

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

**TO THE**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**REPORT ON THE  
INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

***Learning to Work***

**June 2005**

## INTRODUCTION

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training tabled the Report of its Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools, *Learning to Work*, in March 2004. *Learning to Work* identifies and analyses key issues relating to vocational education and learning pathways for young people.

The Committee recognised the benefits of vocational education in assisting young people to make successful transitions from school to work and independence and was encouraged by the significant progress already made in developing appropriate pathways for students from school to work. *Learning to Work* sets out priorities and strategies for vocational education and learning in Australian schools to build on and strengthen achievements to date.

*Learning to Work* calls on governments at all levels to promote the advantages of vocational education pathways to young people and their families. The Committee shared the Australian Government's view that all young people should be supported to achieve their full potential and that the country must invest in the future of the 70 per cent of young people who do not go directly from school to university.

In recognition of the importance and value of Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathways, the Australian Government has recently announced significant initiatives that address many of the Committee's findings and recommendations.

### VET in Schools

Increasing the diversity of choices in education is essential so that all young people are able to develop their full potential through schooling. Currently, 95 per cent of secondary schools across Australia offer Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes. The Report acknowledges the variety of delivery methods of VET in Schools. Provision of more VET options in schools has helped create more diversity in the senior years of schooling.

There has been significant growth in the number of young people undertaking VET in schools from around 60,000 in 1996 to over 200,000 today. There has also been a large increase in the number of young people undertaking School-based New Apprenticeships. There are now 11,900 young people in School-based New Apprenticeships compared to 1,500 in 1998. These pathways lead to industry recognised qualifications and provide excellent career opportunities for young Australians.

The Australian Government supports VET in Schools programmes through its substantial contribution to states and territories and non-government education authorities for schools and VET. For 2005-06 to 2008-09 the government will invest an estimated \$35.1 billion in Australian schools and around \$10.1 billion for the VET system, including support for New Apprenticeships. As education systems and providers increase their expenditure on VET in Schools, the Australian Government supplementation arrangements through the Average Government School Recurrent Costs (AGSRC) leads to a proportionate increase in recurrent funding. The government provides around \$21.3 million per year in direct funding to VET in Schools and \$4 million for School Skill Centres.

The Australian Government recognises the strong national interest in School-based New Apprenticeships for young Australians. From 2005-06, the government will work in partnership with Group Training Organisations to provide \$25.9 million for an additional 7,000 School-based New Apprenticeships and \$20 million for up to 4,500 pre-vocational training places in the trades over the next four years.

On 3 June 2005 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to establish a joint Commonwealth-State working group to focus on the barriers across the VET system to achieving a genuinely national approach to apprenticeships. One of the issues to be considered by the working group is removing the impediments to greater participation by secondary students in School based New Apprenticeships, particularly in the traditional trades.

The Australian Government has made a commitment to amend the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* to remove industrial relations barriers to the take-up of school-based and part-time New Apprenticeships. This will give more young Australians the opportunity to enter a career in a trade by undertaking vocational education and training while still at school.

The establishment of Australian Technical Colleges will promote the benefits of combining a technical and academic education for Year 11 and 12 students and provide opportunities for up to 7,200 students each year to undertake School-based New Apprenticeships in the trades.

### **Increasing the Profile of VET in Schools**

*Learning to Work* highlights the need to better promote the benefits of VET in Schools pathways. The Australian Government supports initiatives that increase parent and student awareness of the valuable opportunities VET in Schools can offer and acknowledges that greater promotion of vocational learning pathways is in the interests of young Australians.

To acknowledge the achievement of those students who have chosen VET in Schools pathways the Australian Government announced funding for four years for the Australian Vocational Student Prize for VET in Schools students and School-based New Apprenticeships students. A cash prize of \$2,000 will be awarded to 450 VET in Schools students and 50 School-based New Apprenticeships students each year across Australia.

### **Australian Technical Colleges**

The establishment of 24 Australian Technical Colleges will further strengthen vocational education and training in Australia by promoting pride and excellence in teaching young people trade skills.

The Australian Technical Colleges represent a national response to critical skill shortages in key trades and will ensure that vocational education and training is a valued and well recognised choice available to young Australians and their families.

The Australian Government will invest \$351 million over the five years to establish the Colleges to provide technical and academic tuition for up to 7,200 year 11 and 12 students annually. The first of these Colleges will commence enrolling students in 2006, with all 24 operational by 2008.

The Colleges will provide high quality facilities where capable and committed students interested in pursuing a rewarding career in trades such as metal and engineering, automotive, construction, electrotechnology and commercial cookery can commence their vocational studies. It is intended that students at the Colleges will be enrolled in School-based New Apprenticeships and will also be able to undertake academic, information technology and business courses. They will gain trade, employability, entrepreneurial and business skills, resulting in better employment opportunities and the capacity to complete their trade qualification and go on to further education and training or be self employed in the future.

Australian Technical Colleges represent a new approach to attracting and training more young Australians into the trades. Through the Colleges, local communities will provide regional solutions to skill shortages in key trades in their area. At the same time these Colleges will raise the profile and status of vocational pathways in schools.

## **Career Advice**

The Report highlights the need for students to receive quality career education. Career professionals in schools have a critical role to play in helping students navigate their way through their career options, make the most of their vocational learning experiences and make a smooth transition from school to work. In recognition of this, the Australian Government has taken steps to strengthen careers advice.

From 2005-06 to 2008-09 the government will commit \$143.2 million to establish an Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers to support young people aged 13 to 19 years of age to achieve a successful transition through school, and from school to further education, training and work. Under this initiative, the Australian Government funded network of Local Community Partnerships will continue to deliver the Structured Workplace Learning Programme. However their role will be expanded to include forming partnerships with industry and professional careers advisers to assist young people, teachers and career advisers to better understand the range of available post-school options and provide professional careers advice tailored to the young person's talents and interests.

The Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers will be underpinned by \$4.5 million worth of careers-related initiatives announced in April 2004, including:

- development of professional standards and an accreditation scheme for careers practitioners;
- a professional development package for careers practitioners;
- a scholarship scheme for schools careers advisers to participate in study or industry placements;
- information for parents about their children's career options which was included in the 2005 Job Guide;
- initiatives to strengthen the network of over 200 Local Community Partnerships to support students to make career choices;
- careers fora for school principals and careers advisers to be held in conjunction with major careers expos across Australia; and
- infrastructure for a new national careers telephone helpline service.

In addition, the Australian Government is further enhancing the *myfuture* website, Australia's world leading career information and exploration service, to assist career practitioners through the development of support materials.

These key initiatives build on the broad range of existing career services and products funded by the Australian Government.

## **Indigenous Careers and Transitions**

The Australian Government recognises that steps need to be taken to remove barriers that continue to inhibit Indigenous students' access to transition pathways. This includes supporting the development of vocational skills and VET qualifications prior to Year 10 and providing

additional support, mentoring and career guidance for Indigenous students undertaking or considering VET in Schools or School-based New Apprenticeships.

Over the next four years the Australian Government will be investing \$2.1 billion to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous students by making mainstream education services work better for Indigenous students, redirecting resources to programmes that have improved learning outcomes, and targeting resources towards those Indigenous students in remote areas.

The Australian Government will provide \$23.1 million over the next five years to establish an Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme to help 600 young Indigenous Australians from remote communities to experience training and employment opportunities in major regional centres. Safe and supported accommodation will be managed through Aboriginal Hostels Limited and participants will be supported to maintain contact with their home communities. The Australian Government will also establish Indigenous specific pre-vocational training courses with post-training employment and placement support.

It will take collaborative effort from all levels of government to ensure better Indigenous career and transitions outcomes, including the retention of more Indigenous students to Year 12 or its vocational education equivalent.

### **Business and School Linkages**

The Australian Government strongly supports the focus in the Report on enhancing linkages between business and industry and schools to address skills shortages at the local and regional levels. The network of over 200 Local Community Partnerships is a key vehicle to support business and school linkages. In 2004 the Australian Government provided more than \$14 million for the network of Local Community Partnerships to assist over 95,000 young Australians to participate in over 105,000 work placements in the industry of their choice ranging from retail to building and construction. Working together, schools, TAFEs, parents and local and regional businesses can best support young people to acquire vocational, enterprise and career education, knowledge and skills before they leave school.

The Australian Government recognises the importance to Australian industry of having a work force with the right skills to ensure continued competitiveness and is tackling skill shortages in the trades through its National Skills Shortages Strategy. Under the new Strategy, a "one-stop shop" web site for students, parents and industry on careers in skill shortage occupations has been established. In addition, industries, especially in regional areas, will be encouraged to participate in "Adopt-a-School" projects and meet regularly with school students and their careers advisers and teachers to broaden their understanding of the trade industries. These measures will increase young people's awareness of the potential benefits of trade careers and engage them in local industries by providing hands on opportunities to learn about training and a variety of career pathways.

### **Enterprise Education and Employability Skills**

Australian industry is seeking young people with an understanding of the world of work. They need generic employability skills including communication and teamwork, planning and organising, problem solving and initiative, self management and technology skills as set out in the *Employability Skills for the Future* report. The Australian Government supports the continued broadening of course options for students in school and post school to enable young people to develop the necessary skills for their future. Vocational learning courses provide students with a realistic view of the work environment and its expectations, a clearer knowledge of career opportunities and pathways, and increased self-esteem and job readiness.

*Learning to Work* highlights the need to ensure that enterprise education and employability skills remain a priority. As the development of enterprise skills in young people is an important preparation for work and life, the Australian Government has undertaken work to investigate best practice models in enterprise education in Australian schools. This work demonstrates the importance of enterprise education in supporting students to apply their learning in real life situations and understand the realities of the wider world outside the school. Through the 'Enterprise Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' initiative, the Australian Government is providing over \$2 million in 2004-05 to fund innovative projects that encourage young Australians to be more enterprising.

The Australian Government has recently completed a national strategic project 'Development of a Strategy to Support the Universal Recognition of Employability Skills', which found that an employability skills portfolio model should be applied to the schools, higher education, VET and community sectors.

In July 2004 the Australian Government announced the development of an 'e-portfolio' website to provide Australians of all ages the opportunity to record the employability skills they have learnt in a variety of contexts and to present their skills to future employers. The Australian Government also announced an initiative to develop models for new Certificate I qualifications with a focus on the employability skills in various industry contexts. The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) has been managing this initiative which will transfer to DEST from 1 July 2005 and which will include wide consultation with industry groups including the new Industry Skills Councils. The new qualifications may be nationally endorsed into industry Training Packages in 2005.

### **Response to Recommendations in the Report**

The Government responses to the *Learning to Work* recommendations are set out in the following pages.

Many of the recommendations are being referred to the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) including the call for mandatory careers education for all secondary school students, the establishment of at least one full-time professional careers adviser with appropriate specialist training in each school and a national industry placement programme for teachers. A number of other recommendations in *Learning to Work* are being referred to other relevant bodies for consideration.

In October 2004 the Prime Minister announced that the Australian National Training Authority would be abolished at the end of June 2005 and its functions moved to the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). As part of the Australian Government's continued focus on the value of vocational education and training, a new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education will be established from July 2005 to replace the Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council (ANTA MINCO). Recommendations referred to ANTA MINCO for action and/or advice which are still outstanding at June 2005 will be transferred to the new Council. Any functions or projects that are being carried out by ANTA will transfer to DEST on 1 July 2005.

## **Recommendation 1**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*MCEETYA, its associated education authorities and key community groups engage in further debate on the purposes of vocational education in schools, including VET in Schools programs, in order to clarify and articulate specific objectives, expected outcomes, target groups and priorities with a view to better ensuring that policies and programs meet those purposes.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The Australian Government recognises that vocational education in schools refers to a broad range of activities, including vocational education and training in schools, School-based New Apprenticeships, enterprise education, structured workplace learning and the provision of careers education and services.

Vocational education in schools provides opportunities for skill development, it familiarises students with the world of work and provides experiential learning relevant to a range of career pathways; and supports students at risk of leaving school early by maintaining their interest in continued learning at school, including preparation for life beyond school.

## Recommendation 2

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Commonwealth, state and territory governments and industry jointly fund a promotion campaign to:*

- *raise the awareness of students, educationalists and the community of the benefits of vocational education including VET as broadly available to all members of the community; and VET in Schools and School-based New Apprenticeships;*
- *raise the status of VET and other non-tertiary pathways by: increasing awareness of the range of rewarding career options available; and promoting careers in areas of skill shortage, such as in established trades.*

## Response

The Australian Government supports on-going promotion by all levels of government and industry. This recommendation will be referred to the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The Australian Government continues to promote vocational learning pathways for New Apprenticeships, including for School-based New Apprenticeships through media campaigns. In 2004 the Australian Government invested \$6.35 million in the New Apprenticeships media campaign. The campaign focussed on occupations in skills needs areas. Since the campaign began, the number of New Apprenticeships commencements has increased from 198,700 in the 12 months to December 1999 to 263,100 in the 12 months to December 2004. This is an increase of 32%.

The Australian Government has recently announced a number of commitments to support and promote vocational education and training pathways and address industry skill needs. These include the establishment of:

- the network of 24 Australian Technical Colleges will each year provide up to 7,200 students in Years 11 and 12 with high quality training facilities and instruction linked to workplace requirements. At a cost of \$351 million over five years, the Colleges will raise the profile and status of vocational pathways in schools and demonstrate a technical education can lead to worthwhile career paths and should be as equally valued as a university degree. The Colleges will provide high status, high quality opportunities for young Australians, including the opportunity to undertake School-based New Apprenticeships to build a career for themselves in traditional trades;
- the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers to provide young people aged 13 to 19 years with access to career information, advice, support and planning on the range of available post-school options, particularly through non-university pathways. This initiative will receive \$143.2 million from 2005-06 to 2008-09 to promote vocational education and training in schools and organise and monitor relevant work experience and structured work placements for secondary students; and
- the Institute for Trade Skill Excellence which will put in place strategies to improve the quality of trades training and elevate the status of trades and trades education as career choices. The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence will be industry-led through involvement of peak industry bodies, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Business Council of Australia, Australian Industry Group and the National Farmers' Federation. The Institute will also work with other industry bodies such as industry associations, Industry Skills Councils and other relevant industry experts. Key activities of the Institute will be to designate "preferred provider" status to high quality



qualifications, run a teaching excellence awards programme, and elevate the status of trades generally. The Institute will focus on areas of skill shortage, in particular: metals, manufacturing, electrical, building and construction, and automotive. The Government will invest \$4.3 million in 2005-06 to establish the Institute, with \$18.3 million committed over three years for Institute activities.

These additional commitments will build on a number of existing Australian Government initiatives, including the Australian Vocational Student Prize, which will receive \$4 million over four years to acknowledge the achievements of outstanding students undertaking VET in Schools courses and School-based New Apprenticeships. Cash prizes of \$2,000 will be awarded to 450 VET in Schools students and 50 School-based New Apprenticeships students each year across Australia.

The Australian Government supports the careers sector by developing a "tear out" pack for parents that has been included in the 2005 edition of Job Guide. The pack was developed in consultation with industry and professional bodies and describes the range of job prospects and opportunities open to students through both the VET and higher education sectors.

The Prime Minister announced the Australian Government Mining Career Bursary Scheme in July 2004. The scheme aims to increase: the number of students undertaking mathematics and science subjects in secondary school; the number of students undertaking studies at the Curtin University of Technology's Western Australian School of Mines (WASM) Kalgoorlie campus; and the number of graduates entering the mining industry in the core mining professions. The scheme aims to address an expected shortage of mining graduates in future years. The scheme will begin in 2005, with up to 30 students commencing with the scheme in each year and total funding of some \$500,000 over the next four years.

Further, there is ongoing promotion of apprenticeship pathways by New Apprenticeships Centres, through the New Apprenticeships website, the distribution of print materials and the 1800 referral line.

As part of the National Skills Shortages Strategy, the Australian Government has developed a 'one-stop-shop' website for students, parents and industry which includes information on careers in occupations experiencing skills shortages: [www.getatrade.gov.au](http://www.getatrade.gov.au).

The Australian Government funded the national professional association for VET in Schools teachers, VETnetwork Australia, to promote vocational education in schools to a broad range of stakeholders through its 2004 National Conference and associated promotional activities.

### Recommendation 3

*The Committee recommends that:*

*As a high priority MCEETYA pursue greater national consistency, in key aspects of vocational education affecting the recognition and value of VET in Schools, to ensure a more uniform approach to transition to further education, training and employment. This should include:*

- *the collection of meaningful and accurate data;*
- *the adoption of common terminology;*
- *the recognition of VET for tertiary entrance;*
- *the role of and requirements for structured workplace learning (SWL);*
- *issues regarding nominal hours and units of competency;*
- *approaches to stand alone courses versus embedding of VET components;*
- *teacher training;*
- *policies for the use of TAFE and private RTOs; and*
- *reporting of participation and outcomes.*

### Response

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

This recommendation draws together a number of aspects raised in subsequent recommendations which are used to support the overall recommendation for greater national consistency of VET in Schools. The Australian Government has consulted with State and Territory governments and ANTA to seek action to increase the quality of VET systems, including a national approach to professional development and the establishment of auditable standards for Registered Training Organisations which focus on outcomes rather than processes and procedures. These initiatives also cover VET in Schools programmes.

A process for assigning nationally consistent nominal hours to units of competency and qualifications was trialled by ANTA during the first half of 2004, and this work will be progressed in 2005. In November 2003, the ANTA Ministerial Council noted an action plan to address issues relating to the quality of VET in Schools. As a result of this ANTA has engaged the Curriculum Corporation to undertake work relating to the potential to achieve national consistency in terminology and the recognition of VET achievement for tertiary entrance. The projects are due for completion in mid 2005. This ANTA work will transfer to DEST on 1 July 2005.

The Australian Government supports the adoption and use of common VET related terminology across all jurisdictions and sectors and the alignment of national VET in Schools data to the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard that has been agreed for collection in 2005 and reporting in 2006.

The *Skilling Australia's Workforce Bill 2005* will establish the new national training system and put in place the arrangements to ensure a high quality, flexible and responsive system, that delivers genuine competency based qualifications to provide the nation-building skilled people required by industry and business in the short term and beyond.

In support of this commitment, the Australian Government recently conveyed a funding offer of almost \$5 billion to the States and Territories under the proposed 2005-08 Commonwealth-State Agreement for Skilling Australia's Workforce.

If the training system is to be reformed, it is essential to reform TAFE, which currently delivers 85 per cent of publicly funded training. The Government will drive genuine reform by requiring States and Territories to increase the flexibility and responsiveness of the sector including by:

- maximising choice for employers and new apprentices, to enable them to select the most suitable training provider for their needs;
- implementing workplace reform in TAFE, including by offering more flexible employment arrangements such as AWAs and performance pay to staff, so that it is more responsive to local employer and industry needs;
- removing impediments in State awards so that training qualifications are based on competence, rather than on length of time;
- increasing the utilisation of fully publicly funded training infrastructure, by providing third party access to that infrastructure on a commercial basis; and
- ensuring that payments received under the Act are not used for providing vocational education and training to overseas students nor for private recreational pursuits or hobbies

The purpose of these measures is to rejuvenate the training system, especially in TAFE's, to allow flexibility and responsiveness to industry needs and to deliver genuine competency based qualifications as opposed to ineffective time-based qualifications.

With regard to structured workplace learning, while national consistency is sought, individual States/Territories and schools need to have a degree of flexibility sufficient to cater for the particular needs of students and local circumstances. The Australian Government has recently completed a project to investigate this further and to facilitate improved quality and consistency in regards to Structured Workplace Learning across the jurisdictions. In accordance with the ANTA MINCO November 2003 Action Plan for Quality for Vocational Education and Training in Schools, DEST managed a project to investigate the role and requirements for Structured Workplace Learning in VET in Schools.

This DEST project concluded the need for six quality principles as they relate to the workplacement. These principles have been included in the Australian Government's 2005 Guidelines for the Structured Workplace Learning Programme for Local Community Partnerships as quality requirements.

## Recommendation 4

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Commonwealth, state and territories education authorities and industry bodies address the findings and implement the proposals of the ANTA National Evaluation of School-based New Apprenticeships in order to increase the participation of students and industry in School-based New Apprenticeships particularly in areas of skill shortage such as the traditional trades.*

### Response

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The Australian Government recognises the strong national interest in School-based New Apprenticeships for young Australians. There are now 11,900 young people in School-based New Apprenticeships compared to 1,500 in 1998. To further stimulate this growth, the government has announced two commitments to increase participation in School-based New Apprenticeships in the trades including;

- \$351 million over five years to establish 24 Australian Technical Colleges, each with up to 300 Year 11 and 12 students, to offer vocational training that results in, or forms part of a, national qualification from an industry based Training Package. It is expected that each student will be given the opportunity to commence a trade School-based New Apprenticeship while attending the College. Industry will play a pivotal role in both leading and supporting the Colleges, particularly through the employment of students as New Apprentices; and
- \$25.9 million from 2005-06 to 2008-09 for an additional 7,000 School-based New Apprenticeships and \$20 million for up to 4,500 pre-vocational training places in the trades. These additional places will be administered in cooperation with Group Training Organisations.

The central industrial relations barrier to the employment of school-based and part-time New Apprenticeships is the absence of appropriate wage arrangements in some state and federal awards. The Australian Government has therefore made a commitment to amend the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* to remove industrial relations barriers to the take-up of school-based and part-time New Apprenticeships. This will give more young Australians the opportunity to enter a career in a trade by undertaking vocational education and training while still at school. The government is encouraging States and Territories to make similar amendments to their award systems and will require them to move towards competency-based training for New Apprentices (rather than current time-based arrangements) as a condition of the VET funding agreement for 2005 to 2008.

On 3 June 2005 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to establish a joint Commonwealth-State working group to focus on the barriers across the VET system to achieving a genuinely national approach to apprenticeships. One of the issues to be considered by the working group is removing the impediments to greater participation by secondary students in School based New Apprenticeships, particularly in the traditional trades. It will also examine ways of shortening the duration of apprenticeships where competencies are demonstrated.

The Australian Government has commenced a project 'Strategies for the Australian Government funded national network of Local Community Partnerships to better meet the

needs of student, community and industry'. This project will identify information sources about local skills shortages and provide a set of strategies for Local Community Partnerships established across Australia to assist the coordination of structured workplacements for school students.

The Australian Government is progressing initiatives across a number of industry areas, including automotive servicing, retail and nursing/aged care, to progress an analysis of effective models for School-based New Apprenticeships, including working with Local Community Partnerships and local and regional employers. Once completed, the Department of Education, Science and Training managed projects will lead to the development of case studies and resource kits for distribution to the Australian Technical Colleges, Local Community Partnerships and other stakeholders later in 2005.

The National Skills Shortages Strategy is a partnership between the Australian Government and key industry groups working to develop solutions to skills shortages in critical industries throughout Australia, particularly the traditional trades. This strategy includes innovative, practical projects targeting alternative entrants to the skilled workforce and regional projects, to ensure best practice strategies are communicated across sectors.

As part of its 2005-08 funding offer to the States and Territories, the Australian Government is proposing to establish a Commonwealth-State Skills Shortage initiative where States will participate in joint projects with the Australian Government and local industry to tackle skills shortages.

## **Recommendation 5**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*State and territory education authorities recognise in their staffing formulae the additional workload of teachers with significant VET responsibilities, and reduce the classroom teaching load to reflect the extra work supervision and reporting requirements of teaching VET.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA. This issue is one for State and Territory governments and school authorities as they are responsible for this issue.

## **Recommendation 6**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Educational authorities and industry representatives undertake further analysis of the relative costs and benefits of embedded and stand alone courses; and that authorities move towards a nationally consistent approach bearing in mind the suitability of particular subjects to either type of course.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government will refer this recommendation to MCEETYA.

State and Territory governments and school authorities are responsible for decisions about the model (embedded or stand-alone) adopted for VET in Schools.

The Australian Government 'Cost of VET in Schools' project examined the issue of delivery approaches and acknowledged that different models have different policy intentions and associated costs. The project developed a framework for a National VET in Schools Cost Model to allow the cost of VET in Schools to be determined for each jurisdiction and each delivery mode. The challenge faced by schools is to deliver VET in a way that provides the benefits they are seeking in a cost efficient manner and at the same time ensuring quality of delivery. The project found support for the view that high quality VET in Schools delivery is related to the quality of teacher training, the commitment to VET in Schools by teachers and the school and the industry placement and participation. The 'Cost of VET in Schools' report has been distributed to States and Territories for information.

## **Recommendation 7**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*The MCEETYA Taskforce on Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership (TQELT) pursue changes to teacher education programs to achieve a nationally consistent approach. This should include greater consideration of vocational education issues, including the need for potential VET teachers to meet the competencies required to Certificate IV in the new Training and Assessment Package, and more specialised training in VET-related subject areas.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

ANTA has recently completed a review of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). The review focused on fine-tuning the AQTF Standards and recommended refinements to make the Standards more effective in improving the quality of VET delivery. The recommendations included updating the competencies of Registered Training Organisation staff involved in the conduct of assessment and delivery of training (Standard 7 of the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations) to reflect the recently endorsed introduction of the Training and Assessment Training Package.



## **Recommendation 8**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*A consistent application of Recognition of Prior Learning be pursued nationally to ensure that current schools and teachers are not financially disadvantaged in meeting compliance requirements of the AQTF.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports the need to progress work on Recognition of Prior Learning and will refer it to the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The recommendation essentially deals with arrangements for the recognition of teacher qualifications against the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

An ANTA funded Toolbox has been developed for the new Certificate IV qualification, which was endorsed in October 2004 as part of the new Training and Assessment Training Package. This Toolbox includes a user-friendly Recognition of Prior Learning resource. Additionally, learners can negotiate a workplace-based assessment task to replace the project offered in the Toolbox, increasing the flexible delivery options available to the Registered Training Organisations. A comprehensive Teachers' Guide offers trainers and assessors information and guidance to support their delivery of the Certificate IV competencies.

The Australian Government supports a more consistent and transparent application of Recognition of Prior Learning across the jurisdictions and education systems. As part of its 2005-08 funding offer to the States and Territories, the Australian Government is proposing a national initiative to fund infrastructure and resources to increase the uptake of Recognition of Prior Learning.

## Recommendation 9

*The Committee recommends that:*

*A national industry placement program be developed to support teachers accessing industry experience. The involvement of industry in part should be pursued to sponsor such a program in conjunction with state and federal government funding.*

### Response

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The Australian Government supports the targeting of professional development funds to assist teachers to gain industry experience. For instance, professional learning projects for 2004 include a more defined role for teacher professional associations in Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme professional learning projects.

Funding for the Boosting Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics Teaching Programme was announced in the Australian Government 2004-05 Budget, as a key component of the Australian Government's \$5.3 billion investment under the second stage of *Backing Australia's Ability – Building our Future through Science and Innovation*. The Programme is intended to promote innovation in schools and to raise the scientific, mathematical and technological literacy and the innovative capacity of Australian school students. Over seven years, about 500 projects are expected to be funded to promote innovative approaches and cultures in schools, with a focus on the teaching and learning of science, technology and mathematics. These projects will include the limited term engagement of up to 1,300 tertiary students, researchers and other specialists in science, technology and mathematics to work in schools. Many of these projects are expected to develop closer school to industry links, thereby assisting in advancing the objective of Recommendation 9. Projects are to be developed at the school cluster level (school partnerships with other schools, science organisations, tertiary education institutions, teacher professional associations, business and industry, and the broader community), and are subject to final approval from DEST.

The Australian Government's investment of \$351 million over five years to establish 24 Australian Technical Colleges for up to 7,200 Year 11 and 12 students each year will provide teachers with better links to local business and industry. The Colleges will be industry-led. Local business representatives will participate in each College's governing body and vocational training will be informed by industry needs. Given the close links with industry, it will be expected that regular industry placement opportunities will be a key feature of the teachers' employment conditions to ensure that the Colleges attract and retain high quality teaching staff.

The Australian Government supports the careers sector, assisting teachers to access industry experience through industry and education scholarships at a cost of \$480,000. Under this scheme 54 scholarships will be available nationally to career advisers in schools: 27 of \$5,000 each for study and 27 of \$10,000 each for industry placements. The Careers Industry Council of Australia, the national peak body for Australian career practitioner organisations managed the submission based selection process.

The government has also strengthened arrangements for the network of over 200 Local Community Partnerships to assist schools, TAFEs, universities and local industries to advise students on career choices. To build capacity in the Local Community Partnerships, a funding grant of up to \$15,000 has been provided to each Local Community Partnership.

As part of the National Skills Shortages Strategy, the Australian Government is supporting a number of initiatives that will build closer links between schools and industry. In particular, the Government is supporting business participation in the "Adopt-a-School" initiative to which the Government has committed \$732,000. To date, the Australian Industry Group has been implementing this initiative over the last 12 months and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry will design and cost an industry secondment programme for careers advisers in the 2005-06 financial year.

## Recommendation 10

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Education authorities implement initiatives to attract suitable industry qualified personnel into VET teaching; including supported and accelerated education training, with assistance for HECS provided by the Commonwealth.*

### Response

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the Australian Council of Deans of Education.

The Australian Government supports efforts by education authorities to attract and retain teachers with appropriate industry experience to work in VET in Schools.

The October 2003 final report of the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future – Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics*, addressed teacher attraction and retention, especially in the fields of science, technology and mathematics, and noted needs relating to school vocational education. The report made a number of recommendations to facilitate career change entry to teaching of prospective teachers currently engaged in other professions. The Report's Agenda for Action proposes (Action 20) to "Actively recognise and credit the knowledge, capabilities and experience of prospective teachers now engaged in other professions, and implement recognition of prior learning arrangements in ways that reinforce high standards for the teaching profession". This Action is the responsibility of education authorities, the registration authorities and individual universities.

In developing flexible and innovative pathways it is important to consider that most States and Territories have or are establishing boards of teacher registration or accreditation authorities that certify individuals to teach. In so doing, these authorities have established certifying standards which include requirements in relation to teacher qualifications.

Australian teachers will be able to further strengthen the quality and status of their profession through the provision of an additional \$20 million in Australian Government funding to the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership. This funding, to be provided over the next four years, brings the Government's total support for the Institute to \$30 million. The Institute, run for and by the profession, has as one of its functions, professional standards development and ensuring accreditation of leaders and teachers. This function will complement the work of teacher registration or accreditation authorities at the State/Territory level. In considering flexible and innovative pathways to teaching, the views of the profession will need to be considered.

In addition, to ensure that the newly announced 24 Australian Technical Colleges can attract and retain appropriate industry qualified and accredited staff, the Colleges will offer attractive work conditions. The Colleges will be able to offer employment to teaching staff under Australian Workplace Agreements. It is also expected that work conditions will also emphasise flexibility, high quality facilities, strong professional learning, regular industry placement opportunities and ongoing support for teachers.

In relation to HECS provision, under the reforms to higher education reform package, *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future*, the Australian Government has set lower student contribution ranges for education units of study. This means that, in 2005, higher education providers cannot set student contribution amounts for education units of study above \$3,847 for an equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL). Therefore, student contributions for education

units of study have been maintained at the 2004 HECS rates (indexed) to commence from 2005, contributions for education units of study will continue to be maintained at the current HECS rates and thus will not increase beyond CPI indexation.

## **Recommendation 11**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*The reporting requirements of RTOs, school VET coordinators and teachers be streamlined in order to reduce the administrative burden, but without compromising the integrity of such arrangements.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The streamlining of reporting requirements, wherever possible, is supported by the Australian Government. The quality assurance requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) apply equally to all Registered Training Organisations to ensure system reliability and consistency of outcomes.

ANTA has completed a review of the implementation of the AQTF Standards. The review focused on improving the AQTF Standards by identifying issues associated with their interpretation and application through forum meetings with key stakeholders and an online survey. The review recommended fine tuning of the AQTF Standards and the revised standards will come into effect 1 July 2005 which will be considered further by the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

## **Recommendation 12**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*As a priority more complete assessments be made of the costs of vocational education and specifically VET in Schools (using *The Cost of VET in Schools, 2003* as a methodology) in comparison with;*

- *general education programs in schools; and*
- *the delivery of comparable certificate programs in TAFE;*

*and that if such calculations demonstrate higher costs of VET in Schools programs than general education programs, Commonwealth, state and territory governments share the responsibility for funding with states and territories raising the recurrent per capita funding and the Commonwealth increasing the capital and support funding.*

## **Response**

The Australian Government notes this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA.

MCEETYA, through its Schools Resourcing Taskforce project, is investigating the relative costs of vocational education in schools in comparison to the costs of general schooling.

The Australian Government contributes substantially through the schools and VET recurrent and capital funding agreements to support VET in Schools. There are two targeted VET in Schools initiatives under the current ANTA Agreement including School Skill Centres which receive \$4 million per year; and VET in Schools strategic funding of around \$21 million per year. Total Australian Government funding for schools under the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004* is estimated at \$35.1 billion for 2005-06 to 2008-09. As education systems and providers increase their expenditure on VET in Schools, the Australian Government supplementation arrangements through the Average Government School Recurrent Costs leads to a proportionate increase in recurrent funding. From 2005 to 2008 the Australian Government will deliver around \$5 billion in recurrent, capital and targeted funding to the states and territories to support the VET system.

As part of the agreement being negotiated with the States and Territories a commitment is being sought to examine funding arrangements for Vocational and Technical Education.

### **Recommendation 13**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*MCEETYA pursue the resolution of funding responsibilities for vocational education between the Commonwealth, states and territories across the different education sectors.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports continued national efforts to consider funding models for VET in Schools and will refer this recommendation to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.



## **Recommendation 14**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Efforts be made to improve cooperation between school and TAFE sectors where geography and course offerings make that viable, in areas such as co-location, human resources and administrative practices.*

*This should include a national review of charging practices by TAFE for government and non-government schools in order to:*

- *determine more equitable practices to better reflect their relative costs and resourcing; and*
- *ensure that funding restrictions and differential charging practices do not act as a barrier to government and non-government school students accessing otherwise appropriate VET courses through TAFE.*

*It should also include consideration of ways of addressing other potential barriers to the greater take-up of suitable courses offered by TAFE or other RTOs, including factors such as transport, timetabling, certainty of course continuity and duty of care issues.*

## **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The Australian Government supports the need to examine this issue and the issue of TAFE fees more generally. A recent report by Access Economics projects that over the 2004-06 triennium, there will be some 97,000 fewer students and 27.9 million fewer VET hours than there would otherwise have been at the national level, as a direct consequence of the recent TAFE fee increases imposed by State and Territory Governments. While TAFE fees are a matter for the States and Territories, the Australian Government is concerned that these practices may create barriers to the take-up of vocational education and training and will take up the matter through the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

As part of its 2005-08 funding offer to the States and Territories, the Australian Government is proposing a national fees review to achieve national consistency and more equitable access to vocational education and training across the States and Territories, as well as seeking commitment to examining funding arrangements for Vocational and Technical Education.

## **Recommendation 15**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*The Commonwealth Education Minister coordinate education authorities and universities to accelerate work on nationally consistent approaches to developing tertiary recognition arrangements for VET in School courses.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA.

University admission requirements are set independently by universities. Students apply through Tertiary Admission Centres, such as the Universities Admissions Centre, which is the centre for students seeking to enter NSW and ACT based universities.

State and Territory Governments should facilitate a dialogue between their Boards of Secondary Studies and University Admissions Centres on the recognition of VET subjects included in the accepted curricula of secondary studies. Such an approach may ensure that VET courses delivered by TAFE on behalf of schools or delivered directly by schools gain appropriate recognition in initial calculations of university entrance scores for school leaver cohorts. Similarly, further engagement is required to develop a greater flexibility for re-calculation of these scores for those who have postponed their application for university entrance.

Almost all the States and Territories currently have arrangements for including achievement in VET in Schools programs in the calculation of the tertiary entrance ranking. This policy decision is one for each of the jurisdictions to make.

An ANTA National Project 'Greater Recognition of Achievement by Industry and Higher Education of VET in Schools' is being managed by the NSW Department of Education and Training assisted by a National Working Party. As part of this work twenty universities have indicated their willingness to recognise achievement in VET in Schools courses in their selection strategies. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee has supported this work. The project also involved a national trial of a model developed to provide for more consistency in assessment practices for VET in Schools programmes.

The High Level Review of Training Packages that reported in April 2004 suggested that ANTA investigates options for graded assessment within Training Packages as supplementary reports. ANTA has commissioned further work on the potential to achieve a nationally consistent approach to the assessment of VET in Schools subjects for articulation into university pathways consistent with arrangements for other learning areas. This work is expected to be completed in 2005 and will take into account the results of the national trial and complementary work on graded assessments planned by Queensland.

The ANTA work will transfer to the Department of Education, Science and Training on 1 July 2005.

## **Recommendation 16**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and ANTA take action to provide greater recognition of TAFE qualifications for university entrance so that this becomes a more viable pathway to higher education for those pursuing VET options at and after school.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The issue has been taken up in a number of current reviews, including the ANTA High Level Review of Training Packages and in working parties and other measures undertaken through the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board, including recent endorsement of National Guidelines on Cross-Sector Qualification Linkages between secondary education (comprising VET in Schools), VET and higher education.

MCEETYA, at its July 2003 meeting, made a recommendation that the Australian Government coordinate national articulation and credit transfer arrangements between VET and Higher Education with all States and Territories. The Joint Committee on Higher Education, a committee under MCEETYA with representation from all States, Territories and the Australian Government, was tasked to report on appropriate measures and how these might be implemented. The Joint Committee on Higher Education undertook preliminary work in 2004, which included investigating overseas models which addressed these matters. It is now formulating a three-part strategy with both short-term and medium-term outcomes to deliver improvements in information and dissemination of existing practices, promotion of identified best practices and further improvements in implementation in both sectors. The strategy will examine combined or supporting actions that can be taken by States and Territories and the Australian Government. The Joint Committee on Higher Education (JCHE) reported its progress to the 2005 MCEETYA meeting. MCEETYA adopted the Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation, agreed to fund a national student of the current practices in credit transfer and articulation between VET and higher education, asked the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and the new VET quality agency to take a more active role in auditing credit transfer and articulation practice against the National Good Practice Principles and asked the JCHE in collaboration with the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board to establish a working party to improve data collection on credit transfer and articulation.

ANTA's National Training Quality Council has developed a Training Package Workplan to address the issues raised in the final report of the High Level Review into Training Packages. The issues identified include the need to actively seek formal articulation arrangements in and through Training Packages and into higher education and the need to publicise negotiated arrangements, good practice and models for articulation.

The ANTA work will transfer to the Department of Education, Science and Training on 1 July 2005.

## **Recommendation 17**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*The period of funding for providers of work placement coordination be extended to a triennium basis in order to provide greater certainty and continuity of programs.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government notes this recommendation.

From 2005-06, the Australian Government will provide \$143.2 million over four years for the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers. Under this initiative, Local Community Partnerships will be responsible for delivering structured workplace learning in addition to other career education-related activities. Refer to Recommendation 29 for further details on the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers.

The Department of Education, Science and Training is reviewing a number of factors that will enable the provision of multi year contracts for the facilitation and delivery of Structured Workplace Learning. These factors include work on the quality of Structured Workplace Learning for vocational education programmes, the development of a more equitable funding model and allocation framework and tools to assist Local Community Partnerships to succeed in the facilitation of structured workplace learning services for young people at the local level.

This work will be underpinned by Programme Guidelines that will help to ensure work placements and recognise the different vocational learning experiences for young people that lead to a structured work placement within a vocational education in schools context.

## **Recommendation 18**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Agencies at all levels of government be encouraged to participate in supporting work experience and structured work placements.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA.

The Australian Government supports involvement of all levels of government in the delivery of work placements.

From 2005-06, the Australian Government will provide \$143.2 million over four years for the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers. Under this initiative, Local Community Partnerships will be responsible for delivering structured workplace learning in addition to other career education-related activities. Refer to Recommendation 29 for further details on the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers.

The Australian Government is developing a set of core principles as a basis for progressing Structured Workplace Learning Programme arrangements for each State and Territory for 2005 and beyond. These core principles will include reference to the importance of all levels of government being involved in the provision of structured workplace learning placements within their agencies.

In addition to this, the functions of Local Community Partnership Management Committees will be examined with a view to encouraging representation from local government. Once they become members of Local Community Partnership Management Committees, local government representatives will be expected to lead by example through the provision of Structured Workplace Learning placements within their organisations and encourage other local government agencies to do the same.

## **Recommendation 19**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities investigate and develop strategies to support rural and remote communities' transport needs and, where necessary, provide increased travel and accommodation assistance to allow more isolated students to access VET courses.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA.

The Australian Government notes that State and Territory governments have the primary responsibility for school education, including the administrative arrangements relating to student needs where applicable.

The Australian Government will provide \$23.1 million over the next five years to establish an Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme to help 600 young Indigenous Australians from remote communities to experience training and employment opportunities in major regional centres. Safe and supported accommodation will be managed through Aboriginal Hostels Limited and participants will be supported to maintain contact with their home communities. The Australian Government will also establish Indigenous specific pre-vocational training courses with post-training employment and placement support.

From 1 July 2005, eligible New Apprentices will be entitled to receive Youth Allowance, including a higher away from home rate of payment for young people who need to live away from the parental home for the purposes of study or training. Eligible New Apprentices who have had to leave home to take up or remain in a New Apprenticeship will be able to access a third year of the Living Away from Home Allowance at the rate of \$25.00 per week (currently only first and second year New Apprentices are eligible). Eligible young people may also be able to access Rent Assistance to help with the cost of accommodation.

The rural and regional New Apprenticeships initiative provides employers in non-metropolitan areas an additional \$1,100 incentive payment when their New Apprentice progresses from Certificate II training to Certificate III / IV training in an occupation that is identified as being in skill shortage.

The payment is in addition to the existing incentives and available to employers for both new and existing New Apprentices. The incentive is administered by New Apprenticeships Centres.

The Australian Government's Country Areas Programme (CAP) provides funding to education authorities in the States and Northern Territory to support quality learning outcomes for students in geographically isolated areas. CAP funds may be used to undertake a range of activities, including making the transition from school to further education and training and work (post-school pathways). Such support includes assistance in accessing VET in Schools and work experience activities. From 2005-06 to 2008-09, funding of \$122 million will be provided under the CAP to government and non-government education authorities in each State and the Northern Territory. Each education authority then determines how funding is distributed to eligible schools using their knowledge of local needs and ensuring that the activities fall within the ambit of the Guidelines.

In addition, ABSTUDY assistance provides funding support for students who move away from home to study for travel at the beginning and end of their study period. In some instances, mid-

study period travel assistance is also provided, which could be applied to VET in Schools courses.

The Australian Government also provides funds under the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme to help the families of primary, secondary and under 16 year old tertiary students who are unable to attend an appropriate school on a daily basis because of geographic location. The Australian Government will provide an additional \$73.8 million in funding over the next four years to the AIC Scheme. Under the AIC Scheme, financial assistance is also available to the families of eligible TAFE students aged under 16 years to assist with the costs of boarding or setting up a second home in order to access TAFE. Allowances under the Scheme include the Basic Boarding Allowance, the Additional Boarding Allowance, the Second Home Allowance, the Distance Education Allowance and the Pensioner Education Supplement. Specific allowances under the Scheme available to assist eligible rural and isolated students to access VET include the boarding allowances and the Second Home Allowance. The Australian Government has substantially increased the Basic Boarding Allowance from \$4,446 to \$6,000 per year effective from 1 January 2005. In 2005, the Additional Boarding Allowance will be \$1,069 per year and the Second Home Allowance will be \$4,557 per year. In 2004, these three allowances under the AIC Scheme provided assistance to 8,382 students at a cost of \$34.6 million. The scheme is expected to assist a similar number of students in 2005.

The COAG Whole of Government trials are providing an opportunity to develop specific strategies in some of the trial sites to address the issue of remote access. For example, in Cape York the Multipurpose Facility in Weipa now provides an education and training facility as well as hostel accommodation for Indigenous secondary school students from nearby communities.

## **Recommendation 20**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*An evaluation of the role of cluster workplace coordinators be undertaken for the purpose of:*

- *increasing their effectiveness in forming the critical links between schools and industry;*
- *establishing structures to improve cooperative approaches between education and employment services in the community;*
- *assisting them to meet the increasing demand for work placement while also addressing the areas of local skill shortages;*
- *ensuring that rural and remote area needs are being met; and*
- *determining what extra resources and training are needed to effectively carry out this role, with the Commonwealth providing those extra resources.*

## **Response**

The Australia Government notes this recommendation and will refer it to the new Ministerial Council on Vocational Education.

The Australian Government has recently undertaken a review of the network of Local Community Partnerships and is currently mapping the functions of the Local Community Partnerships.

The Australian Government has provided funding to Local Community Partnerships (\$15,000 each) to draw on the experiences of the Leaders in Careers Forum and develop strategies at the local level to develop career information, provide training for coordinators and improve Local Community Partnerships infrastructure and processes. In the future, the Australian Government may be in a position to identify opportunities for additional Local Community Partnerships initiatives relating to this recommendation following the completion of this mapping exercise and the roll out of the Building Capacity in Local Community Partnerships initiative. The government has recently undertaken a review of the network of Local Community Partnerships and is currently mapping their functions.

From 2005-06, the Australian Government will provide \$143.2 million over four years for the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers. Under this initiative, Local Community Partnerships will be responsible for delivering structured workplace learning in addition to other career education-related activities. Refer to Recommendation 29 for further details on the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers.

Under the National Skills Shortages Strategy the Australian Government committed \$348,700 in 2004 to regional skills pilots to identify and develop practical strategies to address a region's current and future skills needs. In each pilot the Australian Government is working with regional stakeholders, including Local Community Partnerships, education providers, industry, employment services and State/Territory and local governments.

Also under the National Skills Shortages Strategy the Australian Government has provided funding of \$732,000 to promote and encourage local industries to 'adopt their local school' and improve awareness of training opportunities and invite students to undertake VET through their senior secondary school years. The Government is providing funding to develop an "Adopt-a-School" kit for use by Local Community Partnerships, industry, employers and schools across Australia.



## **Recommendation 21**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Relevant authorities address issues regarding work placements such as occupational health and safety, workers compensation, and clarifying the responsibilities of supervisors, which may be acting as barriers to more employers offering work placements.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will write to the relevant State and Territory Ministers responsible for occupational, health and safety and workers' compensation.

The Australian Government supports arrangements for the coordination of structured work placements and assists with addressing these identified issues through the Department of Education, Science and Training programme contracts and guidelines. The Australian Government will strengthen the requirements for the Local Community Partnerships in relation to the matters set out in the recommendation and will also provide assistance to coordinators to address these matters.

Workers' compensation arrangements are a legislative responsibility of State and Territory governments. The provision of insurance for students undertaking work placements is a matter that would need to be addressed by educational institutions and employers as these students are not employees and are generally not covered by workers' compensation arrangements. As School-based New Apprentices are employees, they are covered by the relevant State and Territory workers' compensation legislation.

The Australian Government's National Occupational Health and Safety Commission released in March 2004 *Student Work Placement: An OHS Guide for Employers*. The Guide informs employers of their legal duty of care to this group; outlines the risks facing young people in the workplace; and provides practical advice on how to prepare OHS for work placement students.

On 3 June 2005 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to establish a joint Commonwealth-State working group to focus on the barriers across the VET system to achieving a genuinely national approach to apprenticeships. One of the issues to be considered by the working group is removing the impediments to greater participation by secondary students in School based New Apprenticeships, including the occupational health and safety and workers' compensations issues faced by employers providing on-the-job training.

## **Recommendation 22**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Appropriate national, state and territory associations be identified to support professional development and forums to encourage principals and school leadership teams to advance the VET agenda and more fully incorporate VET into the mainstream school curriculum.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA.

The Australian Government supports initiatives to further enhance the professional development of school principals and leadership teams to advance the VET agenda. Funding for teacher professional learning activities in vocational education is already provided through the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP). The AGQTP is the Australian Government's major initiative to improve the quality and status of Australia's teachers and school leaders. Education authorities are encouraged to involve professional associations in the development and delivery of professional learning activities and are required to allocate at least ten percent of their funding to professional associations and higher education institutions. Approximately \$159 million has been provided for the AGQTP over the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05. The Australian Government will provide an additional \$139.9 million to continue the Programme to the end of 2009. This brings the total funding for the Programme to nearly \$300 million since the Programme commenced in 2000.

The Australian Government is providing \$600,000 to support Careers Lighthouse projects which will highlight and reinforce high quality career education as an essential part of schooling in Australia. Thirty-three projects encompassing seventy schools across Australia have been selected through a competitive application process to receive funding to document their existing best practice career education programmes and disseminate information about these as examples to other schools. The project also supports those schools wanting to trial new and innovative career education programmes. As part of such projects, schools will be expected to document and share information about their programme and its outcomes.

The Australian Government has sponsored the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC) to promote improved outcomes for Indigenous students under the 'Dare to Lead' strategy.

The Australian Government is also funding APAPDC to conduct a number of School and Industry Leaders fora at major career expos around Australia to facilitate discussion around job prospects, local area skill needs and shortages as well as career opportunities in a range of industries/professions. The first forum was held in conjunction with the Canberra Times Career and Employment Expo in October 2004. The other forums will be held in conjunction with major career expos around the country in 2005.

With funding from the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee the Australian Government supported the Leaders in Careers project which sought to build partnerships between school leaders, careers practitioners, industry representatives and parents with the aim of supporting a holistic approach to the delivery of career education in schools. This included a particular focus on providing information on vocational learning pathways and skills shortages.

## **Recommendation 23**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*MCEETYA and ANTA develop a consistent national approach to structured workplace learning with an agreed mandated minimum which meets the needs of industry and the requirements of the National Training Framework and Training Packages.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

Training Packages are designed to encourage flexible delivery arrangements and do not prescribe minimum workplace delivery requirements. ANTA is working with relevant groups and industry to provide better guidance on work placement and simulation for practitioners such as VET in Schools. This is expected to facilitate the adoption of a more consistent national approach to structured workplace learning.

This work will be transferred to the Department of Education, Science and Training on 1 July 2005.

## **Recommendation 24**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Enterprise and employability skills be made a higher priority and developed through a range of strategies across the curriculum in addition to the VET in Schools pathway to maximise the effectiveness of vocational education in preparing students for post-school options.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA.

The Australian Government supports efforts by the education authorities to make explicit the employability and enterprise skills in curriculum and delivery strategies and that both employability and enterprise skills need to be developed in the compulsory years of secondary schooling as well as the post-compulsory years.

#### *Employability Skills*

The Australian Government recently completed a national project 'Development of a Strategy to Support the Universal Recognition of Employability Skills' to facilitate the implementation of the employability skills in the schools sector as well as other sectors. The project conclusions and advice on a 'skills portfolio' approach for the recognition and recording of employability skills development will be provided to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The Department of Education, Science and Training is providing funding of \$100,000 to develop models for Certificate I qualification for employability skills that will cover the eight employability skill groupings recently agreed by Education Ministers as well as sets of technical skills to provide pathways to higher Training Package qualifications. ANTA has been managing this initiative and is working collaboratively with DEST.

The Australian Government is providing funding of \$200,000 for the development of an 'e-portfolio' website which allows Australians of all ages the opportunity to record their employability skills to support their future employment.

The Australian Government also supports an amendment to the Training Package Development Handbook to stimulate the inclusion of employability skills across all qualifications for each new Training Package.

ANTA has been working closely with Industry Skills Councils to progress the incorporation of employability skills in Training Packages. ANTA's responsibility for managing Industry Skills Councils will transfer to the Department of Education, Science and Training from 1 July 2005.

This includes \$351 million over five years to establish 24 Australian Technical Colleges in regional areas experiencing skills shortages. The colleges will provide tuition for up to 7,200 year 11 and 12 students to undertake academic studies, trades and trades-related vocational courses, as well as developing employability and entrepreneurial skills.

#### *Enterprise Education*

The national project 'Action Research to Identify Innovative Approaches to, and Best Practice in, Enterprise Education in Australian Schools' was conducted in approximately 200 primary and secondary schools over the period of April 2002 to April 2004. This \$3.4 million action research project was the first comprehensive national analysis of enterprise education in Australian

schools and demonstrated the key elements for successful implementation of enterprise education.

A new submission based initiative 'Enterprise Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' will build upon the success of the Action Research project. The Australian Government is providing \$2.5 million in 2004-05 to fund innovative projects that will encourage young Australians to be more enterprising.

## **Recommendation 25**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*The National Industry Skills Initiative be evaluated for the purpose of increasing its effectiveness and breadth in attracting young people into industries experiencing skill shortages, and that any funding necessary for an expanded role be jointly met by government and the relevant industry bodies.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will be implementing a comprehensive package of measures to attract young people into industries experiencing skills shortages, particularly the traditional trades. On 3 June 2005 the Council of Australian Governments agreed to establish a joint Commonwealth-State working group to focus on the barriers across the VET system to achieving a genuinely national approach to apprenticeships. One of the issues to be considered by the working group is removing the impediments to greater participation by secondary students in School based New Apprenticeships, particularly in the traditional trades.

#### Australian Technical Colleges

From 2004-05 the government will spend around \$351 million over five years to establish 24 Australian Colleges in regions experiencing skill shortages. The Colleges will provide Year 11 and 12 students with technical education in a trade, academic tuition in line with senior secondary curriculum and will raise the profile and status of school-based vocational education and training.

#### The Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers

The Australian Government will invest \$ 143.2 million from 2005-06 to 2008-09 for the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers to provide young people aged from 13 to 19 years with access to career information, advice, support and planning. The Network will promote the profile of careers in industry, including traditional trades.

#### Increased financial support for New Apprentices

From 1 July 2005 full-time New Apprentices will be eligible to apply for Youth Allowance, Austudy and ABSTUDY at a cost of \$384 million over three years. This will provide additional support to New Apprentices while their wages are at their lowest. This measure aims to improve full-time New Apprenticeship retention, particularly in the initial years, and will benefit up to 93,000 full-time New Apprentices by 2008-09. Full-time New Apprentices receiving assistance will be subject to the same personal, partner and parental means tests as currently exist for full-time students under the payments.

Living Away from Home Allowance will also be extended to third year New Apprentices who have moved away from home to take up or remain in a New Apprenticeship at a cost of \$5.8 million over four years.

#### Trade Scholarships and Toolkits

From 1 July 2005, the government has committed \$106 million over four years to provide Commonwealth Trade Learning Scholarships to all Certificate III and IV New Apprentices in trades experiencing skills shortages. The Scholarship will consist of two \$500 tax exempt

payments and will be available on successful completion of the New Apprentices first and second years of training.

Under the Tools for your Trade initiative the Government will provide tool kits worth up to \$800 to first year New Apprentices in trades identified as experiencing skills shortages at a cost of \$119.8 million over four years. Many New Apprentices in the first year of their apprenticeship forfeit part of their wages to acquire the essential tools of their trade. Provision of the tool kits will alleviate this burden and encourage more young people to take up New Apprenticeships in the trade occupations. The tool kits will have no tax impact for the employer in net terms.

### Apprenticeships

Working in partnership with Group Training Organisations the government has committed \$45.9 million over four years for an additional 7,000 School-based New Apprenticeships and 4,500 pre-vocational training places in the trades. From 2005-06 an additional 5,000 places per year will be created in the New Apprenticeships Access Programme at a cost of \$51.6 million over four years to provide pre-vocational training, support and assistance to help job seekers secure a New Apprenticeship. These places will be targeted to industries and regions experiencing skill shortages.

### Institute of Trade Skill Excellence

The Institute for Trade Skill Excellence will be established to elevate the status of trades and trades education as worthwhile career choices and to identify best trades training, including through provision of Preferred Provider status to high quality qualifications. The Government will invest \$4.3 million in 2005-06 to establish the Institute, with \$18.3 million committed over three years to fund its operations.

### National Skills Shortages Strategy

Building on the success of the National Industry Skills Initiative (NISI), the Australian Government announced the National Skills Shortages Strategy (NSSS) to develop a comprehensive approach to tackling skill shortages, particularly in the traditional trades. Since 1999 the Australian Government has spent more than \$12.5 million through NISI and NSSS to assist 14 industry sectors to examine their current and future skills needs. The financial and in-kind support from industry itself has also been substantial. Projects funded under the National Skills Shortages Strategy include:

- "Adopt-a-School" – the Australian Government has provided funding of \$732,000 to promote and encourage local industries to 'adopt their local school'. Industries that "Adopt-a-School" will increase students' awareness of career paths, qualifications and New Apprenticeships opportunities in their industry; improve the uptake of vocational education and training in their industry in secondary schools and beyond; and establish effective communication between secondary schools, their students and industry. An additional element to this programme is a 'toolbox' of shared ideas and information being developed by the Australian Industry Group for use by industry, employers, schools and Local Community Partnerships across Australia;
- careers materials targeting the youth market are being designed and developed in a number of industries, including engineering, road freight and building and construction with funding of \$490,380 from the Australian Government in 2004;

- an industry exchange programme for careers teachers is being developed. This programme will provide valuable opportunities for careers teachers to experience and understand the true nature of industry jobs and convey this to their students;
- regional skills projects which will look at skills needs on a regional basis, developing and using local networks of industry and employers, education and training and other organisations and all levels of government. These projects have started with work in the Townsville, Hunter and Illawarra regions with Australian Government funding of \$348,700 in 2004. COAG also agreed on 3 June 2005 to examine measurement of skills shortages across both regions and within particular industries and a working group is due to report back by December 2005;
- in 2004 the government provided \$1.2 million to support five innovative and practical projects to target alternative entrants to the skilled workforce, including the piloting of shorter apprenticeships in the automotive industries. For example the retail automotive sector in Victoria is testing apprenticeships that are shortened and recognise existing skills of migrants, parents returning to the workforce and mature age workers. The building and construction industry wants to recognise the added skills and maturity that Year 12 leavers bring to their apprenticeship and is researching and analysing how the training system can better accommodate shorter duration apprenticeships. The COAG working group referred to above will examine shortening the duration of apprenticeships where competencies are demonstrated;
- further work to ensure industries experiencing critical skills shortages, including mining and plastics and chemicals, are given support in addressing their unique skills needs. Industries such as retail, which rely substantially on young people in their workforce, will focus on identifying and recruiting people who are more likely to become career retailers. The Government commitment in 2004 to these projects totalled \$2.9 million; and
- a New Apprentices Roundtable to ensure direct communication between the Australian Government and people currently or recently involved in training.



## Recommendation 26

*The Committee recommends that:*

*DEST work with industry bodies to identify and project skill shortages, and that closer links be forged between business and industry and schools to address those shortages at a local, regional and national level.*

- *At the national level this needs to be addressed by industry representatives and training bodies in conjunction with educational authorities.*
- *At the local and regional levels the links between industry and schools should be strengthened by enhanced cluster coordinator positions.*

## Response

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

A distinguishing characteristic of the 24 Australian Technical Colleges will be the leadership of industry in their operation. The Colleges will be industry driven and very much part of their local community. Each College will have a governing body chaired by local business and industry representatives with other members also drawn from the local business community. Industry will also play a pivotal role through the employment of the students as New Apprentices. The first of these Colleges will begin accepting students in 2006, with all 24 Colleges operational by 2008.

The Australian Government's commitment to implement the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers will provide industries with resources to work closely with Local Community Partnerships (LCPs) and better link with schools. Future industry engagement in school to work transitions will be targeted to better meet local skill shortage, community and labour market needs. Industry/ employer mentors can have a significant impact in helping young people to develop skills which make them ready for finding work.

Under the Australian Network of Industry Career Advisers, young people will have access to professional career advice from industry experts. A network of Regional Industry Career Advisers (RICAs) will be on-the-ground industry champions and knowledge brokers with a comprehensive understanding of regional industry skill needs, local opportunities and circumstances. They will provide the capacity to increase access to quality structured work placements, School-based New Apprenticeships and mentoring – giving students exposure to work in skills shortage and regional growth areas. Industry career advisers will have an understanding of employability skills and be supported by industry relevant career resources.

The network of RICAs, supported by a network of National Industry Career Specialists (NICS), will engage local business through LCPs to promote VET pathways to young people. NICS will support RICAs by providing industry sector specific career advice and information.

Findings from the project 'Strategies for the Australian Government funded national network of Local Community Partnerships to better meet the needs of students, community and industry' will provide a range of strategies to assist Local Community Partnerships to better link needs of local industries with the delivery of quality Structured Workplace Learning.

The Australian Government is undertaking a project to investigate national and regional data collection approaches and the development of models to support the forging of closer links between industry and schools, particularly in the skills shortage areas. In addition, this project will develop resources for use by the national network of Local Community Partnerships to encourage the strengthening of industry school linkages.

The Australian Government regularly convenes a national Steering Committee to oversee the work previously done under the National Industry Skills Initiative and now with the National Skills Shortages Strategy. The Committee includes relevant government departments as well as industry bodies (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australian Industry Group, Business Council of Australia and National Farmers Federation), National Centre for Vocational Education Research and Group Training Australia. As part of its mandate, the Steering Committee oversees elements of the Strategy that address this recommendation, including labour market forecasting, regional skills shortages projects and the "Adopt-a-School" programme.

Valuable data and information on industry skills needs will be channelled from the National Skills Shortages Strategy projects to a national Skills Outlook Working Group that is being established by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) will link with the activities of the Working Group, which will focus on national consistency in skills needs and labour market data, to support industry skills analysis and planning for VET occupations. The Working Group will incorporate industry representatives as well as relevant government departments and will: guide the design of web-based skills needs data; consider good practice for effective reporting of skills needs data; facilitate exchange of industry-based skills information; enhance availability of quality, regional skills data; and highlight areas of current and emerging skills shortages. A national skills forum is being planned by DEST to promote and share information on strategies that have been successful in addressing industry skill shortages.

The current negotiations with States and Territories for the 2005-08 VET Funding Agreement is seeking commitment to improving skills forecasting.

## **Recommendation 27**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*The MCEETYA Taskforce on Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership (TQELT) pursue changes to teacher education programs to achieve a nationally consistent approach. This should include greater consideration of vocational education issues, including the need for technology based courses to have appropriate industry-standard facilities to train teachers.*

## **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA.

The Australian Government notes that this matter should be progressed in collaboration with the State and Territory boards which accredit teacher education courses to facilitate the registration of teachers. Higher Education providers which offer undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate education courses have the responsibility to provide an appropriate standard of facilities to train teachers.

## **Recommendation 28**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*ANTA receive additional funding to facilitate the development of qualifications and industry links in new and emerging industries, and to better reflect the growing numbers of students undertaking VET in Schools courses.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government notes this recommendation.

ANTA currently supports the development of new VET qualifications in new and emerging industries through the Industry Skills Councils as part of its Training Package development process, which would then become available to the school sector. This ANTA work will transfer to the Department of Education, Science and Training on 1 July 2005.

States and Territories can develop accredited courses through existing mechanisms outside of Training Package endorsement processes, where a Training Package is not immediately available. This is a matter for the jurisdictions.

A number of initiatives are in place to facilitate linkages and industry engagement with vocational education in schools.

The Australian Government funds a number of peak industry bodies to support the take-up of vocational learning pathways for young Australians. These peak industry groups are working at the local level through Local Community Partnerships to provide pathways that are widely recognised by business and the community and which meet industry requirements. They are raising awareness and understanding of the features and benefits of VET in Schools entering into partnerships with schools and providing structured workplace learning opportunities for students. Industries will focus on local and regional skill shortages; increasing the quality and effectiveness of structured workplace learning and School-based New Apprenticeships; implementing successful models of engagement through "Adopt-a-School" and School-based New Apprenticeships and enterprise learning projects; participate in 'Leaders in Careers' and build networks at the local level and continue to develop and promote career information and guidance.

In addition, a number of projects under the National Skill Shortages Strategy are improving industry links and undertaking activities to support the building of careers in new and emerging technology fields.

## Recommendation 29

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Careers education be a mandatory part of the core curriculum for the compulsory years of secondary schooling. It should include a clearly defined and structured program, distinct from VET programs.*

### Response

The Australian Government support this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA.

The Australian Government supports efforts by the education authorities to have career development programmes as part of the core curriculum for the compulsory years of schooling while recognising that the actual development of school curricula and selection of student activities is an issue for individual government and non-government school authorities.

The Australian Government supports careers education in schools through:

- a study/ industry placement scholarship scheme to reward Australia's most outstanding careers teachers;
- a three-part professional development package for careers practitioners:
  - ReCaP – a paper-based resource for careers practitioners;
  - an internet based training package of three programmes that cater for a range of people who promote career guidance; and
  - a career education elective for teacher pre-service degrees.
- School and Industry Leaders forums for school principals, career advisers and industry and business representatives that will be held in conjunction with major careers expos around Australia; and
- Capacity building for Local Community Partnerships.

In addition, the Australian Government is:

- sustaining a national network of over 200 Local Community Partnerships to build links between schools, TAFEs and local regional businesses to assist young people to acquire vocational, enterprise and career education, knowledge and experience before they leave school;
- further enhancing the *myfuture* website, Australia's world leading career information and exploration service, which will assist both website users and our career practitioners. Parts of *myfuture* will be rewritten to improve access and use of the site by disadvantaged groups;
- developing resources to help career advisers use *myfuture*. These will include a guide on how to use *myfuture* in a secondary school setting with a range of supporting materials showing how key concepts relating to transition from school can be taught using the *myfuture* resource. A series of training workshops based around *myfuture* will be delivered in each State and Territory to meet the needs of careers advisers in a variety of settings, such as schools, remote communities and community programmes; and

- introducing a Career Education Lighthouse Schools project to support schools to document their existing best practice career education programmes and disseminate information about these as examples to other schools. The project also supports those schools wanting to trial new and innovative career education programmes. As part of such projects, schools would be expected to document and share information about their programme and its outcomes. Following a competitive application process, thirty-three projects encompassing seventy schools have been selected to receive funding and projects commenced in 2005.

To further support career education, the Australian Government has announced funding of \$143.2 million from 2005-06 to 2008-09 for the establishment of an Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers. The Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers will provide young people aged from 13 to 19 years with access to career information, advice, support and planning and will ensure that strategies to raise the profile of industry occupations, including traditional trades are introduced.

Under the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers the role of the network of Australian Government funded Local Community Partnerships, which bring together both government and non government schools, as well as local employers, government, community organisations, service providers, TAFEs and universities will be expanded. Local Community Partnerships are currently involved with coordinating structured workplace learning. Through the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers the Local Community Partnerships will partner with industry and professional careers advisers to, among other things:

- provide professional career advice tailored to young people's talents and interests;
- assist students to develop an understanding of the range of options during and post-school for study and work, particularly through non-university pathways;
- organise and monitor relevant work experience through structured work placements during their schooling;
- manage and promote an industry-led "Adopt-a-School" programme, bringing representatives of local and national business into schools to talk of their work and experience;
- promote vocational education and training in schools;
- engage parents, teachers and careers advisers in education about post-school options; and
- advise students on youth services such as Youth Allowance, mentoring, volunteering, pre-vocational training, the New Apprenticeships Access Program and School-based New Apprenticeships.

The Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers will ensure that all secondary students have access to career information, advice, support and planning through individual Transition Plans, setting out their skills, experience and aspirations which they can carry through their schooling, further study, and on to their working lives.

The National Youth Careers and Transitions Advisory Group will assist in championing the national career and transition agenda for young Australians, with a particular focus on helping them make a successful transition through school, and from school to further education, training and employment. In particular, the Advisory Group will help to ensure the successful implementation of the Government's Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers.

### **Recommendation 30**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*All secondary schools have at least one full-time professional careers adviser, with appropriate specialist training, who can provide a dedicated career education service within the school and work with the VET coordinator.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA.

While the employment of career advisors is a matter for the State and Territory education authorities, the Australian Government supports efforts by education authorities to have career development programmes as part of the core curriculum for the compulsory years for schooling while recognising that the actual development of school curricula and selection of student activities is an issue for individual government and non-government school authorities.

Initiatives to support the provision of careers education in schools include:

- a three-part professional development package for career practitioners; and
- a study/industry placement scholarship scheme to reward Australia's most outstanding careers teachers.

The Australian Government has announced funding of \$143.2 million from 2005-06 to 2008-09 to establish the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers which will provide young people aged from 13 to 19 years with access to career information, advice, support and planning. Refer to Recommendation 29 for further details on the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers.

## **Recommendation 31**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*The MCEETYA Taskforce on Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership (TQELT) pursue changes to teacher education programs to achieve a nationally consistent approach. This should include greater consideration of vocational education issues, including the need for all pre-service teacher education to include some career education training.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School

The Australian Government is funding the development of a career education elective that can be undertaken by students completing degrees in education. The elective will be made available to all higher education providers in Australia. The elective will be expected to equip graduates with a broad ranging and up to date understanding of current career development theory and best practice careers service provision. For example, it will be expected to equip graduates with the skills to:

- Develop balanced and appropriate career programmes that take into account the need to tailor information to individual student's requirements and to work with key stakeholders such as parents, industry and government.
- Provide career advice that educates students in how to access and use the wide range of careers information currently available, including current industry information.
- Provide careers advice that raises students' awareness of the wide range of, and equal validity of, different post-school pathways and possibilities including higher education, VET and employment.
- Provides students with an understanding of interactions between society, work and the local/ national/ global economy, and fosters students' understanding of the world of work through avenues including but not limited to employability skills, structured workplace learning and VET in schools.

The Australian Government has announced funding of \$143.2 million from 2005-06 to 2008-09 to establish the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers which will provide young people aged from 13 to 19 years with access to career information, advice, support and planning. Refer to Recommendation 29 for further details on the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers.



## Recommendation 32

*The Committee recommends that:*

*The professional development needs of careers educators be better met by:*

- *private and public tertiary institutions providing additional and more accessible post-graduate courses; and*
- *sufficient resourcing for teachers to access both formal courses and industry knowledge including state and territory support through salary continuity and release from teaching; and*
- *Commonwealth support in meeting formal course costs.*

## Response

The Australian Government will refer this recommendation to the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership, and the proposal for additional and more accessible post-graduate courses in career education to the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the Australian Council of Deans of Education.

While this recommendation is primarily the responsibility of the States and Territories, the Australian Government has provided funding to education authorities to support teacher professional learning activities in vocational education. The Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme is the Australian Government's major initiative to improve the quality and status of Australia's teachers and school leaders. The Australian Government will provide an additional \$139.9 million to continue the Programme to the end of 2009. This brings the total funding for the Programme to nearly \$300 million since the Programme commenced in 2000.

The Australian Government is supporting the professional development needs of career advisers in schools through several complementary initiatives announced in April 2004. These initiatives include:

- the development of a career education elective that can be undertaken by students completing degrees in education. The elective is expected to be available to higher education providers in Australia in 2006;
- the development of a multi-media training package to enhance the skills of those who advise young people on career pathways. This package is called Australian Career Development Studies and is available at [www.career.edu.au](http://www.career.edu.au). It has three components designed to assist career practitioners in a variety of contexts (including career teachers), other teachers, parents, coaches, youth workers and community members; and
- \$480,000 for an industry and education scholarships scheme to support school career advisers by providing them with opportunities to gain skills, knowledge and experience through scholarships for further study or industry placements. A total of 54 scholarships will be made available across States and Territories: 27 of \$5,000 each for study and 27 of \$10,000 each to undertake short-term industry placement

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations has recently provided a Career Kit of information on Job Network Services for all School Counsellors and Youth Support Workers to assist young people who may be looking for work and to further assist efforts to upgrade career education in schools. The Australian Government also supports career education through its skill needs analyses. Local Job Network members with their on-line access to Australian Government information and experience in working with local employers are well placed to work with schools in career education.

In relation to access to postgraduate courses, the Commonwealth Government provides funding to institutions for Commonwealth supported places (previously known as HECS places). Students in a Commonwealth supported place pay a contribution towards the cost of their education, while the Australian Government contributes significantly by paying around three quarters of the cost.

The majority of Commonwealth supported students also have access to a HECS-HELP loan. HECS-HELP debts are indexed to maintain their real value but are otherwise interest free, and loan repayments are income contingent. While the majority of Commonwealth supported places are at the undergraduate level, institutions may also allocate places at the postgraduate level.

Students in a postgraduate fee-paying place also have access to a loan through FEE-HELP (which has subsumed the previous Postgraduate Education Loan Scheme). The repayment and indexation arrangements for FEE-HELP are the same as for HECS-HELP.

The availability of HECS-HELP and FEE-HELP ensures students are not deterred from accessing their chosen higher education course by an inability to pay their student contribution or tuition fees up-front.

### **Recommendation 33**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*In order to ensure consistency, transparency and accountability in the delivery of career education, a clear set of national standards for the delivery of career education in schools, and a national system of reporting, be adopted by MCEETYA.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government will refer this recommendation to MCEETYA.

In 2004, the Australian Government announced a \$4.5m package of initiatives to support the careers sector. This includes funding to the Careers Industry Council of Australia, the national peak body for Australian career practitioner organisations, to support the development of professional standards for careers practitioners and design a national accreditation process for existing and future careers practitioners across the industry.

In August 2004 Careers Industry Council of Australia together with the Australian Government, hosted a national forum for career practitioners and representatives of their employing bodies to discuss the development of national standards. Discussion was informed by a scoping paper, 'Shaping a career development culture: quality standards, quality practice, quality outcomes' and followed by another paper 'Moving Forward', which summarised the discussion of the forum. A national consultation is now being conducted by Miles Morgan Pty Ltd, and this will report in 2005.

## Recommendation 34

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities give further attention to providing VET programs; and effecting transitions to work and further training, for people with disabilities by:*

- *providing necessary modifications to learning materials, programs and equipment;*
- *increased work placement mentoring and support; and*
- *improving links between workplace coordinators and disability employment services.*

## Response

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA.

Improving the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities, is a major priority of the Australian Government. In addition to general recurrent funding for schools, the Australian Government contributes significant additional funding to improve the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students including students with disabilities. From 2005, this funding will be provided under the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) programme, with an estimated \$498.6 million in 2005-06 in Australian Government funding, and an estimated \$2.1 billion over 2005-2008. The LNSLN will have three elements, including:

- a Schools Grants element, with funding of an estimated \$ 1.87 million over 2005-08 for government and non-government education authorities to measurably improve the learning outcomes of the most educationally disadvantaged students. Education authorities have the flexibility to determine which students and schools have the greatest need for additional assistance and decide how the funds are used to support individual students, including those with disabilities;
- a Non-government Centres Support element which aims to improve the educational opportunities and learning outcomes of children with disabilities who receive services provided by non-government centres. The funding may be targeted to provide learning and development opportunities for children with disabilities who are below school age to prepare them for integration into regular pre-schools or schools; assist school-aged children with severe disabilities by improving their access to educational programmes; or assist children with disabilities in residential care. An estimated \$146 million will be allocated through this element over 2005-08; and
- a National Projects element, to provide an estimated \$32 million over 2005-08 for national projects and initiatives aimed at improving the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students. This funding will be targeted to literacy and numeracy projects, early childhood education initiatives and the development of policies to assist educationally disadvantaged students to use information and communications technologies.

The Australian Government supports efforts that ensure equal access by students with disabilities to vocational education in schools pathways. This recommendation is also consistent with future directions of the Australian Disability Training Advisory Council following a mid-term review of the *Bridging Pathway* Blueprint for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in VET. These include increasing pathways for students with a disability and improving their employment outcomes, including through giving priority to the provision of learning supports and developing better links between organisations and networks, such as Registered Training Organisations, disability employment agencies and Job Network providers.

Australian and State and Territory Government Ministers have agreed to a revised *Bridging Pathways* Blueprint which outlines these directions.

In recognition of the need to do more to assist people with a disability with transitions between school, education and training and employment, the Australian Government funds the Disability Coordination Officer/Regional Disability Liaison Officer network. The network aims to increase the awareness of post-school options, supports and services and employment assistance available for people with a disability. It also seeks to facilitate coordination of, and linkages between, services and assistance for people with a disability interested or enrolled in post-school education.

The responsibility for ensuring that VET programmes in schools are accessible to students with disabilities rests with State and Territory education authorities and the individual schools.

School education is a joint responsibility with the State, Territory and non-government school authorities having primary responsibility for funding and overall responsibility for the delivery of school education.

The Australian Government and the States and Territories set national goals and priorities for schooling. The Australian Government also provides substantial financial assistance to improve the quality of schooling and enhance the educational outcomes for all students.

The New Apprenticeships Incentive Programme offers significant support for people with disabilities through elements of the Disabled New Apprentice Wage Support (DNAWS), including assistance for tutorial, interpreter and mentor services and workplace modification (up to \$5000).

New Apprenticeships Centres are required to ensure that people with disabilities who wish to undertake a New Apprenticeship are aware of this assistance through DNAWS.

The Australian Government is currently providing funding of \$720,000 (GST inclusive) from 2003 to 2007 to a project under the Group Training New Apprenticeships Targeted Initiatives Programme aimed at increasing the uptake of New Apprentices with a disability, by building partnerships between Group Training Organisations and Disability Employment Assistance Services providers.

Group Training Organisations (GTOs) employ New Apprentices under a Contract of Training and place them with Host Employers. GTOs undertake the employer responsibilities for the duration of the New Apprentices' employment and training, and also manage the additional care and support necessary to achieve the successful completion of the Contract of Training. Disability Employment Assistance Services providers (DEAs) are agencies funded by the Australian Government to provide job placement and support services to jobseekers with disabilities.

The Government notes that the draft Disability Standards for Education, to be implemented under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, are set to ensure that students with disabilities can access and participate in education and training without experiencing discrimination. The Standards will cover government and non-government providers in all sectors – pre-school, school, vocational education and training, higher education and adult and community education. The Standards were released for public information in June and November 2004. The Australian Government re-introduced legislation to the Parliament which will ensure that the Standards are fully supported by legislation. As soon as the legislation is passed the Standards will be formulated and tabled by the Attorney-General before coming into force.

To ensure that students with disabilities can make the most of their education and training opportunities, the Standards clarify what students can reasonably expect from their education providers. They also give education providers guidance on how they can meet their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act, including through the provision of 'reasonable adjustments' which enable students with disabilities to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students.

### **Recommendation 35**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*The Principles and Guidelines for Improving Outcomes in Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools (2002-2004) be revised for the next period to reflect the greater need for access to VET qualifications prior to senior secondary years.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government will refer this recommendation to the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The Principles and Guidelines for Improving Outcomes for Vocational Education and Training in Schools (2005-2006) maintain the focus on the need to link VET in Schools outcomes to the senior secondary certificate but allow flexibility for particular student groups that are difficult to reach and/or service. It is currently recognised that schools are delivering VET courses in these circumstances in years prior to senior secondary years and these provide pathways to higher level qualifications in later years.

The Australian Government believes that it is appropriate for all States and Territories to consider extending VET qualifications prior to the senior secondary years. The development of Certificate I qualifications to cover the employability skills is being undertaken by the Australian Government. The implementation of this qualification may assist pre-senior secondary school students to enter into a vocational pathway or with employment opportunities as well as provide pathways to higher VET qualifications.

## **Recommendation 36**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities through ANTA fast track the development of a Certificate I in Generic Workskills for all students to complete by Year 10.*

## **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The Australian Government is funding the development of new Certificate I qualifications with a focus on the employability skills. The Department of Education, Science and Training is funding ANTA to manage the development of these qualifications. ANTA is negotiating the models for these qualifications with three Industry Skills Councils (Transport, Agri-Food and the Manufacturing) in 2005. Trialling of the models developed will take place in mid 2005 and the new qualifications are expected to be endorsed later in 2005. From 1 July 2005, the Department of Education, Science and Training will work with the other Industry Skills Councils to enable the new qualifications to be accepted and endorsed into multiple industry Training Packages. The work being undertaken by ANTA will be transferred to the Department of Education, Science and Training on 1 July 2005.

In the High Level Review of Training Packages, the Australian Government suggested the development of broad based Certificate I and possibly Certificate II qualifications to provide greater entry level opportunities. The High Level Review of Training Packages final report highlights the need for Training Packages to provide adequate pathways to meet the needs of the VET market including industry, individuals and the community.



### **Recommendation 37**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*There be an increased focus on earlier assistance to support students 'at risk' and Indigenous students by:*

- *strengthening literacy and numeracy skills;*
- *supporting the development of vocational skills and VET qualifications earlier than Year 10; and*
- *monitoring the progress of Partners in a Learning Culture projects and programs for the purpose of replicating and expanding those which effectively meet the training and transition needs of Indigenous students.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

The Australian Government has made the development of the foundation skills of literacy and numeracy a priority of its schools policy and funding through the National Literacy and Numeracy Goals and Plan and this has been agreed by all Education Ministers. This national agreement provides a national focus to improve literacy and numeracy levels.

The Australian Government provides significant funding for additional assistance for students who are at risk of not meeting the appropriate literacy and numeracy standards. In 2005-06 funding for Australian schools will include an estimated \$498.6 million under the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Programme, to be targeted towards the most disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities. The funding will support the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan.

In addition, the Australian Government is providing \$4.8 million for the 'Literacy and Numeracy in the Middle Years of Schooling Initiative' to support improved literacy and numeracy outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students in the middle years of schooling. The focus of the initiative is to strengthen the role of literacy and numeracy assessment practices in informing teaching, learning and curriculum development for these 'at risk' students.

The Australian Government will be investing \$2.1 billion over the four years 2005 - 08, with \$505.4 million in funding in 2005-06, to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous students to make mainstream education services work better for them, redirecting resources to programmes that have the most effective learning outcomes, and provide greater weighting of resources towards those Indigenous students in remote areas.

As a result of the mid-term review of *Partners in a Learning Culture* six priority areas have been identified. A revised Blueprint is due to be released soon. A number of projects and research activities are underway to meet the training and transition needs of Indigenous students. This ANTA work will transfer to the Department of Education, Science and Training on 1 July 2005.

### **Recommendation 38**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities fund additional support, mentoring and career guidance, ideally by Indigenous staff, for Indigenous students undertaking or considering undertaking VET in Schools or SBNA's, and that consideration be given to more effectively linking these courses to real post-school employment opportunities and career paths.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government will refer this recommendation to MCEETYA.

The recently announced Australian Government initiatives under the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme support this recommendation. The Australian Government will provide \$195.7million in 2005-06 to provide recurrent funding on a per student basis to independent pre-schools, government and non-government schools and independent vocational and educational training institutions. The programme is focused on improving literacy and numeracy for Indigenous students, increasing Indigenous enrolments and attendance, increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in education, and providing culturally inclusive education.

The need to provide additional support to Indigenous students while they are in schooling has been widely recognised as essential in improving the career planning and post-school employment opportunities for Indigenous students.

The Australian Government will provide \$23.1 million over the next five years to establish an Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme to help young Indigenous Australians in areas of economic disadvantage to participate in New Apprenticeships and training courses in capital cities and provincial centres. Counselling and supported accommodation will be provided through Aboriginal Hostels Limited. The Australian Government will also establish Indigenous specific pre-vocational training courses with post-training employment and placement support.

## Recommendation 39

*The Committee recommends that:*

*There be an evaluation of funding for a wide range of specific ancillary vocational education and careers support programs, in order to:*

- *determine their effectiveness;*
- *improve coordination;*
- *ensure greater continuity of funding; and*
- *reduce community confusion by eliminating the frequent rebadging of similar programs.*

## Response

The Australian Government will refer this recommendation to MCEETYA.

The Australian Government has announced funding of \$143.2 million from 2005-06 to 2008-09 for the establishment of the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers initiative. Refer to Recommendation 29 for further details on the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers.

The Stepping Forward Declaration, endorsed by MCEETYA and Community Service Ministers in July 2002, demonstrates a national commitment to providing leadership and establishing a common direction in developing transition opportunities for young people, particularly those most at risk.

MCEETYA has developed an Action Plan that implements the Ministerial Declaration *STEPPING FORWARD - improving pathways for all young people*. The Declaration provides a common direction for improving social, educational and employment outcomes for all young people. The intent of the Declaration and its Action Plan is to promote a holistic approach to the range of options that young people face as they move towards independence.

The Action Plan asks the States and Territories to report on progress they have made against the Plan through building on existing initiatives and commencing new initiatives. MCEETYA noted the progress of jurisdictions in implementing the Action Plan.

Further, in July 2003, MCEETYA agreed to the promotion of the Career and Transition Services Framework, as a tool to assist jurisdictions and the government and non-government education and training sectors, in planning for and providing services to assist successful transitions. The Government is confident that the Framework will provide flexibility for the government and non-government sectors to implement strategies in ways appropriate to organisational circumstances, priorities and resource profiles to ensure successful transitions for young people.

## Recommendation 40

*The Committee recommends that:*

*A full analysis be undertaken of the wide range of training pathway, career and transition services in order to:*

- achieve better understanding and coordination of services, avoid duplication and remedy deficiencies;*
- improve the links between SBNA's and New Apprenticeship Centres, making NACS more accessible for young people; and*
- improve the information available to students on transition options and available assistance.*

## Response

This recommendation will be referred to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

In relation to improving the information available to students on transition options and available assistance, the Department of Education, Science and Training has established a website, [www.year12whatnext.gov.au](http://www.year12whatnext.gov.au), with links that will make it easier for Year 12 students and their parents to explore the full range of post-school education and training choices. All Year 12 students in Australia in 2004 have also received a copy of an accompanying pocket guide *Year 12 – what next?* This guide is a free national resource that sets out all education and training options in an uncomplicated style with 'fast facts' and case studies. It provides a balanced presentation of both VET and university pathway options and emphasises the value of continuing with education and training post school. The guide will encourage students to explore and discuss options with their families and careers advisers.

The Australian Government supports better linkages between service providers in the transitions, training and education markets including with New Apprenticeships Centres and Local Community Partnerships and is undertaking analytical work in this area.

The Australian Government currently supports a network of over 200 Local Community Partnerships. These partnerships bring together schools, employers and community groups to work together to provide students in Years 11 and 12 with opportunities for workplace learning, as they make their way through school and on to further education, training and work. These Local Community Partnerships facilitate the delivery of the Structured Workplace Learning Programme.

The Department of Education, Science and Training is currently analysing a number of elements of the Local Community Partnerships network through a range of consultancies to improve the range and quality of services and support to young people. The outcomes from these projects will lead to the development of a stronger, more coordinated network of Local Community Partnerships with an enhanced role in the coordination and provision of services and support to young people.

The Jobs Pathway Programme continues to assist around 66 000 young people, aged 13 -19, from around 1700 schools. These young people are 'at risk' of not making a smooth transition through school and from school to further education, training or employment and active participation in the community. The Jobs Pathway Programme assists young people to reach their full potential by keeping them engaged or assisting them to re-engage with the education system to attain a level of education that will allow them to obtain the qualifications for their career goals and aspirations. Some key objectives of the programme include commencement in school-based vocational programmes or School-based New Apprenticeships.

The Australian Government introduced Partnership Outreach Education Models and Career and Transition pilot projects in 2002. These initiatives are managed by the Department of Education, Science and Training and have been the subject of independent evaluations finalised in 2004. While the initiatives were very different in nature and in the young people they target, both were testing a range of community-based strategies involving partnerships between schools and other education providers, youth and community services and representatives of the community and local industry. The evaluation of Career and Transition demonstrated the value of dedicated career and transition advisers in guiding young people through their transitions in and beyond school. The evaluation of Partnership Outreach Education Models found the networks created by Partnership Outreach Education Models providers at the local level greatly enhanced the delivery of education and support services to many young people in these communities. Both the Career and Transition pilots and Partnership Outreach Education Models initiatives are funded to 31 December 2005.

Building on learning from the Career and Transitions pilots the Australian Government announced the establishment of the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers. The Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers will provide young people aged from 13 to 19 years with access to career information, advice, support and planning. Under the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers, the role of the Australian Government funded network of Local Community Partnerships will be expanded. Refer to Recommendation 29 for further details on the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers.

Several Australian Government initiatives are underway to examine the linkages surrounding School-based New Apprenticeships. Under the current contract for New Apprenticeships Support Services (2003-2006) New Apprenticeships Centres are required to market and promote New Apprenticeships and the comprehensive range of New Apprenticeships options available to employers, potential New Apprentices, schools and the general community. New Apprenticeships Centres provide a streamlined service for employers and individuals to access quality New Apprenticeships.

Assistance is provided through the Group Training New Apprenticeships Targeted Initiatives Programme to Group Training Organisations to assist and target the participation of young people in School-based New Apprenticeships.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations has implemented a range of measures to improve the information and services available to students and young people including:

- Youth Specialist Job Network members who are specifically equipped and trained to assist young people;
- a Career Counsellors Resource Kit that has been distributed to career counsellors, principals and parents' and citizens' associations in all secondary schools in Australia as well as to Youth Support Workers assisting disadvantaged youth. The Kit is aimed at school leavers not going on to higher education, and those who have already left school but were yet to secure employment;
- a youth comic promoting Job Network especially to young people disengaged from mainstream employment services and a youth website portal which enables young people to rapidly access information about employment ([www.jobjuice.gov.au](http://www.jobjuice.gov.au));
- a Job Network Youth Toolbox that provides Job Network members with strategies to manage young job seeker needs by identifying specific barriers to employment;

- a New Apprenticeships Strategy and Action Plan, which includes trialling innovative strategies through Group Training Australia; and
- Better Connections Workshops, consisting of regional workshops, that are trialling improvements to employment and related services using a data base which enables real time identification of employment opportunities and job seeker characteristics and support at the local level.

All young job seekers aged 15 to 20 years old are eligible for the full range of Job Network services when they register with Centrelink as looking for work.

## **Recommendation 41**

*The Committee recommends that:*

*Research be conducted at a national level into immediate and longer term post-school outcomes of students to better evaluate the effectiveness of VET in assisting students into career pathways.*

### **Response**

The Australian Government supports this recommendation and will refer it to MCEETYA and the new Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education.

Existing regular sources of information on the immediate post school destinations of VET in school students are the *NCVER Student Outcomes Survey* and the *Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) Student Destination Survey* (conducted by the Department of Education, Science and Training).

The *National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) Student Outcomes Survey* has been conducted since 1997 and the *SWL Student Destination Survey* since 2000. Both are conducted annually and information is published on the DEST website. The two surveys provide slightly different coverage of VET in schools students, owing to the different purposes for which they are conducted. In addition, in broad terms, the NCVER outcomes survey has greater information about the student's background while the SWL destination survey has more information about their destinations after leaving school.

The Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY) funded by the Australian Government is a key existing mechanism for tracking cohorts of students, including those involved in VET pathways while at school. LSAY follows a cohort of young people each year from the time they are selected for the survey (at age 15 for the most recent cohort which began in 2003 and at Year 9 for previous cohorts) up until they are in their mid-twenties. Using LSAY data it is therefore possible to analyse pathways and outcomes for VET in school participants both in the short and longer term.

Several important studies on issues related to VET in schools participation and outcomes were commenced in the last couple of years and were released since the Inquiry reported or are due for completion in the near future.

*The Young Visions: a follow up study of Young Visions participants and their destinations one year later* commissioned in 2003 by the former Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP) was published in August 2004. It examined in detail the post school destination of a group of students, including many who had undertaken a VET in schools subject in Years 11 or 12. The report was based on a survey of nearly 3,000 young people among those who had taken part in the original Young Visions survey one year earlier. These young people had mostly left school.

A study exploring student career decision making among Year 10 and Year 12 students, including their attitudes to VET in schools and the reasons for enrolling and not enrolling in these subjects was commissioned by DEST in 2003. The study involved a set of focus groups with students, their parents and school career counsellors and principals. The report was published on the DEST website in December 2004.

A study utilising LSAY data to examine VET in schools participants commenced in 2004 and is due for completion by 30 June 2005. The study is investigating variations in VET delivery

across education systems and schools, the post school destinations of VET participants and the education and labour market impacts of this participation.