

**INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

**SUBMISSION BY**

**THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF  
QUEENSLAND INC.**

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# **INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

## **1. Introduction**

The Association of Independent Schools of Queensland Inc. (AISQ) is a peak education body with a membership of 152 independent schools administering Commonwealth and State government funding on behalf of all independent schools in Queensland. The Association has been involved since the early 1980s in ensuring that students in independent schools can participate in quality vocational education and training (VET) during their post compulsory years of schooling. A number of specific programs such as access, link and co-operative programs in partnership arrangements between schools and TAFE Colleges preceded the current expansion of VET offerings in schools. These programs encouraged young people to include VET courses in their senior school study thus expanding their options for further study and training when they exited Year 12.

Following the Finn Report (1994) and the Carmichael Report (1995) The Association has played a significant role through the development and implementation of key competencies, embedding of VET in academic courses, schools achieving Registered Training Organisation (RTO) status, school-based traineeships and apprenticeships (SATs) and teacher training in VET. AISQ has had representation on ITABs, worked in partnership with ECEF (previously ASTF), assisted schools in achieving and maintaining compliance to the AQTF, assisted in the development of state-based Industrial Relations and administered the ANTA funds provided through the State Training Authority, the Department of Training (DET) for the expansion of VET and SATs on behalf of independent schools in Queensland.

## **2. Structure of Submission**

This submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools focuses on the growth, development and effectiveness of vocational education and training in independent schools 1997-2001. Recommendations for future development, activity and funding are included in Section 12.

## **3. Background**

Prior to 1997 a number of Queensland Independent Schools offered selected students access to accredited vocational education programs through Cooperative Programs with TAFE and/or through the schools as a registered training organisation. Since 1997 ANTA funds have encouraged and motivated the majority of Independent Schools in Queensland to broaden their curriculum to include vocational education programs designed to meet the needs of all students and to provide opportunities for students to undertake

school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. Particular emphasis has been placed on improving literacy and numeracy levels of indigenous students

through vocational literacy and numeracy courses and preparing these students as well as students with disabilities for successful participation in School based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SATs).

#### 4. Participation

Please refer to Table 1, *Profile of School-based Traineeships and Apprenticeships mid 2002* and or information detailing students who are currently undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. This table relates to the:

- Number of independent schools with students participating
- Male/female participation
- Apprentice vs trainee numbers
- Numbers of students employed by Group Training Organisations
- Numbers of students employed by individual employers or large firms
- Numbers of students whose RTO is a TAFE institute
- Numbers of students whose RTO is a private training organisation
- Numbers of students in each region of the State (DET regions)

Note: A greater number of students has been involved throughout 2002. However, a number of Year 12 students have already completed their traineeships or left school in order to undertake their apprenticeship or traineeship full time.

A total number of 1373 students in Queensland Independent Schools have had signed contracts of training since 1998. Twenty-eight (28) schools have had 21 or more school-based apprentices or trainees each since 1998. This accounts for 975 students. One of these schools has had 93 and another 80 students in the program since 1998. There are 27 instances where a younger brother or sister has followed a sibling in the program and two where a third member of the family is now involved.

Fourteen students have undertaken a second traineeship (whilst still at school) at a high level (e.g. Certificate III following a certificate II) and one student is currently undertaking her third traineeship.

The number of students in the program is steadily increasing each year and current funding support is now inadequate. AISQ records show that 2.5% of students have withdrawn from their Training Contracts before the end of the probation period and just over 12% have cancelled whilst still at school. This is below the cancellation rate for mainstream apprenticeships and traineeships. It is likely that this can be attributed to the fact that:

- Students have a person at their schools to whom they can go if a problem arises, and,

- The majority of students signing up for a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship have undertaken work experience in that area before committing to the more formal training situation.

<b>Students</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
<u>Student Statistics:</u>	
No. of male students	295
No. of female students	281
No. of Indigenous students	15
No. of female students in non-tradition roles	11
No. of rural & remote students	61
No. of NESB students	2
No. of students with a disability	30
No. of schools involved	82
Apprenticeships	56
Traineeships	520
<u>Employer Statistics</u>	
Students employed by private employers	397 (68.9%)
Students employed by Group Training Cos.	179 (31.1%)
Students studying with TAFE	235 (40.8%)
Students with Private RTOs	341 (59.2%)

**Table 1,** *Profile of School-based Traineeships and Apprenticeships mid 2002*

In VET programs other than school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, the number of students enrolled in at least one VET program has increased from 3432 students to 5959 students in 1997 to 2001. In the same period, the number of schools delivering VET programs increased from 56 schools to 86 schools. Students' courses of study may include enrolment in only one VET program while other students may be studying five or six VET subjects.

## **5. Range of Programs including Industry Areas**

The number and type of VET programs offered by schools depends on student demand, school location, availability of human and physical resources either at the school or available to the school, access to suitable programs and providers external to the school, and employers willing to offer opportunities for structured workplace learning and/or traineeships and apprenticeships.

The number of students currently in contracts of training as trainees or apprentices by industry area is shown below in Table 2, *SATs in Independent Schools by Industry Area*.

<u>Industry Area</u>	<u>No. of SATs</u>
Arts & Entertainment	1
Automotive	30
Building & Construction	24
Business & Clerical	77
Communications (includes Information Tech)	22
	23
Community Services & Health (Childcare, Aged Care)	17
Engineering (includes Boatbuilding)	1 3
	12
Fishing	
Food Processing	99
Furnishing (includes Cabinetmaking)	1 18
Hospitality	65
Primary - Forestry	7
Primary - Horticulture	4
Primary - Rural	2
Primary - Vet nursing	
Printing	12
Property	109
Sales & Personal Services - Hairdressing	2
- Retail	7
- Retail Cosmetic	
Assistant - Community Pharmacy	6
Operations	22
Science, Technology & Other (Multimedia)	1 5
Sport and Recreation	4
Textile, Clothing & Footwear	2
Tourism	
Transport & Warehousing	
Utilities	

**Table 2.** *Industry areas and SAT participation numbers*

The following list illustrates the range of courses (excluding school-based traineeships and apprenticeships) in which students are enrolled for suites of competencies or full certificate courses. These programs may be delivered by the school as a registered training organisation, in partnership with another registered training organisation, or by an external provider.

- Certificates I and II in Hospitality (Operations)
- Certificate I in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations)
- Certificate II in Tourism
- Certificates I and II in Business
- Certificate II in Small Business
- Certificates I, II and III in Information Technology
- Certificate I in Construction
- Certificate I in Engineering
- Certificate I in Furnishing

Certificate I in Plastics  
 Certificate I in Automotive  
 Certificates I and II in Horticulture  
 Certificates I and II in Agriculture  
 Certificate II in Animal Attendant  
 Certificate III in Wool Classing  
 Certificate IV in Farm Management  
 Certificate I and II in Entertainment  
 Certificates II and III in Music  
 Certificate II and III in Arts  
 Certificate I in Clothing Production  
 Certificate I in Printing and Graphics  
 Certificate II in Community Services (Children's Services)  
 Certificate I in Marine  
 Certificates II, III and IV in Multimedia  
 Certificate II in Outdoor Recreation  
 Certificate II in Sport and Recreation  
 Certificate II in Fitness  
 Course in Senior First Aid  
 Certificates I and II in Retailing  
 Certificate II in Hairdressing  
 Certificate II in Beauty  
 Certificate II in Retail Cosmetics Assistant  
 Certificates I and II in English Communication  
 Certificate II in Trade and Business Mathematics  
 Certificates in Literacy and Numeracy  
 Certificates I and II in Work Education

## **6. Delivery Models**

Mostly, students enrolled in independent schools are accessing Certificate I and Certificate II courses delivered by their schools as RTOs or through direct enrolment with outside providers. A small number of schools offer Certificate III and IV courses usually in partnership with outside providers, while a few individual students are enrolled directly with outside providers for a small number of Certificate III and IV courses.

Most programs are delivered face-to-face. To meet the needs of individual students, schools arrange access to VET programs through distance education with the Open Learning Institute of TAFE in Queensland, other Queensland and interstate TAFE Institutes or private RTOs. As the range and suitability of on-line courses improves, some students are accessing these.

Schools often extend their capabilities to offer VET programs to their students by working in partnership with TAFE, private RTOs or industry people. Independent schools have worked closely with their local TAFEs for a number of years. Since 1997, schools have begun to access private RTOs, particularly where TAFEs have been unable to meet their needs. For example, one private RTO provides a valuable service to schools by travelling throughout Queensland to deliver hospitality competencies to school students in local industry settings. In some instances, a team approach between an industry person and a teacher is often adopted to deliver and assess competencies to industry standards. An increasing number of Independent schools have employed suitably qualified industry people with teacher registration through the Board of Teacher registration to deliver and assess VET courses.

Independent, Catholic and State schools often form a cluster to access Cooperative Programs delivered by their local TAFE Institute to meet the specific needs of individual students. These VET programs devised from certificate courses in a number of industry areas are generally delivered one half day per week each semester. Classes are often comprised of individual students drawn from a number of different schools.

Since 1997 increasing numbers of students enrolled in Independent Schools have undertaken structured workplace learning associated with accredited VET programs instead of general work experience. Structured work placements greatly enhance the quality of outcomes for VET programs and often lead to part-time work and/or school-based traineeship and apprenticeship.

## **7. Teacher Training**

As VET programs have been introduced into the school curriculum, the demand for experienced teachers to undertake professional development to gain relevant qualifications, currency and industry relevance has been ongoing. Changes in training packages and to registration requirements also increase teachers' workloads. In addition to professional development release time provided by their schools, teachers often use their holiday time to work in industry or to gain additional qualifications.

## **8. Impact on other program areas**

It has been suggested that the introduction of VET programs has resulted in reduced numbers in traditional subject areas and in some cases, some subjects have not been offered. For example, there is anecdotal evidence that Hospitality has led to a reduction in the number of Home Economics classes. Schools will augment their curriculum and sometimes alter the subject range in their curriculum to meet the students' needs and to ensure that students have maximum opportunity to access further education and training through a process of credits and recognition of prior learning (RPL).

Normal school routine, timetables and non-VET subjects are sometimes disrupted when students undertake work placements, school-based traineeships and apprenticeships, external VET programs and industry visits

## **9. Differences between school-based and other vocational education programs and the resulting qualifications, and the pattern of industry acceptance of school-based programs.**

In Queensland, schools deliver VET courses/qualifications from endorsed training packages or from accredited VET programs where training packages do not exist. Therefore there is no difference between school-based programs and other vocational education programs in the content of the programs and



the resulting qualifications. However, it has been stated by people in some industry quarters and some registered training organisations that the quality of the outcomes for school-based programs does not compare favourably with those of other RTOs. The Association and independent schools have not received any documented comments from employers to support this view.

One of the main concerns raised in conversations relates to the industry experience of teachers and their understanding of workplace competency. Many of the teachers of VET in independent schools have come from an industry background and have a thorough knowledge and understanding of industry standards. Teachers without this industry experience undertake placement in industry and many teachers work with industry mentors and other RTOs to deliver and assess VET competencies to industry requirements. When schools conduct internal audits an industry person is involved and any concerns they may have are acted upon. Schools are externally audited under the AQTF and the area of teacher competence is given particular scrutiny.

If school students are able to undertake structured workplacement, there is no doubt that the students' knowledge, understanding and competencies are enhanced and the outcomes for these students may be of a higher quality than for those students who complete their studies in a simulated work placement. This would be the same for students undertaking an institution based course with private RTOs or TAFE.

The main difference between VET delivered by schools and that delivered by other RTOs is in the time-frame for delivery and the student workload. The gaining of a VET qualification at Certificate I or II level is only one component in a school student's course of study spread over two years. VET undertaken with other RTOs at Certificate I or II level is concentrated into one course of study and is completed over a matter of weeks.

Anecdotal evidence of acceptance of school-based VET programs seems to show greater reluctance in the trade areas than in service type industries. This could be attributed to comparisons between the skills gained by apprentices who are employed on the job and completing the same competencies as students who are studying in an institution in a simulated work environment.

## **10. Vocational Education in new and emerging industries**

The schools ability to deliver programs in new and emerging industries is limited by availability of and access to resources, both physical and human. Where schools lack the required resources, links are being encouraged between schools and external RTOs to introduce competencies in new areas. School-based apprenticeships and traineeships also provide an avenue for students to participate in industry areas not offered by their school or school clusters, particularly in new and emerging industries.

Most schools are delivering information technology to industry standards to at least Certificate II level. A number of independent schools are working with QANTM to deliver and assess multimedia competencies on school sites to Certificate II, III and IV levels and in some schools, students are developing

web-sites for businesses. Technology in creative arts (animation, digital art, etc) is being delivered in partnerships with TAFE and schools in some locations.

Currently, new programs to be offered through links with TAFE include biotechnology, aviation, aged care and health. While a school would find it uneconomical and inefficient to offer these courses to small numbers of students, clustering between schools enables viable classes to be formed.

Links with external RTOs to offer courses in new and emerging industries place additional cost burdens on schools and families.

## 11. Recommendations

- R1** Continuation of Commonwealth government ANTA funding support is required to enable schools to maintain the infrastructure to adapt to the changing requirements of VET and to introduce VET programs in new and emerging industries. Unlike general education where changes in syllabus occur over five year periods, the constant review of different training packages and the emergence of new industries places demands on schools for continuous improvement and expansion in the delivery of their VET programs and the professional development of VET teachers.
- R2** Continuation of funding to assist with the professional development of VET teachers is required. The need for the professional development of VET teachers to maintain industry currency and to keep up-to-date with changes in training packages and the requirements of the AQTF is more constant and demanding than for non-VET teachers.
- R3** There should be some coding or notation to distinguish qualifications delivered through institution-based delivery from those delivered through traineeships or apprenticeships. There is no distinction between VET qualifications gained through institution-based delivery (schools, TAFE or other RTOs) and those gained through traineeships and apprenticeships although workers obtaining their qualifications through the latter probably have greater workplace competency signified by their Certificate of Completion.
- R4** Some incentive should be given to employers to encourage them to take students on structured work placements. There is an additional cost to employers who participate in structured workplace learning programs but they receive no monetary incentives or tax concessions for the costs involved. Access to structured workplacements improves the quality of VET outcomes and encourages employers to employ school students as employees or as apprentices/trainees.

- R5** Continuation of funding for ECEF clusters to support workplace coordination is essential to maintain and expand the existing networks.
- R6** The Commonwealth incentives to employers for taking on school-based apprentices and trainees should be continued and there should be additional incentives to encourage participation in new and emerging industries.