



House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education & Training

Inquiry into combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions

Submission: Helen Mower – Program Coordinator, LCP – (personal submission, not on behalf of my LCP organisation) – please see comments below in boxed paragraphs:

Terms of Reference

Managing the demands of study and part-time or casual employment is part of everyday life for the majority of Australian school students. The impact of potentially competing demands is not well known, and there is little provision of information or guidance to schools or employers on the effect this has on the lives of young people generally, and more specifically on their career development and prospects for successful transitions. The committee's review of the impact of combined study and work on the success of youth transitions and Year 12 attainment will focus on:

- providing opportunities to recognise and accredit the employability and career development skills gained through students' part time or casual work;

Approx 50% of Yr 10 – 12 students I am involved with in my work as an LCP Program Coordinator are engaged in some form of casual employment. The majority of employment is in the retail sector, & secondly in the hospitality/retail sector.

LCP's are well placed to gather basic data and information from individual students, as this information is provided by the students via the schools to the LCP usually for the purposes of structured work placement arrangements brokered by the LCP. This information is recorded on a secure database to assist with organisation of structured work placements for students. Currently RPL recognition is available, but is restricted to skills recognised usually in a related industry to the ICF course being undertaken in Yr 11-12. The RPL information and documentation is the responsibility of DET (NSW) (or private school sector) VET Teachers/Coordinator at the school – in line with workplace

assessment processes. The DET documentation requires verification by the employer/supervisor in relation to the skills demonstrated to provide evidence for RPL.. Sometimes verification is not forthcoming by employers paying cash wages.

Additional opportunities to monitor and accredit the employability skills of students exist with LCP personnel who are qualified in current Workplace Training and Assessment.

- identifying more flexible, innovative and/or alternative approaches to attaining a senior secondary certificate which support students to combine work and study;

Currently – limited acknowledgement by education providers of students' casual and part-time work, especially those students who are not undertaking VET/ICF courses. Arrangements are viewed as "private", whereas a range of skills and experience gained in casual/PT employment directly relates to senior study. A number of senior students "work" on flexible timetabled days ie Wednesdays when this day is used for offline courses and sport.

- support that may be required to assist young people combining work and study to stay engaged in their learning, especially where work and study intersects with income support;

A number of students are paid "cash" money by various employers and this income is necessary to supplement Youth Allowance, or limited family income, esp. if students not entitled to Youth Allowance.

LCPs often hold information in relation to individual students' "work/employment situations" and could assist young people under CTS arrangements. Currently, LCPs are unable to provide "individual assistance", except to facilitate information between parties. In NSW, school Careers Advisers may have this role, in terms of supporting students.

State Careers Advisers could be assisted more readily by LCP personnel.

Students combining School based traineeships/apprenticeships with senior study require support, especially if students are from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Limited support is provided under current NSW State funded School Based Traineeship/Apprenticeship Liaison Coordination. LCPs can assist to ensure successful transitions to FT Apprenticeships/ work and/or study.

- the potential impact on educational attainment (including the prospects for post-compulsory qualifications and workforce productivity); and

- the effectiveness of school-based training pathways and their impact on successful transitions, including opportunities for improvement (particularly in relation to pathways to employment for disadvantaged young people).

Pre-apprenticeship training together with availability of SBT&A's can ensure that employability skills, credentials, educational outcomes as well as future workplace productivity is achieved.

Skills training is also being delivered by Trade Schools (specific skill shortage areas), Skill Centres, Trade Training Centres and TAFE (TVET) as well as SVET (ICF) courses. LCPs are working closely with the education sectors (public and private) to improve pathways, particularly for disadvantaged youth. Programs such as Structured Work Placement, Adopt A School and Career and Transition Services are responsive to changes in local communities, as well as the national labour market.

With the current economic downturn and contraction of the labour market, LCPs are well placed to work in conjunction with State and private education sectors, business and job networks to assist with facilitation of information and resources which are available, depending on the needs of local communities/marketplaces.

A formal audit of students/youth – those combining school and work – should be undertaken. Until this is achieved, data and evidence collected remains anecdotal and speculative. Programs to support students' learning and outcomes in the senior years of school will be piecemeal.

Our community is coastal rural/regional NSW.

Helen Mower
Program Coordinator LCP