



MEDIA RELEASE – **RESPONSE TO HISTORY CURRICULUM REVIEW PANEL**

27 June 2007

President of the HTAA, Nick Ewbank is cautiously supportive of the reference panel announced earlier this week by Commonwealth Education Minister Julie Bishop.

“I have no issue with the composition of the panel” Mr Ewbank stated “But I am wondering what its purpose is”.

“The work done by the Australian History Summit and its Working Party was crystallised by Assoc Prof Taylor’s draft model curriculum”.

That draft model curriculum is believed to have been forwarded to the Department of Education, Science and Training in April this year. Two weeks ago, the Minister stated that she had not seen the document.

Mr Ewbank expressed reservations about the work of the panel, wondering if it was, in fact, an attempt to rewrite the outcomes of the Summit and the Working Party.

“It seems as if the Government may be trying to re-interpret the findings of the process it itself set in place”.

Mr Ewbank also expressed concern that, with Ms Lawless’ appointment being blocked by the NSW Minister for Education, the panel would have no representative who had taught History in a school setting.

He added that “misinterpretations of the curriculum, such as appeared in *The Australian* this morning, are not helpful”. Mr Ewbank’s belief is that the model curriculum was a wise compromise, reached by consensus, arising from the Summit.

Mr Ewbank also noted that a degree of flexibility in the curriculum design was highly desirable. “We want teachers to have *some* ability to shape what they deliver to students. The key to successful teaching is being able to engage students – and that can’t necessarily be captured by diktat from Canberra (or anywhere else)”.

“The Government must recognise that teachers must be allowed to exercise a degree of professional judgement in the implementation of the curriculum”.

Mr Ewbank also stated that he was confident that the Minister would not allow the consensus and gains made at the Summit to be eroded, and continued to express his support for the general thrust of the Commonwealth’s policy.

Please feel free to contact Mr Nick Ewbank on 0421 042 195 with any questions.

Message ends.