Submission to
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING
by
Queensland Catholic Education Commission

INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Comment on the place of vocational education in schools, its growth and development, and its effectiveness in preparing students for post-school options;

- **Vocational education has a definite place in schools as evidenced by the following:**
  - Has enabled schools to better cater for the diversity of students and their needs
  - Provides a worthwhile alternative pathway for students who are gifted with practical skills
  - Allows students to combine vocational studies with their general education curriculum
  - Enables students to keep their options open to pursue further full-time or part-time vocational training or to enter tertiary studies after school

- **Growth and development of vocational education:**
  - Vocational education has experienced significant growth particularly since ANTA VET in Schools Funding became available in 1997
  - In the 78 Catholic Senior Secondary Schools in Queensland in 2001:
    - 55% of all Years 11 and 12 students were enrolled in vocational curriculum
    - Since 1997 the number of students enrolled in VET has risen by 110.4% (2002 MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School)
    - 74 Catholic schools from a possible 78 schools offered vocational subjects
    - There were 17 270 enrolments in VET competencies which was the highest enrolment in the Catholic sector in Australia (2002 MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School)
    - Contact hours for VET were 2 183 479 – the highest in the Catholic sector in Australia (2002 MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School)

- There were 821 students undertaking a School-Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship (SAT); 508 of these SATs were commenced in 2001 the remainder commenced in 2000. This was the highest number of SATs in the Catholic sector in Australia
- There were 2 420 students involved in 332 104 hours of structured workplace learning (2002 MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School)

➢ Effectiveness in preparing students for post-school options
  - Students gain an understanding of the dynamic nature of the world of work – particularly those engaged in structured workplace learning (SWL) and in School-Based Apprenticeships & Traineeships (SATs)
  - Enables students to develop an understanding of a greater range of school and post-school options
  - Vocational education provides an increased range of post-school options for students studying in this area of the curriculum
  - The industry competency standards gained by students are part of the nationally recognised industry standards
  - An increasing number of students complete Certificate I or II while at school

➢ The range and structure of Vocational Education in schools
  - In Queensland schools vocational education takes the following forms:
    - Vocational competencies are embedded in Category A (formerly Board) subjects which **count** towards tertiary entrance. There are six of these subjects offered in Queensland schools **(APPENDIX 1)**
    - Subject Area Specification Category B (formerly Board-Registered) subjects which **do not** count towards tertiary entrance. There are 12 if these subjects offered in Queensland schools **(APPENDIX 2)**
    - Stand alone subjects offered either by the school as RTO or by private providers
    - Through structured workplace learning where students are assessed for vocational competencies
    - Through SATs where students achieve vocational competencies
    - The majority of special needs students (Level 5 & 6 students) in a school undertake vocational education and learning support resources are limited

➢ Delivery and resourcing of Vocational education programs in schools

Delivery
  - In Queensland all schools are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
  - Primarily delivery of vocational education programs is undertaken by teachers who meet the human resource requirements of the particular training package embedded in Category A & B subjects

- o There is a growing reluctance among teachers to take on VET because of the paperwork and bureaucracy involved
- o In a number of curriculum areas schools engage outside providers to present particular competencies where teaching staff do not meet the human resource requirement
- o Both SWL and SATs are delivered in the workplace

Resourcing
- o Vocational education programs are resource intensive for the following reasons:
  - ▪ All schools are RTOs and must comply with the considerable demands of implementing the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) as from 1 July 2002
  - ▪ In the past this has required additional release time for the Senior Administrator and Vocational Education Coordinator in each school who manage the implementation and on-going requirements of the AQTF
  - ▪ Schools have had to provide an additional allocation of administrative support for the implementation and on-going requirements of the AQTF
  - ▪ In the past class sizes for vocational programs (Category B subjects) have been smaller than for academic subjects because of the practical nature of most of these subjects and because of the need for increased individual attention for students eg:
    - • **Academic class – 25 to 27 students**
    - • **Vocational education class – 15 to 17 students**
    - • Based on a comparison between 100 students studying vocational programs and 100 students studying academic programs, these smaller class sizes have required an additional two (2) teachers over and above the number required for the academic programs
  - ▪ Students on SWL and students engaged in SATs are required to be visited and assessed in the workplace which involves significant additional cost to schools as the time involved is regarded as teacher contact time and reimbursement for travel is also required
  - ▪ A number of the vocational subjects require industry standard resourcing e.g. Hospitality Practices, Industrial Skills, Computer Studies, Information Technology Systems, which is at significant cost to schools and school systems
  - ▪ Teachers of vocational programs are required to gain industry experience and to ensure this experience is updated annually. Schools must bear this additional cost as such experience is undertaken in school time
  - ▪ Schools belong to Local Area Cluster Program such as ECEF clusters and most pay the cluster program:
    - • $30 - $50 to place a student in SWL
    - • Up to $500 per student in a SAT
    - • If schools belong to a Cluster Program that has a Jobs Pathway Program (JPP) then there is little or no cost involved between the cluster and the school for each SAT

- Of the 50 Cluster Programs in Queensland there are only 10 Cluster Groups with a JPP program. This leads to significant inequities between schools
  - Any of the courses delivered by private providers, including TAFE Colleges, have to be funded by the school which is at a considerable cost to schools

Funding available to the Catholic sector in 2002 includes:
- ANTA VET in Schools funding of $701 121 (approximately $40 per student)
- TAFE Cooperative Programs funding shared with the Independent Schools sector of $360 000 in; the share for the Catholic sector is approximately $180 000 or $10 per student

➢ **Teacher Training**
- In Queensland the only institutions which include some training in Vet for pre-service teachers are the University of Central Queensland and the University of Southern Queensland
- Schools have to bear all of the professional development costs associated with upskilling teachers to deliver vocational programs
- Schools find that having dedicated significant funds to upskilling teachers often these personnel move to other schools and the schools has lost the expertise as well as not gaining the full benefit of funds expended
- There is an urgent need for the professional development of teachers in adult learning pedagogy to better cater for the increasing numbers of students choosing to study vocational programs
- The ageing teacher population restricts the capacity for energetic innovation in the delivery of vocational programs

➢ **Impact of vocational education on other programs**
- Currently VET programs are absorbing a disproportionate level of resources particularly in terms of personnel and time
- There is significantly more one-on-one contact required with students involving study VET programs including:
  - follow-up of students
  - visits to the workplace to assess workplace competencies
  - mentoring and counselling students
  - liasing with employers and RTOs

- ➢ **The differences between school-based and other vocational education programs and the resulting qualifications, and the pattern of industry acceptance of school-based programs**
    - o Schools have made enormous progress in implementing VET since ANTA VET in Schools funding commenced in 1997
    - o Industry acceptance of school-based VET programs is much more positive at the local or grassroots level than at industry peak body level
    - o At peak body level there is often unhelpful criticism of school-based VET programs with little recognition of how far schools have come with VET since 1997 (see data under Growth & Development of VET above)
    - o It is obvious that employers appreciate what schools are offering in VET in Queensland given the uptake of SATs – in 2001 Queensland had 62% of the total number of SATs in Australia
    - o In 2001 Queensland Government and Catholic sectors had the highest enrolments in Australia in VET units of competency and modules as well as the highest number of SATs
    - o There is a disincentive for students to complete a Certificate II while at school as this diminishes the likelihood of their gaining an apprenticeship or traineeship after completing their schooling

- ➢ **Vocational education in new and emerging industries**
    - o Accessing information re new and emerging industries is problematic
    - o In some instances Training Packages in these industries have not been developed and therefore schools cannot become involved in preparing students for such industries
    - o Difficulty of placing students in structured workplace learning in emerging industries

- ➢ **The accessibility and effectiveness of vocational education for indigenous students**
    - o Structured workplace learning is highly problematic for indigenous students
    - o Students are disinclined to go into industries on their own because of cultural dependence
    - o A community based structured workplace is much more successful – there are limited opportunities in local communities
    - o Getting indigenous students to participate in SATs is difficult

Mr Joe McCorley
Executive Director
Queensland Catholic Education Commission
15 October 2002

APPENDIX I

2001 STUDENT ENROLMENTS BOARD SUBJECTS WITH EMBEDDED VET (CATHOLIC)

BOARD SUBJECTS	NUMBER SCHOOLS	YEAR 11 STUDENTS	YEAR 12 STUDENTS
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE	3	22	23
BUSINESS COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGIES	45	1393	1231
BUSINESS ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT	14	353	257
HOSPITALITY STUDIES	2	1	10
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS	7	151	118
TECHNOLOGY STUDIES	17	195	153
TOTAL		**2115**	**1792**

APPENDIX II

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<tr><td>Hospitality</td><td>31</td><td>534</td><td>554</td></tr>
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