

**Submission Number: 25**  
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**VACC Submission**

**Inquiry into Combining School and Work: Supporting Successful Youth  
Transitions**

VACC is appreciative for  
respond to this inquiry  
would be more than  
more information.



the opportunity to  
and, if required,  
happy to provide

**Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce**

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January 2009

**Inquiry into combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions**

**Submissions Due**

Friday 16 January 2009.

**Terms of Reference**

- providing opportunities to recognise and accredit the employability and career development skills gained through students' part time or casual work;
- identifying more flexible, innovative and/or alternative approaches to attaining a senior secondary certificate which support students to combine work and study;
- 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;
- 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)

## **Introduction**

The Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce supports the combination of work and study for students completing their secondary schooling. VACC believes that not only is it possible for a secondary school student to successfully combine school and work, but, for some students, it can be beneficial the students' employability beyond their completion of year 12.

“the industry views work experience as important not only for those students that choose to pursue a career in the industry, but also for those that, as an outcome of their experiences, decide that the retail motor industry is not where their career aspirations lay”.<sup>1</sup> VACC considers this a successful transition.

## **Response to Terms of Reference**

- (a) *Providing opportunities to recognise and accredit the employability and career development skills gained through students' part time or casual work*

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<sup>1</sup> Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, 2002, *Submission for the Enquiry into Vocational Education in Schools*, accessed at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/EDT/ves/subs/sub005.pdf>, 3/12/2008.

It is a concern of VACC that, not only are students not currently being provided with opportunities to accredit their part-time and casual employment in conjunction with schooling, they are in fact being pushed away from careers in trades and in particular, the automotive industry. The Auto Apprenticeships Department of the VACC has expressed concerns that many teachers and careers advisers hold inaccurate and negative perceptions of the automotive industry. There is a commonly held view among many teachers and careers advisers that it is only the students with a low “cognitive ability” who undertake an apprenticeship. This view is entirely inaccurate and a research paper by NCVER stated that in 1997 “well over a third of apprentices had completed Year 12 and about a fifth of these had obtained a Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) score. Of these a handful had scored in the top decile”.<sup>2</sup> If those within schools who hold mentoring roles in students’ lives possess these negative opinions of the industry it is possible and, in fact probable that this negative and misleading information is being passed onto students who make enquiries into the industry.

Another survey by NCVER titled *Doing an Apprenticeship: What Young People Think*, interviewed young people to find out what factors, both internal and external, which either persuaded them or dissuaded them from undertaking an apprenticeship. It found that a common reason for not undertaking an apprenticeship was because schools did not place much importance on it as a career path;

*“Students in focus groups (especially Year 12 students) also reported that teachers rarely spoke to them about apprenticeships and were most concerned with students’ university preparation. Teachers were also reported to encourage high-achieving students to do the suicide 5 subjects [that is] ... maths 1 and 2, physics, chemistry and English. When students wanted to find out about vocational programs, they generally went to teachers with specific responsibility for vocational studies, including apprenticeships. There will be the construction or tech teacher that*

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<sup>2</sup> Misko, Josie, Nguyen, Nhi and Saunders, John, 2007, *Doing an Apprenticeship: What Young People Think*, National Centre for Vocational Educational Research (NCVER), p.10

*encourages students [to pursue an apprenticeship] but most of the time it's about getting good grades and getting into uni".*<sup>3</sup>

For the sake of the retail motor industry as well as the individuals within it, it is important that its image be revamped. VACC has found that individuals who enter the industry with lower educational standards, find its demands difficult due to increasingly complex technology, techniques and instruments. This coupled with a perception that apprenticeships are for low achievers is a self-fulfilling prophecy which is preventing both the industry and those planning to enter it to progress.

This attitude problem begins within schools. For student's extracurricular work to become accredited, there must be a framework for this recognition within schools. The VACC Auto Apprenticeships Department report that schools, currently, are unreasonably promoting University, as the only prospect for students upon completion of their year 12 certificate. The numbers of university places are limited and only around 30% of school-leavers go on to undertake a course.<sup>4</sup> As a result of this attitude, some school-leavers may find themselves with a tertiary entrance score below the cut off levels for courses they wish to take and may not have taken any other preparations for alternate career paths. This attitude is potentially responsible for leaving many students unemployed or not fully engaged after finishing school.

To provide opportunities to recognise and accredit students' part-time and casual work, schools must begin to recognise the validity of traineeships and apprenticeships as valid career paths. Teachers and careers advisers must be provided with accurate and positive information and should release this information to students who enquire about traineeships and apprenticeships, positively and encouragingly.

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<sup>3</sup> Misko, Josie, Nguyen, Nhi and Saunders, John, 2007, *Doing an Apprenticeship: What Young People Think*, National Centre for Vocational Educational Research (NCVER), p.30

<sup>4</sup> Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2007, *How Young People are Faring: At a Glance*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, NSW

A 2006 inquiry titled, *Inquiry into retaining young people in rural towns and communities*, found that paid employment had a positive effect on youth transitions to work;

*“Young people at risk who were engaged in paid employment during the course of their education stood a much better chance of making a positive transition into ongoing and full-time employment, as opposed perhaps to the concept of young people going straight into VET programs that are linked very closely to school. I guess the thought behind that is if a young person is engaged in paid employment, they have got to achieve certain standards of performance because they are being paid”.*<sup>5</sup>

The VACC Auto Apprenticeships Department has also found problems with the basic employability skills with some of their apprentices. It has found that often, students are leaving school without knowing which direction they wish to take, let alone the knowledge of how to look for and apply for an apprenticeship. Students are not given adequate information about the expectations of them when they begin in an industry. Many school-leavers exhibit behaviours which may be acceptable (although undesirable) at school which are not acceptable within an industry such as being late and having attendance issues. At the school level, there needs to be a greater emphasis on the expectation on individuals within the workforce and students must know the consequences, not only for the individual, but for others who may be affected. Students who have undertaken paid work as well as school, tend to have a better knowledge of the expectations of them in the workforce because, clearly, they have experienced it already.

(b) *Identifying more flexible, innovative and/or alternative approaches to attaining a senior secondary certificate which support students to combine work and study*

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc/inquiries/YoungPeople/transcripts/20060516\\_RRSDC\\_e.pdf](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc/inquiries/YoungPeople/transcripts/20060516_RRSDC_e.pdf)

An alternative or more flexible approach needs to be looked at for students for their attainment of a secondary certificate. It is the view of the VACC, that the current system of secondary schooling is too focused on pushing students toward tertiary education and in particular, university. This push towards university is unreasonable on the part of the schools for two reasons, one it reduces the validity of other forms of engagement such as apprenticeships and second, it is an unrealistic path for many students since only 29.8% of school leavers in 2007 went on to University education and only 24.4% went on to Tafe or other Education.<sup>6</sup>

As a result of this attitude, the attainment of a trade is seen in a secondary and negative light and is often perceived as undesirable to students. This view is completely naïve since trades are essential services, often very well paying and with chances for further career development. This view is causing many to consider University as their only possible future but since there are only limited places, many students are denied entry with no goals or prospects; hence the high rates of school leavers with no full time employment, study or a combination of both.

To aid successful youth transitions, there must be a change in the basic structure of later secondary schooling. The VACC supports the inclusion of more technical-based programs within the schools' curriculums. Since only about 55% of students continue on to some form of tertiary education after the attainment of their certificates, it would follow logically that perhaps the school curriculum could provide opportunities to cater to this disparity. It would make sense if the schools' curriculums contained a more technical or vocational aspect to education in addition to the more traditional subjects.

The inclusion of a more comprehensive work-experience program within the later years of secondary schooling would have a beneficial effect on students wishing to enter a trade. School-leavers need to be given more information and more direction in regards to future

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<sup>6</sup> Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2007, *How Young People are Faring: At a Glance*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, NSW

employment and some comprehensive experience in the work industry within the schools' curriculum, may help provide this information. The VACC's Auto Apprenticeships Department has seen students insistent that they wanted to take on an apprenticeship in a particular trade, only to find a few months into it that they were mistaken. If work experience, beyond that of the current system (one compulsory week in year 10) were to begin within schools, students may be able to properly gauge which fields they *actually* want to work in before entering them, thus avoiding them finding out during the training.

The inclusion of a work experience aspect within secondary schools would be beneficial to students' perception of the work and industry in addition to gaining work skills. Not only would work experience provide students with an opportunity to experience the workforce, first-hand, but according to a study by the NCVET, students actually enjoy their experience. According to the report titled *Students Learning from Their Paid and Unpaid Work*, students rated work experience as their preferred workplace activity. In the study, 57.7% of students in the study rated their level of enjoyment of the activity as "a lot" compared to paid work which only rated 45.5%. Furthermore, work experience rated the lowest amongst students who did not enjoy their workplace activities with only 6.2% rating their enjoyment as "not at all". Again, paid work was the least favourite receiving a percentage of 10.1 of the "not at all" rating. Although the differences between the satisfaction levels is only slight, the results nevertheless show that students' experience of work experience is enjoyable.<sup>7</sup>

An effective method of combining school and study is school-based traineeships (which will be discussed in more detail later in the submission). Fundamentally, VACC believes that this program offers a viable alternative career and educational pathways for VCE students.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Smith, E. And Green, A, 2001, *Students Learning from Their Paid and Unpaid Work*, NCVET, Australian National Training Authority.

<sup>8</sup> Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, 2002, *Submission for the Enquiry into Vocational Education in Schools*, accessed at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/EDT/ves/subs/sub005.pdf>, 3/12/2008.



School-based traineeships are a successful method for students to combine study and work in the attainment of their year 12 certificate. There is however a limitation placed on these programs by the inflexibility within secondary schools. Often, secondary school timetables are too rigid to allow for students to attend TAFE and the workplace, in addition to their ordinary schooling. This is a major restriction of school-based training pathways. VACC believes that increased flexibility within schools to accommodate for school-based training pathways would be a successful approach to support students to combine work and study and to encourage them to gain a successful transition to work.

- (c) *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.*

According to a report by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, in order to improve youth prospects and, in particular youth transitions, it is essential to combat the school failure and the drop-out rate. It is this “silent epidemic of school dropouts” which has resulted in the numbers of school leavers who are not “fully engaged” in either full-time study, work or a combination of both. A “lack of basic education qualifications is a source of longer-term vulnerability for many young people in the labour market”.<sup>9</sup> According to the report, “early and sustained intervention” is the way to prevent this cycle of non-engagement.

According to Professor Richard Sweet, the disadvantage of not completing high school is particularly high in Australia compared to other countries in the OECD. For example, a 24 year-old who *has not* completed year 12 or an equivalent is twice as likely to be unemployed as a 24 year-old that *has* completed that level of education. Comparing this

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<sup>9</sup> Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2007, *How Young People are Faring: At a Glance*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, NSW

information to other nations within the OECD, the only country where this proportion is higher is the Czech Republic.<sup>10</sup>

Although Sweet does not state that Australian youths without a secondary certificate are in dire straits, he does say that they are at a “significant disadvantage”. According to the report, Australia seems to have the worst of both worlds, having a relatively high number of young people without a secondary school certificate as well as a high “penalty” for those with low qualifications. This “penalty” for not completing a secondary certificate or an equivalent qualification is a rate of unemployment more than twice that of those who have completed their year 12 certificate. This is particularly bad in Australia since much of the economy is dependent on higher skilled industries. In other countries where the number of early school leavers is high, such as Greece, Spain and Portugal, economies are more dependent upon lower-skilled industries such as agriculture and tourism. However in Australia’s labour market, demand for skills and qualifications is high, and as a consequence, the penalty for lacking these is substantial.<sup>11</sup>

### **Work may intersect with income support**

For secondary school students undertaking part-time or casual work, there are more reasons for working other than just gaining work experience. “students believed that a part-time job provided them with the opportunity to develop a range of social and personal skills, such as communication skills and self-confidence through working and dealing with other people, and a sense of competence and responsibility that came from turning up to work on time and carrying out designated tasks “.<sup>12</sup> Although perhaps a minority, there is at least a sizeable number of students who undertake paid work in order to help support their family or simply to remain studying. It is for these reasons that VACC supports students

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<sup>10</sup> Sweet, Richard, 2007, *Education, Training and Employment in an International Perspective*, Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Melbourne.

<sup>11</sup> Sweet, Richard, 2007, *Education, Training and Employment in an International Perspective*, Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Melbourne.

<sup>12</sup> LSAY, 1999, Research Report number 9: *The Effects of Part-time Work on School Students*, The Australian Council for Educational Research.

undertaking paid work while at secondary school. It would be a disadvantage to already disadvantaged students if they could not work. A support framework must be in place to help disadvantaged students remain at school despite monetary pressures. Although most students work voluntarily, either for work experience or for other reasons, however “for a small proportion of student-workers - perhaps as many as one in ten - there was some evidence of a financial imperative in their decision to work while at school; these were more often students from poorer families, especially those from such families who were receiving the means-tested Austudy allowance”.<sup>13</sup>

Support for students from lower income families needs to be given. According to a report by LSAY titled *The Effects of Part-time Work on Students*, 13 percent of students worked in combination with secondary school in because their family needed the money and 14 percent worked in order for them to remain in school.<sup>14</sup> The study included sample answers within a survey under a list of reasons for working “The money I earned enabled me to remain a student” and “my family needs the money” among others. Not surprisingly there was a strong relationship between family wealth and responses to the answers for needing money, students from poorer families were more than twice as likely to answer yes to these particular questions.<sup>15</sup> As a further indicator of the financial status of these students, a considerably higher number of the students who agreed with the questions received Austudy payments (more than double) than those who did not.<sup>16</sup>

For the students who could perhaps be considered most at risk in this respect - that is, those who had been the lowest achievers during their earlier years of secondary school - there

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<sup>13</sup> LSAY, 1999, Research Report number 9: *The Effects of Part-time Work on School Students*, The Australian Council for Educational Research.

<sup>14</sup> LSAY, 1999, Research Report number 9: *The Effects of Part-time Work on School Students*, The Australian Council for Educational Research.

<sup>15</sup> LSAY, 1999, Research Report number 9: *The Effects of Part-time Work on School Students*, The Australian Council for Educational Research.

<sup>16</sup> LSAY, 1999, Research Report number 9: *The Effects of Part-time Work on School Students*, The Australian Council for Educational Research.

was no strong indication that working part-time was seen by them to be any more of a problem than it was for other students

- (d) *The potential impact on educational attainment (including the prospects for post-compulsory qualifications and workforce productivity).*

### **Not one model for all children**

The potential impact of combining work and study on educational attainment seems to be a double edged sword. On the one hand, participation in part-time work does seem to reduce the likelihood of students completing year 12. On the other hand, students undertaking part-time work while at school leads to an increase in levels of engagement into apprenticeship and traineeships as well as greatly lower levels of unemployment. At a general level it would appear that there is a linear relationship between the number of hours worked during year 12 and the levels of completion, being the more hours worked the lower the likelihood of completion.<sup>17</sup> Taking this data in mind, VACC does not encourage students to work excessive hours in part-time work while still at school.

These statistics tend to only apply to students who work many hours (more than 15 hours per week) during year twelve, they show almost the opposite result in regards to work during year 11. Provided a student does not work excessively during year 11 part time work has little to no effect on completion rates of secondary school. Furthermore, in terms of post-school outcomes, students who in year 11 who had a part-time job were less likely

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<sup>17</sup> Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY), 2003, *Student Workers in High School and Beyond: The Effects of Part-Time Employment on Education Training and Work*, Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd., p.6

to be unemployed at age 19 and “less likely to suffer long spells of unemployment” after finishing school, at least in the early post-school years.<sup>18</sup>

- (e) *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)*

According to a NCVET study, *How Workplace Experiences While at School Affect Career Pathways*, students who had participated in a School-Based New Apprenticeship (SBNA) were far more likely to be engaged in full-time work or study, six months after leaving school than students who had not participated in the program. The study showed that only 10.8% of the students who had completed SBNAs were not in full time work, training or apprenticeships, six months after finishing school. There is quite a marked difference when one compares this to almost a quarter of non school-based pathway students (24.3%) were not in full-time work or study six months after finishing school. These figures show that SBNAs are successful at facilitating the successful transitions of youth.<sup>19</sup>

VACC views the success of a SBNA in a broad sense. “The purpose of an SBNA is to provide a seamless transition from school to a career”.<sup>20</sup> Obviously, the work-experience gained within such a program is beneficial for both the student and the employer since the student will have an advantage over others in an application for an apprenticeship, and the employer will have a more experienced apprentice or trainee. Another, less obvious successful transition provided by a SBNA in regards to employers, is that employers can

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<sup>18</sup> Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY), 2003, *Student Workers in High School and Beyond: The Effects of Part-Time Employment on Education Training and Work*, Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd., pp.2-3

<sup>19</sup> National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 1995, *How Workplace Experiences While at School Affect Career Pathways*, Australian Government

<sup>20</sup> ACPET, 2007, *Effective Outcomes for school-based New Apprentices – A Case Study of Training Organisations Working together* 2006/2007, Australian Council for Private Education and Training,

effectively trial an individual within their organisation and monitor their work before offering a traineeship or apprenticeship position to them and students can have a taste of an industry, without committing to undertaking an apprenticeship.

Aside from school-based apprenticeships allowing students to dip their toes into an industry, they, like casual and part-time jobs, offer the individual an opportunity to gain experience in a workplace and to become familiar with the culture which they inevitably will have to become familiar with in the future. They allow students to dip their toes into an industry, often weeding out early, the students who, “as an outcome of their experiences” in the industry, decide that it “is not where their career aspirations lay”.<sup>21</sup>

VACC’s Auto Apprenticeships Department has seen students certain that they want an apprenticeship in a particular trade, only to find a few months into the apprenticeship that it was not for them. The success of SBNAs in this respect is that students can have a taste of an industry before they actually enter it. This reduces the likelihood of apprentices either ‘dropping out’ of their courses prematurely or simply completing their course because they are enrolled, and pursuing a career in an unrelated industry, wasting both their own time and the time of their mentors. SBNAs give young people entering an industry a realistic view of the work required of them, the working environment, and as a consequence, are less likely to cancel their training agreement before its completion.

Despite this seeming success of SBNAs, the study, *Experiences While at School Affect Career Pathways*, notes that almost one quarter (23.9%) of school-based training students indicated that their “major activity”, six months after finishing school, was not the career path which they had planned to take. This fits with the view of the VACC that a SBNA assists a successful transition to work, even when the student continues into another industry. On

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<sup>21</sup> Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, 2002, *Submission for the Enquiry into Vocational Education in Schools*, accessed at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/EDT/ves/subs/sub005.pdf>, 3/12/2008.

the other hand, in the non school-based training group, only 12.9% indicated that they were in the “major activity” in which they had planned to be.<sup>22</sup> Although the numbers are not great, here is a clear indication that SBNAs provide pathways into further contracts of training, both full-time and part-time, in the same industry area, with 32.3% of school-based training students in the study, taking up full-time work in their part-time workplaces which they had at school.<sup>23</sup>

VACC has had some success in demonstrating the effectiveness of SBNAs with Australian school-based Apprenticeships (ASbA). An Australian school-based Apprenticeship is similar to an Australian Apprenticeship, but is part-time and is more flexible. The first year is spread usually over two years or more, and takes place while students are enrolled in full or part-time studies at school. (Note: the term Australian Apprenticeships include both Traineeships and Apprenticeships).<sup>24</sup> An ASbA teaches students a nationally recognised qualification (usually a certificate II) which will count as part of their Year 12 qualifications, allow students to undertake paid work in a chosen industry as well as including a component of further industry training. For a student who has completed an ASbA, it gives them a further advantage in the form of a head start in the job market once they finish school, since they have some experience and working environment is not entirely foreign to them. This experience assists in the transition from school to work. Furthermore, since an ASbA contributes points toward a Year 12 certificate, it does not restrict entry into further or Tertiary education, should the student wish to take that path.

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<sup>22</sup> National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 1995, *How Workplace Experiences While at School Affect Career Pathways*, Australian Government

<sup>23</sup> National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 1995, *How Workplace Experiences While at School Affect Career Pathways*, Australian Government

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.communityactivecareers.com.au/Apprenticeships-Training/Australian-school-based-Apprenticeships-Employers/What-is-an-ASBA-.cfm?objid=269>

Although there are only a very small number of students undertaking in an ASbA, the VACC has had great success with the program. Of a total of 246 students participating in an ASbA at the VACC (42 this year) over 50% of students have successfully make the transition into the workforce as a result of their training program. VACC have had 146 in total and 20 in 2008 made successful transitions. VACC expects to increase enrolments to around 60-70 students by 2009. In addition to this, many students have been accepted into apprenticeships, even before the completion of their ASbA, because of their skills learned within it.

### **Recommendations to improve school-based training pathways**

The current Vocational Education and Training (VET) area of school-based training pathways does not have the same successes as SBNAs and ASbAs. The two biggest criticisms of VET programs are that the current system is too school-based and does not focus enough on giving students real experience of workplaces and second, the perception that it is geared for lower achieving students. The VET system, on paper, is a very good idea providing educational, and vocational training for students who may not be completely satisfied with the school experience or simply would like to add a vocational dimension to their schooling experience. In practice, VET has many short-falls and would benefit from a change.

If VET's curriculum were changed to include a value of learning from work rather than an attempt to train for a narrow field it would have better outcomes for students.<sup>25</sup> Students could receive a more hands-on experience from work, while studying for recognised educational qualifications which "serve multiple purposes and users, including university entrance".<sup>26</sup> The lack of clear pathways between VET and higher education is helping to drive away many capable students from traditional trades as well as a perception that it

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<sup>25</sup>Ryan, Robin, 2002, *Making VET in Schools Work: a review of policy and practice in the implementation of vocational education and training in Australian schools*, Journal of Educational Enquiry, Vol. 3, No. 1, Page 11

<sup>26</sup>Ryan, Robin, 2002, *Making VET in Schools Work: a review of policy and practice in the implementation of vocational education and training in Australian schools*, Journal of Educational Enquiry, Vol. 3, No. 1, Page 11



does not lead to university education.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the most advantageous options for vocational education are those which qualify young people for tertiary studies as well as for work”. It would seem that the ideal way to incorporate vocational objectives into the curriculum is through utilising *real* work experience to assist the transfer of specific learning to more general and more recognised competencies, placing them within a broader educational framework” allowing pathways for either an industry or the option for university education.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps the biggest problem for VET is the public’s perception of the program. Vocational education programs are often marginalised since it is perceived that they exclude higher achieving students, while they tend to exclude the most disadvantaged students and being seen as “alternatives to general education, not as integral to” education.<sup>29</sup> A revamping of VET’s image is needed and allowing a greater work-experience contingent as well as greater pathways for higher education such as a higher proportion of subjects with a tertiary entrance score could assist with the metamorphosis.

A further criticism sometimes cited of the VET program. VACC has found that VET does not realistically cater for disadvantaged students and is generally not geared towards females participating in courses other than hospitality and Food courses. “There is a negative streaming into VET in Schools along socioeconomic status and gender lines”.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee, 2003, *Bridging the Skills Divide – Report*, The Senate, p.162.

<sup>28</sup>Ryan, Robin, 2002, *Making VET in Schools Work: a review of policy and practice in the implementation of vocational education and training in Australian schools*, Journal of Educational Enquiry, Vol. 3, No. 1,

<sup>29</sup>Ryan, Robin, 2002, *Making VET in Schools Work: a review of policy and practice in the implementation of vocational education and training in Australian schools*, Journal of Educational Enquiry, Vol. 3, No. 1, Page 11

<sup>30</sup>Ryan, Robin, 2002, *Making VET in Schools Work: a review of policy and practice in the implementation of vocational education and training in Australian schools*, Journal of Educational Enquiry, Vol. 3, No. 1,

### **The effectiveness of school-based learning for disadvantaged students**

Evidently, the biggest problem with school-based training pathways in regards to their success for disadvantaged students is the small level of participation in the programs within that group. That is disadvantaged in relation to students from poorer backgrounds.

School-based training pathways such as VET do not specifically cater to disadvantaged students with levels of low academic achievement, so as a result, they do not impact on positive transitions. The VET system seems to not be “the answer” for many students who have low levels of academic achievement.<sup>31</sup> VET would benefit from a broadened curriculum to appeal to all levels of abilities, increasing participation by disadvantaged students as well as catering for them and improving results.

*“Drawing on this table it is evident that people with disabilities are relatively under-represented in terms of employment, training participation and qualifications. That is, their participation in the labour force, their participation in vocational training and their qualification levels are all lower than might be expected compared with the general population”.*<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Ryan, Robin, 2002, *Making VET in Schools Work: a review of policy and practice in the implementation of vocational education and training in Australian schools*, Journal of Educational Enquiry, Vol. 3, No. 1,

<sup>32</sup> NCVER, 2008, *The Role of Vocational Education and Training in Welfare to Work*,

VACC supports the 5 basic principles

- VACC encourages students to undertake school-based learning.
- VACC encourages the participation of school students in part-time work on an informal basis, if the work consists of less than 15 hours per week since the research shows that this does not affect their studies. VACC also encourages students adopting a more formal combination of work and study in the form of ASBAs and SbNAs.
- VACC supports ASBAs as a preferred stream for both industry and students based on our experience.
- VACC would support a review of the current VET programs and their effectiveness.
- VACC supports the promotion of alternative pathways such as SbNAs and ASBAs as an alternative option to traditional schooling.

The adoption of the above principles in our view encourages engagement in industry, post-secondary schooling and successful transitions to the workforce for students.

## References

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3. Australian Industry Group and Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2007, *It's Crunch Time: Raining Youth Engagement and Attainment – A Discussion Paper*,
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5. Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2007, *How Young People are Faring: At a Glance*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, NSW
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