

SUBMISSION TO
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**INQUIRY INTO
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

ECEF

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OVERVIEW

The following submission attempts to illustrate the complex concept of implementation as it applies to school-based vocational education. Since the early nineties the policy framework has changed from a focused perspective of reforming training systems to a broad-based one intent on reforming upper secondary schooling and building a partnership culture for youth between schools, communities and employers. In this complex framework vocational education has been identified as:

- A lever to reform senior secondary school curriculum
- A means of establishing structured work place learning and local community partnerships
- A means of skill formation according to industry standards
- Providing curriculum choice within an established general education framework for students not proceeding to university, and keeping options open for those who do
- Providing students with work-ready skills to assist their passage into employment
- A means of establishing integrated and coordinated provision of entry-level training between the VET and school sectors
- A means of establishing long-lasting connections between employers and the education sector through the formation of co-operative partnership

The endorsement of the "Framework for Vocational Education and Training in School" in 2001 witnessed another stage for the implementation and development of vocational education in schools. This emerging new stage has seen the extension of vocational learning to a number of new dimensions and has promoted initiatives beyond senior secondary schooling with objectives related to lifelong learning pathways and generic skills and competencies.

This increasingly complex set of objectives has led to confusion about the purposes of the different levels of vocational activity, the structural reforms that need to be implemented to integrate the traditional organisation of secondary education with post-school education and training, vocational and academic education and education and work, ie:

- *Integration of academic and vocational curriculum:* through models of general education that incorporate applied learning principles to traditional academic subjects and through the introduction of generic employment related skills and competencies to curriculum frameworks.
- *Integration of secondary and post-secondary opportunities:* through the development of multiple pathways and the provision by schools of vocational courses and certificates delivered separately or in partnership between schools and traditional post-school training institutions.
- *Integration of school based learning and work-based learning;* through a variety of mechanisms including:
- The promotion of workplace learning in a variety of forms as part of the social contact of employees to schools within the community

- The establishment of community partnerships that provide advice on coordinated provision of skills, training and education relevant to local labour market needs

At this point there exists a rare opportunity for a forward looking policy platform addressing the future of transitions which can better anticipate socio-economic circumstances and significantly advance local practice. The considerable body of available research suggests a number of key elements appear to contribute to successful outcomes for students in transition. The *"Thematic Review of Transition for Initial Education to Working Life"* by the OECD identified the following key features of effective transition systems.

- Clearly defined, well organized, open and coherent learning pathways and qualification frameworks designed and developed in a lifelong learning perspective
- The availability of extensive opportunities for young people to participate and learn in real work settings while they are students
- The provision of a broad range of vocational and technical skills, together with general education and personal skills
- The existence of labour markets that are 'youth friendly'
- Tightly knit safety nets for young people who are most at risk of social and economic exclusion which reintegrate them into mainstream education and training
- Attractive and accessible information, guidance and follow-up services for all young people integrating educational, labour market and social counseling
- Institutional frameworks for the organized and continuous involvement of and cooperation among all the relevant players at the national, sectoral and local levels in order to achieve policy coherence and effective program implementation
- Well-designed monitoring tools such as statistics, indicators and longitudinal surveys reflecting developments in education and employment systems not in isolation from each other but revealing their interactions

In order to enhance success in school-based vocational education, the implications are to build on what already has been achieved within an environment which includes the following characteristics:

- A responsiveness to concerns of industry and the labour market
- Flexibility
- Business/government/labour/education together creating the climate to build the necessary frameworks and structures for school-based vocational education including effective and efficient processes to establish and review standards, develop curricula and assess performance
- Structures and processes that build active involvement by all partners at all levels
- Industry defines its needs
- Investment by all partners in education and training

- Young people receive training in a broad and technical set of skills
- Strong emphasis on career and transition support throughout school years and beyond
- Commitment of quality employers in all sectors to provide work and learning opportunities for young people
- A wide range of pathways
- Curricula with emphasis on active contextual learning and broad skills training
- Life-long learning
- Knowledge and understanding of the labour market and labour market trends

The following are identified as being essential to this process:

- The need to clarify and prioritise the objectives and expectations for the various level of activity that occur within the broader vocational agenda
- Accompanying this strategic specification of vocational education should be:
 - The implementation of the Career and Transition Services Framework endorsed by MCEETYA in 2002, to ensure young people have access to a continuum of support in their local community, including follow up beyond school to ensure they achieve successful transition
 - A commitment to community collaboration that reflects a move towards integrated provision of youth education, training and employment services
- A universal recognition process for employability skills, that provides young people with a set of generic competencies acceptable to employers and recognises the various contexts in which these skills might be developed, including non formal and informal learning
- A coordinated and sustained processes to increase employer participation in the various forms of vocational education
- Developing effective teaching and learning methods and contexts for school-based vocational education including:
 - Upgrading the status, quality and recognition of workplace and community learning
 - Addressing the need to review the content and style of initial and in-service training for education practitioners
 - Improving the ways in which learning participation and outcomes are understood and appreciated, particularly non-formal and informal learning

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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

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1.1 **THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT**

A consistent pattern of policy development has emerged since the 1990's seeking to integrate the traditional organisation of secondary education with post-school education and training, vocational education and general education, and education and work. Some of these are outlined below:

1.1.1 **NATIONALLY AGREED PRINCIPLES FOR VET IN SCHOOLS**

In September 1996, the Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council (ANTA MINCO) agreed that Federal funds be allocated to assist the development and delivery of programs which contributed to the expansion of vocational education in schools in accordance with agreed principles and guidelines. VET in Schools programs were developed with the following national directions:

- Based on national industry/enterprise competency standards related to Training Packages;
- Relate to, or provide, VET certificates within the AQF and senior secondary certificates;
- Provide for industry identified requirements for structured workplace learning and assessment, take account of national and local skill shortages and industry needs;
- Articulate with apprenticeships, traineeships, employment and further education and training;
- Be delivered by providers who meet registration requirements of the Australia Quality Training Framework;
- Delivered in schools, training organizations, workplaces or a combination of these;
- Provide for the needs of the equity target groups; and
- Develop regional and community partnerships.

During 1997 and 1998 significant work was undertaken to establish a framework for the consistent application of the National Training Framework (NTF) within senior secondary VET programs.

In April 1998 there was National agreement on a set of principles to underpin the implementation of VET in Schools. The six agreed principles and implementation framework were designed to assist school accreditation authorities, other State/Territory agencies and industry in making appropriate arrangements to support the implementation of the NTF within the secondary school sector.

These principles were recently updated to reflect the new Australian Quality Training Framework, and provide the basis for the consistent application of the National Training Framework within Secondary Schools.

Recognising Training

Boards of studies, in agreement with State/Territory Recognition Authorities, will recognise as VET in Schools only where it is delivered by providers, which meet the registration requirements under the Australian Quality Training Framework.

Meeting industry and/or enterprise standards

- Boards of studies, in agreement with State/Territory Recognition Authorities, will recognise as VET in School only that which delivers national industry and/or enterprise competency standards within the National Training Framework.

Pathways through Senior Secondary Certificates

- VET in schools will contribute to qualifications defined by the AQF, including Senior Secondary Certificates or equivalents, and will provide multiple pathways which will articulate with further training, education and where appropriate, employment.

Ensuring dual outcomes

- VET in Schools studies, undertaken within the Senior Secondary Certificate, should also contribute to a VET qualification defined by the AQF.

Determining priorities for the delivery of VET in Schools

- In determining priority areas for the development of VET in Schools and School-Based New Apprenticeship programs, account will be taken of national and regional/local skill shortages, industry needs and student demand. Opportunities for all groups of students to participate should be maximized, especially those under-represented in education and training.

Using Training Packages

- Boards of Studies, in agreement with State/Territory Recognition Authorities, will develop recognition procedures consistent with the Australian Quality Training Framework and the requirements of Senior Secondary Certificates in each State and Territory, to enable Training Packages to be delivered.

In March 2000, a set of principles were endorsed to affirm that students completing senior secondary school certificates anywhere in Australia should be able to take advantage of the full range of post-school opportunities in education, training and employment.

The principles outlined below ensured that the purpose of VET in Schools programs was therefore to maximize students' options and opportunities by providing programs that allow senior secondary students to:

- Gain industry recognized AQF qualifications
- Have improved chances of employment in a particular field
- Compete for university selection on the same terms as other students
- Make the maximum contribution to life long learning.

- *The benefits of Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses within senior secondary certificates should be available to all students as a means of encouraging them to continue learning throughout their lives;*
- *University admission policies and processes should recognize appropriate levels of achievement in VET courses which are part of senior secondary certificates;*
- *The National Training Framework should be applied consistently across Australia in secondary schools;*
- *Learning through VET courses as part of senior secondary certificates should embody competencies, including underpinning knowledge, as described in national training packages;*
- *Assessment processes should enable students to progress to university, further training, and employment. (To achieve this, assessment models based on 1. performance and 2. optional, quantifiable graded assessment should be examined.);*
- *The range of educational opportunities available to senior secondary school students should be actively promoted;*
- *New and enhanced pathways to employment and further education and training for senior secondary students;*
- *VET courses within senior secondary certificates should aim to ensure that students are well-prepared for work, education and lifelong learning.*

1.1.2 THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

In March 2000, the Commonwealth and all States and Territories agreed to a new *'Framework for Vocational Education in Schools'*, to better coordinate and integrate a range of related programs for young people. The new Framework was proposed by the VET in Schools Taskforce and aims to ensure that all young people can access the best pathway for them. In January 2001, the Framework was endorsed by all Education and Training Ministers. The Framework is a key strategy for States and Territories to respond to the National Goals for Schooling and to recommendations from the Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce.

Underpinning the new Framework is the *'Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty First Century'* which were endorsed at the April 1999 MCEETYA. Enshrined in the Goals are a set of principles which propose that all students leaving school should have appropriate employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, an awareness of career options and the available pathways towards VET, further education, employment and lifelong learning.

In addition, students should be able to participate in programs of vocational learning and have access to VET programs as part of their senior secondary studies and to engage in activities which foster and develop enterprise skills, including those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.

The goals provide an outline of the destination towards which school systems, schools, students, teachers and parents are being asked to direct their efforts. They also seek to broaden traditional approaches to include the wider community, and, in the case of VET, require productive partnerships to be developed with industry.

The Framework has been developed around the following six interrelated elements:

Vocational Education and Training

Appropriately accredited industry-specific training based on qualifications within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and competencies endorsed with the National Training Framework (NTF).

Enterprise and Vocational Learning

Enterprise and vocational learning perspectives incorporated into general learning that is appropriate for all years of schooling.

Student support services

Services that guide and support young people in their transition from compulsory schooling to post-compulsory schooling options and post-school destinations, especially the inclusion of explicit career education programs in school curriculum. Services will allow for local discretion over delivery and relate to participation and attainment in education, training and work.

Community and business partnerships

Mechanisms that foster close cooperation between all levels of government, business and community organizations, education and labour market authorities.

Effective institutional and funding arrangements

Policy coherence and effective program implementation through institutional arrangements for the organised and continuous involvement of all relevant players at the National, State/Territory and local levels.

Monitoring and evaluation

Data collection processes to provide information that will enable the effectiveness of current and future arrangements to be measured.

The imperative for improving the transition of all young people from school to work and further study is central to the new Framework. This signaled a broadening of the agenda beyond senior secondary to include expanded roles for community partnerships, the centrality of lifelong learning, 'generic' employment related skills, enterprise education and integrated career information and guidance services.

In implementing the Framework, all jurisdictions are building on existing initiatives or are proposing the put in place new programs and processes to implement the Framework's six elements.

The new Framework promotes a comprehensive and integrated approach to enterprise and vocational learning which allows all young people to have multiple opportunities for authentic learning. These opportunities, provided both inside and outside school, are cooperative, collaborative, experiential and project based. They should be built around a range of elements, including generic skills and competencies, enterprise education, community based learning, career education and work based learning. Programs should have a strong community and employer involvement and make use of local networks.

School students should be able to access VET programs (that incorporate structured workplace learning opportunities) and School-based New Apprenticeships in their post-compulsory years. These programs should address student interests, local State/Territory and national employment patterns, and regionally specific demands for skills. They should be delivered through active local networks of schools, training organizations and employers working closely with post-school training and job placement services.

The new Framework advocates an emphasis on career guidance and advisory services that are linked to employment outcomes, job placement services and external networks of advice and information drawn from the community and employers. These services should be integrated with programs that offer youth-focused services such as job seeking skills, training and direct contact with local employers, and their requirements. Strategies should include case management of students, such as school leaver tracking, and personally tailored services for disadvantaged students, offering advice, support, training and access to part-time work.

Overall the new Framework provides a seamless transition from school-to-work for the majority of young people, ensuring that across Australia they will have improved flexible pathways. It promotes a re-thinking of relationships between schools, businesses and the wider community, working in local level partnerships. It also leads to recognized and valued qualifications.

1.1.3 THE TRANSITION AGENDA AND HOLISTIC RESPONSES FOR THE 15-19 YEAR OLD COHORT

The dramatic changes to the learning and work circumstances of 15-19 year old Australians are well documented. It challenges longstanding perceptions and assumptions regarding the nature of transition – this includes transition from compulsory secondary education to a variety of post-compulsory destinations while at the same time moving to take on adult status in our society. Recent National and State/Territory Policy directions are promoting visions where all stakeholders work in partnership to enable young people to attain their goals and aspirations. Key themes emerging from these directions include:

- communities taking greater responsibility for young people and their future;
- a more integrated holistic approach to meeting the needs of young people;
- better coordination between government programs;
- flexible approaches to programs and services;
- collaboration between agencies;

- greater accountability for young peoples' transitions;
- better information about young people.

The recent Ministerial statement "*STEPPING FORWARD: IMPROVING PATHWAYS FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE*" – is a joint declaration by Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for Education, Training, Employment, Youth and Community Services. It commits to establishing a common direction in order to make a real and lasting difference to the lives of all young people by improving their social, educational and employment outcomes.

In July 2002 MCEETYA proposed that an effective way of working collaboratively to implement the Ministerial Declaration and, within that context, to respond to issues arising from Footprints to the Future, could be through the development of an "Integrated Action Plan". Such a plan would take a broad overview of the range of ways of supporting young people and provide a focus for discussing and progressing ways of strengthening community support for young people through partnership approaches across all levels of government and within local communities.

The development of the Plan will require a new way of working together, and making it work will depend on a shared understanding and vision. The plan will demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the Ministerial Declaration and will provide opportunities for:

- different inter-governmental, cross-portfolio and cross sectoral relationships and responsibilities;
- more strategic approaches to ensure that communication and coordination mechanisms are put in place for the benefit of young people and their families.

The "Plan" will not duplicate or re-invent policy and planning frameworks but rather link them to a whole-of-government perspective. It will assist Commonwealth and State/Territory departments, agencies and relevant Ministerial Taskforces to develop and implement national policy in relation to young people's transitions. It will allow the connections between existing programs to be identified and strengthened, and identify strategies for developing an effective National approach to young people's transitions.

The "Plan" will highlight the need to invest in education, training and community support systems that will equip all young people with the capacity to participate in the social and economic life of their community. An effective national approach to youth transitions will make a major contribution to developing the capacities of young people as creative, enterprising and fulfilled individuals.

An effective national approach to youth transitions will support all young people, including:

- Those young people who successfully navigate their pathways with the support of their families and peers but could maximize their choices through more relevant and timely information and support thereby making for smoother transitions;
- Those young people who are vulnerable who might need additional support from time to time; and
- The smaller number of young people who have become disconnected from their families, schools and communities and require a higher level of support over a longer period of time.

All young people should be recognized as the focus of the future of our nation. As well as having a greater impact on their own futures, they can contribute significantly to the economic and social development of their communities. All young people will benefit from a national approach in which:

- there is recognition of a shared responsibility to equip young people for their futures;
- they have access to quality education and training that allows them to complete twelve years of schooling or its vocational equivalent, to develop employability and essential life skills, and to be lifelong learners;
- they are empowered to make their own transition decisions with appropriate support from a coordinated network of professionals (including teachers, youth workers and community workers);
- appropriate support is available;
- they have access to effective employment preparation and placement programs and relevant re-entry education and training opportunities when needed;
- there is appropriate intervention and early response strategies for those at risk of not participating effectively in education and training;
- they have the opportunity to experience a broad mix of work, study and training in a diversity of settings including the community and the workplace settings;
- business, industry and the wider community actively participate in the ongoing development, updating and delivery of programs; and
- there is coordination of youth services.

The Integrated Action Plan will:

- outline a vision in which all stakeholders work with young people to assist them to attain their goals and aspirations;
- describe an effective national approach to youth transitions, underpinned by the following themes:
 - Education and Training as the foundation for effective transitions for all young people;
 - Access to Career and Transition Support;
 - Responding to the diverse needs of young people;
 - Promulgate effective ways to support young people;
 - Focused local partnerships and strategic alliances.

1.2 **THE ENTERPRISE AND CAREER EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

It is within the context of these policy initiatives that ECEF's Mission Statement has been developed. There are three dimensions to the statement outlined below:

- Successful Transitions for all Young People;
- Alliances at all levels; and
- Systems change, to ensure all young Australians have the necessary skills, and to ensure transition pathways are well organized.

ECEF'S MISSION

Our goal is to support the reshaping of Australian Schooling.

To ensure Young Australians achieve their full potential

Through effective transitions from school to work due to enterprise learning and informed career choice.

We 'build alliances' that equip young Australians with appropriate information and employability skills.

To promote this statement ECEF has focused on the broad strategies that are necessary to achieve successful transitions by young people to further study, training or work. These include:

- Stronger involvement of, coordination between and ownership by:
 - Education Systems
 - Business/Industry
 - Local and Regional communities
- Greater ownership by young people and greater involvement of parents, in transition pathways.
- Greater innovation in enterprise education, career education and the development of employability skills and industry specific skills.
- Improved 'fit' between local ownership of community alliances and State and Commonwealth policy directions/emphases.
- Well organized pathways that connect initial education with work and further study.
- Greater Indigenous community capacity to own and control local support for successful Youth Transitions.
- Tightly knit safety nets for those at risk.

More specifically ECEF's programs and activities need to ensure we build upon the advances already achieved, particularly in ensuring that:

- successful transition processes are built on a foundation that emphasises the importance of lifelong learning as well as the skills that enhance immediate employability;

- underpinning knowledge, generic competencies and work readiness skills from the basis of education and training;
- young people have improved opportunities to learn in real work settings while they are students, particularly by increasing the levels of employer involvement;
- vocational education in schools is responsive to changes in the workforce, new opportunities, emerging business and skill shortages in specific industry areas;
- an enhanced range of pathways suited to differing student interests and needs will be offered at the end of compulsory education to encourage a higher proportion of young people to remain in education and training;
- VET in Schools pathways will qualify young people for both work and tertiary study;
- VET in Schools pathways will involve strong links to employers and enterprises so as to result in better immediate labour market outcomes for young people;
- VET in Schools is 'outcomes' driven, highly flexible and responsive to student needs;
- VET competencies achieved during student's part-time employment are recognised where appropriate;
- effective processes are in place for identifying young people who are most at risk of prematurely leaving the education system, and re-integrating those who do leave it. This will be achieved through integrated approaches which enable young people to better deal with the administrative separation of labour market, education and training, and welfare programs;
- integrated approaches to career guidance which combine education, labour market and counselling programs are in place;
- data management systems are in place which help monitor the performance of systems, closely monitor the labour market experiences of school leavers, and track the destinations of young people exiting from various programs;
- greater policy coherence is achieved in relation to resourcing and entitlement;
- responses at the local level are enhanced in relation to State/Territory and National policy; and
- marketing to employers will use strategies appropriate to small, medium and large enterprises.

1.2.1 ECEF OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

ECEF has identified seven Program Areas that will be used to describe the key 'outcomes' for the organisation.

1. **An Enhanced Learning System**
 - *Goal: the establishment of an effective "Australian learning system" that meets the needs of a post industrial society.*

2. **Engaging Industry**
 - *Goal: Business seeks and accepts an active role in activities that support the transition process.*

3. **Build Alliances of common interests**
 - *Goal: The transition process is enhanced by the capacity of relevant parties to form effective partnerships.*

4. **Enhance the Capacity of identified groups**
 - *Goal: Factors that inhibit the effective transition process for specific groups are eliminated or reduced.*

5. **Predicting Trends in the World of the Future**
 - *Goal: The Australian Community has an understanding of future trends and their implication for work, learning and the needs of individuals and the broader community.*

6. **Listening and Responding to Young Australians**
 - *Goal: The views, aspirations and expectations of young Australians are canvassed and influence transition policies and strategies.*

7. **Create an efficient and effective organisation**
 - *Goal: ECEF is an efficient and effective organization that exhibits best organisational practice.*

1.2.2 THE ROLE FOR ECEF – BUILDING THE LINKAGES

ECEF has contributed in a very practical way to achieving a broader approach to schooling. It has fostered partnerships between schools, industry and the community which create ongoing opportunities for secondary school students to learn and develop in the workplace and in the broader community. ECEF is driving the cultural shift in rethinking the roles of schools, employers and the community and how they might best assist young people to achieve their goals. ECEF achieves this by performing the following roles;

Awareness Raiser

ECEF:

- develops initiatives that raise awareness at all levels of career and enterprise education, employability skills and enterprise skills, and why they are so important;
- encourages widespread recognition that these skills can be acquired inside and outside the classroom, in many different environments including structured workplace arrangements and part-time work undertaken by young people.

Toolbox Supplier

ECEF:

- provides tools, processes and measurement devices to ensure the successful development and outcomes of vocational education programs.

Knowledge Broker

ECEF:

- provides information about successful school-to-work transitions for young Australians;
- works with diverse communities to build and share knowledge;
- provides linkages to information from other agencies involved in career and enterprise education;
- promotes shared learning and encourages people to exchange ideas and learn from each other.

Funding Provider

ECEF:

- provides funding to establish and maintain vocational or enterprise and career education programs across Australia, using explicit selection criteria and simple, transparent processes.

Relationships and Alliances Manager

ECEF:

- facilitates alliances between business, education, government and the broader community to support young people in making successful school-to-work transitions. These alliances occur at the local, state and national level, and include schools from the State, Catholic and Independent sectors, small and large enterprises across many different industries, state education networks and government organizations.

Change Agent

ECEF:

- advocates policy change by being networked into national and international initiatives;
- drives change by supporting innovative approaches in enterprise and career education;
- works with business organizations to ensure greater acceptance of their role in determining successful transition outcomes for young Australians;
- works with the education sector, to ensure they accept that learning can take place inside and outside school boundaries.

SECTION 2: THE RANGE, STRUCTURE, RESOURCING AND DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS.

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2.1 **THE RANGE AND STRUCTURE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACTIVITY**

2.1.1 CLARIFYING THE EXPECTATIONS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In agreeing to the "Vocational Education and Training Schools Framework" in January 2001 MCEETYA endorsed the following vision for "VOCATIONAL EDUCATION".

"Vocational Education in schools assists all young people to secure their own futures by enhancing their transition to a broad range of post school options and pathways. It engages students in work related learning built on strategic partnerships between schools, business, industry and the wider community".

Vocational education is therefore a broad term that encompasses a wide range of programs that connect young people with the world of work. It embraces 'Vocational learning', enterprise education' and 'vocational education and training (VET)' which are important components of lifelong learning and supports young people's transitions from school to employment and to further education and training.

Within this broad vocational education agenda a wide spread of objectives and expectations have been imposed at both policy and practitioner levels. These include:

- The establishment of industry-focused vocational courses within schools in accordance with the National Training Framework requirements.
- The establishment of school-industry partnerships on a regional or industry basis.
- The reform of secondary school curricula to provide more programs for those not proceeding to university. Improvement of the participation rate of youth at risk of early school leaving.
- The provision of programs to enable students at risk of early school leaving to have successful transitions.
- The introduction of integrated forms of part-time school and work.
- The establishment of shared delivery structures between education and training providers.
- Ensuring that school leavers attain competence to a specified standard in either generic or industry-specific skills.

In parallel to these expectations, school systems through the 'Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework' are attempting to provide a connecting general education framework that includes vocational activities such as work experience, enterprise education and careers education. This spread of expectations and objectives has created some conceptual confusion as well as a risk of terms like vocational education, vocational learning and career education being used in ways which disguises rather than clarifies their purpose.

There is now a need to further clarify and prioritise the objectives and expectations for the various levels of activity that occur within the broader vocational education agenda. While there are growing sets of economic, social and education objectives associated with the various levels of activities, they are not coherently connected. We need to further clarify the emerging relationships that exist between the various groupings of activity in particular:

Activity within The National Training Framework:

This has involved the introduction of industry-specific programs alongside the traditional academic ones within the senior secondary curriculum, in order to provide learning opportunities that will motivate a wider range of students, while ensuring that they are sufficiently flexible to maintain access to a full range of tertiary education options. It is thus a concept that applies to some students, not to all; its implementation is well advanced and has been supported by the substantial 'tagged' funding. Most school-based VET programs are located in Years 11 and 12, though some start in Year 9. Some include access to School Based New Apprenticeships.

Activity that sits outside the National Training Framework:

This represents vocational learning perspectives incorporated into general learning that is appropriate for all years of schooling. It supports the notion that all students should have a range of generic work-related learning experiences, both within the school and through work placements and other experience-based opportunities. These will enable them to develop enterprise skills, lifelong learning skills and general employability skills. In principle this should apply throughout school. There is much development work in this area, though the frameworks for its delivery tend to be looser than in the case of the VET pathways.

Vocational Preparation Programs

This generally refers to the post-compulsory training and education outside of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) targeted at disadvantaged, at risk groups and school based learners and designed to provide support and pathways for further study and/or employment. These programs are variously described as pre-employment, vocational access, pre-apprenticeships, labour market, prevocational programs and so on.

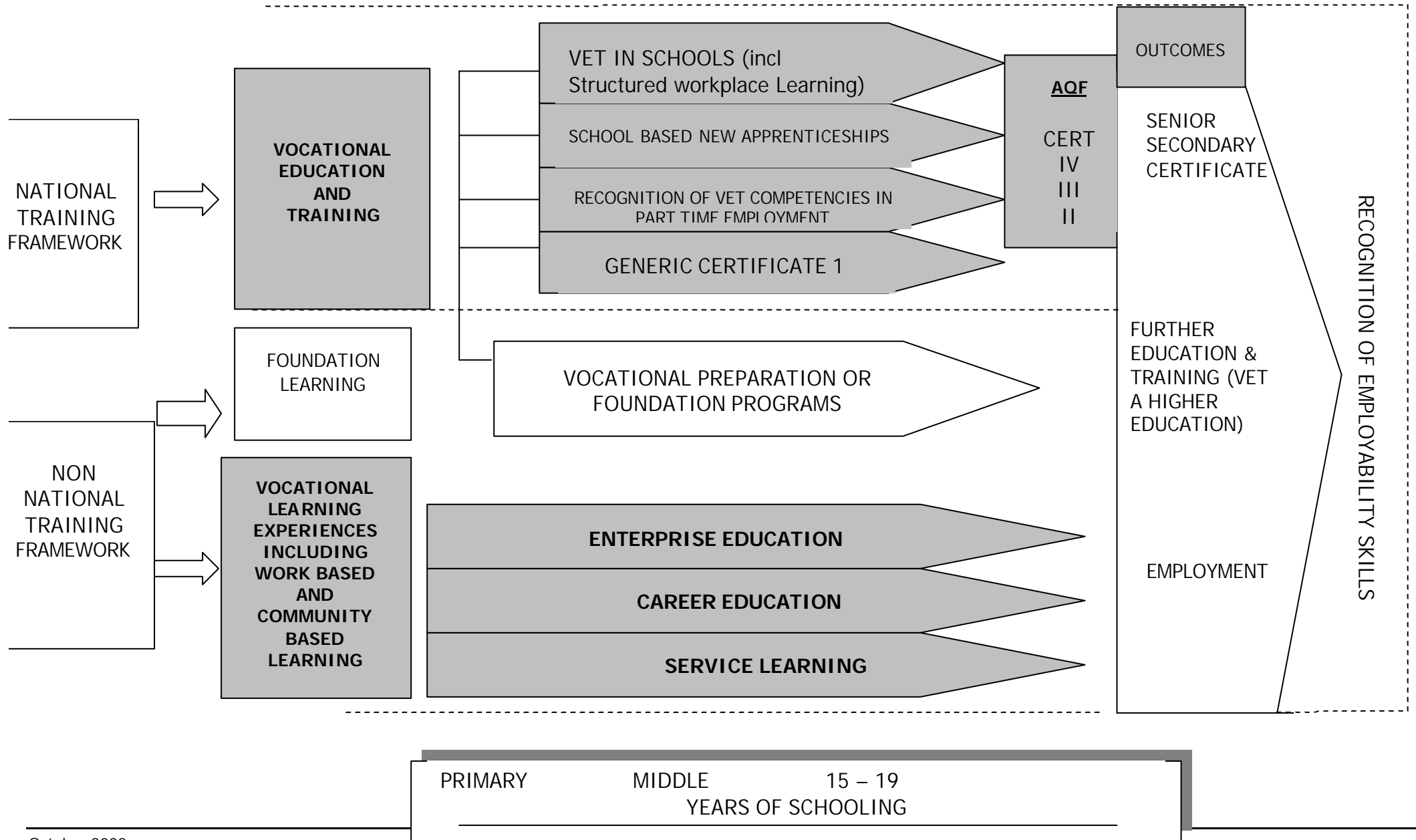
Universal Generic Approaches

This refers to the set of generic skills (eg Employability skills, life skills) that can be generated by vocational programs and activities undertaken in the education, training and community sectors.

There is a need to clarify and prioritise the objectives and expectations for the various level of activity that occur within the broader vocational education agenda.

The following diagram illustrates the emerging relationships that exist between the various groupings of activity.

Fig 1: Various Levels of Vocational Activity within a General Education Framework.



2.1.2 PROGRAMS THAT RELATE TO THE NATIONAL TRAINING FRAMEWORK

It is important to understand that compliance with the National Training Framework means that theoretically there is no difference between school-based VET outcomes and other VET outcomes. This point is crucial in meeting the expectations of industry and ensuring that students leave school with qualifications recognised in the job market.

VET in Schools refers to programs that are undertaken by school students as part of the senior secondary certificate and potentially provide credit towards a nationally recognized VET qualification within the AQF. The training that students receive reflects specific industry competency standards and is delivered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) or by the school in partnership with an RTO. The school might also be an RTO in its own right if it has been accredited as such. The number of schools which are RTOs varies greatly between States and Territories reflecting varying policy directions.

VET in Schools programs are increasingly providing opportunities for students to participate in structured workplace learning or on-the-job training. These opportunities are often provided by local businesses, and students learn practical workplace skills that industry and employers have determined as important for a specific job or career. The skills students learn are subject to formal assessment against the standards outlined in the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). The assessment is undertaken by an RTO which may be a school. It is important to note that activities such as a general work experience are not included as VET in Schools programs.

VET in Schools programs allow students to combine vocational studies with their general education curriculum as they continue to work towards their senior secondary school certificate. In this way, students can keep their options open to pursue further full-time or part-time vocational training or to move into tertiary studies after school. Considerable work has been undertaken to progress greater recognition of VET in Schools qualifications for tertiary entrance purposes.

Students can also begin a new apprenticeship whilst still at school and the number doing so has been increasing. **School Based New Apprenticeships** enable young people to gain a vocational qualification while continuing their school studies. They have a number of features such as: attendance both at work and school; the attainment of a senior secondary certificate as well as a vocational education and training qualification; the payment of wages for the time spent in the workplace; and a training agreement which is linked to an industrial award.

Under nationally agreed arrangements for School Based New Apprenticeships, secondary school students are required to:

- enrol as full-time students;
- undertake the program as part of their broader study towards the senior secondary school certificate;
- enter a formal training agreement with an employer;
- attend school for part of their time, be employed and attend work for part of the time, and attend a place of training for the off-the-job component of the New Apprenticeship.

The only difference between School Based New Apprenticeships and New Apprenticeships in general is that students engaged in School Based New Apprenticeships are employed on a part-time basis so that they are able to continue studies towards their senior secondary certificate at the same time.

In accordance with these endorsed policy directions, all jurisdictions have agreed that quality outcomes for VET in Schools and School-based New Apprenticeships stem from courses and/or programs that deliver industry or enterprise competency standards within the context of the National Training Framework. Against this background though, one of the most striking features of the development of VET in Schools is that its evolution has taken significantly different forms in different jurisdictions across the nation. Diversity in VET in Schools arrangements in each State and Territory, while generating benefits in terms of flexibility may be impeding progress towards the broader goal of placing VET in Schools firmly within the National Training Framework.

Currently VET in Schools across the jurisdictions, serves a number of purposes including:

- **Skill Formation:** these programs operate primarily to enhance skill development in a way that is consistent with the VET sector and the content of nationally recognised Training Packages. Students would expect to exit schools with a credible and transportable vocational qualification regarded highly by business as a comparable qualification from the VET sector.
- **Vocational Experience:** these programs attempt to meet students' expectations for broad vocational experience – familiarity with a workplace and skills that are broadly relevant. These programs enable students to assess their interest or capability in an industry area – they serve as a 'taster' to assist vocational selection.
- **Retention:** These programs are for those who may be at risk of leaving school early without qualifications who require access to some form of VET studies so as to retain their interest to continue learning in schools and prepare for transition to work. These students may not be ready to undertake at the level and intensity required by Training Packages.

We need to clarify whether these diverse purposes are equally 'legitimate' in terms of the stated national parameters. There is a need to state more fully the expectations of schools and students in undertaking VET in Schools.

To ensure VET in Schools is firmly placed within the National Training Framework there is a need to clarify more fully the expectations VET in Schools, particularly the multiple opportunities it provides. This could include a focus on increasing the depth of student programs, resulting in higher levels of completion of modules, units of competence and AQF qualification.

A major concern flowing from policy decisions to confine the definition of VET in Schools to skills formation in a way that is consistent with the VET sector is that it will lead to a narrowing of curriculum.

In addition to these two programs (VET in Schools and School Based New Apprenticeships) two additional pathways need to be considered for young people that comply with the National Training Framework.

Recognition of VET competencies in students' Part-Time Employment

ABS sources indicate that almost one-third of school students are employed part-time - that is students undertaking a senior secondary education and also undertaking part-time employment. Should these students be able to be given credit for VET programs within the school, should some or the entire part-time group be linked to School Based New Apprenticeships? Work needs to be undertaken to identify the potential for the recognition of VET competencies achieved in students' part-time employment in VET in Schools programs, particularly School Based New Apprenticeships, and the mechanisms needed to be put in place to allow interested students to access this pathway.

The focal issue in progressing work in this area is the VET competencies achieved during part-time employment, not the process by which these might be achieved. This means potential links should be investigated where:

- The student is enrolled in school and there is a formal structured training component in their part-time employment (unlike School Based New Apprenticeships, these activities are not connected in any way).
- The student is enrolled in school and there is no formal structured training component in their part-time employment.

The necessary systems and processes for formal recognition are already in place within the AQTF, Training Packages which specify the competencies, recognition of prior learning or recognition of current competence processes, VET in Schools and School Based New Apprenticeships in students' part-time employment.

Further work needs to be undertaken to:

- **Identify the potential for the recognition of VET competencies achieved in part-time employment in VET in Schools programs and School Based New Apprenticeships.**
- **Develop the principles and mechanisms needed to be put in place to allow interested students to access this pathway.**

The development of Generic Certificate 1

Many schools and school authorities are concerned about the loss of flexibility occurring if the approved form of VET in Schools (as described previously) does not encourage programs suited to the needs of some groups of students. To meet these needs as an option, within the National Training Framework, a broader stream of programs could be provided to improve the linkages with other training, including VET in Schools and School Based New Apprenticeships, and provide pathways into other Training Package qualifications.

Developing entry-level qualifications and pathways into Training Packages, including links to prevocational learning and vocational learning in schools is a priority for ANTA. The new approach is being based on developing a new class of flexible Certificate One's incorporating competencies that may operate across a range of related industries that will focus on benchmark skills for employment. This approach will ensure all skills necessary for employment outcomes are explicit and available in the pool of units for Certificate 1, with the packaging guidelines providing a balance between the flexibility and the rigour necessary for achieving employment outcomes that enables training programs to cater for a wide diversity of young people.

2.1.2 PROGRAMS NOT RELATED TO THE NATIONAL TRAINING FRAMEWORK

As discussed, VET in Schools and School Based New Apprenticeships are based on accredited industry-specific training based on AQF qualifications and competencies within the National Training Framework. These programs are not the same as other programs of vocational learning offered through schools.

The definition of **vocational learning** currently being considered through MCEETYA processes describes vocational learning as "... *general learning that addresses the broad understandings of the world of work and develops in young people a range of knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes relevant to a wide range of work environments*". It includes elements such as general employability skills, career education and community and work based learning. Vocational learning is appropriate for all years of schooling and, when integrated in the school curriculum, provides students with the skills, experiences and attributes they will need to adapt to the changes that are going to be a constant feature of their lives.

The outcomes of vocational learning are that students further develop their:

- understanding of the dynamic nature of work, its cultures and environments;
- understanding of changing economic and social environments, including patterns of employment and factors that influence the labour market;
- understanding of the range of school and post school options;
- self-awareness, making and implementing decisions on educational and career pathways;
- generic employability skills and competencies that prepare them for work, including self employment, and the application of such skills to work;
- acquisition of enterprise skills and enterprising behaviour, including the ability to recognize, create and utilize opportunities, products and services in business, community and other contexts; and
- capacity to manage transitions to and throughout post-school life.

The definition of **enterprise education** under consideration by Ministers is "... *learning directed towards developing in young people those skills, competencies, understandings and attributes which equip them to be innovative and to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal, community, business and work opportunities, including working for themselves*".

Enterprise Education has significant potential for contributing to students' general education, vocational learning and preparation for the world of work. It has the particular benefit of bridging academic and applied learning. It also gives young people a means of acquiring and exercising skills such as initiative, problem solving, creativity, adaptability and flexibility, and translating them into practical action. These are skills which young people will need in all aspects of life in modern Australia, including their personal, social and economic lives.

In addition, Enterprise Education has been promoted as a strategy that:

- Improves student learning and achievement by engaging students in real life contexts that address personal, social and economic issues;
- Promotes school reform especially in relation to curriculum, organisational and professional development by challenging groups of schools to examine their culture, relationships, structures and their influence on students' learning and the school's relationships with the outside world;
- Assists in the process of regional and social development of communities.

Career Education as part of the regular curriculum encourages young people to explore their social and economic environment, to identify key features of occupation and to start thinking about their own interests, strengths, weaknesses and plans for the future. It will use active learning methods such as project work in local business and enterprises, and utilize local networks of employers to support programs.

In 1998, MCEETYA agreed to the following definition of career education:

Career education is concerned with the development of knowledge, skills and attributes through a planned program of learning experiences in education and training settings which will assist students to make informed decisions about their life study and/or work options and enable effective participation in working life.

Career education needs to encompass:

- *Learning about the world of work and its changing nature, its place in the Australia culture;*
- *The general expectations of employers and the demands of the workplace;*
- *An understanding by individuals of themselves including their interests, abilities, weaknesses, desires and values;*
- *An understanding and awareness of the career options and alternative pathways available;*
- *An understanding of the decision making processes which can be applied in making career choices; and*
- *Acquisition of the skills necessary to complement the decisions made."*

Service Learning and **Community Based Learning** are programs which aim to better connect young people to their community and are increasingly becoming approaches integral to achieving the outcomes for vocational learning. These programs encompass structured activities that connect community activity with classroom experience and focus on addressing specific problems, issues and practices that have been negotiated with the community. Examples of these approaches involve students being required to engage in active learning in community settings and young people undertaking projects in the community to solve problems that are relevant to themselves, their community and their school.

2.1.4 VOCATIONAL PREPARATION/PROGRAMS

As mentioned earlier, **Vocational Preparation** programs are generally described as pre-vocational, pre-employment, pre-apprenticeship, labour market programs and vocational access courses. These programs variously aim to:

- Improve the transition from school to work and/or training and/or further study;
- Provide work experience or occupational tasters for young people.
- Develop work readiness in young people.

The defining characteristic of these types of programs is that they are designed to address the needs of particular target groups. The majority of programs focus on the disadvantaged and at risk groups. These programs generally;

- are not determined by direct or current industry needs and there tends not to be a direct link to employment;
- are locally developed, funded under different state based employment programs and not recognized nationally;

- are not competency based and so the level of articulation between the programs and into the Training Package system is limited.

While Vocational preparation programs are extremely valuable and provide a much-needed mechanism for addressing the needs of young people, there is an opportunity to improve and strengthen their contribution to the training and education system.

2.1.5 UNIVERSAL APPROACHES AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE.

The *Employability Skills for the Future Report*, produced by the Business Council of Australia (BCA) in collaboration with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and jointly funded by DEST and ANTA, was recently published by DEST. The report presents an employer view of the employability skills necessary for Australian business, industry and employees to succeed. It proposes a framework of employability skills that has the potential to link the range of activity in generic skills from across the education, training, business and industry sectors.

Given the breadth of contexts and activities in which employability skills can be developed, further work on how they might be developed, assessed, reported and universally recognized will need to be progressed in an integrated manner across the formal education and training sectors as well as the broader community.

Further work is to be undertaken to investigate how the employability skills might be developed, assessed, reported and universally recognised. This will take into account the associated policy work in the schools, VET and youth sectors. This work is to be staged as follows:

- **Verification:** Verifying the skills framework in a range of contexts related to Education, training and community sectors
- **Pedagogy:** Promoting active teaching and learning approaches for the development of employability skills
- **Assessment and Reporting:** Identifying approaches and strategies for assessing and reporting.
- **Universal recognition arrangements:** Exploring the feasibility of developing an overarching universal recognition strategy that recognizes the range of approaches within each sector.
- **Supporting an effective transition system:** Identifying strategic approaches for applying and marketing these skills, including strategies to improve information flow between educators and employers.

The Way Forward:

VERIFICATION, PEDAGOGY, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING:

Each sector (School, training and community) will separately attend to these three strategies. ECEF in conjunction with the MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School will progress work in the school sector. Activities to be undertaken include:

➤ FOR THE VERIFICATION STAGE

Verifying the skills framework in a range of contexts related to schooling to maximize credit within school curriculum that students attain through formal activities, informal activities, vocational learning and enterprise education including work-based and community based learning.

➤ FOR THE PEDAGOGY STAGE

Promoting active teaching and learning approaches that ensure young people in schools have access to learning in a broad range of settings which assist them to develop employability skills and developing strategies that reinforce the role of school as community resources. This could include developing strategies support packages that can be customised to suit the needs and circumstances of individual States and Territories and

- Incorporate opportunities for the development of employability skills in the design of learning experiences;
- Incorporate work based and community based programs;
- Outline professional development and pre-service programs for teachers;
- Identify different models of schools as learning organizations which capitalize on employability skills to assist student transitions;
- Incorporate opportunities for working with external partners.

➤ FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING STAGE:

Identifying approaches and strategies for assessing and reporting that could include:

- Determining the most appropriate means for promoting take-up and management of a portfolio/skills passport approach
- Examining school-based strategies that provide recognized statements of experiences and accomplishments
- Consulting with State/Territory jurisdictions and authorities on flexible mechanisms for a portfolio/skills passport approach which assists young people to:
 - Demonstrate and articulate their development of the employability skills;
 - Document the accumulated evidence of their skill development, including formal and informal certificates and awards;
 - Receive recognition of prior and other learning.
- Examine the possibility of on-line portfolios, particularly through the development of "YOUTH LIFE WEBSITES" where young people in Australia can develop personalised websites in order to promote their skills, achievements and qualifications.

UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENTS:

ECEF will be part of a cross sectoral approach to be used to investigate recognition arrangements collaboratively across the Schools, VET, community and higher education sectors. This work will investigate:

- Issues associated with the certification and recognition of employability skills across the schools, VET, community and higher education sectors
- Best practice approaches to certifying and recognizing generic and or employability skills currently operating or being developed in, the schools, VET, community and higher education sectors in States, Territories and the Commonwealth
- Approaches to certifying achievement of employability skills
- Options for electronic data mechanisms for recording of employability skills
- An overall framework for the certification and recognition of employability skills across the schools, VET, community and higher education sector

SUPPORTING AN EFFECTIVE TRANSITION SYSTEM:

ECEF will be identifying strategic approaches for applying and marketing these skills including strategies to improve information flow between educators and employers.

2.2 **THE DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

2.2.1 THE DELIVERY OF VET IN SCHOOLS

A variety of forms of delivery of VET in Schools have emerged. Delivery modes can vary considerably within schools and across schools and a school will often operate with a range of delivery modes. The delivery of VET in Schools programs can occur in a classroom, training organisation, in a workplace and in varying combinations of these.

The main delivery models include:

- *Schools operating as RTOs:* The school is a Registered Training Organisation and delivers VET in-house to its students. This infers no reliance on TAFE Or any other external provider.
- *Schools in auspice or partnership arrangements:* The school partners with an external provider (community TAFE) to deliver the VET course. Usually the TAFE will act as the RTO on behalf of the school and the school will deliver aspects of the course in-house.
- *Schools in purchasing arrangements:* Where a school purchases the delivery of a VET course from an external provider (usually a TAFE). The student will usually attend the TAFE to participate in the course and the TAFE usually charges the school for the student's participation.

The number of schools which are RTOs vary greatly between States and Territories. In Queensland for example, 378 schools are RTOs, while in South Australia only 3 schools are RTOs. This means that in Queensland most students are undertaking VET with the school as the RTO, but in South Australia most students are undertaking VET with the TAFE Institute as the RTO. The partnership approach to the delivery of VET in Schools is widely used. Purchasing arrangements generally apply when programs have small numbers of students and because schools lack the infrastructure.

There are also variations to the extent in which State/Territory school systems package VET in Schools – in relation to the senior secondary certificate. Schools may offer VET as:

- Stand-alone
- Embedded
- A combination of stand-alone and embedded

Stand-alone VET refers to the delivery of a VET course or qualification outside of a school subject framework. Generally, embedding is an arrangement whereby VET competencies or modules are delivered within a general education course, producing both vocational and general education outcomes. The purpose of embedding is to minimise the assessment workload of students by avoiding unnecessary duplication. In some States/Territories embedding is necessary to provide recognition of VET within senior secondary certificates of education and is undertaken at the State/Territory level or at the school level, depending upon State/Territory arrangements. In other states, stand-alone VET components can contribute towards the senior secondary certificate.

There are industry concerns as to whether the embedded approach was leading to unsatisfactory outcomes. It can be said that in no State or Territory does a subject result automatically credit a student with units of competency or modules.

Tasmania, New South Wales, the Northern Territory and Victoria favour the stand-alone model of delivery while Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory favour embedding models. Western Australia provides for both modes of delivery, as does South Australia where stand-alone is growing in popularity. In all states/territories, VET in Schools is acknowledged in some way on the senior secondary certificate.

Other forms of delivery have also emerged with a range of cooperative models now in place. These range from cluster of schools participating with one and other in the sharing of VET delivery, industry specialist clusters, and wide area models managed by third party agencies with high levels of industry and community participation.

2.2.2 STRUCTURED WORKPLACE LEARNING AS A COMPONENT OF VET IN SCHOOLS

Structured workplace learning is a feature of school based VET, which sets it apart from traditional forms of VET provided by TAFE Institutes. In blending duty of care and pastoral care requirements for students with employer support and on-the-job assessment requirements for some training packages, a growing number of schools are providing an extended form of VET not previously seen.

The development of Structured Workplace Learning has occurred at two levels. One is associated with the development and approval of industry based curricula and standards established under the National Training Framework. The other level has occurred largely through the funding initiative of ECEF and the local responses that established school-industry programs throughout Australia.

The status of SWL varies across jurisdictions. In New South Wales and Tasmania it is a mandatory component of VET programs, whereas in other states they are encouraged but it is not a compulsory part of the program. To gain the full benefit of VET in Schools programs it has been suggested that SWL should be a component of all VET in Schools programs.

There are examples of schools and school systems that have made significant efforts in terms of adjusting timetables to accommodate VET in School students who may be required to attend work placements over a block time, or during school hours. Similarly some schools have allocated complete or part-timetable days to VET in Schools teaching, enabling students to participate in VET in Schools without compromising their results in general education subjects.

Structures to support Structured Workplace Learning

ECEF has had a key role in the development of infrastructure to support structured workplace learning under the VET in Schools program. This refers to the establishment of effective arrangements for the initiation and execution of structured work placements and includes:

- *Establishing Local Partnerships* – Representative committees with responsibility for the advancement of SWL through advocacy and practical forms of support.
- *Coordination* – This has been viewed as a critical factor for success at the local level.
- *Building Relationships with Employers* – This has been a crucial aspect of work placement and in encouraging employer participation.

As discussed earlier, there is considerable variation in how Structured Workplace Learning is conducted across jurisdictions. As with a number of other features of the State and Territory policies for VET in Schools, the status of Structured Workplace Learning is an aspect that is evolving over time. Whilst most of these differences are generally related to education systems

and their procedures and requirements, a reduction in diversity is seen as desirable in order to tackle the question of quality.

Further work will need to be undertaken in trying to establish nationally consistent approaches and standards for SWL which could include discussion around such issues as:

- **consistent definitions of what is to be included as structured workplace learning;**
- **appropriateness of a minimum period of SWL in all VET in School programs;**
- **assessment and recognition of SWL;**
- **lengths of time required to deliver national competencies and lead to recognised vocational qualifications.**

2.2.3 THE DELIVERY OF SCHOOL BASED NEW APPRENTICESHIPS

The introduction of School Based New Apprenticeships for senior secondary students provides students with the opportunity to commence, and possibly complete a Contract of Training and a Training Plan while still at school rather than only having the option of leaving school to take up a new apprenticeship. It is a significant institutional innovation in that it enables young people to undertake paid employment and structured training as part of a senior school certificate.

At the June 1997 MCEETYA meeting Ministers endorsed the *Principles and Framework for New Apprenticeships for School Students*. This agreement established the arrangements for new apprenticeships in schools, with guidelines developed that clearly determine the relationships between apprentices/trainees, employers and schools. While different implementation models have been adopted between the States and Territories, the defining features are that they:

- involve a Training Agreement, linked to an industrial award or agreement, and signed by the employer and the person in training;
- are employment based;
- have the training component delivered by a Registered Training Organisation;
- include attainment of the senior secondary certificate and a VET qualification; and
- require attendance at school and work.

The visions and policies that States and Territories and the Federal jurisdictions have developed for introducing and supporting School Based New Apprenticeships express intentions to enhance skill development and economic growth, and to open up flexible training and employment opportunities for young people with a range of learning needs. As a further stimulus to growth, the Federal Government Budget 2002-2003 included additional incentives for employers who participate in School Based New Apprenticeships. Employers who take on a new apprentice while the young person is still at school will be eligible for an incentive payment of \$750. They will be eligible for a further \$750 if they continue to employ the young person as a new apprentice within six months of them completing year 12.

Although many models of delivery have been adopted within States and Territories the implementation of School Based New Apprenticeships has proven to be quite complex in that it crosses many conventional institutional boundaries and involves many stakeholders in education, training and employment.

The recent review of School Based New Apprenticeships conducted by ANTA reported that their delivery requires a significantly different approach – particularly from schools – in achieving the outcomes and, with the small numbers involved, it is obviously difficult for most schools to manage.

Many of the perceived impediments to growth in the number of School Based New Apprenticeships are however, transitional and cultural obstacles – such as low employer awareness and schools' unfamiliarity with the training sector. Tackling these depends on strategic marketing and building awareness of the options and approaches that work and maximizing the use of the support infrastructure.

Others impediments that were raised in consultations are systemic obstacles in the 'supply chain'. Improved infrastructure, such as wider availability of co-ordination positions, the flexibility of the time required in paid employment, more involvement of the training system, such as New Apprenticeship Centres (NACs) and enabling more streamlined involvement by national enterprises are examples of the systemic improvements that have been identified. Achieving the latter changes would require administrative or policy solutions whereas the former call for information and awareness initiatives.

The review also identified a number of key directions to consolidate and expand this pathway. ECEF can play a role in conjunction with ANTA and DEST, in these areas:

- *Partnerships that clarify roles and responsibilities;*
 - Initiating processes to clarify roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders.
- *Marketing and Awareness;*
 - A national marketing campaign to specifically promote School Based New Apprenticeships to appropriate audiences and develop awareness in industry sectors.
- *Infrastructure Support at the Local Level;*
 - Exploring the possibility of extending infrastructure support at a local level to enable more effective coordination of School Based New Apprenticeships.
- *Pattern of Industry Participation;*
 - Considering the current patterns of industry participation, success factors for industry participation and actions required to facilitate.
- *Nationally Consistent Processes;*
 - Securing the participation of national enterprises through the development of nationally consistent structures and processes for School Based New Apprenticeship implementation.
- *Developing a series of practical models so as to enable informed choice of an approach;*
 - Enterprise driven model – where a medium to large enterprise takes the running in organisational matters.
 - School driven model – where school clusters provide an opportunity for sharing resources.
 - Coordinated model (eg. GTC lead) – where GTC take the lead role of coordination and recruitment of enterprises.

More specifically ECEF will be addressing some of these issues by:

- examining the processes for the establishment of School Based New Apprenticeships through the experience of several enterprises and an industry;
- exploring the possibility of extending infrastructure support at a local level to enable more effective coordination of School Based New Apprenticeships, by identifying and exploring the critical success factors at the local level.

Further work needs to be undertaken to address the needs/interests/impediments/issues of key stakeholders. These include:

Education Systems

- **Schools – timetabling, staffing, integration into senior program, compliance with RTO requirements, relationship with employer.**
- **Board of Studies – links to senior school certificate and accreditation requirements.**
- **State Training Authority – links to New Apprenticeship requirements, training agreements, Declared Callings, industrial arrangements.**
- **Resourcing – availability of funding for (i) training delivery, (ii) employer subsidy, (iii) other.**
- **Registered Training Organisation – Quality requirements, registration.**

Industry Support

- **Industrial requirements.**
- **Relevance to career strategy – skill shortages.**

Employers

- **Cost/Benefit of being involved.**
- **Quality of internal support systems.**
- **Link to organisation career strategy.**

Young People/Parents

- **Promote multiple learning opportunities.**
- **Pathway to employment.**

2.2.4 VOCATIONAL LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

Vocational learning experiences should aim to:

- prepare students for lifelong learning essential for a productive post school life;
- develop self-directed and interdependent learners who can access and use a wide range of structures to transfer learning to contexts that they have yet to encounter in a rapidly changing world;
- provide young people with multiple opportunities for authentic learning, including participation in decisions about the nature and location of that learning;
- enable students to combine learning, work and living in a community in ways that will allow them to fulfil their potential and lead satisfying lives.

Vocational learning experiences should provide a context for general education that enhances its relevance. It includes knowledge of general concepts of the labour market including paid, unpaid and volunteer work, the domestic economy, industrial relations, the changing nature and patterns of work and career throughout life, and the changing nature of workplaces. Students explore, plan, evaluate and make choices about specific education, training and employment options to be pursued in their immediate post compulsory school years.

Vocational learning programs are characterised by:

- experiential, project based, and collaborative learning experiences both inside and outside the school;
- use of local networks;
- strong community, parent and employer involvement; and
- connections to students' own life experiences including involvement in part-time work.

Vocational learning therefore requires a range of settings to adequately develop, apply, and transfer skills, competencies and knowledge. The range of settings includes:

- the classroom;
- the workplace, including simulated and virtual workplaces;
- the local and global communities;
- the 'on-line' community;
- other out of school settings.

Vocational learning can encourage young people to:

- take more responsibility for their own learning;
- apply their learning in community and workplace settings other than the classroom;
- bring learning from these settings back into the classroom;
- center their learning around problems rather than known solutions; and
- develop employability skills that can be applied in many settings.

The challenge of vocational learning for schools is how best to equip students to deal with the unforeseeable situations and work they will encounter in their future lives. Vocational learning is realized when students are provided with authentic experiences across all learning areas to allow multiple opportunities for the application of their developing knowledge, skills, understandings and attributes.

Effective vocational learning depends on diverse learning strategies based on real life contexts including meaningful community activities and work based learning, and structured activities such as simulations of work situations. The students' world outside of school is a valuable learning resource that needs to be acknowledged and built upon within the curriculum.

ECEF is committed to working with systems to strengthen Vocational Learning within general education frameworks.

Strengthening Vocational Learning in general education framework requires:

- its integration across all levels of schooling;
- a learning environment to enable development of general skills, competencies and attributes;
- increased connections between general vocational education, learning in the classroom and learning in the workplace and increasing students' opportunities for contextual learning in community and workplace settings;
- improving connections between schools, local employers and local community networks;
- general education programs that can meet the full range of students' interest and talents, and more diverse learning modes and locations to meet varying individual needs;
- mechanisms to recognise, make transparent and give status to all forms of knowledge and skill, whether acquired in the classroom, the workplace or the community;
- stronger student-centred approaches to learning, increased scope for individual choice over the content mode and location of learning; and
- improving the ways that schools both develop and signal generic work related competencies; for example through the use of portfolios and other reporting systems that are based upon wider assessment of student attributes.

2.2.5 ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

While a number of enterprise education initiatives have been in operation since the early 1990s – enterprise education emerged, as a national issue, in response to the Karpin Report "Enterprising Nation". Since that period the Commonwealth has supported a range of initiatives including:

- awareness raising
- demonstration of pilot projects
- information and resource materials for schools
- teacher professional development courses
- simulated business situations
- information on employment and self-employment opportunities.

Take up across States and Territories has been patchy with South Australia and Western Australia making Enterprise Education explicit in their curriculum frameworks while others it continues to be an add-on activity.

The Commonwealth Enterprise Education program has been established to enhance this activity by supporting the development of an enterprising culture in Australian schools. The intention is to facilitate an increased awareness of enterprise education in both the education and business sectors; support the integration of enterprise education into all key learning areas and across

curriculum; strengthen strategic collaborations between schools, industry, business and the community to provide authentic enterprise opportunities for students.

The MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School is currently preparing advice about a national strategy for promoting and implementing enterprise education at all levels of schooling. The advice will include high level outcomes that address strategies in relation to:

- Curriculum
- Workforce Development
- Promotions and Communications
- Partnerships
- Research
- Effective Institutional and Funding Arrangements
- Monitoring and Evaluation

The funding that ECEF has received from the Commonwealth will be focused on increasing and improving the engagement of business and community in enterprise education endeavours. This will complement DEST activity that focuses on increasing and improving the provision and awareness of enterprise education in the broad school community. Both DEST and ECEF acknowledge the value of taking a collaborative approach to optimise the outcomes of their complementary work.

The *Enterprise and Career Education Foundation* will build capacity for business engagement with schools and facilitate systematic engagement by business and industry at the national and local level in enterprise education. ECEF will be developing enterprise education in the following three areas:

- **Capacity building**

This refers to promoting the potential role for business and industry to work with primary and secondary schools to assist with developing enterprise activities with links to business, industry and local communities. This activity will build on the arrangements the *Enterprise and Career Education Foundation* already has in place to facilitate business and industry involvement in school-industry programs, and work placement coordination.

It is anticipated that “capacity building” and promoting enterprise education will be the major activity for the *Enterprise and Career Education Foundation* in the early stages to ensure that business and the wider community are receptive to and understand the concept of enterprise education.

- **Engagement**

This element of the *Enterprise and Career Education Foundation* involvement refers to activities aimed at involving business, industry and school communities in sustainable enterprise activities. Activities may include research and project work to develop models for business and industry involvement, development of materials to support business involvement, and regional workshops to assist communities develop localized enterprise activities for their school(s).

- **Sustainability**

A key role for the *Enterprise and Career Education Foundation* will be to develop processes to investigate and establish sustainable options for business and industry involvement with enterprise education. This may include in-kind arrangements and an industry owned trust fund to develop viable ongoing alternatives and sustainability rather than reliance on Commonwealth funding.

2.2.6 CAREER EDUCATION

State policies regarding the structure and delivery of career education vary considerably. In practice, most decisions related to the provision of career education are taken at the individual school level, with a few exceptions, schools have considerable flexibility in the way they allocate resources and deliver programs within the general government funding allocated to them.

The differences between states are particularly evident in two respects:

- the first is the provision being made for a staffing allocation of careers adviser – where it varies from one state having full-time careers advisers in each secondary school to other states having no state policy regarding careers advisers.
- The second major difference relates to the structure of career education within the curriculum.

There has been widespread concern about the schools' career programs. In the community consultations conducted by the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce, career education and guidance within schools came in for considerable criticism. A recent attempt to address these issues of quality has been the development by ECEF and the Career Education Association of Victoria, of a 'Career Education Quality Framework'. Another effort to improve quality has been the dissemination of 'The Real Game, career in life skills programs'.

The recently completed "OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies" for Australia suggested there is a need for more accountability in relation to career education programs in schools which might best be achieved by:

- Developing nationally agreed guidelines for career education and guidance in schools, including a broad statement of entitlement.
- Ensuring that there is a clear but flexible policy framework to implement these guidelines at state and local levels.
- Expecting schools to develop their own programs within this framework.
- Requiring schools to make their programs transparent and accountable – through school prospectuses, school plans and school reports – to their end-users: students, parents and the wider community.

With respect to this ECEF will work with the Transition from School Taskforce to progress the development of a blueprint outlining the career development competencies that individuals need to acquire and apply throughout their lives. The Blueprint (building upon the Canadian/US Blueprint for Life//Work Design and the ECEF Career Education Quality Framework) will:

- outline quality standards for career information;
- outline quality assurance standards in career education;
- outline indicators for the effectiveness of career education;
- adopt a whole of life perspective;
- inform practice at all levels and especially in schools.

2.2.7 SECURING BUSINESS/INDUSTRY SUPPORT IN THE DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Employers have a key role to play in the provision of vocational education opportunities to students. In addition to their involvement in VET programs for young people and the provision of workplace learning, employers also need to be more broadly involved in providing vocational learning opportunities and information about career options.

The implementation strategy for the 'Framework for Vocational Education and Training in Schools' includes as one of its priorities the development of Business Participation Models. These are aimed at increasing the participation of business and industry through incentives and opportunities to participate in a variety of ways at systematic, regional and local levels. Business Participation Models aim to:

- Support employers of all sizes to customize their participation in enterprise and vocational education activities;
- Allow effective partnerships at national, State/Territory regional and local levels;
- Facilitate employers to evaluate their own resources and target them to areas of opportunity.

In endorsing the implementation strategy for the new framework in January 2001, Ministers agreed to:

"Increased participation of business and industry through incentives and opportunities to participate in a variety of ways at systemic, regional and local levels".

ECEF will support this through two approaches:

1. ECEF has established and will maintain long term strategic alliances with Australia's peak industry and sectoral organisation to help industry and business participate in and influence the broader vocational education agenda. Industry associations will be working constructively with ECEF in the development and implementation of plans that outline relevant activities and performance outcomes based on progressing the Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework. This will be achieved through supporting activities that:
 - Increase Industry/Business recognition of the potential to enhance productivity and profitability by promoting the benefits of being a learning institution and the involvement in learning beyond the classroom activities.
 - Raise awareness of the income producing potential of a particular industry with reference to:
 - size
 - economic importance
 - geographical spread
 - potential growth
 - skill/occupational mix
 - skills value – recognized
 - Facilitate young people's exposure to workplaces to enhance understanding and develop skills through:
 - VET/Part-time School Based New Apprenticeship leading to AQF recognition
 - Work based enhancing non-VET subject areas
 - Activities that develop employability skills
 - Increased exposure to the world of work during compulsory years of school
 - Developing enterprise/entrepreneurship skills.
 - Increase the exposure of teachers and schools to modern business practices and workplaces and of business to the operations and organizations of schools.

- Broker the establishment of coalitions with other relevant stakeholders, eg.
 - Parents and friends
 - Principals
 - Identify and support policy change relevant to the industry through involvement in appropriate forums.
 - Build industry infrastructure to support the transition process.
 - Highlight future trends relevant to people needs in a particular industry.
2. ECEF will be developing a model that can be applied by business and industry to determine and customise the breadth and depth of their participation in enterprise and vocational education programs, initiatives and activities. Using it as a foundation business and industry should be able to evaluate their resources and target them to areas of opportunity.

The model will address to the following broad areas of activity.

- **Business working directly with students**
For example, assisting students to:
 - develop career awareness
 - explore careers
 - prepare for careers
- **Business working directly with teachers**
For example:
 - Facilitating the development of project based learning, including student operated enterprise/entrepreneurial projects
 - Providing opportunities for teachers to develop their knowledge of industries, workplace skill requirements and workplace culture
- **Business supporting the work of teachers**
For example:
 - Curriculum development
 - Development of teaching materials
 - Providing information and advice on workplace and industry practices
- **Business strengthening practices within the enterprise to support new relationships with the education sector**
For example:
 - Implementing hiring practices that value school-based records and experiences
 - Preparing employees to work with and supervise students in work-based learning activities
- **Business working with policy makers, stakeholders and other businesses**
For example:
 - Participating in local partnerships to develop enterprise and vocational education opportunities for school students

- Participate in local/regional/national economic development forums in ways that address the need to align education and training with labour market needs and projections
- Influence government to develop incentives for business involvement in vocational education
- Promote vocational education to industry specific associations

A coordinated and sustained approach is needed to increase employer participation in the various forms of vocational education is required.

2.3 THE RESOURCING OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

2.3.1 RESOURCING OF VET IN SCHOOLS

The issue of ongoing funding and resourcing responsibilities for the provision of VET in schools has been an ongoing debate. ANTA has provided VET in schools funding of \$20m per annum since 1997. The principles and guidelines for 2000-2004 make provision for this funding to continue with additional funding to be made available through indexation. Other initiatives to assist in the development and delivery of VET in schools program include;

- *ECEF: SWL Coordination funding (\$79m)*; This program encourages and supports effective school industry partnerships to link business, schools and communities to coordinate the provision of workplace learning opportunities for senior students. ECEF administers over 220 local partnerships that operate in all states and territories in a variety of forms.
- *ANTA: Skill centres for School students*; This program aims to provide capital funding to assist with programs which create additional facilities and provide additional opportunities for VET in schools among year 11 and 12 students.

In addition to recurrent State/Territory funding special purpose funding for VET in schools is also being provided by the States and Territories.

2.3.2 THE COST OF VET IN SCHOOLS

Resourcing is a significant issue for schools but whilst most impact is felt at the school level, the issue requires resolution primarily at a system level. Because of the need to employ program coordinators, provide professional development for teachers, develop learning materials and purchase services from TAFE, it has been perceived that VET is costly for schools. Schools have consistently stated that they cannot run VET programs without additional funding. Schools have provided advice that some elements of VET in Schools programs cost more than general education subjects. Factors contributing to the additional costs include;

- The provision of structured workplace learning as a required component of a VET in school program, particularly when it involves additional student and employer support and coordination
- The purchase of instructional hours from publicly funded TAFE Institutes and other providers at market rates
- The cost of training school teaching staff to meet AQTF requirements for teaching and assessment

In the report of the MCEETYA VET in School Taskforce to MCEETYA in March 2000, the main factors affecting the cost of provision of VET in a school were identified as:

- start up costs;

- teaching time allocated to the teaching of VET in Schools programs (where schools provide the labour);
- payment to other organizations for the provision of tuition and assessment of competencies;
- other teacher and personnel time for work placement and assessment of competencies; and
- cost of material and equipment.

Within this context though, the actual costs of VET in Schools programs have not been clearly established.

Two specific initiatives have been designed to assist in addressing these costing issues in 2002. Firstly, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training is undertaking work in relation to the costing of VET in Schools programs. The project has two overarching objectives:

Undertake research and analysis of the Report on Costing of VET in Schools (April 1999) prepared by Ernst & Young in order to test the national costing model for VET in schools as outlined in the report, and test the validity of the findings in each education sector and in all States and Territories, and

Explore actual and potential options for developing cost efficiencies for the delivery of VET in schools. This includes making recommendations concerning further research and analysis including in terms of broader education and training delivery. The Consultant will also be required to consider current and prospective models for the delivery of VET in schools and to make recommendations regarding the most cost effective and efficient models.

Key findings from this project are not expected until later this year.

Secondly, ECEF in conjunction with the Taskforce on Transition from School is to examine organisational best practice for the delivery of VET in Schools programs. This work will examine the scope for improving delivery of VET in schools and includes:

- Exploring the organizational and other factors needed to achieve best practice in the implementation and delivery of VET in Schools programs and how these may effect cost variables and their drivers; and
- Documenting a range of good practice case studies that identify organizational arrangements to achieve improvements, in order to inform strategic policy development in this area

2.3.3 FUTURE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR VET IN SCHOOLS

The current funding arrangements for VET in Schools conclude at the end of 2004. Decisions relating to whether funding should continue and on what basis will be considered by Ministers at the November meeting of ANTA MINCO.

Whatever arrangements are put in place, any funding to school systems should be structured on conditions that require VET in Schools moving from being an “add on” to an integrated and sustainable component in the schools curriculum offerings.

SECTION 3: TEACHER TRAINING

3.3 Teacher training for the delivery of VET in Schools

3.4 Vocational Teacher Supply

3.3 Building the Profession to support Vocational Education

3.1 **TEACHER TRAINING FOR THE DELIVERY OF VET IN SCHOOLS**

Data on the proportion of teacher's upskilling to teach VET in Schools are largely unavailable. However a number of studies have revealed that teacher retraining is one of the key areas in which the ANTA VET in Schools funds have been expended.

The key issue for schools moving forward will be how to keep training costs down while also attempting to satisfy industry standards by maintaining the skill level of teachers and their ability to deliver continually developing Training Packages. Industrial relation issues, such as award differentials between TAFE and school teachers, are also as yet largely unresolved. These challenges are more significant in some industry areas than in others. Some VET in schools courses lend themselves more easily to classroom delivery (eg IT, office management) and secondary teachers are well equipped to deliver these courses. However other VET in schools courses (eg. trades), are more suited to workplace training. This challenge is also greater for those jurisdictions opting to register all schools as RTOs.

As will be discussed later, industry remains doubtful about the ability of secondary teachers to adequately delivery competency-based VET courses. Industry has asked for teachers to periodically re-accredit (as is the norm for workplace trainers), but this has been resisted. A common view expressed by industry representatives was that teachers should concentrate most on imparting the generic skills and competencies rather than the technical content of training where they do not have the qualifications or experience to do so.

3.2 **VOCATIONAL TEACHER SUPPLY**

Within policy circles there has been an absence of discussion about the future supply of teachers to maintain VET in Schools programs. Two types of skills are required to run vocational programs in schools. One set of skills is associated with the planning and coordination of vocational programs and requires knowledge of regional economic development, business operations, negotiation and conflict resolution, employment and welfare programs and benefits, assessment requirements and training systems and student record systems. The other set of skills relates to the technical knowledge of a particular vocational area and skills in teaching and instructing young people in the 15 to 19-age-group. Since some preliminary work suggests that there is soon likely to be a shortage of vocational teachers for the VET sector, then it more likely that VET-in-schools programs will also be experiencing shortages of either qualified teachers or trainers.

3.3 **BUILDING THE PROGRESSION TO SUPPORT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

Based on the understanding that the implementation of the 'Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework' has implications for;

- Teacher professional skills, standards, knowledge and attributes
- Teacher education, both post-graduate and undergraduate
- The increasing multiplicity of roles that educators are asked to perform daily

ECEF has commissioned the Australian College of Education (ACE) to;

- Determine current understanding and attitudes of practicing teachers, trainee teachers and teacher educators forward policy and practice of vocational learning
- Identify a range of issues and future strategies to build the capacity of teachers and teacher educators to integrate vocational education across the curriculum and to link education to work and community more effectively.

We need to influence and stimulate reviews of teacher education courses to encompass this new learning agenda particularly in the preparation of teachers as flexible facilitators and managers of individual learning pathways.

SECTION 4: IMPACT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ON OTHER PROGRAMS

4.1 IMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

4.1.1 Pedagogical Impact

4.1.2 Impact of Beyond the Classroom Learning on School Reform

4.2 SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURES FOR VET IN SCHOOLS

4.2.1 Impact of VET in School on school operation

4.2.2 Promoting efficient delivery for VET in schools through enhanced organisational practice

4.3 THE NEED FOR LOCAL COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

4.3.1 Building on the SWL platform

4.1 IMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

4.1.1 PEDAGOGICAL IMPACT

Beyond the classroom learning is seen as essential in the delivery of vocational education. An emphasis upon increasing and reinforcing links between the school and the world outside is often seen as one important way to facilitate active learning. Learning at work favours active methods of self-directed learning, team work and self-evaluation. Hence the development of structured learning in the work environment is a key part of this approach. Such programs also involve general education students, who tend to have fewer opportunities for contextual and applied learning than students. General education programs should undertake work placements in order to gain a better understanding of the way that general education subjects relate to working life, or in order to undertake projects in a more realistic work setting.

Other interesting examples involve students being required to engage in active learning in community settings, and young people undertaking projects in the community to solve problems that are relevant to themselves, their community or their school. As an example, in the United States service learning – voluntary service provided to the community by students – has been used for a decade as a form of active and applied learning: to expand learning through experience beyond the classroom, to connect young people to careers and their communities, to teach responsibility and basic life skills such as problem solving, as well as to provide useful service to others. This can be a way to make active and applied learning part of mainstream education. Active learning strategies can also be integrated into students' career education as well as personal and career planning.

A key challenge for policy makers is how to make sure that pedagogical initiatives designed to motivate young people and to build the foundation skills for lifelong learning can work across education systems as a whole, as normal educational practice, rather than as impressive but isolated innovations.

A substantial part of the answer lies in the support and promotion of appropriate teaching and learning methods through organisational and institutional conditions that make them easier to adopt. Many such innovations require changes to be made to the curriculum, and to the ways that schools are organized and that teachers work. The school timetable and class sizes can be affected for example. Less classroom teaching, a closer involvement with the community and more organizing and mediating tasks for teachers can raise basic issues about teacher training, about what will be counted as teaching time, and about what constitutes normal duties for a teacher.

One of the most serious obstacles to more active and applied learning in the transition phase is provided by the signals that tests and examinations send to teachers and students about the priority that is attached to different learning outcomes. Too often these over-emphasize the assimilation of factual knowledge and theoretical reasoning, to the detriment of applied knowledge and the demonstration of practical skills. Under such circumstances teachers will be reluctant to apply pedagogical methods which they feel to be less than optimal in producing the expected results. What is more, such contradictions cannot be resolved by providing opportunities for active and applied learning, and related assessment of learning outcomes, only to so-called low-achievers or young people at risk, important as that may be. If this kind of pedagogy is only associated with an image of "second class" education it will not be able to penetrate the educational mainstream. All these are issues for central policy makers, not just for individual schools and teachers.

4.1.2 IMPACT OF BEYOND THE CLASSROOM LEARNING ON SCHOOL REFORM

A successful transition to independence requires a firm base from which to undertake further learning. It means more than finding ways of helping young people to find work and teaching them specific skills – important though these are. It means helping them to become effective learners in a range of personal, social and economic fields.

In fact, pathways that lead only to employment are proving less attractive to young people and their families (OECD 1999). Increasingly, they are choosing pathways that generate qualifications leading either to work or further study, thereby encouraging students to see the world of work and the world of study as intertwined and the need for portable capabilities. This can be a highly desirable form of preparation for uncertain and changing futures.

Providing such pathways requires far-reaching changes in curriculum, teaching methods and assessment. It requires a shift from the traditional paradigms of schooling in formal and sometimes protected settings which, despite all the best intentions, can become isolated from the rest of the community and everyday life experiences. It requires schools to be more aware of the challenges young people face now and will face when they leave school. Many schools and committed teachers are already meeting these challenges using their own skills, expertise and enthusiasm but it is not the experience for all young people. The cultural shift required demands stronger partnerships between young people, their families, schools, enterprises, tertiary institutions, governments at all levels and the broader community.

It requires schools to recognise that learning does not take place only in schools. Learning can be achieved through a number of avenues including employment, life experiences, sport and in the wider community.

Many schools and communities have recognized the need for change and are responding accordingly. There is a growing body of relevant research and Commonwealth, state and Territory governments have undertaken a range of reforms to broaden the role of schooling and the content of the curriculum.

ECEF has gathered evidence that demonstrates that advanced work-based and community based programs correlate with certain kinds of school organisational cultures, styles of teaching, and curriculum options. A range of valuable outcomes have been documented for schools with high participation in out of school learning such as;

- Parity of esteem between vocational and academic subjects
- Timetable reforms which supported out-of-school learning
- Facilitative teaching styles;
- Modern training practices (Competency Based Training, self-paced learning, recognition of prior learning);
- Use of support networks between teachers;
- Collaborative relationships with local community and businesses including quite broad community development initiatives; and
- The adoption of new approaches to the middle years of schooling.

These best practice programs combined with the dramatic increase in student participation more generally suggest the potential for a shift in the traditional view of what constitutes a general education. However, that shift will only be fully realised when the barriers to such best practice are removed. There remain too many schools where:

- Students undertaking work placements are forced to miss other lessons because of unresponsive timetabling;

- Non-VET teachers do not recognize the value and effort of students workplace learning experience;
- Dedicated teachers who are 'champions' for 'beyond school' learning activity are poorly supported by the school; and
- Bridges are not built between workplace and community learning activity and other subjects.

To support schools in reaping the benefits from 'beyond school' and 'action learning' possibilities ECEF will be implementing in School/principal Development Strategy. This strategy will aim to develop and implement a program for secondary school principals, school leaders and parents that will inform, engage and equip them to affectively lead and manage the implementation of beyond school 'learning activities' described in the 'Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework'.

Changing the educational environment to include the wider community in the development of education has placed additional expectations for school teachers to be:

- Advocates
- Change agents
- Network facilitators
- Community leaders
- Models of good practice
- Team coordinators
- Vocational or continuing learners

4.2 SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURED FOR VET IN SCHOOLS

4.2.1 IMPACT OF VET IN SCHOOLS ON SCHOOL OPERATION

The degree to which schools have incorporated the organisational and structural requirements for conducting VET in schools has frequently been raised as a key point of sustaining high quality VET in senior secondary school. This concerns the day to day operations of schools and the 'messages' that schools send to their teachers, students and community about the status and relevance of VET courses.

School operations and culture to sustain VET would include:

- operational features such as timetabling and the length of the school day, purchasing and providing VET provision, and transport to facilitate mobility of students;
- cultural aspects such as perceived parity between general and vocational education;
- equal treatment in career education and student counseling with advocacy of a wide range of training and employment options, beyond the traditional tertiary courses and related jobs.

Generally, the transition in school operations is expected to take a further 2-3 years of concentrated effort (although changing entrenched cultural attitudes may take somewhat longer). There are several innovative models for structural solutions but they have been generated more through leadership and innovation at the school and local level rather through system leadership.

The restructuring of schools' timetable to accommodate students undertaking workplace learning has been the most challenging operational issue for most schools. Most agree that successful adoption of VET requires changes to the traditional timetabling. Some have

dramatically changed the traditional school timetable while others are waiting for participation rates to grow to a level that justifies a more fundamental restructure of school.

Not surprisingly, those States that have senior secondary colleges would seem to have a number of well-established models for incorporating VET into schools structures and culture. A small minority of schools operating in clusters across school sectors and with TAFE are also well on the way to successfully managing the complexities of structural and cultural change. The variety of approaches to including VET would seem to indicate, however, that there is no one size fits all model for schools.

4.2.2 PROMOTING EFFICIENT DELIVERY FROM VET IN SCHOOLS THROUGH ENHANCED ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICE.

MCEETYA proposed that further investigation into organisational arrangements to achieve efficiencies could be developed around:

- shared use of personnel;
- shared facilities;
- planning and coordination at the delivery sites; and
- cluster based planning.

The sustainability of VET in Schools largely relies on its efficient delivery. Some defining features of efficient delivery developed so far include:

- mechanisms for schools to achieve critical mass such as:
 - clustering arrangements;
 - streamlined use of TAFE; and
 - planned use of workplace learning.
- school operations and culture that include operational features such as:
 - timetabling;
 - length of the school day;
 - purchasing and providing VET provision; and
 - transport to facilitate the mobility of students.

Although efficient delivery mechanisms have not been universally implemented a number of innovative and cost efficient approaches have been adopted across jurisdictions.

Adopting cooperative structures is challenging for those schools that have seen themselves in competition for students. This also applies to those schools, TAFEs and other providers such as Group Training Companies who similarly compete for students. Funding formula for schools need to take 'cooperation' into account and identify in built disincentives to 'joint ventures'.

Related to this is how 'success' is measured for schools. If a school student participates in VET but does not complete because he or she transfers to TAFE or gets a job, the school most likely is seen to have 'lost' this enrolment and funding is adjusted accordingly. In this environment, schools are not encouraged to support this more advanced level of cooperation and transfer between sectors although it may be in the best interest of the students.

It is recognized that in gaining efficiencies through innovation and improvement, consideration be given to the provision of additional support for developing and implementing strategies which:

- improve opportunities for students in rural and remote areas to participate in training; and
- increase the participation of educationally disadvantaged students whose educational outcomes are at risk due to a range of factors such as:
 - difficulties with developing English literacy and numeracy skills;
 - indigenous background;
 - low socio-economic background;
 - family or personal difficulties;
 - residential mobility or geographic location.

Regional, rural and remote students face obvious disadvantages, particularly in terms of achieving a critical mass for VET in Schools delivery, and in accessing work placements. Efforts to increase the participation of such students in VET in Schools programs have been made in a number of jurisdictions through the establishment of skills centres and the promotion of new flexible delivery models.

At present there is no national information on cost efficiency and benchmarks. Further work is being undertaken by ECEF and DEST to explore the organisational changes required to achieve organizational efficiencies in the implementation of VET in Schools programs. Organisational changes may include but are not restricted to:

- curriculum;
- class size;
- timetabling;
- teacher workload;
- finance;
- staffing arrangements of schools;
- economics of scale;
- coordinating work placements for students;
- managing VET coordination activities;
- identification and potential for wider implementation of good practice; and
- school clustering and other areas where innovative and efficiency measures may be developed and applied.

ECEF will continue to work collaboratively with the Transition from School Taskforce in examining the scope for efficiencies in the delivery of VET in Schools programs.

4.3 THE NEED FOR LOCAL COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

A range of arrangements for locally managed networks are in place across the country based on either ECEF local community partnerships, school initiated VET clusters, industry-education advisory committees, or initiated through state policies such as the LLEN in Victoria and Regional Networks in South Australia.

These have developed in recognition of the fact that the development of collaborative practices to include the community is an imperative for the advancement of the broad vocational agenda.

ECEF has funded activity to strengthen the capacity of existing local partnerships (ECEF funds over 220 community partnerships) to meeting the emerging demands of the "MCEETYA Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework". This activity has comprised two strategies:

- Review and improve operating infrastructure and processes.
- Expand partnerships to include a broader base of stakeholders in alignment with the MCEETYA framework and greater connections between career education, SWL, VET in Schools, vocational learning and enterprise education.

ECEF has also promoted the consolidation of community partnerships to draw together a range of activities and opportunities which link the school sector, business and industry and communities. Essentially the following elements might be drawn together and coordinated at the local level within a partnership framework:

- The further development and expansion of Vocational Education and Training (including the coordination of SWL).
- The establishment and expansion of School Based New Apprenticeships.
- The development and implementation of programs linked to the labour market.
- The development and implementation of enterprise education programs and entrepreneurial activities.
- The provision of career guidance, counselling and advisory service.
- The placement of teachers in industry and the training of industry personnel to deliver aspects of programs.
- The provision of vocational learning activities.
- Sharing of expertise between schools and industry in areas such as human resource strategies, financial systems and strategic planning.
- Career and transition management support designed and driven by local partnerships.

4.3.1 BUILDING ON THE SWL PLATFORM

Experience with Structured Workplace Learning should now help programs and schools to think through the longer term implications for each young person's transition from school into the labour market – making sensible connections between a student's workplace learning experience and their first career steps.

There are now a few robust examples of local community initiatives that have begun to integrate and manage young people's transitions from school into the labour market.

It is important that we begin to anticipate the implications of the new kinds of 'transition brokerage'. In doing so we must be conscious that the evolution of these integrated arrangements, with the proper incentives, are capable of emerging from labour market or training initiatives as well as from school-industry programs. This is evident in a number of ECEF case studies where (though heading in the same direction) each started from a different base.

There is little doubt, however, the direct relevance of these issues for those school-industry programs which are becoming involved with the development of regionally coordinated models of community learning and servicing of youth needs – creating models for integrated and comprehensive managed pathways from school into the labour market.

Reports from programs which have already moved to provide complementary 'transition' services identify the following benefits from such expanded services:

- Catering for the needs of all students and a broader range of young people.
- The 'one stop shop' approach streamlines activity and creates efficiencies of operation for students and employers.

- Increased retention rates into senior high school for 'at risk' students through the availability of 'taster' vocational programs.
- Strengthening the entire community learning enterprise through the capacity to reach a broader range of stakeholders interested in a particular aspect of student transitions who then become involved in the complete landscape of partnership.
- The multiple facets of student needs in relation to transitions become more apparent through the expanded provision of services leading to increased outcomes because of the capacity for integration.
- Assists in establishing the identity of the program within the community engendering increased interest and support – 'transitions are school-business/industry-community responsibility'.
- Enhances awareness of the value of, and the need for, transitions support.
- However, in communities where the delivery of services was fragmented between agencies without the benefit of collaboration and coordination these 'community renewal' benefits are not apparent.

ECEF is continuing activity in this area through:

- National Youth Commitment Projects – to develop and trial a 'joined-up model' of service delivery to support young people in their transitions through and from school in five diverse sites.
- Partnering with the BEACON Foundation – to implement the 'No Dole' program of eight sites across Australia. The program will enhance local capacity to support transition initiatives and build on existing activities focused on young people in the local region.

SECTION 5: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCHOOL BASED AND OTHER VET PROGRAMS

5.1 NATIONAL TRAINING FRAMEWORK STATUS FOR VET IN SCHOOLS

5.2 QUALIFICATIONS

5.3 PATTERN OF INDUSTRY ACCEPTANCE OF SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

- 5.3.1 Introduction
- 5.3.2 Issues related to the delivery of VET in Schools
- 5.3.3 Issues related to AQF Certificates delivered under VET in Schools arrangements
- 5.3.4 Issues related to RTO arrangements
- 5.3.5 Issues related to the coverage of VET in Schools programs meeting the needs of employers
- 5.3.6 Issues related to the quality of SWL (on-the-job experience)
- 5.3.7 Issues related to available data on the outcomes of VET in Schools.

5.1. **NATIONAL TRAINING FRAMEWORK STATUS FOR VET IN SCHOOLS**

As indicated earlier, there are key differences between vocational education in school that is derived from the National Training Framework and that which is not.

Compliance with the National Training Framework means that there is no difference between VET undertaken by school students – either through VET in Schools programs or through School Based New Apprenticeships – and other VET. The VET in Schools pathway is essentially an institutional pathway with differing mixes of workplace learning. Training is typically delivered in the school, in a training provider or in some combination of the two. Like all other training the standard and quality of these arrangements is assured through the RTO. In addition to this there are variable amounts of workplace learning or on-the-job training to support the off-the-job training. Some programs are supported by workplace learning, some by simulated workplace experience and some do not have any workplace learning.

In the context of the rapid growth of VET in Schools, there is a number of emerging issues of common concern that need to be addressed if the VET in Schools program is to continue to expand and be given appropriate recognition within the schooling and training sectors and within industry.

The compliance of VET in Schools programs with the AQTF will ensure that VET in Schools is delivered fully within the quality requirements expected of the whole VET sector. This compliance needs to be fully communicated to industry to allay any misconceptions that the outcomes of VET in Schools programs are in some way inferior to competencies acquired in other VET programs.

The issue of what AQF levels are appropriate for delivery in schools needs to be addressed. The characteristics of competencies at levels 1 and 2 include performance of a prescribed range of routine functions and procedures in clearly defined contexts with limited responsibility for own outputs in work and learning. Assessment is predominantly (in most Training Packages) in a simulated workplace context.

Where certificates beyond Certificate II are contemplated, schools should consider combinations of the following to ensure the integrity and quality of the student outcomes:

- work-based training and assessment;
- part school-based and part work-based training and assessment; and
- recognition of the competencies acquired through part-time work together with training and assessment.

Industry has also raised issues relating to teacher competence and the currency of training for delivering VET in Schools. The issues are concerned with the quality of teacher training and the benefits of skilling secondary teachers to teach VET in Schools when such services could be contracted out to existing RTOs.

The quality of training is an issue closely associated with the registration of RTOs. A variety of arrangements are currently operating across the country. Although there are rigorous criteria to be met before a school can be registered as a training provider, the bodies responsible for overseeing and registering the quality assurance process vary. There has been concern that if the standards of registration of RTOs vary across jurisdictions this will not only impact on the quality of training but also on employers' commitment to such a system. Furthermore, young people who enter employment with a sub-standard industry qualification may have unrealistic expectations of what they are equipped to do and to learn. Equally, employers may be disillusioned. There is concern that this will create a two tiered system.

To ensure VET becomes a mainstream component of senior secondary curriculum, it must be seen as inherently worthwhile, challenging and genuinely providing a substantial qualification for programs to further training, employment or higher education.

It is imperative that VET delivered by schools complies with the requirements of the AQTF so that students' VET achievements are to be assured of national recognition for employment and further education. Compliance with the AQTF is also a pre-condition for students' VET studies to be counted towards the senior secondary certificate.

Responsibilities of RTOs under the AQTF

Under the AQTF, RTOs are responsible for assuring the quality of training and assessment and for certifying students' achievements by issuing either:

- qualifications for the achievement of a set of competencies specified in a training package or accredited course; or
- Statements of Attainment for the achievement of a subset of competencies.

Bodies that are not registered as training organisations cannot issue qualifications that are part of the national system.

A school that wishes to provide nationally recognised VET for its students has the following options:

- the school can seek registration as a training organization in its own right (subject to state laws and departmental policies);
- the school can purchase VET from an RTO;
- the school can deliver VET under the auspices of an RTO. For example, in different States and Territories, schools deliver VET under the auspices of:
 - Institutes of TAFE
 - Private RTOs
 - School systems
 - Minister of Education
 - ACACA agencies

In all cases, the RTO must be satisfied that students have achieved competencies to the standard specified by industry in training packages or curriculum documentation for accredited courses, and take responsibility for issuing VET certification to students.

Implications of the AQTF for Schools

Where a *school is registered as a training organisation in its own right*, the school/RTO is responsible for ensuring that the training and assessment provided by the school complies with AQTF standards.

Where a *school purchases VET services from an RTO*, the RTO is responsible for the standards of the training and assessment it provides. In that case, the implications of the AQTF for schools will be limited.

Where a *school delivers VET under the auspices of an RTO*, the RTO is responsible for ensuring that the training and assessment provided by the school complies with AQTF standards.

However, from the perspective of the AQTF, schools that deliver VET in partnership with RTOs will be viewed as delivering VET to their students *on behalf* of the RTOs.

This means that certain obligations of RTOs under the AQTF also apply to schools delivering VET on their behalf. For example:

- RTOs must comply with the AQTF standards across all of their operations and in all of their training/assessment activities. This includes training and assessment activities undertaken by a school on behalf of an RTO;
- an RTO must ensure that staff who deliver training or assess students' competencies have certain competencies that are specified in the standards, and keep up-to-date records to staff qualifications. This includes school staff;
- an RTO must develop strategies for assessing competence in consultation with industry/enterprises, and review them annually. These strategies will apply also to schools delivering VET on behalf of the RTO;
- an RTO must have and comply with written agreements with each organization that provides training and/or assessment on behalf of the RTO. The agreement must specify how each party to the agreement will discharge its responsibilities for ensuring the quality of the training and/or assessment on behalf of the RTO;
- RTOs will be subject to audit under the AQTF and these audits may include any of the RTO's operating sites, including audits of schools delivering training on behalf of the RTO;
- Where an RTO fails to comply with the AQTF standards, *sanctions* may be applied to the RTO and its sites (including schools).

5.2 **QUALIFICATIONS**

Under current arrangements VET in School students can either work towards all full VET qualification – an AQF Certificate I, II or III – or they can work towards a statement of attainment – a record of the nationally recognised competencies they have attained. These options are the same as options available to students in the wider VET sector.

In addition to national VET qualifications, VET in Schools programs are recognised by ACACA agencies and contribute to the award of Senior Secondary Certificates. Furthermore, most jurisdictions have put in place arrangements so that achievements in VET in Schools can contribute to the calculation of Tertiary entrance scores.

5.3 **PATTERN OF INDUSTRY ACCEPTANCE OF SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS**

5.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Beyond compliance with the AQTF, industry representatives have been raising a number of concerns relating to the VET in Schools programs. These relate to key delivery aspects of VET in Schools, the quality of which not only varies across jurisdictions but also significantly impacts on VET in Schools outcomes. These issues particularly relate to:

- the delivery of VET in Schools; including the location and teacher training;
- AQF certificates delivered under VET in Schools arrangements;
- RTO arrangements;
- whether the coverage of VET in Schools programs meet the needs of employers;

- the quality of SWL (on-the-job experience)
- available data on the outcomes of VET in Schools.

5.3.2 ISSUES RELATED TO THE DELIVERY OF VET IN SCHOOLS

Industry has expressed concern that the quality of VET delivered in schools is not comparable with that delivered by other training organisations. This relates to 3 key areas:

- Teacher Training.
- The extent to which State/Territory systems package VET in Schools.
- Comparing VET In Schools delivery by the TAFE system with the VET in Schools delivery by the school sector.

Teacher Training

There is some concern among employers that retraining of teachers to deliver VET in Schools has been inadequate and many are still lacking the necessary industry skills and knowledge to provide students with specific technical skills. As mentioned previously, AQTF standards require delivery personnel to be appropriately qualified. Quality assurance procedures must ensure that these standards are complied with.

The extent to which State/Territory systems package VET in Schools.

There are industry concerns that embedding does not result in the same rigour of assessment as stand alone VET; that is, embedding may result in the VET components not being properly assessed. There are also concerns that successful completion of a general education course may result in students being automatically awarded with VET units of competency or certificates. It needs to be stated in no state or territory does a subject result automatically credit a student with units of competency or modules. In each state and territory, where embedding occurs, assessment occurs against units of competency for VET results.

Comparing VET in Schools delivery by the TAFE system with the VET in Schools delivery by the school sector.

Generally, VET delivered by schools is largely confined to Certificate I and II qualifications while the TAFE sector and other private providers tend to be responsible for delivery of higher-level certificate qualifications. It has been difficult to come to any conclusions about the quality of training provided by schools compared with that provided by TAFE or other RTOs due to:

- the relative newness of VET in Schools
- a lack of knowledge relating to VET in Schools by many employers
- training packages in the school curriculum having not been in existence for long enough for employers to make comparisons
- a student with a VET qualification not necessarily seeking employment in the related industry, further reducing opportunities for comparison
- problems associated with tracking post-compulsory students once they leave school.

Further studies will be necessary to establish the existence of any differences in the quality of VET qualifications gained through a school RTO and those gained through a non-school RTO.

5.3.3 ISSUES RELATED TO AQF CERTIFICATES DELIVERED UNDER VET IN SCHOOLS ARRANGEMENTS.

A further area of concern in relation to quality is the AQF certificates that are being delivered under these arrangements. The strategic evaluation conducted by ANTA reported a range of responses and a variety of perceptions about Certificate programs within the AQF. Consultation with ITABs indicates that they are comfortable with school students accessing Certificate I qualifications, and there are some concerns about Certificate II qualifications (because of traineeship implications) particularly in trade areas where on-the-job training is vital.

There are some serious reservations by some ITABs about schools offering students Certificate III qualifications. The report indicated an acceptance that students may be capable of acquiring the technical knowledge required for a Certificate III qualification, but indicated that it was unlikely a student could be assessed as gaining a Certificate III qualification because of a range of issues. These include achieving a consistent standard of work within deadlines, providing customer satisfaction and the interpersonal skills necessary for dealing with adults. In other words, Certificate III skills are considered to be those demonstrated by a competent adult operator in the industry.

5.3.4 ISSUES RELATED TO RTO ARRANGEMENTS

The quality of training is an issue closely associated with registration of RTOs. A wide variety of arrangements are currently operating across the country.

Industry seeks assurance that qualifications gained through a school, which is an RTO, is to the same standard as that being awarded by other deliverers, eg. TAFE. It can be argued that this is the case in that, both the schools which are RTOs and the other RTOs have been audited against the AQTF. The quantum and frequency of audits does, however, vary widely between states/territories. Some states/territories have audited every school RTO each year, some have audited school RTOs only once, and some school RTOs may not have been audited at all.

5.3.5 ISSUES RELATED TO THE COVERAGE OF VET IN SCHOOLS PROGRAMS MEETING THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS.

Industry has expressed a desire for greater communication between schools and employers, particularly in the following areas:

- teachers need to become more knowledgeable about industry practices and expectations;
- work placement should be a planned activity that seeks the input of employers;
- communication between employer and school is important if training, assessment and recording are to be coordinated.

Industry has expressed a belief that the VET choices offered to students are determined by the staff expertise available in a school rather than directed by the local industry demand for labour. This area requires a continued effort with consideration given to support for business/industry to improve the scope and quality of their participation in VET in Schools and their role in workplace learning.

VET offerings do not appear to be determined in relationship to employment patterns – more about student interest – perhaps due to the lack of informed career advisers or teacher availability. A number of instances were highlighted where schools believed they were ‘overtraining’ in relation to regional employment but there was no easy way to seek guidance

for how they should redress this situation. Conversely, there are a few instances of industry direct involvement in course design and liaison with schools, specifically to encourage growth in skilled people in their sector.

Employer confidence in schools' capability to manage and deliver VET in Schools is a very important matter to address but the confidence of industry tends to vary across jurisdictions and courses. The more established trades seem to have the lower level of trust where some newer VET areas are more able to co-operate with schools and assist them. This is a difficult area for schools who report that they need more guidance and understanding of the standards expected by industry.

This has a number of aspects that are seen as essential:

- schools and school systems have ready access to employment data, skill needs and information on employers that can be applied in planning VET offerings;
- major employers and industry associations are engaged in advising on offerings and facilitating meaningful workplace learning; and
- employers have confidence in schools' capability to manage VET in Schools and to offer courses that suit their needs.

5.3.5 ISSUES RELATED TO THE QUALITY OF SWL (ON-THE-JOB EXPERIENCE)

There are mixed views across jurisdictions about the value or success of structured workplace learning to both students and employers. Indeed, while there appears to be considerable goodwill and tolerance at this stage, this is an area attracting some of the strongest comments on quality from industry. A lot of so-called structured workplace learning has been described as simply being about 'try before you buy' on the part of the employer and to some extent the student as a prospective employee. There is some evidence that employers value the opportunity to educate, train and recruit young competent people.

In addition Industry has expressed concerns that students' VET in Schools do not have sufficient on-the-job experience. Almost 60% of students undertaking VET in Schools programs were involved in structured work placements in 2001. This work placement is expected to link with VET in Schools but it is not clear whether this relates to competencies gained on-the-job or competencies reinforced.

This concern about the lack of workplace experience associated with VET in Schools is linked to the broader claim that institutionally based VET does not deliver the same skills as those whose training has occurred largely in the workplace. Workplace simulation is a related issue for both sectors, and while it is generally assumed that VET environments provide better quality simulation experiences than schools, this may not always be the case as in the area of IT and Business studies.

Further work needs to be undertaken in relation to quality of workplace learning in three key areas:

- **The outcomes intended by the National Training Framework**
- **The actual learning/training program experienced by young people in the workplace**
- **The process by which SWL is coordinated and managed.**

The outcomes intended by the National Training Framework

This relates to achieving quality in structured workplace learning arrangements for students to meet industry standards and leading to verifiable outcomes as specified in Training Packages.

Boards and systems will have to be committed to the delivery and assessment of units of competence within the context stipulated in the relevant Training Packages. Where the workplace is a stipulated context for assessment, mechanisms will need to be put into place to allow for this to occur.

Notwithstanding Boards' and the secondary school sectors' commitment to comply with industry requirements outlined in the need to assess units of competence within a workplace context raises a number of implementation issues for the schools sector. For example, an increased requirement to access work placements for assessment purposes may lead to increased pressure on an already limited supply of meaningful placements and, therefore, the increased possibility of restricting the number of students able to undertake VET in Schools programs.

The context of assessment stipulated within each individual Training Package will have major design and accessibility implications for VET in Schools. Although many of the endorsed Training Packages allow for off-the-job demonstration of competency in a simulated environment at AQF level I and II, there is a lack of a common understanding about what is a suitable 'simulated environment' and doubt expressed by some industry bodies about the ability of schools as RTOs or school-RTO partnerships to ensure suitable contexts.

Extended work placements featuring structured training and on-the-job assessment will have significant implications for the design, implementation and resourcing of VET in schools programs, and the ability of secondary schools to participate in the delivery and assessment of these programs. In addressing these implications the following would need to be considered:

- Ensuring that secondary school students are assessed as competent in enough units of competence to gain sufficient recognition for their commitment;
- The role of secondary schools in the assessment of competencies in the workplace which has resourcing implications for VET in Schools;
- The problems associated with geographically isolated secondary students if 'simulated environments' in schools are not considered suitable contexts for acquisition of competence; and
- The possibility of students not completing their VET qualification whilst undertaking senior secondary studies (ie. students may be unable to be assessed in the workplace contexts, putting them at risk of not completing the VET unit of competence).

The actual learning/training program experienced by young people in the workplace

As the number of students grows, the demand for work placement is also growing. Attaining quality in workplace learning will require heightened levels of communication between schools/TAFE and employers to improve the awareness of both students and employers of their roles and responsibilities providing support and resource materials and better preparing students and so on.

The process by SWL is coordinated and managed

It is hard to overstate the importance of coordination in securing the support and confidence of employers. Coordination at the local level ensures the quality of SWL programs by encouraging:

- Long term strategic planning
- Development and implementation of data collection
- Recruitment and active engagement of employers
- Marketing and relationship building

5.3.6 ISSUES IN RELATION TO AVAILABLE DATA ON THE OUTCOMES OF VET IN SCHOOLS

There is not yet a comprehensive national survey of employer satisfaction, nor of student destinations arising from the implementation of VET in Schools Program.

An ECEF destinations survey of 9,600 students in SWL programs indicated 70% were either in full-time work or study will approximately 90% in full of part-time study or work and an unemployment rate of 10%, which is lower than the national rate (17%). Industry outcomes reported on included respondents who undertook work placements in automotive, building and construction, metal/engineering and service and primary industries as being more likely to be in full-time work and those undertaking placements in arts/media/printing, business/finance and IT, were more likely to be in full-time study. 45% of those employed who undertook a placement in a specific industry sector found work in that sector. Most likely matches occurred in auto, retail and primary industries.

ECEF and the Transition from School Taskforce aim to progress activity in this area and will undertake further work by commissioning projects to look at:

- **The collection of comprehensive data on student destinations**
 - National data on the destinations of students participating in VET in Schools is not being collected at present. Despite the lack of nationally consistent data, data on destinations is being collected at the State/Territory level for some jurisdictions (eg. comprehensive research has been undertaken in Victoria on the destinations of VET in Schools students).
 - The project will develop advice on what could be done in other jurisdictions to produce similar data.
 - The project will also provide advice on the potential for obtaining comprehensive data on destinations utilising mechanisms that are currently in place.
- **Employer satisfaction with the effectiveness of VET in Schools provision**
 - A further measure of the effectiveness of VET in Schools provision could be derived from collecting the views of employers as to the perceived relevance to employment of the skills gained through VET in Schools programs.
 - The project will provide advice about the appropriate methodologies that can be used for gathering such data.

- **Developing a nationally consistent approach to the collection of data on structured workplace learning (ie on-the-job training)**
 - Most States and Territories have undertaken limited collections in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000. The now completed VET in Schools Taskforce provided data on participation measures using student numbers and Annual Hours Curriculum (AHC). However, their collections were not undertaken according to a clearly defined national standard and the information available systemically cannot produce reliable detailed output.
 - It should be noted that measures of the extent to which VET in Schools programs involve workplace learning do not lend themselves to consistent approaches to collection through ACACA agencies. Nor is the data on workplace learning collected in the VET sector itself.
 - It is considered important that data on workplace learning be collected and reported upon. However, the present situation is unsatisfactory. There is a need for either a nationally consistent approach to the collection of data on workplace learning or agreement to rely on regularly conducted sample studies. To advance work in this area the project will:
 - Reconsider the definition of what is to be included as workplace learning;
 - Develop strategies for a coherent national approach to the collection of data on workplace learning which provides the data required for performance measures, minimises duplication of effort by schools and meet any justifiable need for more detailed data.
 - Within this context the project will provide advice on quality assurance arrangements for structured workplace learning leading to verifiable workplace outcomes as specified in Training Packages.

SECTION 6: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NEW AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES

6.3 INDUSTRY COVERAGE

6.4 SKILL SHORTAGES AND EMERGING NEEDS

6.1 INDUSTRY COVERAGE

In the VET in Schools area 11 industry areas provide 92% of enrolments with the top four providing 62%. Three of these are from the 'new' areas of training – Tourism and Hospitality (18%), Computing (16%), and Business and Clerical (15%). The traditional trades such as Engineering and mining, Building and Construction and TCF and Furnishing involve 6%, 4% and 3% respectively.

Compared to School Based New Apprenticeships there is also a large percentage undertaking General Education and Training (13%) and a small percentage involved in Sales and Personal Services (4%).

By contrast, Sales and Personal Services have by far the largest up-take of School Based New Apprenticeships (39.5%) in terms of commencements in 2001. Automotive and Primary Industry are reasonably prominent compared to their popularity in VET in Schools.

6.2 SKILL SHORTAGES AND EMERGING NEEDS

Attention has recently been focused on the issue of skill shortages in Australia, with national activity taking place in a number of traditional trades. States and Territories are also targeting particular skill shortages in their training priorities.

Organisations and enterprises involved in this work across all industries identified the VET in Schools program as one of the strategies which could assist in addressing skill shortages.

The now complete MCEETYA Taskforce on VET in Schools also identified this as an area for action in the future, together with work in emerging industries.

It would be timely for more detailed planning to take place in this area and to take into account the issues of a coordinated and strategic approach to VET in Schools.

ECEF will commission work that will provide advice on strategies that can be used to ensure that VET in Schools contributes to meeting skills shortages, including processes that ensure:

- Planning for VET in Schools targets local, regional, State/Territory and national skills shortages;
- Skills development for young Australians plays a vital role in regional economic development;
- Greater recognition is given to the contribution of VET in Schools to the economic and social prosperity of the regions;
- Regional structures facilitate the linking of skills development with regional development and the promotion of a culture of enterprise;
- Strategies for skill development builds upon networks between business, industry, schools, community and training providers;
- Greater alignment between regional needs and the provision of VET in Schools at the local levels;

- Better understanding by schools of the training needs and industry trends at a local, regional, State/Territory and national basis.

This work will include:

- Analysing data to
 - Identify reasons for the variation with industry areas across States/Territories;
 - Identify potential areas for improved growth.
- Developing strategies which simulate interest in industry areas with significant skills shortages and employment opportunities.
- Developing guidelines to ensure that VET in Schools program assist in addressing skill shortages in Australia.
- Developing strategies in achieving quality in structured workplace learning arrangements for students to meet industry standards and leading to verifiable workplace outcomes as specified in Training Packages.

In addition to this, ongoing activity within ECEF includes:

- TARGETED INDUSTRY PROGRAM (TIP): Where ECEF support a limited number of industries with significant skill shortages and/or emerging needs to address relevant career education deficiencies for youth (IT, Supply Chain, Nursing, Finance).
- INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT: Where ECEF has established and will maintain long term strategic alliances with Australia's peak industry and sectoral organisation (ACCI, AIS, NFF, GTA) to help industry and business participate in and influence the youth transition agenda.

SECTION 7: THE ACCESSIBILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

7.3 INDIGENOUS TRANSITION ISSUES

7.1.1 Vocational learning for Indigenous students

7.4 ECEF'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

7.2.1 ECEF's Indigenous Strategy

7.2.2 Northern and Central Australia

7.1 **INDIGENOUS TRANSITIONAL ISSUES**

Indigenous students and their parents have high educational and vocational aspirations. Numerous reviews, inquiries and consultations conducted in recent years have all demonstrated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people place a high priority on education. They want for themselves and their children no less by way of educational opportunity than is afforded to other Australians. They expect that educational processes should lead them to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to realise their individual potential, lead satisfying lives, and contribute actively to the community. They look to education as a means of moving out of poverty and welfare dependency, enabling them to earn income through employment or enterprise and to manage the development of their communities.

Nevertheless, many young indigenous Australians have a poor understanding of the pathways within and between school and post-school options, and their Indigenous cultures and experiences, because the connections are often not apparent or available to them. Therefore they may drop out of education and training or restrict themselves to one pathway, rather than explore the multiple pathways available to them.

The report of the Prime Ministers Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce "Footprints to the Future" found that young Indigenous Australians generally:

- seem disproportionately represented among young people who are having difficulty in successfully negotiating the transition from school to independence and active participation in their communities;
- experience substantial disadvantage in terms of educational participation, attainment of qualifications, and labour market participation;
- have insufficient attention paid to their recreational, cultural and spiritual needs;
- have a fractured pattern of education and employment participation because the connections between school education, ATSI cultures and experiences, and post-school options are often not apparent to them;
- record markedly lower outcomes in all academic subjects with their poor literacy achievement being of particular concern;
- experience higher levels of unemployment – even when they achieve the same levels of educational qualifications as their non-Indigenous counterparts and when geographic and other differences are taken into account;
- need their own role models and mentors;
- lack opportunities for participation and leadership in community decision-making; and
- need to feel valued and respected members of their communities.

Recent work shows that school to work transition can be improved for Indigenous students by implementing alternative teaching and learning practices in such a way as to build on the cultural capital of the students. Apart from focusing on the students and the qualities and

competencies that need to be fostered, school to work transition can be more successfully negotiated by:

- designing and delivering courses that are tailored to meet local needs, have a high degree of flexibility and are undertaken in cooperation with a number of parties including: schools, higher educational institutions, VET providers (public and private), Indigenous communities, employers (individually or in association), and local government;
- providing information about careers and development of individual plans that identify student goals and map pathways through school and post-school education and training options and employment;
- increasing cultural support through the provision of Indigenous adult support (either by mentoring and/or access to role models) and by building and affirming cultural identity through the conduct of camps and excursions;
- providing extensive periods of work experience placements even in geographically remote locations within limited job opportunities; and
- maintaining sufficient flexibility to meet difficulties associated with the lack of qualified and appropriate VET trainers, the lack of locally accessible training facilities and accommodation for visiting trainers, limited opportunities for local work placements, and the high cost of student travel and accommodation.

7.1.1 VOCATIONAL LEARNING FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Vocational Learning is one way that schools can meet the heightened challenge of preparing young people for a complex world, including the world of work. Vocational Learning can also provide schools, communities, teachers and students with greater variety in their 'education experience', and in doing so ideally generate greater educational appeal for young learners, including Indigenous youth.

All Vocational Learning initiatives and programs should be flexible enough to meet individual students' aspirations and learning preferences (eg on-the-job delivery). Ideally, these initiatives will allow for articulation and skills transferability across industry contexts. Outcomes which include paid work and a positive vocational orientation can be deliberately anticipated within program and curriculum design. Similarly, a lifelong learning orientation must be anticipated, so that learning does not suddenly end with the first job.

Effective practice in Indigenous vocational learning in schools requires recognition with program designs that:

- Careers education in its many community and curriculum-embedded forms, should start early, particularly for young people at risk or leaving schools early;
- Work experience is important;
- A focus on generic work skills is important;
- Semi-structured Vocational education in middle secondary school is desirable;
- Structured VET in Schools and School Based New Apprenticeships must be flagged as a real possibility early in secondary years, particularly to cater for students 15 years of age and in junior years.

The provision of information about careers and development of individual plans should identify student goals and map clear and accessible pathways through school and post-school education and training options and employment, both within and beyond the local Indigenous community.

Vocational Learning programs which actively and positively connect learners to their communities have the capacity to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to make their cultural identity a positive growth area of their lives which they foster, nurture and value as a source of personal strength and self esteem.

Linking Vocational Learning programs to Indigenous communities also facilitates understanding trust, collaboration and community networking. Work to support community partnerships needs to ensure a significant level of formal local Indigenous community involvement at a management level with a focus on agreed local educational priorities. In this way, schools, Indigenous communities and community organisations positively network and collaborate to build social capital. Such networking promotes reconciliation, celebrates shared norms and encourages reciprocity, now widely recognized as the building blocks on improved social and economic well-being in the wider community.

While connecting to the community is important, it is not an end in itself. Few Indigenous young people can anticipate a life totally within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Opportunities for paid work beyond community, and the lifelong learning to support that work, are essential if Indigenous young people are to share in an equitable future with other Australians.

A high degree of flexibility needs to be encouraged especially in relation to the design and delivery of vocational learning courses, which need to be tailored to:

- Meet the diverse range of Indigenous student learning needs;
- Ensure continuing participation and engagement in education and training;
- Accommodate varying levels of participation and attendance;
- Develop administrative arrangements to local mobile students and support schools in ensuring that the students adapt to their new setting as quickly as possible, especially through the use of electronic student portfolios;
- Establish good functional levels of literacy and numeracy;
- Operate holistically by addressing health, juvenile justice, welfare and housing issues.

The design and delivery of vocational learning courses needs to also recognize the difficulties often associated with the provision of qualified and appropriate VET trainers, the provision of locally accessible training facilities and accommodation for visiting trainers, limited opportunities for local work placements and the high costs of student travel and accommodation, particularly in rural and remote locations.

There are ongoing concerns that vocational learning and VET in Schools may be seen as the only pathway being explored for these students. Often there are few obvious incentives or alternatives visible to Indigenous young people other than vocational learning at school through community.

7.2 ECEF'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

7.2.1 ECEF'S INDIGENOUS STRATEGY

ECEF currently has an individual contract linked to supporting transition of Indigenous young Australians. ECEF has developed an Indigenous Program Strategy to address identified areas of need and will promote initiatives that achieve the following:

- Support a learning environment that promotes the development of 'core' skills;
- Enhance the capacity to perform work in local communities;
- Identify and develop activities that can be undertaken in local communities that generate income within the community or elsewhere; and
- Create the capacity for individuals to operate successfully outside local communities while retaining culturally appropriate links.

7.2.2 NORTHERN AND CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

ECEF has been provided with funding to support the 'filling of gaps' in the provision of workplace coordination in Central and Northern Australia. Whilst this funding is not intended to be used exclusively for Indigenous young people, many of the 'gap areas' identified are in remote areas with predominately Indigenous populations.

Most of these areas do not have access to 'normal' job opportunities and ECEF has considered innovative ways to provide local young people with learning experiences outside the classroom that assists them to develop skills, attitude and knowledge to live meaningful and sustainable lives. A number of locations in Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia have been identified for support to enhance the quality, quantity and diversity of workplace learning opportunities and career and transition services provided at the local level.