

**World Education Forum (SA)**  
**Draft Paper**  
**“Being and Becoming:**  
**Research, Practice and the Economic Imperative in Education”**

**1. Background**

This discussion document is intended to discover the feasibility of conducting a national conference on ‘Being and Becoming: well being in education’.

Given that much has been said and done in recent years to foster the ‘well being’ of students and young people in education systems and other related areas in Australia and the Western World, what have been the apparent gains and losses? How will we educate our children and young people for the world in which they live now and in which they will flourish as citizens of tomorrow?

For some years now educators, medical professionals, psychologists, social workers, politicians and others have been concerned to improve the well being of children. A development based on a belief that many children in Australian society are being raised in circumstances where they are too vulnerable intellectually, emotionally, and socially. The activities have been designed to build and to assist the growth of well-rounded, competent and confident Australian citizens who can assume responsibility for our democratic society and government.

WEF SA thinks that it is timely to take stock of the effectiveness of the effort that has been made. Time to share opinions and expertise and re-examine the values, which underpin many of the assumptions that drive modern educational policy.

Those involved in the education of children would play a major role in developing the scope of the conference. However, it is also important where possible, to include other relevant persons (such as parents). In this way it is believed that all relevant information can be considered in shaping the format of the conference and in the choice of speakers.

**2. Objective**

**The World Education Forum SA wishes to facilitate the design of a national Australian conference on ‘Being and Becoming: research, practice and the economic imperative in education’, for September 2008.**

The conference design should allow the exploration of a number of issues including the following:

- an examination of the various strategies being used to promote ‘student well being’ and a review of their effectiveness.
- a review of the value of these programmes to promote ‘student well being’
- the exploration of the classic tensions in formal education which address the following questions.

1. Do children have the right to 'be' as well as become?
  2. Is the emphasis on 'well being' and social-emotional development merely a pretence, when our society demands competitive, content-based progress?
  3. How might an educational system foster coherence, cohesion and creativity for all its citizens in a strong democratic society
- the development of recommendations for improvement and modification to current practice.

The conference design should cover these critical issues and identify appropriate speakers from both overseas and Australia. The involvement and advice of representatives of State and Federal Departments of Education, other appropriate key professional groups and parents would be important to its success. It is also important that the conference is practical and effective in terms of its design and that it attracts support and sponsorship from state and federal governments and from other potential funding bodies.

### **3. Participants and size of Conference**

These could include: -

- Educator/teacher practitioners, curriculum specialists and researchers in early childhood, primary and secondary education;
- Psychiatrists and psychologists;
- Medical specialists including paediatricians;
- Social workers;
- Police and those working with young offenders;
- Parents

It is expected that to cover this range of participants the conference would be of approximately 400-600 in size.

### **4. Duration**

It is expected that the duration of the conference covering such complex issues would be of 2-3 days. eg from Thursday afternoon to Sunday lunch

### **5. Location**

At this stage the venue would be the Adelaide Convention Centre

### **6. Organising Committee**

An Organising Committee will be established to work with the World Education Forum SA committee to further the development of the concept and its feasibility which would include representatives from each of the key areas described above and maybe from different states.

To have Australia wide appeal it would be valuable for each state to develop a degree of ownership for the conference. This may involve the creation of a wider reference group to give feedback on ideas and to provide wider information.

The organising committee would have a number of key objectives that would include:

- Development of the content and themes of the conference;
- Recommendation of speakers;
- Strategies for securing funding support;
- Identification and approach to possible support organisations including government bodies
- Finalizing the venue
- General conference organisation

## **7 Speakers and/or Support Persons**

These will be finalized during 2007 and published on this web site. They will include international and national speakers.

## **8. Contacts**

The following people representing The World Education Forum S.A. can be contacted to discuss the proposal further.

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