Victorian Government Submission

to the

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools

Contents

Executive Summary

Vocational education in schools plays an important role in preparing students for lifelong learning essential for a productive and effective post school life. It can address broad understandings of the world of work and develop in young people a range of knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes relevant to a wide range of work environments. It can encourage and develop the knowledge and critical skills that young people require to successfully compete in the labour market and make a productive contribution to an innovative and enterprising community.

The Victorian Government has established clear goals to improve participation and achievement in education and training across all regions and has set specific targets to ensure that these improvements can be realised in a timely fashion. The expansion and enhancement of vocational education in both the compulsory and post-compulsory years of schooling is one of the critical factors to achieving the goals and targets, particularly in regard to successful Year 12 completion.

In order to achieve the goals and targets, the Victorian Government has developed initiatives to effectively engage and retain young people in learning, build pathways across sectors and better support students in transition and prepare them for productive and satisfying adult lives. These include:

- Community structures – Local Learning and Employment Networks; School Networks

- Programs – Managed Individual Pathways; Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning; Block Credit

- Processes – Transition processes.

Victoria has committed substantial resources to support the delivery of vocational education in schools. Vocational education programs in Victorian schools include:

- VET in Schools (includes both VET in the VCE and Part-Time Apprenticeships and Traineeships for School Students)

- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

- Careers education

- Enterprise education

- Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs)

These initiatives will provide the broad, strategic support necessary to further build on the impressive achievements to date:

- An increase in the number of students participating in VET in the Victorian Certificate of Education from 432 in 1994 to over 27,000 in 2002

- Growth in the number of VET programs from 3 in 1994 to 32 in 2001

- An increase in the number of secondary colleges providing VET programs from 19 in 1994 to 453 in 2001.

The Victorian *Transitions from VET in Schools Program - the 2000 Year 12 Cohort* report shows that 94% of the VET in Schools 2000 cohort was "progressing to further education, training or work". This is an improvement on the 1999 outcome of 91.1% and compares favourably with the overall VCE cohort.

The cross-sectoral evaluation of the MIPs program undertaken recently has identified the outcomes of MIPs school-based programs as:

- more students staying on at school

- a greater variety of programs to engage students

- changing some students' attitude to school

- cultural change within schools, especially in relation to staff and parent communities.

Funding from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) fro VET in the VCE has remained constant at $2.7m per year for the period 1999 to 2002. At the same time, the State Government's contribution for VET in the VCE increased from $2.0m in 1999 to $4.7m in 2001. In 2002, an additional $1m has been directed to government schools to support VET provision. The additional Victorian Government funding for vocational education in schools has not been matched by the Commonwealth.

Enhanced Victorian Government funding and support demonstrates the considerable emphasis being placed on these important pathways for post compulsory students. It is critical that the Commonwealth now also consider additional funding in order for the demonstrated positive outcomes to continue.

The secondary schooling system uses a cross-transfer of teaching staff from the TAFE sector to help to deliver vocational education in secondary schools. Reflecting a system-wide response in Victoria, part of the cost of delivering VET in the VCE programs in schools is also absorbed by TAFEs.

A cooperative arrangement has been secured whereby TAFE Institutes have agreed to charge within a range of 60%- 80% of the TAFE recovery price. TAFEs have also been advised that no further fees (such as enrolment fees) should be charged to VCE students undertaking VET programs. These measures are estimated to cost approximately $4 million based on 2002 training delivery patterns. Costs are likely to increase in line with enrolment growth. The funding mismatch between schools and TAFE is an issue that needs to be addressed at both the national and state level.

Notwithstanding the benefits of school-TAFE linkages, current delivery arrangements for vocational education in schools give rise to a number of challenges, including:

- the training, supply and professional development of VET teaching staff in schools

- the need for TAFE teachers to acquire the pedagogical skills to teach school students
- expanded and more sophisticated demands on career teachers
- time demands on school staff to arrange appropriate and safe work placements and liaise with employers and RTOs on compliance with work placement requirements
- providing the level of mentoring and support to students necessary to achieve higher levels of completion.

In summary, providing a diverse range of industry relevant vocational programs within the financial and logistical constraints of school settings is complex and demanding.

VET in Schools is still in a high growth stage. It is an increasingly popular and valuable pathway for senior and middle year students. Resourcing this growth while ensuring quality issues are successfully addressed is a major policy challenge that requires the commitment and support of all stakeholders.

Recommendations:

1. As the issues identified in our submission are currently being worked through by the key players, often independently from each other, we strongly recommend the establishment of a high level working party or reference group that will:

   a. provide a specific Vet in Schools policy forum for the Commonwealth and State governments, the school sector, training sector and industry
   b. encourage a collaborative forward planning approach to support continued strong growth and appropriate resource allocations
   c. ensure stakeholders are able to discuss, monitor and evaluate issues on a continuous basis.

2. Increased Victorian government funding and support demonstrates the considerable emphasis placed on the importance of universal access for post compulsory students to vocational pathways. It is critical that the Commonwealth provide additional funding to support growth and quality.

1. Introduction

The Victorian Government welcomes this opportunity to outline its policy, program and funding arrangements for the delivery of vocational education in schools.

1.1 The Policy Environment

Globalisation of economic activity and rapid technological advances are driving major changes in the structure of industry and the nature of work, the way they are organised and the knowledge and skills required by the workforce. The creation and commercial deployment of new knowledge is the key source of comparative advantage for a modern economy. The economic and social success of individuals, regions, states and nations is coming to depend on the quality of their human resources: what people know and can do, their creativity, their ability to adjust to change, and to innovate.

Policy settings for Vocational Education in Schools must be considered in this broad context, and be appropriately responsive to the changing nature of work and the impact of these changes on pathways from school to work. Vocational education in schools can therefore play an important initial role in encouraging and developing the knowledge and critical skills required by individuals and the society to which they contribute. Those entering the labour market now and in the future will require diverse skills and literacies and a capacity to engage in lifelong learning.

The rapid growth of knowledge-based service industries and information and communication technologies has placed pressure on education systems to design courses to meet new skill requirements. This challenge should not be underestimated.

Notwithstanding new and emerging industries, manufacturing remains vital to the Victorian economy. Victoria is Australia's leading manufacturing State, with the most full-time manufacturing workers and one-third of all Australian manufacturing. In order to continually innovate and remain internationally competitive, Victorian manufacturing firms require a technically competent and skilled workforce. Vocational education in schools provides important opportunities to challenge outmoded perceptions of traditional industries and introduce young people to the wide array of attractive careers that exist across the economy.

1.2 Victoria's Commitment to Pathways and Vocational Learning

Education and training is the number one priority of the Victorian Government. To underpin this commitment the Government has articulated goals and targets for education and training. These are:

Goals:

- Improve the standards of literacy and numeracy in primary schooling

- Increase the percentage of young people successfully completing Year 12 or the equivalent

- Increase the percentage of adults taking up education and training and so increase the overall level of educational attainment and literacy levels in Victoria

- Increase the level of participation and achievement in education and training in rural and regional Victoria and among groups where it is presently low

- Make near-universal participation in post-school education and training the norm in our society.

Targets:

- Victoria will be at or above national benchmark levels for reading, writing and numeracy, as they apply to primary students, by 2005

- 90 per cent of young people in Victoria will complete Year 12, or its equivalent, by 2010

- The percentage of young people aged 15-19 engaged in education and training in rural and regional Victoria will rise by 6 per cent, by 2005.

The framework for achieving the goals and targets was elaborated by the Minister for Education and Training in a landmark speech, *Education and Training: the Future for Victoria*, at Education Week 2002. DE&T has released the strategy *Achieving the Goals and Targets for Education and Training*, which provides an overarching policy and planning framework for the portfolio to meet the challenge set by the goals and targets.

The strategy focuses on quality and accountability and identifies the key characteristics of a high quality education and training system as excellence, innovation and access. It articulates strategic directions to improve in each of these areas including in relation to:

- *excellence* by improving learning environments, qualification frameworks and the education workforce, by focussing on continuous improvement and by improving key partnerships and funding approaches

- *innovation* in teaching and learning practices, in programs and curriculum, in qualifications and in delivery modes

- *access* by revitalising the public education system, by enhanced support services, by enhanced pathways and programs, by improved local planning and community involvement and supportive funding models.

The expansion and enhancement of vocational education in both the compulsory and post-compulsory years of schooling is a key component of the strategies to achieve the goals and targets with excellence, innovation and access driving further development. Vocational programs have been embraced strongly by both students and schools and now provide important pathways through compulsory and post-compulsory schooling.

The National Goals for Schooling

Victoria is also committed to the specific references to vocational education in the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century:

> *Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave school they should:*
>
> - *have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning*
>
> *In terms of curriculum, students should have:*
> - *participated in programs of vocational learning during the compulsory years and have had access to vocational education and training programs as part of their senior secondary studies*
> - *participated in programs and activities which foster and develop enterprise skills, including those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.*

The MCEETYA Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework.

The Victorian government's approach to vocational education in schools and post-compulsory pathways is consistent with the MCEETYA Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework. The current approach moves towards the integration of vocational education and training within senior secondary schooling, with formal recognition in terms of qualifications and university entrance requirements. Drawing on the Kirby Review[1], Victoria has reviewed systemic constraints to allow greater flexibility for providers as well as programs, geared to local requirements.

1.3 Financial Commitments

From 2003, the Schools for Innovation and Excellence program will provide $84.3 million over three years for clusters of primary schools and secondary colleges for innovative program delivery. It is expected that vocational learning will play an important role in locally determined innovation.

From 2003, the Access to Excellence initiative will provide an additional $81.6 million over 4 years to specifically targeted schools to provide for additional classroom support to improve student performance. Locally determined program priorities will be able to incorporate vocational learning programs.

The Victorian government invests $4.7m annually in specific support for VET in the VCE over and above what schools invest from the schools global budget and TAFE Institutes provide to support school-based VET programs. From 2002, an additional

---

[1] *Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria*, Final Report, (Kirby Report), DEET, Melbourne, 2000.

recurrent amount of $1m has been directed to government schools to support VET provision. However, the Commonwealth Government's contribution has remained static since 1997 despite the massive increase in VET student enrolments.

The recent Ministerial Statement on *Knowledge and Skills for the Innovation Economy* identifies an additional $1.5 million for enhanced coordination support to increase the number of students accessing a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship from the current 1200 to at least 3000 students by 2005.

The Government is also investing:

- $9m annually to support Local Learning and Employment Networks
- $16.5m annually on Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) plans for students 15 years and over
- $53.3m for the piloting and implementation of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
- $21.6m for the development of Education Precincts.

This commitment has not been matched by a corresponding investment by the Commonwealth. The Victorian Government believes a significant contribution is required from the Commonwealth to support the development of infrastructure and the delivery of vocational education programs consistent with the *Footprints to the Future* report of the Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce (the Eldridge report) and the joint declaration by Commonwealth and State Ministers, *Stepping Forward*.

1.4 Infrastructure

The government has addressed the needs of young people and their transition through education and training into the workforce by the implementation of the following changes within a cohesive post-compulsory pathways strategy.

Creation of Statutory Authorities

The Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission (VLESC)
The Commission was established to provide policy advice and direction to the Government on post-compulsory education, training and employment. These responsibilities give the Commission particular scope to advance the Government's post-compulsory reform agenda in conjunction with the other new statutory authorities and pursue the Government's goals and targets. Additionally the Commission has specific roles to support the Local Learning and Employment Networks and engage in partnership with them to exchange information and advice to inform policy to monitor the outcomes of post-compulsory education and training including vocational programs in schools.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

The VCAA is responsible for the curriculum development and assessment of the VCE, including the suite of VCE VET programs and school based apprenticeships and traineeships. The VCAA works across the education and training sectors and facilitates a cross-sectoral approach to curriculum and resource development.

The Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA)

The VQA is responsible for developing and monitoring standards for education and training normally undertaken in the years after Year 10. This includes all qualifications normally undertaken in Years 11 and 12 (including the VCE), all vocational education and training qualifications, and all further education qualifications (this does not include university qualifications). The VQA ensures that there are appropriate linkages between qualifications and facilitates procedures that make it easier for people to re-enter education and training and acquire qualifications throughout their lives.

Community Structures

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs)

LLENs are a prominent example of the Victorian Government's approach to supporting local communities and are a key factor in efforts to improve education, training and employment outcomes for young people. There are 31 LLENs across Victoria. Each LLEN has a local strategic plan that includes specific activities for improving outcomes for young people in line with the State Government's education and training targets. Further information on the LLENs is at Attachment 1.

Education Precincts

The Victorian Government has supported the development of Education Precincts in Ballarat, Gippsland, and Maryborough. These precincts are designed to bring industry, TAFE, schools and ACE institutions together in innovative ways to expand the range of education and training opportunities available to communities. Each precinct is strongly attuned to the particular needs of the local region.

School Networks

The objective of School Networks is to provide improved access to educational opportunities and better outcomes for young people. Over time, networks will link with and complement the work of LLENs, and develop partnerships with other agencies, businesses and the community, to improve student attendance and participation, facilitate pathways to further education and employment, enhance the provision of local resources and services, and support student wellbeing.

Programs

Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) program

The Kirby Review identified the need for additional support for young people, including the need for better guidance support. The focus of the additional support is the development of Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) for young people. MIPs are designed to enable young people to:

- develop skills to manage their pathways and lifelong learning throughout their working lives

- develop their knowledge, understanding and experience of opportunities in education, training and employment

- successfully move through the transition phase from compulsory schooling to further education, training and employment.

In practice, the MIPs process most often involves extended one-to-one interaction between the young person and an appropriately skilled adult who supports them through exploring skills and interests, formalising a detailed plan of action to enable them to move towards realistic goals, and progressing with implementing their plan.

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning is a newly accredited post-compulsory certificate designed to improve the pathways for young people in the post-compulsory years. VCAL provides new pathways for young people who do not wish to pursue an academically focused pathway using VCE as the sole qualification. Based on applied learning, the VCAL sits alongside the VCE, which will remain the main qualification undertaken by senior students. 'Applied learning' means it is a hands-on course and will develop skills in preparation for further education, training or employment.

Block Credit

Block credit arrangements will be introduced into the VCE in 2003. They will provide students with credit towards the VCE for completion of units of competence/modules in VET qualifications at AQF II level and above that are not in the suite of approved VCE VET programs. Credit will also apply to qualifications in the Adult, Community and Further Education sector at these levels and to the Intermediate and Senior levels of the VCAL.

Block credit is designed to complement existing VCE VET arrangements. It will provide a flexible, accessible means of broadening pathways within the VCE, and will be particularly useful in promoting locally developed pathways negotiated between schools, employers, training providers, LLENs and community groups.

Processes

Transition processes

Individual tracking will provide evidence of successful post-compulsory outcomes. Notably, whole of state destination tracking of the VET in Schools cohort has provided evidence of successful transition for over 95% of Victorian VET in Schools graduates.

Research being undertaken at the local level by LLENs has provided data on the importance of co-ordinated transition and support services for students leaving school prior to completing year 12. On the basis of this research LLENs are contributing to the development and provision of enhanced transition processes. It is expected that these enhanced processes will contribute to improving retention and completion rates.

1.5 Achievements

A key achievement has been the success of the VET in Schools program, as indicated by:

- an increase in the number of enrolments in the VCE VET programs from 432 in 1994 to 21,171 in 2000 and over 27,000 in 2002

- the growth in the number of programs from three in 1994 to thirty-two in 2001

- the increase in the number of secondary colleges providing programs from 19 in 1994 to 453 in 2001.

The successful outcomes of this program are best demonstrated through the VET in Schools destination survey - the latest report into the destinations of the VET in Schools 2000 cohort, which shows that ninety-four per cent of VCE VET students were either enrolled in further VET studies or university, were an apprentice or trainee, or in full –time work or part-time work six months after the completion of their school program.

1.5.1 Destination Tracking of VET in Schools Students

Since 1996 the Educational Outcomes and Research Unit at Melbourne University, headed by Associate Professor Richard Teese, has been funded by DE&T to study the destinations of VET in Schools students. The Unit has tracked the destinations of the 2000 VET in the Schools cohort, consisting of 17,576 students (made up of 12,963 students enrolled in Year 11 and below, and 4,613 students in Year 12). A summary of the tracking report is outlined below.
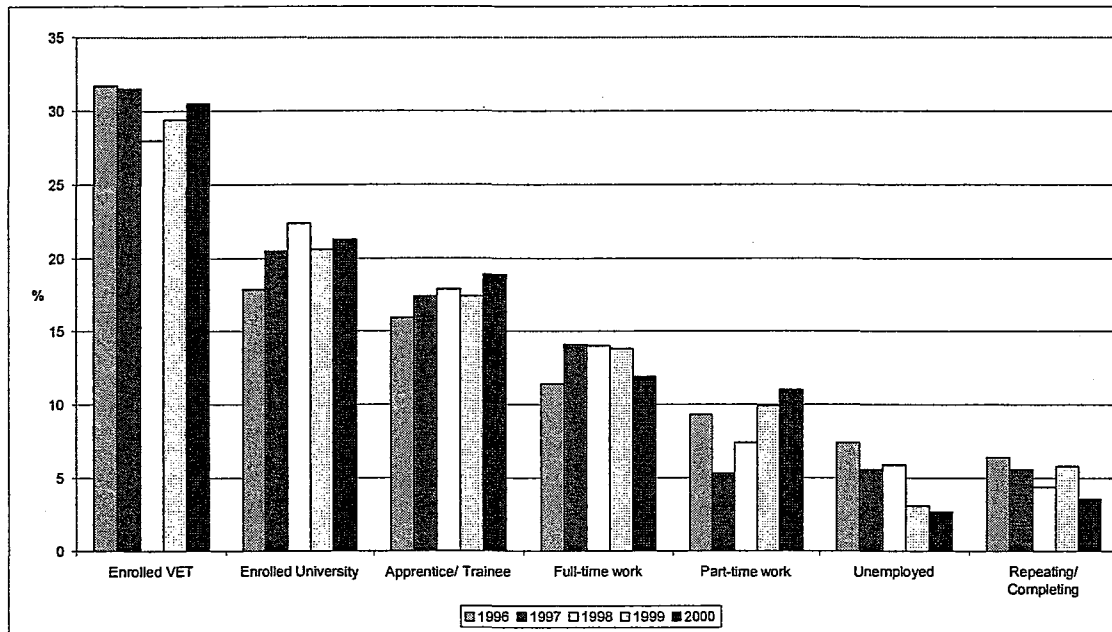
The 2000 VET in Schools Cohort

- The participation rate of male students is higher than female students in Year 11, but marginally lower in Year 12
- VET in Schools enrolment rates were highest in non-metropolitan Victoria and in regions with a low socio-economic profile, such as the western and northern suburbs of Melbourne
- The number of certificates offered in the VET in Schools program rose to 67 in 2001 (up from 39 in 1999).

The destinations of the 2000 VET in Schools graduates were as follows:

- 30.5 per cent enrolled in VET
- 21.3 per cent enrolled at university
- 18.9 per cent apprentices or trainees
- 11.9 per cent in full-time work
- 11.0 per cent in part-time work
- 3.6 per cent repeating or completing VCE
- 2.7 per cent unemployed.

Comparisons with Past Cohorts

This is similar to the pattern for past cohorts, with the proportion unemployed continuing to fall and the proportion in part-time or casual work rising. Overall, the proportion of apprentices and trainees is trending upwards. The proportion entering university is also trending higher, while TAFE enrolments have now risen for the past two years after a sharp fall in 1998.

Source: 2000 VET in Schools Cohort Tracking Report

Comparisons between the 2000 VET in Schools Cohort and the previous four cohorts also reveal a stable and consistent pattern of destinations over those years. The gender differences identified in past years are relatively unchanged. These include:
- proportionally more girls going into tertiary education (both VET and university)
- proportionally more boys going into apprenticeships and more girls going into traineeships.

Impact on Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER) Scores

The majority of VCE VET programs contribute to the calculation of an ENTER by way of a 10% increment. At present, 10 VCE VET programs can make a direct contribution to an ENTER, and the number of such studies is expanding. It is worth noting that there has been significant growth over recent years in the number of students undertaking VCE VET subjects, despite the fact that there has been only indirect contribution to the ENTER in the past.

The analysis, done by the Victorian Tertiary Admission Centre, of the impact of including VCE VET shows that for over 80% of students who receive a score for their VCE VET program, it is included in their best four subjects. That is, their ENTER is increased because of the availability of scored assessment.

13

Comparisons with Non-VET Students

Analysis of the distribution of VET and non-VET students across academic achievement levels reveals that VET in Schools students are over-represented in the lowest achievement levels and under-represented in the highest achievement levels.

The rate of entry of VET in Schools students to university is lower than for non-VET students (23.4% compared to 44.5%), but VET in Schools students are more likely to enrol in TAFE. Differences between the two groups can also be seen in labour market destinations, with VET in Schools graduates more likely to be in the labour force.

Regional Analysis of Destinations

Participation in VET in Schools programs is generally stronger in non-metropolitan regions than in the city. In the metropolitan area generally, VET in Schools participation tends to rise as the socio-economic status of the labour force region falls. In the country, regions with high levels of VET in Schools participation tend to have higher levels of transfer to university. The relationship with transition to TAFE/VET is mixed, whereas in the metropolitan area TAFE/VET transition generally rises with levels of VET in Schools.

The rate of transfer to tertiary study varies across regions. For example, graduates from Goulburn North East Region are approximately 10 per cent more likely to enter tertiary study than Central Highlands Wimmera Region graduates.

Participation in the workforce is higher for non-metropolitan VET in Schools graduates than for metropolitan graduates. On average, unemployment rates among graduates are similar in both the city and the country.

A full copy of the Teese report can be made available to the Committee if required.

1.6 Current Policy Trends and Future Directions

In summary, the major Victorian trends and new initiatives include:

- Individualised support for young people during the complex transitions in post compulsory education and training, delivered through the MIPs program in the school, TAFE and ACE sectors

- Enhanced planning and local level coordination of post-compulsory education and training through LLENs, working in partnership with schools and the wider community, resulting in an increase in programs customised for and delivered to young people aged 15–19

- A broader range of post-compulsory offerings, including piloting and then wider implementation of the VCAL across schools, TAFE Institutes and designated ACFE organisations

- Continued growth in VCE VET programs including increasing flexibility for local initiatives through Block Credit arrangements and extending scored assessment in VCE VET programs

In summary, the provision of the diverse range of industry relevant vocational programs within the financial and logistical constraints of school settings is complex and demanding.

In particular, VET in Schools is still in a high growth stage. It is an increasingly popular and valuable pathway for senior and middle year students. Resourcing this growth while ensuring quality issues are successfully addressed is a major policy challenge that requires the commitment and support of all stakeholders.

Recommendations:

1. As the issues identified in our submission are currently being worked through by the key players, often independently from each other, we strongly recommend the establishment of a high level working party or reference group that will:

    a. provide a specific Vet in Schools policy forum for the Commonwealth and State governments, the school sector, training sector and industry
    b. encourage a collaborative forward planning approach to support continued strong growth and appropriate resource allocations.
    c. ensure stakeholders are able to discuss, monitor and evaluate issues on a continuous basis.

2. Increased Victorian government funding and support demonstrates the considerable emphasis placed on the importance of universal access for post compulsory students to vocational pathways. It is critical that the Commonwealth provide additional funding to support growth and quality.

2. Responses to the Terms of Reference

2.1 The range, structure, resourcing and delivery of vocational education programs in schools, including teacher training and the impact of vocational education on other programs

2.1.1 Range & Structure

Vocational education programs in Victorian schools include:

- VET in Schools (includes both VET in the VCE and Part-Time Apprenticeships and Traineeships for School Students)
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
- Careers education
- Enterprise education
- Managed Individual Pathways

The number of students enrolling in VET in the VCE subjects has grown from 4,500 in 1997 to over 27,000 in 2002. VET in the VCE allows students to undertake dual awards that combine work, training and school study. Ninety per cent of secondary schools will be targeted to offer vocational subject choices to post-compulsory age students by 2005.

In 2001, 74,000 students enrolled in training and further education programs in TAFE Institutes were aged 15-19 years, compared to 63,000 in 1999. To support the important role of TAFE in achieving the Governments goals and targets, the Ministerial Statement *Knowledge and Skills for the Innovation Economy* announced the provision of an additional $3.1 million, from 2002-03 onwards, to increase the number of young people completing qualifications in TAFE.

VET in the VCE

For senior secondary students, Victorian schools can offer programs in industry areas approved by the VCAA. VET in the VCE combines both general and vocational studies and frequently involves a number of components, as described below:

- VCE VET units comprising VET modules/units of competence approved by the VCAA. Individual modules/units of competence are grouped together by the VCAA, recognised as VCE units and given a designated level of recognition in the VCE (1-2, 3-4). These VCE VET units contribute towards the completion of the VCE certificate and the VET qualification. VET in the VCE programs are now an integral part of the VCE and can contribute up to 8 of the 16 units required for satisfactory completion of the VCE. All VCE VET programs with a unit 3-4 sequence make a contribution to the Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER). Ten VET in the VCE programs have the option for a study score which can count fully in the calculation of the ENTER.

- Work Placement comprising training enhancement and/or delivery and assessment. Work placement is appropriate and strongly recommended in all VCE VET programs. In some programs work placement is mandated. It provides an understanding of workplace culture and employer needs and allows students to acquire foundation skills and knowledge appropriate to training within an industry setting. If recognition towards completion of the training qualification is sought, Workplace Assessment must comply with requirements outlined in the curriculum or the training package. The Work Placement arrangements also apply to non-government schools.

Successful completion of a VET in the VCE program provides students with:

- two qualifications: a Victorian Certificate of Education issued by the VQA and a VET Certificate or Statement of Attainment issued by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

- two Statements of Results issued by the VCAA giving details of units completed in the VCE and modules/units of competence completed in the VET qualification

- an enhanced Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER) which can improve access to further education

- the ability to articulate into further vocational education and training courses

- workplace experience, including structured workplace training.

A list of certificates offered is at Attachment 2.

Part-Time Apprenticeships and Traineeships for Secondary School Students

The Part-Time Apprenticeships and Traineeships for secondary school students program is open to students 15 years of age or over who are permanent residents of Australia. It combines:

- VCE studies selected by the student

- a training agreement registered with the Department of Education & Training (DE&T)

- a negotiated training program leading to a nationally recognised qualification

- paid work covered by an industrial agreement.

Part-Time Apprenticeship and Traineeship programs generally provide the same contribution to the VCE as VET in the VCE programs. A list of certificates offered is at Attachment 3.

An additional $1.5 million has been allocated to increase the number of students accessing a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship from 1200 to a minimum of 3000 by 2005.

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

The VCAL is designed to provide a more vocationally-orientated post-compulsory program. It has been trialled in 20 schools and 2 TAFE institutes in 2002; approximately 450 students are enrolled in VCAL. The development and piloting of VCAL was supported by initial Government funding of $5.6m (2001-05). As announced in the 2002-03 Budget, the further implementation of VCAL has been supported by additional Victorian Government funding of $47.7M over the next four years.

One important feature of VCAL is its use of local partnerships between the enrolling provider and other agencies such as community organisations, TAFEs, adult education providers, employers and the Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN). These partnerships ensure that relevant vocational and personal development experiences form part of the VCAL learning program. It has received strong support, particularly from students, parents and educators, who see it as a much-needed opportunity for students who wish to develop vocational rather than academic pathways.

The VCAL framework qualification enables accredited curriculum from a range of sources to be grouped into coherent Learning Programs at three award levels: foundation, intermediate and senior. Each level represents a learning program of 1000 hours and can be undertaken over Years 11 and 12. The components of the VCAL learning programs are accredited units and modules drawn, for example, from the VCE, VET in the VCE, and VET certificates. Providers have to meet the usual accountability and quality assurance measures appropriate to each component. Arrangements have been put in place to provide block credit transfer between the VCE and VCAL, thus ensuring that students are able to transfer with credit from one to the other in the event that they decide to change pathways.

The VCAL has now been formally accredited by the VQA as a new post-compulsory certificate in Victoria. Action to implement the first phase of the statewide rollout of VCAL next year is well underway. There has been a strong response from schools, with over 180 expressions of interest received from government schools. Successful implementation of the VCAL next year will see an estimated 5,000 students undertaking the certificate and the development of strong local partnerships to support delivery of the certificate.

Up to 20 new VCAL trials will take place in 2003. The trials will look at courses providing access to the foundation VCAL level and progression from the senior VCAL level. A further intention of the trial is to look at possible "themed" VCALs, each giving students experience of a broad occupational sector such as land-based industry or manufacturing. The final new trial will investigate ways in which the learning program for VCAL can be contextualised, to meet, for example, the needs of indigenous learners for whom a traditional learning context may not be appropriate.

Career Education

In Victoria, career education in schools, career and labour market information and career and transition management are being further developed across the school, ACE

and TAFE sectors. DE&T has the role of facilitating integration and improvement of careers information and guidance, incorporating the current range of products and complementing the introduction of the Youth Employment Information Service.

As part of their school global budget arrangements, individual schools determine the staffing and resources allocated to career education at the local level. Most Victorian state secondary and P-12 schools have at least one staff member responsible for career education. The timetable allocation ranges between 0.2 to 0.8 and teachers are responsible for the provision of career information, either in individual counselling sessions, group sessions or face-to-face classroom teaching. Within a school the careers position is supported by the Year level co-ordinators, the Student Welfare Co-ordinator, the Managed Individual Pathways or Transition Co-ordinator and Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) subject teachers.

The SOSE strand of the Curriculum Standards Framework II on Society and Environment Levels 4 – 6 contains career and employment information. Career education is embedded in the Economy and Society Strand of SOSE, which introduces students to the structure and management of the economy and its resources, the world of work and business, and Australia's political and legal systems. It promotes the development of enterprise skills and attributes, and draws on past and contemporary issues and a range of perspectives, particularly those related to the future and technology. Career and Work Education concepts can be embedded within the school curriculum from the SOSE Levels 4–6 of the strand "Economy and Society", where the curriculum includes examination of Work and the Environment (Level 4), Work in Australian Society (Level 5) and Choosing an Occupational Pathway (Level 6).

Some Victorian schools are also currently embedding career education into their 7-10 curriculum using the Real Game Series. The Real Game Series is a career and life skills education program that enables students, through activities based on an "experiential" approach, to discover the realities of the adult world. It empowers students to realise the impact choices and decisions made now can have on their quality of life as adults.

Among a range of benefits, work experience allows students to improve their understanding of the work environment and employers' expectations, provides an opportunity to explore possible career options, and to increase their self-understanding, maturity, independence and self-confidence. The Work Experience arrangements also apply to the non-government education sector.

Under a Service Agreement, DE&T provides a grant to the Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV) for the provision of training for new careers practitioners within schools, ongoing professional development activities, curriculum development, curriculum advice and the Biennial Careers Conference.

A Victorian Government website, www.careersthatgo.com.au , is designed to provide students aged 14-17 with opportunity to explore careers and meet people working in science. Teacher support materials are also available. Youth Employment Link is a website and telephone service (www.yel.vic.gov.au or 1800 15 20 25) that provides young people with information on career and education options.

The New Realities Campaign is a key initiative of the Victorian Government's policy framework for ICT skills, *skills x knowledge = growth*. New Realities resource kits, case studies, video and school visits have assisted both teachers and school students to understand how technology skills are impacting on workplaces across all industries.

Enterprise Education

Industry and Enterprise Studies

Industry and Enterprise Studies, a VCE study offered at Years 11 and 12, is taken by 6,121 students at Year 11 and 850 students at Year 12. It provides structured work placements and the study of enterprise at the firm and industry level.

The central theme of Industry and Enterprise Studies is work and its place in Australian industry and society. The study recognises the vocational economic and social aspects of work and encourages students to undertake a theoretical investigation of these aspects throughout the four units. A key feature of the study is the requirement that students undertake work outside the classroom.

Australian Business Week

The Australian Business Week (ABW) School Program is an intensive one week program, developed by a national partnership of Universities, Business and Departments of Education, for in school delivery to the whole year 10 or 11 cohort. Students are given the opportunity to learn about business by running their own company in a computer simulation of the Australian Economy.

ABW offers students a wide variety of experiences and addresses all Learning Areas, including skill development in teamwork, using technology, time management, networking and negotiating, problem solving, communication, and using mathematical techniques.

Curriculum Development

The VCAA is developing exemplary units of work integrating vocational skills for use in Years 9 & 10. It is also working on developing approaches to assessing and reporting on the Key Competencies and skills which are embedded in middle and later years curriculum. These approaches will be crucial in developing more sophisticated ways of genuinely integrating employability and lifelong learning skills for all senior secondary students.

Other Activities

In addition DE&T manages Commonwealth funds for activities that support Enterprise Resources and Programs. These include:

- The Australian Network of Practice Firms: Practice Firms provides a simulated business environment where students establish and run their own businesses with the help of a facilitator and real business partner. They are

used in schools for a variety of training purposes, including the development of enterprise skills and attitudes, the delivery of nationally recognised VET courses, and general exposure to the requirements of a business environment

- Working Community: this is a community based enterprise program designed for whole of year levels 9 and 10 students. Schools, community agencies and employers work in partnership to support young people to engage with their community, develop key competencies and enterprising skills and take increasing responsibility for their learning and understanding of the world of work

- Quality Teacher Programme (QTP) for Vocational Learning: this project targets professional learning teams in secondary schools to build skills and understandings about vocational learning programs (enterprise education, key competencies, careers and community based learning) that develop learning communities involving business and community to improve student outcomes.

Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs)

All 307 Victorian government secondary schools receive MIPs funding.

Young people attending TAFE and ACE have also been provided with MIPs support where they:

- are aged between 15 and 17 years of age (this will be expanded to include 18-19 year old students in 2003)

- have left school (Year 12 not completed)

- are unemployed.

The recent cross-sectoral evaluation of the MIPS program has identified the outcomes of MIPS school-based programs as:

- more students staying on at school

- greater variety of programs to engage students

- changing some students' attitude to school

- cultural change within schools, especially in relation to staff and parent communities.

2.1.2 Resourcing

Resourcing for the VET in the VCE program is based on the provision of additional funds to schools as a contribution to the costs of these programs and a cooperative arrangement with TAFE providers in relation to the price of training hours for VET in the VCE students.

The funding to support the delivery of VET in the VCE programs in 2002 has two elements:

- a contribution towards the purchase of specialist resources from Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), such as off-the-job training

- additional funds to support cost-effective and quality program delivery (a per capita grant).

While there has been significant enrolment growth in VET in Schools over the past 3 years, there has been also been an increase in the overall number of young people in Years 11 and 12.

DE&T funds the off-the-job training delivery by TAFE and private RTOs for part-time Apprenticeships and Traineeships for School Students with registered Training Agreements. Almost all vocational education in Victorian schools is provided on the basis of full delivery of a nationally recognised qualification (Certificate 1-4).

With the exception of IT and Office Administration, most schools do not have the technical capabilities and resources to deliver a full certificate, so external specialist providers are engaged to deliver some or all of the school's vocational program. Around 70% of VET subjects taken at senior secondary level involve some delivery by an external provider (which is TAFE in approximately 90% of cases).

This approach has the advantage of facilitating compliance with Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) standards, but gives rise to the following funding tensions:

- Funding arrangements do not acknowledge that average student contact hour costs are higher for TAFE than for schools

- VET subjects vary significantly in cost. For example, trade subjects have a higher hourly cost, so funding models that do not acknowledge cost variation can act as a disincentive for schools to offer higher cost VET subjects

- Transportation costs are higher in rural and regional areas where external providers may be located at significant distances from the school

- Training manual costs and uniform (including protective equipment) can increase the up-front subject costs for students.

Barriers to the uptake of apprenticeships and traineeships by students who undertake VET in Schools

Where a student completes a VCE VET program awarding them a Certificate II and subsequently picks up an apprenticeship or traineeship in the same industry area, the employer will not receive Commonwealth incentive payments unless the apprentice/trainee is undertaking a different Certificate II or higher level qualification eg Certificate III or IV. This acts as a barrier since the Certificate II the student completed may not contain the sector specific competencies that the employer wants and which can only be gained through another Certificate II qualification in that same industry, particularly if the training package qualifications are occupation streamed eg automotive and hospitality.

Numbers of enrolments in VET in Schools programs have grown significantly and rapidly. VET enrolments from all three sectors have increased from 14,876 in 1999 to over 27,000 in 2002, an increase of 82%.

Positive outcomes are being demonstrated for this cohort. For example, the "Transitions from VET in Schools Program - the 2000 Year 12 cohort" report shows that 94% of the VET in Schools 2000 cohort was "progressing to further education, training or work". This is an improvement on the 1999 outcome of 91.1% and compares favourably with the overall VCE cohort.

For the period 1999 to 2002, funding from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) has remained constant at $2.7m per year. At the same time, the State Government's contribution for VET in the VCE increased from $2.0 m in 1999 to $4.7 m in 2001. In 2002 an additional $1m has been directed to government schools to support VET provision.

Reflecting a system-wide response, part of the cost of delivering VET in the VCE programs in schools is also absorbed by TAFEs. A cooperative arrangement has been secured whereby TAFE Institutes have agreed to charge within a range of 60%- 80% of the TAFE recovery price. TAFEs have also been advised that no further fees (such as enrolment fees) should be charged to VCE students undertaking VET programs. These measures are estimated to cost approximately $4 million based on 2002 training delivery patterns. Costs are likely to increase in line with enrolment growth.

Increased Victorian Government funding and support demonstrates the considerable emphasis being placed on these important pathways for post-compulsory students. It is critical that the Commonwealth now also consider additional funding in order for the demonstrated positive outcomes to continue.

2.1.3 Delivery

Only RTOs can issue VET qualifications. In order to comply with these arrangements, schools involved with VET in the VCE programs have two options:

1. To develop one of the following partnership arrangements with an RTO:

   - the RTO delivers all the off-the-job training, is responsible for certification, quality assurance, and for issuing the VET qualification

   - the school delivers all the off-the-job training and the RTO has responsibility for certification, quality assurance and for issuing the VET qualification

   - the school and the RTO each deliver part of the off-the-job training and the RTO is responsible for certification, quality assurance, and for issuing the VET qualification.

2. To become an RTO and deliver off-the-job training and have responsibility for certification, quality assurance and for issuing the VET qualification.

All part-time apprentices and trainees in schools are required to be employed and paid for a minimum of fifteen hours per week (including structured training), which may be averaged over two years. When an apprenticeship is undertaken as part of the VCE and its duration is three years, a minimum of ten hours per week averaged over the three years is applicable. The number of hours and cycle of attendance must be negotiated between the apprentice/trainee, employer and registered training organisation and form part of the training program.

VET in Schools Teacher Training

In addition to the qualifications any teacher must have to teach in a Victorian school, a VET teacher will also require:

- recent and relevant industry experience as outlined in the training package

- equivalent competencies in Plan Assessment, Conduct Assessment and Review Assessment if responsible for assessment

- all the competencies from the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training if responsible for delivery and assessment.

Careers Education Teacher Training

Careers Coordinators in government secondary schools do not have a mandated position and are drawn from the following categories:

- Classroom Teachers (who may participate in the CEAV's New Careers Co-Ordinators Conference to receive training in the careers field or participate in a range of professional development activities).

- Experienced teachers with formal training (a post graduate qualification, eg. Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters in Career Development courses offered by RMIT (off-campus only) and Deakin University via Psychology or Education Graduate Certificate & Diploma).

Some schools employ non-teaching staff and psychologists as School Support Officers (SSO are non-teaching staff); they are employed full time or part time within the school to perform a range of support roles. Schools can also integrate the role with the Student Welfare Co-ordinator's role. Schools are also able to use MIPs funding to employ MIPs Co-ordinators.

Issues

The secondary schooling system uses a cross-transfer of teaching staff from the TAFE sector to help to deliver vocational education in secondary schools. Schools draw on TAFE teacher supply, TAFE facilities, infrastructure and resources on a program basis from individual TAFE Institutes. This encourages partnerships/collaboration

between education providers to better meet local and community needs and individual pathways.

Notwithstanding the benefits, these arrangements also give rise to a number of challenges:

- The supply of sufficient numbers of vocational education teaching staff within the secondary schooling system

- The training, resourcing and upgrading of vocational education teachers within the secondary system, including increasing their knowledge of the Australian vocational education system and policy

- The need to ensure the currency of skills of vocational education teachers in the secondary system, including knowledge of the latest industry trends

- TAFE teachers may also lack current skills in sectors where technological development is rapid

- The need for some TAFE teachers to acquire the necessary pedagogical skills for dealing with school students

- Expanded and more sophisticated demands on careers teachers

- Increased demand for access to vocational programs for middle year students

- Significant teacher/support staff time required to ensure appropriate and safe work placements

- Increased need for liaison with employers and RTOs in regard to compliance with training and structured work placement requirements

- Provision of mentoring and support to students needing assistance in managing the demands of work placement, training module assignments and VCE studies. This support is critical to achieving higher levels of completion.

2.1.4 Impact of Vocational Education on Other Programs

The thirty-two VET in schools programs that are delivered as part of the VCE represent a substantial broadening of the senior school curriculum. Schools have reported that, in almost all instances, the introduction of VET programs has not reduced the availability of other curriculum offerings.

The trend in Victoria for vocational education programs to be offered as an addition rather than a substitute for existing programs has impacted in the following ways:

- Some vocational programs compete with each other. For example, a common reason for not offering a school-based apprenticeship and traineeship program is that the school can only resource one vocational program, typically VET in the VCE

- The higher status of academic programs can significantly impact on VET subjects. However, Victoria has addressed this issue in a number of ways including the provision of scored assessment for VCE VET programs. 10

VCE VET studies now contribute directly to ENTER calculations on the same basis as all other VCE studies. All other VCE VET studies that have recognition at Unit 3-4 level in the VCE attract an increment to the ENTER calculation. The adoption of scored assessment in all VCE VET programs with Unit 3-4 recognition will be important in removing any distinction between VCE studies and VCE VET programs.

2.2 The differences between School-Based and other Vocational Education Programs and the Resulting Qualifications, and the Pattern of Industry Acceptance of School-Based Programs

In Victoria, external specialist training providers deliver some of the vocational education programs, so the major difference tends to be the amount of time spent on the job acquiring or consolidating competencies (structured workplace learning typically varies from 0-25 days per year for a VCE VET subject).

All VET qualifications, whether delivered by a school as an RTO, an external RTO, or a partnership arrangement between a school and an RTO have the same level of recognition. The AQTF standards ensure that a nationally consistent and high quality VET system operates throughout Australia.

All VET in the VCE and part-time apprenticeships and traineeships for school students programs offer nationally recognised qualifications. All VET in Schools programs are within Certificate 1 – 4 levels within the Australian Qualification Framework. All RTOs must be compliant with the Australian Quality Training Framework regulations. From a Victorian perspective, there is a strong level of acceptance of the VET in Schools programs by employers and employer associations.

The 1999 University of Melbourne research, *The Employer Perspective: A Report on Employer Views of the VET in Schools Program*, noted that "employer perceptions of the program are very positive, with its greatest strength identified as its strong orientation to the world of work".

Employers value the program because it:

- contributes to the development of entry level skills for their industry
- provides students with a practical and focused introduction to workplace requirements
- enables employers to use the program for selection purposes
- enables industry to influence educational programs in schools
- provides useful training and supervisory experience for existing employees
- enables industry to participate in local community networks.

Although school-based vocational programs tend to be well accepted by industries that extensively recruit school age workers, consideration needs to be given to the following issues:

- The ability of schools to expand vocational education programs is constrained by the challenge of securing work placements for students. This process is resource intensive for schools given the need to educate employers about the merits of work placements (for both the students and the company) and their responsibilities as employers

- In some industry areas there is reluctance to accept VET in Schools for students at Certificate II and III level. This is based on the view that school students would not be able to demonstrate work-related competences without substantial hours in the workforce.

2.3 Vocational Education in New and Emerging Industries

The VCE VET program in Multimedia has grown rapidly since its introduction. VCE VET programs are also available in Information Technology Certificate II and III, CISCO, Desktop Publishing. They have been among the fastest growing area of enrolments in the VCE.

Victoria is also piloting vendor certification in 18 government schools in an effort to meet the needs of the Information and Communications Technology sector for employees with job-ready qualifications. Vendors involved are CISCO, 3COM, Microsoft and Novell. Teachers are currently completing training and developing curriculum guidelines for use by other schools in 2003. 3COM curriculum will be mapped into the Certificate II in Information Technology. Novell curriculum will be mapped into the Certificate III in Information Technology (Software Applications, General and Network Administration) and Microsoft curriculum will be mapped into all of the above certifications.

The extension of vocational education in new and emerging areas will require new qualifications to be supported by careers awareness activities that alert school students and teachers to the range of exciting jobs and careers in new industries.

Victoria will introduce block credit within the VCE in 2003 for any nationally recognised qualification beginning at AQF level 2. The block credit will be available for all new and emerging industries for which an appropriate nationally recognised qualification has been developed.

The availability of block credit means that the capacity for schools to provide vocational education in new and emerging industries would principally depend upon:

- Industry interest in providing workplace learning opportunities for school-aged learners

- Identification of vocational education pathways within the industry that can be commenced at school.

2.4 The Accessibility and Effectiveness of Vocational Education for Indigenous Students

Year 12 retention for Indigenous Australians is still below that of non-Indigenous students: 32.1% compared with 72.7%. Indigenous students aged 16-17 represent 5.4% of all Indigenous school students, compared with 11.3% for non-Indigenous students. In 1999 the Year 10 retention rate for non-Indigenous students was 96.3%, compared with the Indigenous rate of 79.2%. Although Indigenous students are under-represented in higher education, they have comparable levels of participation in vocational education and training (VET).

The VET in Schools program is designed to provide a more vocational VCE and to enable VCE students to expand their courses and their opportunities. The poor retention rate of Indigenous students is one of the major reasons that there are so few Indigenous students taking up the VET in Schools option. The majority of Indigenous students leave school by Year 10, some at the beginning and some during the year. Decisions concerning participation in further school attendance are often made prior to entering year 10 and the offer of VET courses does not precipitate a change in plans. In 2001, 17 Indigenous students completed their VET certificate, but not their VCE.

In 2001 the number of Indigenous students who met the requirements of a Year 12 certificate in Victoria as a percentage of the number of students who commenced Year 11 in the previous year was 75.2%.

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS WITH ENTER, 2001

Gender	Adult	Catholic	Government	Independent	Total
Female	3	6	32	4	45
Male	1	5	31	10	47
All	4	11	63	14	92

SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THE VCE FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS, 2001

Gender	Adult	Catholic	Government	Independent	Total
Female	4	6	33	5	48
Male	1	6	32	10	49
All	5	12	65	15	97

Enrolments in the post-compulsory education sector are acknowledged as an opportunity for Indigenous students to gain further education and prepare them for employment opportunities. Indigenous students need to be well informed about VET courses and the benefits of them throughout their secondary schooling and before they leave school.

Support for Indigenous students to participate in education and training is critical for retention and success. There needs to be better information about careers and educational pathways, support from Koorie people employed by institutions, guidance

by community people, courses that are culturally relevant and assistance for students to make the transition from study to employment.

Yalca: A Partnership in Education and Training for the New Millennium (Koorie Education Policy) was launched in October 2001.

Yalca assists in meeting the Government's objectives of improved outcomes for students, with particular respect to Indigenous students through ensuring consultation with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) and its networks of Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECG's).

Yalca provides a framework to develop and implement collaborative initiatives and strategies relating to Koorie education.

Yalca has six major objectives:

- to place the Koorie student at the centre of educational policy and decision-making
- to maintain and strengthen the formal partnership between the VAEAI and the Victorian State Government
- to recognise the central role of the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG) in education and training
- to formalise the protocols that inform all education related discussions and negotiations with the Koorie community, and
- to strengthen the framework, at all levels of education and training, for the implementation of strategies that will:

  - enable active involvement of Koorie people in educational decision-making;
  - increase the participation and outcome rates of Koorie students;
  - provide a supportive and culturally relevant learning environment;
  - provide to all Victorian students an understanding and respect for Koorie traditional and contemporary cultures; and
  - increase the number of Koorie people employed within all sections of the education and training system.

The VAEAI is also involved in the planning and implementation of the Wurreker Strategy. The Wurreker Strategy aims to ensure that the needs of the Indigenous community are addressed. Wurreker is concerned with improving outcomes for Koorie students and the Koorie community in TAFE sector programs. The Strategy is based on Koorie community involvement at all levels of decision-making. Koorie participation in the education process is critical to successful outcomes. Wurreker further builds on the equal partnership between the Victorian State Government and the Koorie community to ensure that the delivery and support contributes to Koorie communities and enable them to have a say in their future.

The linkages between education and employment need to be made explicit to Indigenous students at an earlier age, given that the majority leave school by Year 10. Access to VET programs that provide opportunities for hands-on industry experience combined with classroom experience would be helpful in this regard. Victorian policy

and program initiatives are designed to keep these students engaged and provide them with meaningful pathways to further education and employment.

The Victorian Government has put in place a number of initiatives designed to overcome the educational disadvantage that has been and is being experienced by Koorie students.

The *VCAL for Diverse Needs* will be available in 2003 to ensure that the VCAL is culturally inclusive and appropriate for Koorie students or students from refugee backgrounds.

Education providers have been invited to submit proposals for VCAL for Diverse Needs projects that provide a VCAL Learning Program that caters for the cultural needs of students. These pilot projects will inform the need for new VCAL units and/or the customisation of existing VCAL units to ensure that they are inclusive of diverse needs.

VCAL for Diverse Needs is for students in either Years 11 or 12 and can be developed for the requirements of any of the three VCAL award levels. On successful completion of the pilot project, enrolled students will receive a VCAL Certificate, issued by the VQA, at the appropriate award level.

The *Koorie Open Door Education (KODE) school campuses* were established to look at the identified needs of retention and success of Indigenous students in the Schooling sector. The KODE campuses that focus on Koorie-based decision-making in relation to curriculum design and management, were established in 1994 as a joint initiative of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) and the Department of Education (DOE) Victoria and the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). Two Pre-school-Year12 campuses were initially established at Morwell and Glenroy. As a result of their success with students, two more KODE campuses have now been established at Mildura and Swan Hill.

The *Koorie Middle Years Project* involves 13 school communities across Victoria. It aims to improve educational outcomes, specifically literacy outcomes, for students in the Middle Years (Yrs 7-9) through the use of videoconferencing facilities. It brings schools and communities together to share best practise, strategies and resources, it also enables a raised awareness of Koorie community issues, and promotes the use of school community teams. This Project assists in better preparing students for the later years of schooling, including alternative avenues within education such as VET, through strengthening Information Communication Technology skills and literacy skills such as interpersonal skills.

The *Koorie Literacy Links Project* concentrates on the early years of schooling (Prep to Year 4) and involves fourteen school communities throughout Victoria. The project incorporates the extensive use of software and information technology, utilising videoconferencing as a literacy tool, for example. School communities regularly link to establish strong support networks for students who are learning to read and write and for the adults involved with their education. There has been a marked increase in the self-esteem and self-efficacy levels of the students involved in the Project. It is

expected that these students will build on this improved confidence and carry it into their secondary and subsequent schooling experiences.

The *Koorie Numeracy Links Project* commenced in 2002 as a result of the success of the Literacy Links Projects. It concentrates on the Middle Years of schooling (Yrs 5/6) and involves ten school communities across Victoria. The Project also utilizes videoconferencing as a numeracy tool. School communities share best practice and are enhancing problem solving and mathematical skills in their students to better prepare them for entry into the secondary sector.

The *Koorie Pathways Project* is a new project that aims to provide support for students aged 15-19 to remain engaged in education and training pathways, with a focus on supporting Koorie students in their senior years of schooling. A Mentor program will be developed for students in the senior years, a Koorie senior student network established, and local activities with structured workplace learning will be developed.

Student Support Teams

The Home School Liaison Officer and the Literacy Officers are a part of a regional Koorie Student Support team. The objective for these teams is to improve educational outcomes for Koorie students in participating schools. This will be done with the team working collaboratively with the student Welfare Coordinators (which are based in secondary schools) to assist families to support the literacy/welfare development of individual students in secondary and primary schools. This team will also identify the current support mechanisms, programs and initiative available to assist Koorie students, their families and schools to facilitate improved attendance and participation in schooling.

Gifted Koorie Students Program

Experience in the Literacy Links Projects has indicated that many Koorie students are at present performing at a level far below their intellectual potential. The aims of this Project, which commenced in June 2002, are to identify underachieving Koorie students in Links Project schools, to improve their academic achievement and to identify and provide support for gifted Koorie students.