres. Subsequently, teachers who have completed the GCLE and show an aptitude and leadership for this aspect of their work could be incrementally recruited to the panel and trained. This would share the burden of assessment and ensures that, over time, schools would have an experienced advisor to mentor new staff undertaking the GCLE.

It is important to note, however, that no assessor would assess the portfolio of a person they have guided or taught. There are two reasons for this distinction in the assessment process. Firstly, it is important to insure that personal relationships and trust between staff member and their guide, that is so important in faith-led learning involving intra-personal self-reflection, is protected. Secondly, this distinction mitigates the compromises inherent in the ultimate need to make judgements in the summative assessment process. These processes also assure the accrediting universities of a rigorous assessment process that is driven by the standards agreed and is free from unintended bias. A further guarantee is that with each portfolio assessed by two experts, it will provide on-going moderation of the assessment process and the maintenance of common understanding of the standards.

Initially the expert assessment panel will require training and would consist of 8-10 assessors. It would involve assessing some common portfolios together to develop a shared understanding of what are good indicators of learning achievement. The knowledge generated in this process will also contribute to developing online resources for staff who are developing a portfolio for assessment.

As an aside, while portfolio assessment now can be creatively supported with online programs that have multiple purposes, should this scheme be agreed to, in the first instance IT affordances freely available within 'Word' should be used in submitting the portfolios. That said, portfolio platforms are useful contemporary tools that would serve more than staff formation. In particular, it could be used by senior students in the schools to capture not only their classroom learning but all other learning activities and achievements that might enhance their future employment applications. Used here the staff involved would have first hand experience of using portfolios to evidence learning which they could transfer to use in their own role as teachers. Of course, these issues are beyond the remit of this project and, as stated, a simpler cost free alternative should be used in the first instance.

Opportunities

There are a number of opportunities to be considered in contemplating the plan as outlined. One development is that teacher education and teacher quality and development are under considerable scrutiny by both federal and State governments. Schools and universities are being asked to provide assurance of the capabilities of their teachers and to provide evidence as to their efforts to ensure that their teachers and leaders meet Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST). They outline the expected standards across four levels, nominated by AITSL as Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. The standards are detailed within three domains: Professional knowledge, Professional practice and Professional engagement. Of particular alignment to the issues addressed in this project is within the third domain, namely, Standard 6.2, 'Engage in professional learning and improve practice.' An additional outcome of this project could be a reworking of the APST to reflect the intentions of Lutheran accreditation to teach and this framework could be adopted in schools to contribute to teacher effectiveness evaluation.

Other opportunities to be considered are:

- **A test case for the new Governance for Lutheran Education:** The implementation of the upcoming Cleary report on Governance. This Lutheran formation and professional learning project could provide a concrete focus to test and adapt any decisions made regarding a restructured governance system.
- **Formation of Reciprocal Partnerships with Universities.** At this point in time, the current federal government is keen to measure universities in terms of their engagement with their related industries. Already the universities approached have shown a willingness to address the potential partnerships in collaboration, not competition, and with a good measure of creativity and openness to possibilities.
- **Contribution of Middle Leadership COPL Roles to Succession Planning.** The COPL roles could contribute to long term succession planning; where leaders emerge that have a first hand knowledge of, and a commitment to, on-going faith-led and spiritual formation and professional learning for Christian studies.

Finally, a system of recognition and promulgation of good practices stands to benefit the Australian Lutheran education system from efforts already achieved. It also is a motivational device for students and staff at all levels of the system. Communication and reinforcement of that which is of most important within an education system is always best accomplished when good practice and outstanding achievements are both recognised and rewarded. Ensuring that school staff enact their roles to exemplify the values espoused by Lutheran education and its church is a deeply worthwhile aspiration of the existing and proposed programs.

Recommendations

Based on consultations with staff in the various sectors of the Lutheran Education sector, namely LEA, ALC, regional offices, schools and teachers; analysis of the aspirations of LEA, ALC and staff in the regional offices; the achievements and challenges of delivering the current programs and on discussions with universities the following recommendations are presented to be considered by the LEA Board.

Before considering the recommendations, however, it is important to note that what has been described as a potential course of action in the preceding discussion is certainly not a simple endeavor that can be easily accomplished. Neither has it a design that can be effectively disaggregated. Each element is dependent upon the strength of the other. Furthermore, there are a number of key stakeholders who need to have a shared understanding, intentions and approach for the endeavor to be successful.

Recommendation 1: Leadership commitment to formation

That as an element of the dissemination of *Growing deep*, all principals need to be systematically appraised of the importance of formation and of the place and delivery of *Pathways spiritual* to accomplish this. Ideally principals should commit to providing a substantial focus on the induction for all new staff each year before the school begins. A further teacher development time should also be allocated in the ensuing six months in which new staff are supported by a designated experienced staff member who has both levels of accreditation (At and Ac).

Recommendation 2: Timely At and Ac completions

That expectations for the uptake and completion of the At and Ac accreditation programs be more explicit and that they be commenced during the first year of employment with explicit completion time frames. Once again a commitment should be sought from school principals that this will be a priority for all new staff.

Recommendation 3: More rigorous assessment of At and Ac programs

That At and Ac continue to be guided by supportive ongoing formative assessment, but culminate with more rigorous summative assessment procedures that separate formative guidance from summative assessment, the latter attesting to completion of *Pathways* and *Equip*.

Recommendation 4: Graduate Certificate (Lutheran Education)

That the BLEA affirm a determination for the further development of the concept of a professional learning pathway leading to a Graduate Certificate (Religious/Lutheran Education) to be developed based on the existing programs (*Pathways* and *Equip*).

Recommendation 5: Evaluation strategy

That an evaluation strategy be developed from the outset focusing on the impact of any significant changes in line with what is proposed for changes to formation, professional learning for accreditation and that formative evaluation be included to enable modifications in the pilot phase. In addition a more summative evaluation plan be devised drawing upon the frameworks of key educational evaluation theorists Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2008,2014) and Guskey (2000 and 2014).

Recommendation 6: Recognition and reward of what is important

That a working group be established to consider ways to acknowledge, celebrate and promulgate exemplary Christian practices and leadership as well as innovative educational achievement among school staff and students that is in keeping with core values of a Lutheran ethos. The aim of this initiative is to reinforce the importance of the distinctiveness of a faith-led Lutheran education.

Recommendation 7: A draft implementation plan and budget be tabled at the BLEA in June 2016.

The LEA Director of Formation is asked to draft an implementation plan to be tabled at the BLEA in June 2016.

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