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**SUBMISSION TO THE
INQUIRY INTO
COMBINING SCHOOL &
WORK: SUPPORTING
SUCCESSFUL YOUTH**

TRANSITIONS

Submission to the Inquiry into combining school & work: Supporting successful youth transitions.

Rationale:

The increasing emphasis on retention rates in Australian has its origins in political, economic and educational factors.

The nature of Secondary Education has undergone significant change over the last ten years.

Originally the final years of Secondary school were seen as a means of preparing students for university. Now our perspective is much wider, including a strong element of vocational education which may be delivered in schools or by external providers.

The result of this changed approach is to provide the nation with a better educated, more highly skilled workforce.

From a student's point of view, it allows a more focussed program of study which provides for career development and the acquisition of work-related skills and accreditation.

Having acknowledged this, a number of points need to be made:

1) The provision of realistic and appropriate curricula.

Currently many students complete their secondary schooling but have no desire to attend university.

They are compelled to follow academic curricula which alienates them from their studies, damages their self-esteem and increases their sense of frustration.

Accordingly we would seek to put in place a range of subjects that supports their aspiration and that enhances their vocational skills.

- a) An English course that is essentially based on communication skills with a minor literature component.
- b) A Mathematics course that has its basis in arithmetic with some elements of geometry.
- c) A Civics course which examines three tiers of Australian government and is focussed upon the rights and responsibilities of the individual in each sphere. This course could include some elements of legal studies.
- d) A Commerce course which centres upon the management of personal finances, an understanding of credit arrangements and basic accountancy. Such a course could include an analysis of the techniques of advertising.

These four subjects need not lack intellectual rigour and, because of their inherently practical nature, they may well appeal to students who are alienated by the current academic bias in the final years of Secondary education.

These subjects should not be compulsory and students may elect to combine “traditional” courses with these new electives.

Such additions to the curricula offered by Secondary schools could only encourage young people to remain engaged with their learning.

2) The development of more flexibly structured curricula.

Currently curricula in the later years of Secondary education are content driven. This has resulted in “surface” learning where breadth of knowledge has

superseded depth of knowledge and where analytical and evaluative skills have been undervalued.

Accordingly a new structure is proposed: a common core of knowledge augmented by a range of electives, three of which would be examinable and assessable.

Such a structure would allow more opportunity for skill development and for teaching to be more pupil-centred. This, in turn, would lead to greater student engagement with their learning.

3) A national standard for the staffing of public Secondary schools.

All schools with a Secondary component must have a trained, full-time Careers Teacher.

Currently schools in NSW are penalised when vocational education students are taught by an external provider and their teacher numbers are reduced on a formula basis. Schools, often located in rural areas where qualified staff and resources of an appropriate industrial standard are not available, are penalised for implementing flexible delivery structures.

If staff numbers were not reduced, the onus would be on schools to examine a range of options: more variety in the school's curriculum offering; lower class sizes; increased remediation and learning support.

This concept of a base staffing component would enhance equity for students in small schools and would promote greater student involvement in their learning.

4) A more flexible model of Work Experience.

Rather than pursue a block system of Work Experience, schools should be free to negotiate a more flexible model where students are released for one day a week to undertake work placement.

Gundagai High has implemented this model for students “at risk”.

This approach allows employers to appraise student performance in a more structured way.

Tasks can be allocated and monitored in a setting that is more educative than time filling. This arrangement is reviewed after three weeks by the employer and the school’s Careers Teacher. Should this evaluation be favourable, the program may continue for a further ten weeks.

Students gain from a more realistic work experience and employers benefit from a more systematic view of a student’s capabilities and suitability for further employment.

This scheme has led to several of our students gaining apprenticeships and continuing their education through TAFE.

5) Transition to Work.

The introduction of School Based Traineeships has been a success, although the process needs to be reviewed to make the implementation of the program less demanding and confusing for students, employers and parents.
(See Appendix 1)

6) Investigate a more flexible model of Apprenticeship.

The current lack of apprenticeships may have its origins in the costs which accrue to employers.

Apprentices could assume some of these costs via a HECs-style scheme, accepting the responsibility for some of their training costs.

The length and cost of training could be reduced by allowing employers to sign off on industry-based competencies while apprentices are in the workplace. This would compliment the teaching of RTOs.

7) Recognition of Part-time Employment

Where school students have been in regular part-time employment for, say, one year, their employers should sign off on an agreed (or system-devised) list of employability skills (see Appendix 2). This list could be added to the formal certification of student achievement at the completion of their secondary education.

Recognition of regular part-time work over a period of two years would compliment a student's school based studies.

Peter Franks
Principal

Neil Armstrong
Careers Adviser

APPENDIX 1

Recommended Process for Establishing School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships – SBATs for students in Government Schools

SBAT identified and SBAT Coordinator () notified

Identification could come via an AAC, School, Parent, Employer, Career Adviser or Student



SBAT Coordinator confirms that the traineeship or apprenticeship has a school based option, eg BOS approval & VTO. If not enquiries made to determine viability.



**SBAT Coordinator advises RVEC responsible for school and the RTO, TAFE via the notification form to TSLO
or
relevant Private Provider.**



Capability and Readiness to support training is confirmed by the RTO.
Within a maximum of 10 working days.
Preferably completed before the end of the previous year



Meeting of all parties – This step has proven critical to overall success.

SBAT Coordinator invites all stakeholders eg Parent, student, school, employer + RTO rep
Organises time and location. (Time should be determined to meet employers needs eg out of school hours.
Options of video conference or speaker phone be considered.)
SBAT Coordinator prepares & provides background information for RVEC to facilitate meeting.



RVEC facilitates meeting – All parties commit to continuing the process.

Any barriers to success are discussed, eg timetable, travel, mode of delivery, student needs, pattern of study
Refer to checklist
Where possible a DRAFT Training Plan (TP) is produced for the meeting by the RTO.
Training options are negotiated with the employer in consultation with the trainer or nominee and amendments made to the TP.
The TP is signed by all except the RVEC who will double check the final version of the TP before signing.
The TAFE Notification form & TVET application form is also completed and signed at this meeting.



RTO finalises the Training Plan

& slots in signature page – Forwards to RVEC for final checking and signature.



Sign up and signatures on the Training Plan Completed

The RTO is responsible for liaising with stakeholders to ensure all signatures are complete.
When signatures are complete, the Training plan is forwarded to the SBAT Coordinator



The SBAT coordinator takes copies and provides to all stakeholders.

School, AAC, RTO, Parent, Student and maintains the central DET file.



The school ensures entry of course on eBOS, including the Industry Based Learning Course if applicable.

SBAT progress is monitored by the school, and liaises with RVEC or SBAT coordinator if another RTO is involved.

APPENDIX 2

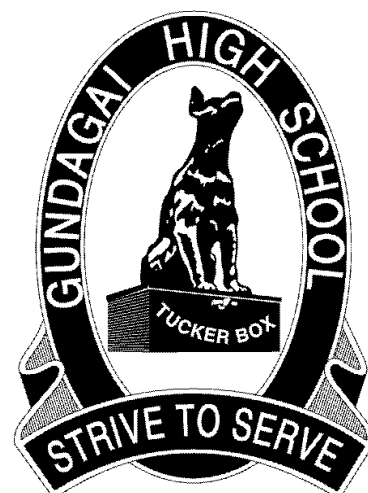
EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS RECORD 2009

Student Name _____

Class _____ Teacher _____

Topic _____

Date _____



COMMUNICATION – listening and speaking	
TEAMWORK	
PROBLEM SOLVING	
SELF MANAGEMENT – time, Punctuality	
PLANNING & ORGANISING – goals, targets, action planner	
USING TECHNOLOGY – email, web etc.	
LEARNING – knowledge	
INITIATIVE & ENTERPRISE	
COLLECTING, ANALYSING & ORGANISING INFORMATION	