

1 October 2002

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

Dear Richard Selth

Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools

Please find enclosed a Submission from the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria to the above inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Michelle Green
Chief Executive

Encl:



The Association of Independent Schools of Victoria

**Submission to The House of Representatives Standing
Committee on Education and Training – Inquiry into
Vocational Education in Schools**

Chief Executive Officer:

Michelle Green



Executive summary	3
Terms of reference	4
Context	
Introduction	4
Factors leading to VET in Schools	4
VET in Schools	5
Current situation	
The Victorian scene	5
Independent schools	6
External drivers influencing VET in Schools provision	7
Current research in the Victorian Independent sector	9
Funding	
Context	11
Future funding	11
Recommendations	11
Building Partnerships documents	12
Statistics	13

Executive Summary

AISV welcomes this Inquiry, particularly in the context of the need for a continuation of the current Commonwealth funding support mechanisms.

Since 1996, there has been significant growth in the Victorian Independent sector's participating in VET in Schools programs.

This growth has occurred because of a variety of external and internal factors impacting on independent schools.

Significant external factors include changes in the accreditation of AQTF Certificate programs at the State level and the funding support provided by the Commonwealth via ANTA; funding support with a clear and defined allocation to the independent sector. A movement away from this type of funding allocation mechanism, as suggested in a current ANTA consultation document, will seriously disadvantage further VET in Schools provision by Victorian independent schools, particularly as the sector does not receive State VET funds (the level of funding provided for students in Victorian Government schools includes both a State component and a Commonwealth component).

This submission calls for continuing Commonwealth funding support for VET in Schools programs and for a continuation of the current funding allocation mechanism based on student numbers in the 15-19 cohort.

The Association therefore recommends:

- That a defined VET annual funding allocation be made to the sector
- That the Commonwealth recognizes that Commonwealth funds are the sole source of funding support for VET students in the Victorian independent sector
- That a funding model be developed based on enrolments in the 15-19 year old cohort
- That the funding model is based on nationally consistent data

Accompanying this submission are supportive documents in a *Building Partnerships* series produced by The Association of Independent Schools of Victoria over the period 1997 – 2001 (list of documents on page 8).

Terms of Reference

The House Committee on Education and Training is to inquire into the place of vocational education in schools, its growth and development and its effectiveness in preparing students for post-school options, with particular reference to:

- the range, structure, resourcing and delivery of vocational education programs in schools, including teacher training and the impact of vocational education on other programs;
- the differences between school-based and other vocational education programs and the resulting qualifications, and the pattern of industry acceptance of school-based programs;
- vocational education in new and emerging industries; and
- the accessibility and effectiveness of vocational education for indigenous students.

Context

Introduction

Since 1996 there has been a significant growth in the independent sector's involvement with vocational education and training (VET) pathways. However VET in Schools program (in Victoria named VET in the VCE programs) delivery comes with inherent challenges and opportunities.

Factors leading to VET in Schools

Several forces influenced the review of post-compulsory secondary education in Australia leading to the introduction of VET in Schools programs. These included:

- government commissioned reports including those conducted by Finn, Mayer, Blackburn and Carmichael that found schools were inadequately preparing young people for life and making school difficult and irrelevant for many by placing undue emphasis on 'academic' subjects
- increased retention rates in secondary schools
- more and more young people staying on until the completion of year 12
- a subsequent increased demand for tertiary and higher education places
- a downturn in the Australian economy
- the rise of national debt
- the restructuring of major industries
- the emergence of the global economy
- a reduction in apprenticeship training
- increasing numbers of unemployed and underemployed young people

Responses to these forces included:

- the development of broad general key competencies, not specific to any subject or industry, that are seen as intrinsically valuable to individuals regardless of their post school choices



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- government incentives and group apprenticeship schemes to reform the apprenticeship system
 - introduction of traineeships in non-trade industries which recognised the benefits of learning both on and off the job
 - the recognition that skills can be acquired both on and off the job
 - the development of a nationally accredited training system based and assessed on definitive and measurable competencies
 - the establishment of nationally recognised qualifications
 - the promotion of greater convergence between vocational and general education
 - the provision of a greater range of training options, including VET in Schools provision, especially for young people

These challenges and opportunities or drivers have influenced the provision of VET in Schools. Some of these drivers are external, occurring because of changed social attitudes and values, government legislation, policy and guidelines, or as a result of global forces. Other drivers are internal and are responses that emanate directly from a school's mission and vision as well as collective and individual attitudes and values residing in that particular school community.

VET in Schools

States and territories adopted in principle VET in Schools provision as early as 1993 when the first Australian Vocational Training System pilot projects began. These primarily concentrated on retail, building and hospitality.

In June 1993 the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) was formed to coordinate strategic policy at the national level, negotiating and developing national agreements on shared objectives and interests including secondary education, vocational education and training, higher education, employment and linkages between employment/labour market programs and education and training and youth policy programs across interrelated portfolios. MCEETYA has largely driven the national agenda for the integration of VET into post-compulsory education provision throughout Australia.

Current situation

The Victorian Scene

Education and accreditation authorities in Victoria adopted an integrated approach to VET in Schools delivery beginning with credit transfer. This system recognised that there was a relationship between identified industry competencies and VCE studies and therefore deemed that credit for attaining both could be awarded by completing one.

When the VCE was reviewed in 1997 the decision was made to fully integrate VET into the VCE certificate. Each recognised VET program can contribute units to the VCE. If scored assessments are not available to contribute to the Equivalent

National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER), students receive a 10% as their fifth or sixth study increment on successful completion of their VET certificate.



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The research¹ into post-schooling destinations conducted by Richard Teese, John Polesel and others from the University of Melbourne and the published report of the Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria² provides a contemporary view of VET in Schools provision.

The Teese et al research generally demonstrates sound further training, education and employment outcomes for those students enrolled in VET and overwhelmingly positive responses from employers who have recruited staff from VET in Schools graduates³.

The Kirby report, although recognising the positive influences of VET and in particular structured workplace learning, clearly indicated that despite VET in Schools provision and the relative post-school success for its participants, VET is not the panacea for all students as many, especially in specific geographic locations, are exiting school prior to attaining a qualification leading onto further education, training or employment.

Largely, the findings of this report have led to the introduction of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) which takes a generic approach to attaining work-related competencies while simultaneously building communication and literacy skills to a level where enrollees can confidently participate in the workplace as well as further work education and training.

Independent Schools

In Victoria in 1996 approximately 100 students from ten independent schools were involved in VET programs. In 2002 over 3400 students from 85 independent schools are participating in VET in the VCE programs (ie enrolled in full AQTF certificate programs) with a further 73 students undertaking school-based part-time traineeships. In total, 29 AQTF certificate programs are offered across the 85 schools.

The growth in the sector's involvement with VET pathways has in the main resulted from the availability of supporting Commonwealth funding to both purchase VET delivery and provide professional development and consultancy support for school staff; the needs and aspirations of students and parents; the willingness of schools to provide broader pathways for students; and the willingness of schools to provide the necessary human and capital resources to facilitate involvement.

Throughout this period and to date, the sector has not received access to State VET funds; in 2001 State VET funds, over and above Commonwealth allocations, to Government schools in Victoria totaled \$4.7 million

¹ Teese et al have published a number of reports describing the transitions and destinations of senior secondary students involved in VET in Schools programs, commissioned and published by the Department of Education and Training, Victoria.

² The report, known as the Kirby report, was published in August 2000, and underpins the development of Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs), the creation of the Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA) and the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA).

³ Teese, R et al (2001) The Employer Perspective DE&T

External drivers influencing VET in Schools provision

Policy and Research

- Commonwealth and Victorian Government policy supporting VET in Schools including *Knowledge and Skills for the innovation Economy*: Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2002 and the establishment of the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation: Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, 2001
- Research papers published by a range of organisations including the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA) and the Commonwealth and Victorian Departments of Education

- ↓
- *need for longitudinal data on student pathways based on specific VET industry certificates undertaken as part of a VET in Schools program*

Commonwealth funding policy

- The level and distribution arrangements for funding
- Special purpose grants such as Skills Centres
- Peak industry awards and other prizes
- The Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP) special industry programs

- ↓
- *the current review of the ANTA funding allocation mechanism to States has the potential to seriously disadvantage independent schools*

State funding framework

- The mechanisms by which VET funds can be accessed including Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs)
- Extraordinary projects and pilots

- ↓
- *to date, the independent sector has not received access to State VET funds*

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority ENTER arrangements and contributions

- The arrangements for scored assessment of VET in the VCE studies
- Incremental contributions from VET in the VCE to the ENTER.

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority certification

- The range and type of programs available
- The negotiation between peak industry groups and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) regarding equivalence between certificate courses in the VET sector and VCE studies in the secondary sector
- The contribution of VET in Schools programs to the VCE

• *the introduction of "Block Credit" arrangements by the VCAA will maximise the flexibility of schools to customise VET in Schools programs for students*

- *School-based VET programs preparing trainees for the uptake of post-school pathways, whether this be direct entry into industry and/or further education/training, exhibit various positive features over and above vocational features:*
 - *schools have a more pastoral approach to education and training in that students that are not performing to expectations or not achieving course outcomes are identified and targeted for individual support; and,*
 - *regular communication by schools with parents regarding their child's progress encourages and facilitates direct parental involvement in the child's education and training.*

• *the Building Partnership document enclosed and entitled "effective learning through VET in Schools", highlights that VET programs "offer opportunities for the expansion of the contexts for learning and the range of learning experiences".*

Quality assurance

- Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) principles for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- The mechanisms for audit and reporting through the Victorian Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE)

• *Commonwealth funding has enabled support to be provided to assist independent schools (51) which are RTOs to review their compliance*

Current research in the Victorian Independent Sector

Since 1996 there has been a significant growth in the independent sector's involvement with vocational education and training (VET) pathways.

Eight years on, schools in the sector are now in a position to reflect on developments in the provision of VET to date and to consider possible future developments. With this in mind the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria (AISV) is carrying out a minor research project *Planning for the future: vocational education & training options for independent schools in Victoria* which addresses four questions:

- What is the current context?
- What factors have influenced this position?
- What can the future possibly hold?
- What might influence decision-making for the future?

The aim of the project is to assist independent schools strategically plan their ongoing VET in Schools provision.

The specific objective of the project is to increase schools' understandings of the emerging issues which may influence VET in the VCE provision in the future and through the use of three scenarios (*minimal change; change resulting in growth; and change resulting in decline*), establish a sound platform for strategic planning. One outcome of the project will be a document that will assist schools with strategic planning.

Shaping the project

The first stage of the project has involved a round table luncheon discussion which resulted in draft report being compiled. This report outlines the drivers which have provided the momentum for VCE VET provision. Drivers have emerged from within individual schools as well as externally, largely brought about by government policy.

The paper is intended for use in schools already providing VET in Schools programs and/or familiar with the VET in Schools agenda. Readers will in the main be school leaders: principals and their assistants; coordinators such as VCE, Curriculum, VET and Student Welfare Coordinators; and others who have a key role in a school's strategic planning.

The follow is a part extract from the third scenario ie *change, resulting in decline*.

The Commonwealth no longer provides funding to support the provision of VET in Schools programs. The Victorian government introduces a funding model based on Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs), each of which is given a finite education budget to cover all education provision from kindergarten to Year 12. It ceases to support VET, including VET in Schools provision, through a separate and distinguishable office.



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As most industries no longer recognise certificates attained in VET in Schools programs the government adopts a single model solution for VET in Schools provision, reducing the number and range of VET programs available including only the 'soft skills', that is office administration, information technology, hospitality and retail. VET in Schools can be counted as contributing one of the ten core VCE studies.

The only form of external funding for non-core VET programs is through peak industry grants and sponsorships. These can only be applied for through a local education authority and applicants must demonstrate a high level of cooperation between the stakeholders including local industry and business, schools and TAFEs. This is particularly hard to demonstrate in the competitive education market.

Schools continuing to offer non-core VET programs face spiralling premiums to insure students enrolled in studies requiring access to live workshops or fieldwork involving animals and machinery. Added to this is the increasing complexity regarding VET arrangements in an attempt to assure quality delivery and the ongoing tension about program provision between schools, TAFEs, clusters and LLENs.

Funding

Context

One of the key factors which has driven Victorian Independent School involvement with VET in Schools programs has been the availability of Commonwealth VET funds. As the previous section and the accompanying *Building Partnerships* documents highlight, this support has enabled:

- ❑ The provision of consultancy support to schools
- ❑ Delivery support for students where training is purchased
- ❑ Professional development
- ❑ Research
- ❑ The provision of forums, briefings and print (*Building Partnership* documents) and electronic material

All of which have resulted, as the accompanying graphs on pages 9, 10 and 11 indicate, in increased participation by schools, students and business in VET in Schools programs.

Future funding

A paper, entitled *Funding Allocations for VETiS 2003-2004*, tabled at the MCEETYA meeting of 17th May 2002 outlined a future funding option based on a performance based system using data related to three key performance indicators:

- ❑ Number of students enrolled in VETiS programs and such students as a percentage of all students enrolled in course leading to senior certificate
- ❑ Average annual student contact hours delivered through VETiS
- ❑ Number of students undertaking New Apprenticeships

The paper presents various models providing a mix of a base allocation and allocation based on the key performance indicators. These models would largely result in a reduction in funds to the independent sector. In addition the current defined allocation to the sector would be removed.

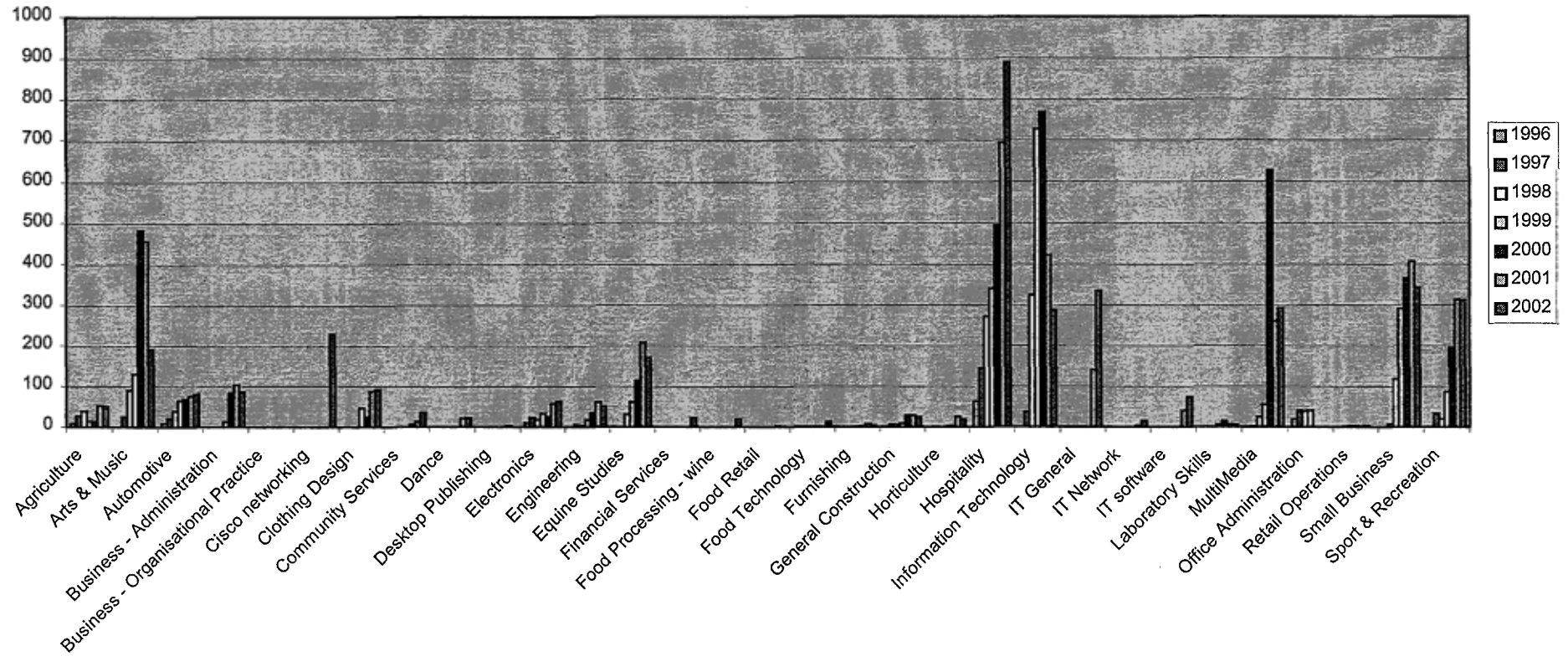
Recommendations

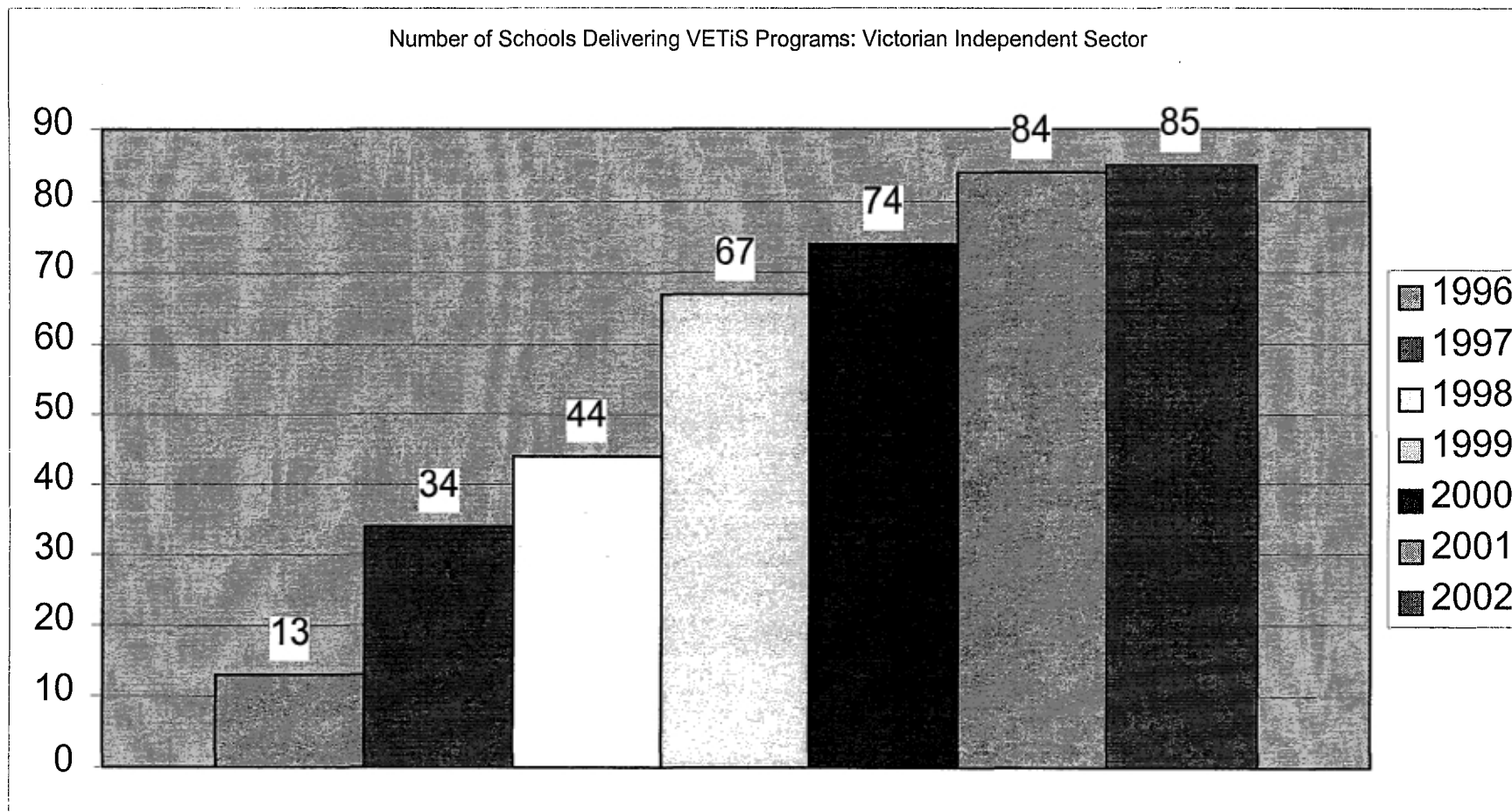
- ❑ The Association of Independent Schools of Victoria believes a defined annual VET funding allocation be made to the sector
- ❑ That the Commonwealth recognizes that Commonwealth funds are the sole source of funding support for VET students in the Victorian independent sector
- ❑ That a funding model be developed based on enrolments in the 15-19 year old cohort
- ❑ That the funding model is based on nationally consistent data

Building Partnerships documents

September 1997	AISV's strategic plan 1997 - 2000
September 1997	Support provided to independent schools via AISV
September 1997	Background information
November 1997	Research – a study of VET in the independent schools sector within Victoria
March 1998	VET map
January 1999	Research – sustaining VET in Schools
March 1999	Revised VET Map for parents & students
June 1999	Effective learning through VET in Schools
January 2000	Research – when the funding ceases
January 2000	VET map for employers
November 2000	Supporting the pathways
January 2001	Providing the pathways

Student enrolments in the Victorian Independent Sector by industry area





Total VETiS Student Numbers: Victorian Independent Sector

