



Additional submission to Inquiry into combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions

Professor Erica Smith, University of Ballarat, 11 February

Since my submission on 23 December we have undertaken additional analysis from data gathered during the ARC Linkage project referred to in the 23 December submission. (Details of the project are given below). We analysed interviews undertaken with representatives (15 in all) of national and State organisations that have a policy interest in student-working in Australia, including representatives from employer bodies and trade unions as well as government organisations. The following conclusions were drawn from the data. (This excerpt is taken from a paper submitted to an international journal but not yet accepted for publication.)

“The data gained from the stakeholder interviews suggest several principles that could conceivably help to form a policy agenda. These principles are the need to ensure that students who work are treated fairly by employers and by their educational institutions so that they are not exploited and are able to give due attention to both sets of responsibilities; that the learning gained from part-time work is seen as important, can be articulated by all stakeholders and may possibly be accredited in some way; and that due attention is paid to equity issues so that neither those who work nor those who do not work are unduly advantaged and those who have jobs providing rich experience are not unduly advantaged compared with those who have jobs that are relatively impoverished in the experiences available.

Flowing from these principles, some policy issues that could warrant attention are:

- Regulation of working hours for student-workers;

- The right for student-workers to time off for specified school and university-related activities;
- The right to qualification-based training as part of student-working;
- The need for pre-education at school about rights and responsibilities of part-time working at ages 13 or 14 before student-working life begins;
- Timetabling flexibility at schools and universities within reasonable bounds;
- Structured dialogue about part-time working between educational institutions and employers at local levels;
- A referral service for under-18 student-workers needing advice about employment difficulties;
- Consideration of standard forms of recognition in school and university qualifications for learning from part-time work;
- A ‘compensation’ program organised through educational institutions for those students unable to access part-time work.”

The project is funded by the ARC Linkage program: 2006-8, Smith E. & Patton, W., *Changing the way that Australians enter the workforce: part-time working careers of young full-time school and tertiary students*, ARC Linkage grant, \$94,142.