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The Secretary
Standing Committee on Education and Training
House of Representatives Inquiry
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

17th September 2002

Dear Secretary

In response to the House of Representatives Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools we wish this correspondence to be included as a formal submission.

From our professional experience as providers of career and transitional services to young people, through state and federal programmes, we fully endorse and support the core objectives of Vocational Education and Training offered in schools.

The enhancement of employability skills and encouragement of life long learning practices builds a solid foundation for the future of students. It provides the necessary life skills and the confidence in self, for their future personal and professional development.

VET increases the choices for all students and raises the profile of skilled professionals. It is an integral part of a sound general education, providing further pathways to tertiary education and training.

Community stakeholders and government are able to share the responsibility of vocational education with educational institutions. This is achieved through an environment of collaboration and participation. Inclusion of Non Government Organisations and employee representatives in this partnership process would augment the effectiveness of VET in schools and enhance outcomes for students.

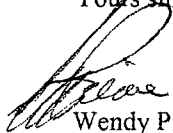
Funding arrangements and the resourcing of VET delivery is critical to the future of young people in this country. An ongoing commitment to funding, which supports availability of student choice, is imperative in the provision of a holistic education system and continuance of the philosophy of "Australia as the smart country".

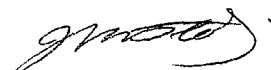
Certificate levels offered through VET in schools is an area requiring review. In smaller regional communities, prior achievements can preclude students from having access to traineeships beyond school in some industries. Employers generally prefer for young people to enter at a Certificate 11 level for the financial incentives, the reduced costs of employment and provision of a rollover opportunity into Certificate 111.

Choices for VET in schools may be limited if based on teacher interests, skills and views of employment opportunities and may dictate the courses offered. These choices may not necessarily represent regional industries, further training opportunities and regional development and planning. Accessibility and inclusion for all students needs to be a continuing consideration in the structure of VET.

Explanations of the objectives, implementation, participation and evaluation must be clarified for all stakeholders. Information needs to be transparent and comprehensive for these stakeholders. Improved links between VET and industry must be the basis for a wider acceptance and future strategic planning for Vocational Education and Training in schools.

Yours sincerely


Wendy Picone


Joanna Stolz