



The Honourable Rod Welford MP



Queensland  
Government

15 JAN 2009

Minister for Education and Training  
Minister for the Arts

Ms Sharon Bird MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Education and Training  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**Submission Number: 41**  
**Date Received: 29/01/09**

Dear Ms Bird

Thank you for providing the Queensland Government with the opportunity to make a submission to the *Inquiry into Combining School and Work: Supporting Successful Youth Transitions*.

Supporting young people to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for successful participation in modern life and work is an ongoing challenge for governments around the world. Since the introduction of Queensland's *Education and Training Reforms for the Future* in 2002, we have taken a number of steps to increase the flexibility of senior secondary schooling and improve the opportunities for young people to gain Year 12 or equivalent qualifications.

Please find enclosed the Queensland Government response to the terms of reference, highlighting some of our many achievements. Should members of your committee wish to discuss any of the issues raised in the submission, they can contact my Senior Policy Adviser, Dr Suzanne Oberhardt on telephone (07) 3237 1000.

I look forward to the outcomes of the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

**Rod Welford MP**

Ref: 08/193612

Enc

cc: Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations

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# **Queensland Government**

Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on  
Education and Training

## **Inquiry into combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions**

The Queensland Government is committed to providing every young person the opportunity to gain a rounded education that will place them as employable within the skilled workforce and prepare them to participate in lifelong learning.

Evidence suggests that young people without the basic educational attainment will not be adequately equipped to effectively operate in the changing workplace and society<sup>1</sup>.

For many young people, part of their education journey involves the combination of work and study, in many cases to great success. The work experience gained through part-time employment provides young people with invaluable skills that compliment their school-based learnings and prepares them for future employment. However, without the systemic and local supports, young people can face challenges to achieving educational outcomes, facing conflicting demands from work and study.

Structured work-based training, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, provide young people with greater opportunities to acquire advanced skills and qualifications, compared to menial casual or part-time work.

The Queensland Government has implemented a range of initiatives and strategies to support young people to complete their schooling in the modern environment, including combining work and work-based training with traditional schooling programs.

Further, to demonstrate our commitment to boosting the education and qualifications of the state's population, as part of *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*, the Queensland Government has this year set an ambitious target for three out of four Queenslanders to hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications by 2020.

This Submission provides a range of examples of the practices in place in Queensland to support the school-work balance, in response to the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry. Further information regarding the initiatives of the Queensland Government can be found at [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au).

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<sup>1</sup> Dusseldorp Skills Forum, *It's Crunch Time*, 2007

## **Term of Reference 1**

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Providing opportunities to recognise and accredit the employability and career development skills gained through students' part time or casual work

### ***Summary of major points:***

Recognition and accreditation of employability and career development skills is essential for young people to work and live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. There are a number of strategies in place in Queensland to support this aim:

- Queensland legislation provides the option for young people to “earn or learn” during the senior phase of learning.
- The Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) provides flexible options for students to gain the senior schooling qualification through a variety of education and training options, with credits remaining current for 9 years.
- Skilling Solutions Queensland provides information and guidance for people of all ages on training and qualification pathways. The service includes recognition of prior learning to accredit the skills and experience that individuals gain in the workplace.
- School-based apprenticeships and traineeships provide a structured way for young people to gain workplace experience alongside their schooling. These programs provide stronger pathways for young people than unstructured work experience, part-time or casual work.
- A number of work readiness Certificate I and II programs are delivered by Queensland schools to provide students with options to attain employability skills. Students undertaking part-time or casual employment have the opportunity to gain recognition for a unit of competency in structured workplace learning.
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools programs also offer students options to gain industry-relevant skills, and often include structured workplace learning.

For many young people, the skills and knowledge gained during part-time or casual employment are a valuable component of their education and preparation for future employment.

Employers frequently state that employability skills such as creative and problem-solving skills, leadership and relationship skills, the ability to work in teams, learning and critical thinking skills, and communication skills are vital for the workplace, and are as important or more than technical skills<sup>2</sup>. Part-time work, structured work experience and work-based training are excellent ways for young people to develop these skills.

However, research undertaken in 2003, shows that young people participating in over 5-10 hours of part-time work are less likely to complete Year 12<sup>3</sup>. Today, completing Year 12 is generally considered a bare minimum for personal and employment success in later years<sup>4</sup>. As such, Queensland's education system is working to maximise the benefits of student employment opportunities and to keep young people engaged with the primary objective of completing Year 12.

### ***Earning or learning options in the post-compulsory years***

Under current Queensland legislation<sup>5</sup>, young people who have completed the compulsory years of schooling (at age 16 or upon completion of Year 10, whichever comes first) are required to be engaged in full-time education, training or employment for a further two years, or until they complete Year 12, attain a Certificate III or higher, or turn 17. This means that young people have the option to:

- attend education programs provided by schools, higher education providers, TAFEs or other registered training organisations
- participate in departmental employment skills development programs or alternative education programs ("flexible arrangements")
- participate in traineeships or apprenticeships (full-time, part-time or school-based)
- or go to work (full-time, part-time combined with part-time education/training or other eligible option).

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<sup>2</sup> Curtis, D., & McKenzie P., (2002) *Employability Skills for Australian Industry: Literature Review and Framework Development*, Report to the Business Council of Australia and Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australian Council for Educational Research: Victoria.

DEST (2002) *Employability Skills for the Future*, Department of Education, Science and Training: Canberra

Moy, J. (1999). *The impact of generic competencies on workplace performance: Review of research*. National Centre for Vocational Education Research: Adelaide.

ACCI (2003) *Giving Australian Youth Relevant Skills - Meeting Employers' Expectations*, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

(2007) *Are they really ready to work? Employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century US workforce*, The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management.

Martin, R., Villeneuve-Smith, F., Marshall, L., & McKenzie, E. (2008) *Employability skills explored: Research Report*, Learning and Skills Network: London.

<sup>3</sup> Vickers, M. Lamb, S. & Hinkley, J. (2003) *Student Workers in High School and Beyond: The effects of part-time employment on participation in education, training and work (LSAY Research Report No 30)*, ACER.

<sup>4</sup> Keeley, B., (2007) *Human Capital: How what you know shapes your life*, OECD

McGaw, B., (2008) *Benefits of education for individuals and society*, Presentation to QSA Senior Schooling Conference, Brisbane, 10 March

Dusseldorp Skills Forum (2007) *It's Crunch Time: Raising youth engagement and attainment: a discussion paper*. p 17

<sup>5</sup> Education (General Provisions) Act 2006

The challenge in the current environment is to support those young people who opt to go to work to move toward the attainment of a qualification, during and beyond the traditional years of schooling.

Through the new QCE, students who do not meet the QCE requirements (details contained under Term of Reference 2) at the end of Year 12 can continue to work towards their certificate - their learning account remains open, regardless of their age (however, credits expire after 9 years).

VET competencies and qualifications count as credits toward the QCE. For some young people, their participation in employment may enable them to attain VET competencies or a partial qualification through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

### ***Skilling Solutions Queensland***

A number of Skilling Solutions Queensland centres have been established across the state to support people to identify the skills they have gained through employment and life experience, and to identify training they may need to undertake to support their chosen career path.

The Skilling Solutions Queensland centres, located in shopping centres and other popular locations, are staffed by specially trained consultants who help adults and young people to decide which career to pursue, evaluate the skills they have and the skills they need to gain. Skilling Solutions Queensland also refers eligible customers to Registered Training Organisations (RTO) for formal RPL assessments that may result in the attainment of a partial or full qualification.

### ***Structured arrangements for combining school and work-based training***

Research has shown that young people who undertake a structured work-based training program in conjunction with the completion of Year 12 studies, such as a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship (SAT), have greater prospects for employment and further education and training than those who opt to participate in part-time or full-time employment.

SATs allow students (typically in Years 11 and 12) to study for their QCE, work for an employer and train towards a recognised qualification, while completing high school. Students in Year 10 can also do a SAT.

SATs are available in hundreds of fields ranging from rural to retail, business to building, hospitality to hairdressing, and automotive to arts.

Depending on the qualification and when the young person commences, many students can complete a school-based traineeship while at school. A school-based apprenticeship provides a head start into a full-time or part-time apprenticeship and career. Young people may complete up to a third of an apprenticeship while at school. After school they can convert to a full-time arrangement.

One of the key benefits of a SAT over a part-time apprenticeship is that the school, employer and student can work together to arrange flexible timetabling and work arrangements. A student can still undertake an Overall Position (OP)<sup>6</sup>, work towards a QCE, and keep recording results towards their QCE even after they have left school.

### **Next Steps**

The *Next Step Report 2008*<sup>7</sup> shows that young people who undertake a SAT were more likely to be working full-time or undertaking further education or training in the twelve months after completing Year 12 than young people who do not undertake a SAT.

Students who undertook a SAT were three times more likely to undertake apprenticeships and traineeships after leaving school than other Year 12 graduates (37.6% compared to 12.8%). They were also more likely to be working full-time (21.3% compared to 17.0%) and less likely to be seeking work than other Year 12 graduates (3.9% compared to 6.0%).

A comparison of students with an OP and students who completed a SAT shows that students have similar success in making a transition to either post-school study or work. Students seeking work and not studying made up 3.2% of OP-eligible students and 3.9% of SAT students compared with 10.8% of non-OP students.

One in twelve Queensland Year 12 graduates in 2007 (8.7%) had undertaken SAT. Students can do a SAT and an OP at the same time, and many young people do. Almost one in eight young people who participated in a SAT went on to university.

### **SATs and university entrance**

Results from VET undertaken as part of a SAT can be used by students who are OP-ineligible to gain a selection rank for university entrance. Details of how this works are available through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre at <http://www.qtac.edu.au>.

### **Work Readiness**

Education Queensland, in partnership with the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland, has developed a suite of nationally-accredited Work Education Certificate courses. The courses are:

- 30625QLD Certificate I in Work Readiness
- 30626QLD Certificate I in Work Education
- 30627QLD Certificate II in Workplace Practices.

The courses were developed in response to an established market need and demand to provide candidates for industry who are workplace ready by equipping them with entry-level, generic employability knowledge and skills that will be expected and required of them in any workplace. Certificate I in Work

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<sup>6</sup> Queensland tertiary entrance score

<sup>7</sup> Queensland Government, 2008

Readiness is specifically designed for learners who have a major learning impairment – physical or intellectual.

The units of competency in the courses include the areas of developing a career and learning development plan, developing basic knowledge of workplace relations, applying job search and interview skills and following occupational health and safety principles and procedures. In addition, one core unit of competence requires students to participate in structured workplace learning. However, students engaged in part-time or casual employment are able to obtain recognition for this unit of competence. They may also gain recognition for any particular skills they have developed in their workplace through performance of routine tasks and schedules at their workplace.

There are currently 135 Queensland schools with scope registration to deliver the Certificate I in Work Education, 78 for Certificate I in Work Readiness, and 71 for Certificate II in Workplace Practices. In addition, 80 other RTOs (TAFE Institutes and private providers) across Australia are registered to deliver one or more of the three certificate courses.

### ***VET in Schools***

#### *Queensland Studies Authority VET subjects*

The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) has developed a number of subjects that embed VET qualifications from industry-endorsed National Training packages. These VET subjects cover industry areas such as hospitality, business and engineering.

QSA subjects that include embedded VET provide students with the opportunity to attain either a full or partial qualification at Certificate I, II or III levels. Students can also gain a level of achievement for the subject. As National Training packages have an industry focus, structured workplace learning is a recommended component of the program.

#### *Stand alone VET*

Schools can also offer accredited VET courses outside the embedded QSA subjects. VET in schools courses can also be delivered by RTOs other than schools, such as TAFEs or private RTOs, or through a partnership between a school and an outside RTO.

A VET Certificate or Statement of Attainment is awarded for the competencies achieved, and can contribute toward the attainment of a QCE.

### **Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures**

*Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures – Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy 2008-2011* specifically targets the school to work transition for Indigenous young people. Key actions under *Skilling Individuals for Work* include increasing the number of Indigenous SATs and ensuring that Indigenous young people are able to access culturally appropriate career information and assessment of current skills.



## **Term of Reference 2**

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Identifying more flexible, innovative and/or alternative approaches to attaining a senior secondary certificate which support students to combine work and study

### ***Summary of major points:***

The introduction of the QCE marks an important milestone for the Queensland Government in providing young people with more flexible options to attain a meaningful senior secondary certificate.

The flexibility of the QCE includes options to credit alternative education programs toward the attainment of the QCE, such as the *Get Set for Work* initiative, which provides work readiness training for early school leavers.

The Queensland Government is committed to providing flexible options for young people to complete their senior schooling. As noted under Term of Reference 1, Queensland legislation provides for young people to be earning and/or learning during their senior phase of learning. More recently, the introduction of the QCE established a flexible framework for young people to combine education and training to attain a meaningful qualification, and allows them to attain the qualification over a period that suits them (with credits expiring only after 9 years).

### ***Queensland Certificate of Education***

The QCE is Queensland's senior school qualification, which is awarded to eligible students usually at the end of Year 12. In 2008, the QCE was awarded to Year 12 students for the first time.

To ensure students have the opportunity to make the most of their senior phase of learning, and attain credits toward their QCE through the education and training options that best suit them, students are supported to plan their senior learning at the end of Year 10. A Senior Education and Training Plan (SET Plan) helps a student structure their learning around their abilities, interests and ambitions and is agreed between the student, their parents or carers and the school.

Over the senior phase of learning, student learning and achievement is registered in a "learning account" that they can access and monitor online. At the end of Year 12, if a student does not meet the QCE requirements, their learning account remains open, regardless of their age (however, credits expire after 9 years), and once the individual becomes eligible for a QCE, one will be awarded.

The QCE offers flexibility in what is learnt, as well as where and when learning occurs. Students have a wide range of learning options, which include senior school subjects, vocational education and training, workplace and community learning, as well as university subjects undertaken while at school.

To be awarded a QCE, students must have at least 20 credits in the required pattern, and fulfil literacy and numeracy requirements. These requirements can be considered in detail at [www.qsa.qld.edu.au](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au).

### ***Skilling Queenslanders for Work***

The *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative formally commenced on 1 July 2007, as part of the Queensland Skills Plan. Under this initiative, organisations are funded to deliver customised employment and training assistance targeted to specific population groups under a number of strategies.

The YouthWorX Strategy under *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* is a broad strategy tackling youth unemployment and targets 15 to 24 year olds. The Get Set for Work program sits under this program.

The Get Set for Work (GSFW) program was developed in response to the rise of the school leaving age and the introduction of a compulsory participation

phase. GSFW specifically addresses the work readiness needs of 15-17 year old early school leavers who are disengaged or highly likely to disengage. Although the program has a standard core, there is considerable flexibility in how it is delivered to enable tailoring to local conditions. Whether using a one-on-one approach, small group activities or a combination, the program has shown consistent results with 69% in employment or training or a combination of both 12 months post completion.

On successful completion of the program a young person can receive credit towards their QCE in the event that they choose to return to school or vocational education and training.

Other funded programs nominated as employment skills development programs include work placements and 'youth specific' accredited training projects delivered under the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative. Work placements and youth specific accredited training provide alternative pathways for disengaged and 'at risk' young people to formal schooling. Funding is provided to community and public sector organisations to employ unemployed and disadvantaged people, including young people, for periods of three to six months on a range of public works, community and environmental projects.

### **Options for Indigenous Students in Remote Communities**

There is a recognised need for local and regional employment and economic development to build strong communities and good life options for Indigenous Queenslanders in remote communities.

The provision of effective school-based traineeships and apprenticeships is dependent upon the level of enterprise within the community. With the majority of Indigenous communities, the level of enterprise is currently insufficient to provide the required level of infrastructure.

One strategy for the delivery of quality secondary schooling for students in Indigenous communities, including work placements and the opportunity to combine work and study, is to provide "out of community" schooling through residential colleges. "Out of community" schooling options include a matrix of low cost to high cost residential options ranging from share houses, dormitory accommodation, twin and single room accommodation and low to high cost student support ranging from minimal support to provision of house parents, case managers and tutorial support. i.e. from hostel to educational residential accommodation.

### **Term of Reference 3**

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Support that may be required to assist young people combining work and study to stay engaged in their learning, especially where work and study intersects with income support

***Summary of major points:***

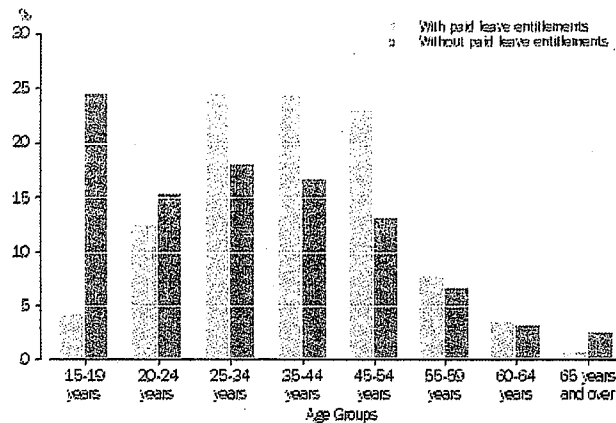
Young people need structural and local level supports to enable them to effectively balance work and study commitments. Queensland has established a number of arrangements to facilitate this:

- Queensland has established Child Employment Laws and Guidelines to stipulate the rights and conditions for child employment.
- Queensland schools are working to enable the flexibility of “earning or learning” and the QCE through timetabling and staff support.
- A range of support staff and services provide guidance and mentoring to students, particularly those identified as at risk of disengaging from learning.

The range of flexible study options established in Queensland supports young people to combine work-based learning and study, however, young people still face many challenges, particularly those in low skill part-time or casual employment.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that a disproportionate number of 15-19 year olds are working in occupations that do not provide paid leave entitlements as indicated by the graph below<sup>8</sup>.

**Figure: Employees by age groups, with or without paid leave entitlements, Queensland, 2007**  
**EMPLOYEES (EXCLUDING OMIES) by age groups, with or without leave paid leave entitlements, Queensland - November 2007**



### **Child employment legislation**

In 2006, Queensland established child labour laws and a Children and Young Workers Code of Practice to inform employers, young people and their parents of the rights of children in the workplace. The *Child Employment Act 2006* aims to:

- protect school-aged children from performing work that may be harmful to their health and safety, or that compromises their mental, moral or social welfare
- limit the hours of work for school-aged children to ensure that their studies are not adversely affected by employment.

Specific restrictions introduced by the Act include preventing school-aged children from being required to work longer than:

- 12 hours during a school week
- 38 hours during a week that is not a school week
- four hours on a school day
- eight hours on a day that is not a school day.

Further, school-aged children are not allowed to work between 10pm and 6am, and children between 11 and 13 years of age who are performing supervised delivery work are not allowed to work between 6pm and 6am.

<sup>8</sup> Forms of Employment, Queensland Statistics, ABS 1318.3, July 2008

The legislation also provides guidelines regarding break requirements during and between working shifts, for those young people employed in occupations that are not covered by other industrial instruments.

### ***Local organisational supports***

There are many organisational practices that can support young people to effectively manage the balance between work and school.

School timetabling can allow students to attend work-based training, work or training on a regular basis. School staff can provide support to students to balance their school work, and guidance to support young people to make appropriate decisions regarding work, education and training that will provide the best long-term outcomes.

### ***Support for students combining work-based training and work***

A range of support services is available for young people in the senior phase of learning.

### ***Youth Support Coordinators***

The Youth Support Coordinator Initiative is an early intervention and prevention program aimed at preventing premature withdrawal from formal education and training. There are now 113 Youth Support Coordinator positions funded across Queensland.

The initiative aims to establish collaborative relationships between schools, TAFEs and community services to enable better responses to the needs of young people experiencing personal or family difficulties. Youth Support Coordinators work directly with individual young people and their families as well within schools and TAFEs and with the wider community.

### ***Access to Pathways Grants Program***

The Access to Pathways grants program provides funding for initiatives that improve participation, retention and attainment for 15 - to 17-year-olds at risk of disengaging from learning.

Through the development of District Youth Achievement Plans, schools, TAFE institutes, industry and the community are working together to find new ways of delivering education and training, and new ways to pool resources.

### ***Flexible Learning Services***

The Flexible Learning Service program provides funding to regions to purchase education and training services that help re-engage 15 - to 17-year-olds who, by choice or circumstance, are no longer learning.

This program builds on a successful trial, which identified a number of key features critical to achieving positive outcomes for disengaged young people. In particular, the trial identified that:

- local communities have the best chance of identifying and responding to local problems

- real solutions emerge when communities take a holistic approach to meeting the needs of disengaged young people.

#### *Community Mentoring Program*

The Queensland Community Mentoring Program, established in November 2004, aims to build a sustainable mentoring capacity throughout Queensland.

The program, delivered through a partnership with Job Futures Ltd, aims to improve participation, retention and attainment in learning for 14- to 17-year olds. Mentors, who are typically experienced people from the community with local knowledge, expertise and standing, volunteer to work with young people at risk of not achieving.

#### *Indigenous Education Support Structures*

The Indigenous Education Support Structures (IESS), a four-year program to address Indigenous students' educational outcomes, focuses on working with Indigenous students, teachers and families to improve student attendance, achievement and school completion levels.

As part of an IESS pilot in state schools (2008-2010), teams have been established in five cluster sites - Mt Isa, Cairns, Rockhampton, Ipswich and Cunnamulla-Charleville - to work with Indigenous students, teachers and families to enhance students' attendance, achievement and school completion levels. The pilot is modelled on the highly successful Spinifex College tutorial assistance and student support strategy.

#### *Transition Support Services*

Through the Transition Support Service, young people from Cape York, Torres Strait, the Northern Peninsula Area and Palm Island are supported to make a smooth transition from the primary phase of schooling in their small home communities to secondary schooling in large metropolitan or urban centres.

In their communities, students and their families are supported to prepare for secondary school by locally based personnel as well as school based personnel. Support is also provided to arrange travel as well as provide chaperones, where required, to assist students with on-time arrivals at destination schools.

#### *Indigenous Employment and Training Support Officers (IETSOs)*

Indigenous Employment and Training Support Officers (IETSOs) are based throughout Queensland to provide culturally appropriate mentoring and support to Indigenous apprentices, trainees and vocational students to help them complete a qualification.

The officers also support employers by helping them become more culturally aware of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural responsibilities and protocols.

## **Term of Reference 4**

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The potential impact on educational attainment (including the prospects for post-compulsory qualifications and workforce productivity)

***Summary of major points:***

Research shows that work experience improves a student's post-school employability. It can however, can impact negatively on their prospects for completing Year 12, or continuing to higher education.

There is strong evidence that school-based apprenticeships and traineeships improve the likelihood of students gaining full-time employment or attending further training post-school.



A number of Australian and international researchers have explored the impact of work on school students and schooling outcomes. This research generally indicates that part-time work and work-experience has a positive effect on post-school employment destinations, while longer working hours during school (in excess of 5-10 hours per week) impact negatively on the likelihood of a student completing Year 12, or continuing to further education or training<sup>9</sup>.

The challenge for school systems, therefore, is to support students to find the balance that enables them to achieve during their senior years of schooling, while preparing them for post-school employment, further education and training.

There is strong evidence to suggest that combining workplace experience with schooling, such as through a SAT, strengthens the skills base of students, and improves the prospects for those students destined post-school for technical training or employment, rather than higher education pathways.

The Queensland *Next Step*<sup>10</sup> research shows that undertaking a SAT has a positive effect on a student's post-school destinations (more detail under Term of Reference 5). In particular, evidence from the Next Step survey suggests that students who undertake a SAT have a greater likelihood of making a successful transition to full-time employment or further training, including full-time Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

However, the *Next Step* survey does not investigate student employment patterns during schooling, and as such does not provide insight into the overall effect of work on schooling outcomes. Further, the survey is a sample only, of students who completed Year 12, and does not survey students who leave school prior to completion of Year 12.

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<sup>9</sup> Vickers, M. Lamb, S. & Hinkley, J. (2003) *Student Workers in High School and Beyond: The effects of part-time employment on participation in education, training and work (LSAY Research Report No 30)*, Australian Council for Educational Research: Victoria.

Robinson, L. (1999) *The Effects of Part-Time Work on School Students (LSAY Research Report No 9)*, Australian Council for Educational Research: Victoria.

Fullerton, S. (1999) *Work Experience and Work Placements in Secondary School Education (LSAY Research Report No. 10)*, Australian Council for Educational Research: Victoria.

Biddle, N. (2003) *Part-time work amongst high-school students: Comparisons across ethnic groups*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, paper presented at the ANZCIES conference, Wollongong, December 2003.

Byrne, D. (2006) *Considering the Impact of Early Work Experiences on Labour Market Outcomes in Comparative Perspective*, ECER, University of Edinburgh.

<sup>10</sup> Next Step 2008, Queensland Government

## **Term of Reference 5**

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The effectiveness of school-based training pathways and their impact on successful transitions, including opportunities for improvement (particularly in relation to pathways to employment for disadvantaged young people)

### ***Summary of major points:***

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships show strong outcomes for student post-school transitions. In particular, students have greater prospects for full-time employment, further training, apprenticeships and traineeships.

The Queensland Government has established a number of partnerships and alliances with industry, employers and enterprises to maximise opportunities for students to engage in education and training pathways that are relevant to industry needs.

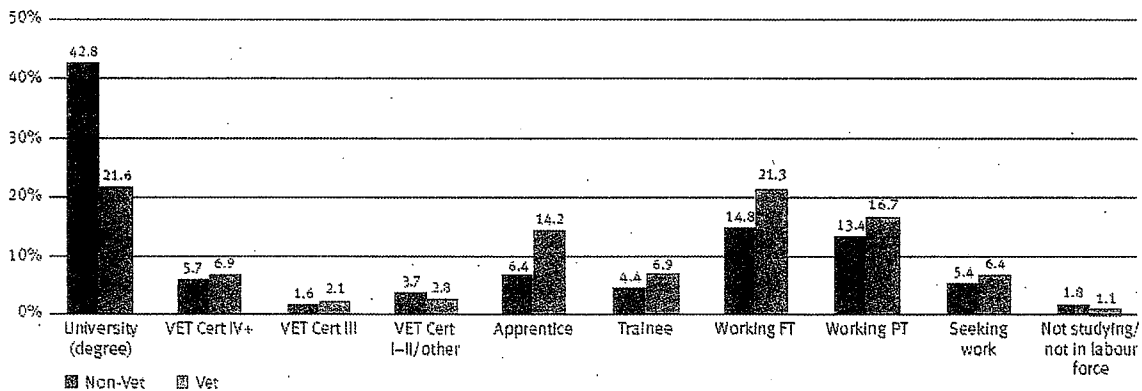
Queensland's *Next Step 2008* survey of Year 12 completers found a link between VET studies at school and destinations after school, as illustrated by the graph below.

Almost four in every ten Year 12 graduates left school with a VET qualification (39.8%), while 8.7% were school-based apprentices or trainees.

Based on the Next Step data, it appears that VET experiences in school alone may not provide improved post-school outcomes for students. VET programs provide students with important technical skills and training, however it appears that the workplace experience undertaken as part of a SAT program has a significant impact on a student's employability and likelihood to participate in further training, or full-time apprenticeships or traineeships.

Overall, students with a VET qualification were less likely to enrol in a university degree course than others (21.6% compared to 42.8%). However, they had higher rates of transition to employment-based training (21.1% compared to 10.8%). They were also more likely to enter employment with no further education or training (38.0% compared to 28.2%).

**Figure: Main destinations of Year 12 completers, by Year 12 strand (VET and non-VET), Queensland 2008**



SATs were three times more likely to undertake apprenticeships and traineeships after leaving school than other Year 12 completers (37.6% compared to 12.8%). They were also more likely to be working full-time (21.3% compared to 17.0%) and less likely to be seeking work than other Year 12 graduates (3.9% compared to 6.0%).

Based on the evidence supporting the educational and employment prospects of young people who participate in a SAT, the Queensland Government set a target to double the number of SATs over the period 2006 to 2010. There has been strong growth in SATs, particularly for disadvantaged groups. For example, 611 Indigenous young people commenced a SAT during 2008 by 31 October, compared with a total of 416 for the same period in 2006.

***Industry School Engagement Strategy – successfully transitioning young people from school to work – or higher education.***

The Queensland Government has recognised the importance of establishing strong partnerships with key industries that have been driving the Queensland economy. These have included among others the mining, building and construction, manufacturing and engineering industries. The Queensland Government has supported the establishment of “Centres of Excellence” in these industries to provide advice and direction regarding current and future skilling needs of the labour force. These industries have recognised the importance of attracting and retaining young people to their industries and have therefore been major stakeholders in the development of the department’s Industry School Engagement Strategy.

The Queensland Skills Plan 2008 has identified as a key action – “improving youth transitions to enhance education, training and employment outcomes.”

Many schools throughout Queensland have established partnerships with employers and industry to provide work experience and structured workplace learning opportunities for their students. However these partnerships have often been adhoc, with little structure or direct relevance to the career aspirations of students.

In creating the Industry School Engagement Strategy a co-ordinated and structured approach to the engagement and investment of industry, education and training partners in the development and provision of:

- Industry based curricula;
- Access to real work opportunities including SATs, work experience and structured work place learning; and
- Access to contemporary industry developed facilities; and
- Recognition of work being undertaken by young people while still at school to ensure they gain industry recognised qualifications.

The Industry School Engagement Strategy is supported by a number of key initiatives including:

***School Industry Trade Colleges***

The Queensland Government has a commitment to establish 5 School Industry Trade Colleges, particularly in areas of skill shortages. The School Industry Trade Centres are the result of partnerships with education, training, industry and local employers to provide access to flexible, contemporary infrastructure or technologies to support learning and skilling within a “real” working environment.

### ***Gateway Schools Projects***

The "Gateway Schools" Project provide an access point and opportunities for employment for young people in key industries including building and construction, wine tourism, agribusiness, manufacturing and engineering, aviation and mining and energy. They have been established to develop and deliver structured activities to assist young people to make a successful transition from school to employment or further training.

The "Gateway Schools" work with industry to develop curriculum, identify work experience opportunities and structured industry placement for accredited school delivered training, establish school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, scholarships, industry mentors, vacation employment programs and provide students with career information.

Through the "Gateway School Projects" partnership arrangements between education, training and industry students gain valuable experience in industry while still at school, providing them with the skills, knowledge and attributes to participate effectively in society and employment.

The investment by partner industries in the "Gateway School Projects" have seen the establishment of the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy, an increase in traineeships in the Wine Tourism Industry as well targeted professional development for teaching staff and employment of school based apprentices in areas of skill shortages.

All the projects are supported and guided by industry based steering committees, which have representation from CEOs of key industry groups, senior government officials and relevant Universities and training providers.

### ***Youth Training Incentives Program***

The Youth Training Incentives Program forms part of the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative and is instrumental in assisting young people to transition from school to employment. The program is designed to provide those students unlikely to pursue direct entry into tertiary education at the completion of their senior phase of learning with an additional pathway into employment by combining education and training towards a qualification in the career of their choice.

The program provides financial incentives to public and private sector organisations, subject to the program's eligibility criteria, to employ an eligible school-based apprentice or trainee. According to the latest 12 month destination survey results for the program, 87% are in employment or training or a combination of both 12 months post participation.

## **Indigenous SATs**

Indigenous students' participation in SATs is on par with other students in Queensland, however, their completion rates are not comparable. Indigenous young people are less likely than their peers to complete their traineeship as part of their schooling, or to convert their SAT to a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship.

Evidence suggests that dedicated support is needed to assist Indigenous students to successfully continue and complete their SAT. This includes learning support but also more holistic support such as mentoring. Indigenous young people also need to be encouraged and supported to undertake higher level qualifications.