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Factors influencing vocational education

6.1   The Committee encountered common themes in talking to staff and students at schools implementing vocational education and training. These can be categorised into system, school or individual factors. Witnesses frequently referred to system factors such as funding, the need for cooperation between sectors, work placement requirements, teacher availability and human resource issues, the operation of clusters and sustainability. Other issues such as industry demand and regional factors arose less frequently and were more often mentioned at a state or industry level.

6.2   System factors are major drivers of or barriers to change in vocational education in schools. This chapter examines system factors in some detail, as many school factors, such as timetabling, were discussed in Chapter 5. Again, much of the information provided to the Committee focussed on VET in Schools rather than on the broader scope of vocational education.

Factors influencing the quality of vocational education

6.3   School staff generally believe that the two most significant factors are the quality of teacher training and the commitment to VET in Schools by teachers and the school. Teacher training and commitment can be viewed as individual factors guided by the system. These two factors were also discussed in the previous chapter. Industry placements and participation were also seen as major influences on the quality of VET in Schools, so it is important for the community and business to participate actively to ensure the quality of VET in Schools. Research commissioned by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) also sought community views,

and Table 6.1 outlines the perception by schools, unions and industry of major factors influencing the quality of VET in Schools.[1]

Table 6.1   Factors making the greatest contribution to delivery of high quality VET in Schools, school, union and industry perceptions: top five factors

School Responses	Education Union Responses	Industry Responses, including ITABs
Quality of teacher training	Appropriate training, professional development and industry experience for teachers	Properly accredited training; RTOs that adhere to quality standards of delivery
Commitment to VET in Schools by teachers and the school	Physical resources that are of industry standard	Teachers with industry experience
Industry placement/participation	Quality supervision of student work placements	Professional development so teachers can understand training packages
Physical infrastructure	Improved collaboration with other VET providers	Partnerships with industry
Support from District Office	Partnerships between schools	Use of Mayer Key Competencies

Source   Drawn from The Allen Consulting Group, 2003, The Cost of VET in Schools. An analysis of the costs of delivering VET in Schools including an analysis of cost efficiencies, *DEST, pp. 141 and 143.*

6.4   The three factors most frequently reported from this research as having the potential to impact adversely on the delivery of quality VET in Schools were:

- lack of equipment, poor budgetary management;
- school management factors such as timetabling; and
- teacher time required for administration, paperwork and training.[2]

6.5   The Committee's findings were similar to the information presented above, indicating that training and professional development for teachers, infrastructure development, work placements and partnerships with other agencies are keys to quality VET programs. Lack of equipment and insufficient support for teachers to enable access to professional development are often a result of inadequate resourcing, a system factor affecting the quality of vocational education.

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1   DEST, *Exhibit No. 89,* p. 141.
2   DEST, *Exhibit No. 89,* p. 143.

System factors

Funding models

6.6   The majority of witnesses to the inquiry spoke of the need for additional resourcing to ensure the viability of vocational education.[3] Vocational education, and particularly VET in Schools, is more expensive to deliver than general education programs, and schools are stretched to accommodate the expenses.

6.7   There is significant variation in the way that schools are resourced and incorporate vocational education costs. The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) funding referred to in Chapter 3 was allocated as a catalyst to initiate and implement VET in Schools programs throughout Australia. ANTA has indicated that this seed funding is not solely for delivery costs; however, the school education sectors have clearly stated that as a result of the high growth of VET in Schools there are insufficient funds to maintain vocational programs. ANTA's national funding for VET in Schools is conditional on the development of a funding framework that promotes the incorporation of VET into schools and the transfer of resources to VET from other activities.[4] In 2001 the *National Report on Schooling* identified the challenges of incorporating the VET costs:

> As the integration of VET into schools will depend on the ability of schools to re-shape their approach to planning, leadership, resourcing and curriculum management, critical factors are being identified which address organisational and cultural change. One such factor is the resourcing of VET in Schools programs. Jurisdictions have reported that the unit cost of VET in Schools implementation to AQTF standards exceeds the cost of general education delivery to senior school students and that national funding provided for improving the outcomes of VET in Schools programs meets only part of these additional costs.[5]

6.8   The debate about funding has been hampered by insufficient data to compare methods of delivery and jurisdictional differences. The report commissioned by DEST to address this issue, *The Cost of VET in Schools,* should assist in costing analysis but also needs to be supported with information on the quality of delivery. The Australian Quality Training

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3   For example: South Australian Government, *Submission No. 97*, p. 7; NSW Department of Education and Training, *Submission No. 94*, p. 30; ACCI, *Submission No. 95*, p. 9.

4   ANTA MINCO, 2001, *Principles and Guidelines for Improving Outcomes for VET in Schools 2002-2004*, <http://www.anta.gov.au/publication.asp?qsID=294>.

5   MCEETYA, 2001, *National Report on Schooling, Chapter 7: Vocational Education. An overview of Trends*, < http://online.curriculum.edu.au/anr2001/ch7_trends.htm>.

Framework (AQTF) focuses specifically on the inputs into the training and education system, but there has been little focus on assessing the outcomes.

6.9   The view was offered to the Committee that VET in Schools needs to be given resources equal to the outcomes produced. It was stated that VET in Schools is responsible for 9.1 per cent of all VET delivered throughout Australia but only 0.06 per cent of the funding for VET is allocated to VET in Schools.[6] A more accurate measure of the costs of vocational education is necessary before commitments by jurisdictions are made to altering funding formulae. However, the delay in accessing appropriate quality data is placing considerable stress on the secondary schooling sector and TAFE.

Costings – Who pays?

6.10   TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) pointed to research which found that VET in Schools programs need more resources then the average Year 11 and 12 program. Who carries the burden of the additional cost varied; it may be the school, supporting agencies, TAFE and other non-school VET providers, students and employers.[7] The magnitude and impact of the cost burden will influence the take-up of vocational education by stakeholders. In some schools, students accessing VET in Schools programs were being charged double the fee of students separately enrolled in the same courses in TAFE.[8] This is a key issue when part of the rationale for VET in Schools is to retain young people at school and to appeal to students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Significant cost burdens reduce the chances of successfully achieving equity goals. Similarly, higher costs for other stakeholders will reduce their willingness to participate.

6.11   In the South Australian Government submission to the inquiry an estimate of costs indicated that:

> VET courses are more expensive to operate than non-VET SACE courses. Initial costing analysis conducted by the South Australian Government has identified that schools are funded for about $8.50 per hour for a SACE unit for an average class size of 22. VET

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6   Mr Graeme Harvey, *Submission No. 107*, p. 2; Figures from NCVER/MCEETYA indicate that in 2002 the number of students participating in VET in Schools accounts for 9.8% of total VET students, or 9.4% based on number of hours, NCVER, 2003, Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics, Students and Courses 2002, At a glance, p. 5.

7   TDA, *Submission No. 83*, p. 4.

8   Burke, G, Beavis, A & Underwood, C, 2002, *Costing Issues for VET in Schools: Secondary Colleges and TAFE. Report by CEET to Chisolm Institute of TAFE,* Centre for the Economics of Education and Training, Monash University – ACER, p. 2.

courses however, need to be delivered in class sizes of 12-20 and
can cost from approximately $8.60 to $ 15.60 per hour.[9]

6.12   Comparative costs across Australia indicate that South Australian costs
were at the higher end. *The Cost of VET in Schools* provides a
comprehensive analysis of costing factors in VET in Schools across
Australia. Using the model developed for the report, the cost of VET in
Schools averaged between $6.91 and $7.72 per student contact hour across
all jurisdictions. Using these figures, state and territory authorities would
be funding $227 million to $247 million of general recurrent funding into
VET in Schools. The costs varied with the jurisdiction and the method of
delivery. In five jurisdictions, over 40 per cent of the cost per student hour
is used in administration and at the system level.[10]

6.13   The findings of *The Cost of VET in Schools* indicate that when schools or
jurisdictions select a delivery mode for VET in Schools, there are complex
decisions to be made and balances to be struck between administrative
efficiency, student and industry needs, costs and responsiveness.
Indicative costings and outcomes show that the following cost drivers are
of most significance to the cost of VET in Schools:

- For the Set-up of VET in Schools Costs, the key driver of total
  cost is infrastructure requirements supported by the number of
  courses/programmes administered;
- For School VET Administration Costs, the key drivers are
  teacher hours and number of courses/programmes
  administered; and
- For School VET Delivery and Assessment Costs, the key drivers
  are student hours and the proportion of these student hours
  delivered within a school classroom.[11]

6.14   *The Cost of VET in Schools* reported that set-up costs to commence delivery
of VET in Schools varied significantly. Nine schools invested on average
$1.1 million each in setup costs, while 34 schools invested on average
$47,200. This variation reflects the range of school preferences for
investment in infrastructure and how best to access that infrastructure, by
improvements on school premises or by accessing infrastructure outside
the school. It also reflects differences in the costs associated with different
courses. Decisions on these matters are also influenced by the diversity of
courses being offered by schools.

6.15   In comparing different delivery models and the choices provided for
students, *The Cost of VET in Schools* made the following findings:

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9   South Australian Government, *Submission No. 97*, p. 7.
10   DEST, *Exhibit No. 89,* p. xx.
11   DEST, *Exhibit No. 89,* p. xv.

- School as RTO model provides the lowest cost of direct delivery
  per student hour, and offers students a relatively broad
  selection of courses;
- Regional RTO model has high administrative costs, which
  might be expected with a centralised model. However, the
  centralised approach shifts the burden of administration from
  schools. The Regional RTO model has the narrowest course
  selection for students, although courses offered under this mode
  are selected considering labour market needs and capacity to
  deliver; and
- Auspice/Partnership model has the highest direct delivery cost
  and provides some benefit to schools in terms of reducing
  AQTF compliance. Overall, the transaction costs incurred to co-
  ordinate the multiple parties involved in this model are high.
  Auspice/Partnership model provides the broadest course
  selection for students.[12]

6.16   The Committee received insufficient evidence to confirm the findings of
        The Costs of VET in Schools. An example of auspicing arrangements was
        provided to the Committee from Western Australia. A recent increase in
        TAFE College profile funding for VET in Schools delivery in Western
        Australia is hoped to better enable the VET in Schools program to access
        the expertise available in TAFE colleges. [13]

6.17   Decisions made on the preferred model of delivery need to reflect state
        and territory and local arrangements. A key factor in determining the
        model for adoption was determining what the greatest benefit to the
        students would be. This is the paramount concern of teachers and
        schools.[14]

Comparable costings

6.18   One issue that the Committee raised with representatives of the
        Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training was the
        availability of a comparative figure for general education and vocational
        education per student contact hour. DEST indicated that no comparable
        figure for general education to estimate costs per student contact hour was
        available.[15] The Committee finds this unacceptable. Earlier preliminary
        data identified the additional costs of around $2.64 per student hour for

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12   DEST, *Exhibit No. 89,* pp. xx-xxi.

13   WA Department of Training, *Submission No. 70*, p. 10.

14   DEST, *Exhibit No. 89,* p. 137.

15   Mr Tony Greer, Group Manager, Schools Group, DEST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 26 June 2003,
      Canberra, pp. 694-695; Correspondence from the Minister for Education, Science and Training,
      18 February 2004.

delivery of VET in Schools, compared to general education,[16] but this was not investigated in the Allen Consulting report *The Cost of VET in Schools.*

6.19   Nor are comparable figures available from the TAFE sector, although a figure of public expenditure of $13.13 per hour for 2002 is available.[17] However, many qualifications were provided by representatives of DEST for the higher costs of TAFE relating to the varying expenses of different programs for different industry areas.

6.20   The MCEETYA Schools Resourcing Taskforce is undertaking a project, *Resourcing the National Goals,* designed to assess resourcing levels required to ensure the achievement of the agreed National Goals for Schooling. The project will undertake an analysis of the base costs of schooling as well as marginal costs impacts, such as size and location of school, student socio-economic status, language background, Indigenous background, information communication technology, and VET in Schools.[18] It is due to report in the first half of 2004. The Committee welcomes the analysis and urges prompt action to investigate the additional costs of VET in Schools.

6.21   Strategies to deal with meeting the demands of vocational education costs have resulted in some authorities making additional allocations to fund schools. An example was given in Western Australia of an additional funding ratio of 1.1 provided for each VET student.[19] However, this was considered to be inadequate and the Committee agrees with this view. In evidence to the Committee it was suggested that the cost of running a VET course is 1.25 to 1.5 times the cost of teaching a general education course.[20]

6.22   It is clear to the Committee that VET is more expensive to set up, deliver and administer than the majority of general education programs, and that this should be recognised. Expectations that all costs can be absorbed into current budgets are unrealistic given the smaller class sizes and greater administration and work placement requirements. The Committee believes that efforts are required at all levels to streamline the administration of VET in Schools, and that a figure of 40 per cent of per student costs being absorbed by administration is excessive.

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16   National Council of Independent Schools' Associations, *Submission No. 79,* p. 16.

17    $13.13 is per Final Adjusted Annual Hour Curriculum, ANTA, 2003, *Annual National Report to the Australian Vocational Education and Training System 2003, Volume 3 Report on the Key Performance Measures for the Australian Vocational Education and Training System:* Table A18.4, p. 166.

18   Correspondence from the Minister of Education, Science and Training, 18 February 2004.

19   Mr Gary Yates, Deputy Principal, Mandurah Senior College, *Transcript of Evidence,* 4 August 2003, Mandurah, p. 853.

20   Mr Harry Dobson, Member, Victorian Independent Education Union of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence,* 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1193.

Recommendation 12

> **The Committee recommends that as a priority more complete assessments be made of the costs of vocational education and specifically VET in Schools (using *The Cost of VET in Schools*, 2003 as a methodology) in comparison with:**
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> - **general education programs in schools; and**
> - **the delivery of comparable certificate programs in TAFE;**
>
> **and that if such calculations demonstrate higher costs of VET in Schools programs than general education programs, Commonwealth, state and territory governments share the responsibility for funding, with the states raising the recurrent per capita funding and the Commonwealth increasing the capital and support funding.**

Cross-sector arrangements

Cross-sector difficulties

6.23   In a number of states and territories the administration of the school sector and the VET sector are in different departments. This separation has been suggested as a reason for poor implementation of VET in Schools,[21] although not all would agree. Inadequate communication is cited as a reason for the delays in reaching agreement on core issues. Principals in Queensland stated that there are fundamental difficulties in schools accessing TAFE facilities for cooperative programs, which is at least partly due to the fact that secondary education and TAFE are administered by different departments in Queensland.[22] During the course of the inquiry the Western Australian Department of Training and Department of Education merged into one department, indicating a recognition of the need for a more holistic approach to the needs of the 15-19 years cohort, and for improved communication in the administration of support services for that group.

Differences in school-based and other programs

6.24   Historically, the purposes of the different education sectors have led to different emphases, although the TAFE sector has also offered the senior secondary certificate program. The major differences between schools and

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21   Housing Industry Association, *Submission No. 7*, pp. 1-2.

22   Queensland Secondary Principals' Association, *Submission No. 88*, p. 5.

the broader VET sector in the programs offered flow from differences in the mandate and orientation of the two sectors. The main emphasis in schools is a well balanced general education that prepares students to enter further education, training or employment. TAFE is primarily focused on providing industry based vocational education within an adult learning environment. TAFE courses are designed to lead to an industry recognised qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), based on assessment of competency.[23] The differences in qualification levels were discussed in Chapter 4.

6.25   While schools are increasingly offering AQF Certificate courses at the I, II and, in a number of cases, III level, the majority of enrolments in VET courses in schools are still in traditional school curriculum areas such as hospitality, business and IT and general studies.

6.26   As noted by TAFE Directors Australia, the school and VET sectors have different strengths. Teachers from the two sectors hold different qualifications, have different industrial experience and different underpinning pedagogical philosophies. Schools typically do not have many teachers with VET skills and do not have staff experienced in industry while TAFE institutes do. There are also significant differences in the facilities available. TAFE institutes generally have industry standard facilities and equipment, whereas few schools do.

6.27   Recognition of the different strengths of each sector leads the Committee to the view that TAFE and private providers' facilities should be more frequently used. However, different funding models are cited as a barrier to greater use of TAFE by schools, as well as other matters such as duty of care and industrial relations issues.[24]

Different funding models

6.28   Each education sector is funded on a different basis and from a different range of sources, and this funding may have different accountability requirements. These differences influence behaviour. Performance measures and funding based on performance act as incentives. For example, TAFE uses student contact hours as the basic counting and funding unit, while higher education uses equivalent full-time students. Schools receive recurrent funding plus ANTA funds based on a proportion of enrolments. However, as these performance measures are not aligned between the sectors barriers to seamless pathways and cooperation can

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23   TDA, *Submission No. 83*, p. 2.

24   TDA, *Submission No. 83*, pp. 2-3; Mr William Daniels, Executive Director, National Council of Independent Schools Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 March 2003, Canberra, p. 184.

occur.[25] Evidence to the Committee confirms that barriers do exist, with schools and TAFE becoming frustrated with the lack of resolution of funding matters. In some jurisdictions identifying that TAFE is funded on a different model from schools, a fee structure has been set up specifically for young people in schools accessing TAFE courses.[26] However, the costs of TAFE are still seen as high:

> When TAFE institutes charge for the delivery of VET in schools on a cost recovery (or for profit basis), often their charges are at the higher end of the market due to their higher overheads than private RTOs. This causes resentment in schools and discourages the use of TAFE as a partner. In Western Australia, a school principal said "too much of our VET funding goes to auspicing (i.e. to purchasing courses from TAFE)." Some TAFE institutes are genuinely interested in partnerships with schools and charge "reduced" rates.[27]

6.29   TAFE's different funding model affects school planning. This does make it easier for schools to continue to offer more mainstream subjects such as maths, science and English courses as they are cheaper than purchasing VET programs from TAFE and other registered training organisations (RTOs), rather than identifying and meeting specific students' needs. The South Australian Government's response indicated that the impact is apparent. However they are not directly addressing the funding concerns:

> Let's say it is a challenge that has not been resolved. Schools in particular are looking at sustainability. In the end, with some of these courses it will be consolidated. For instance, with automotive engineering, it is really difficult for schools to have the resources to do that. Tourism and hospitality may be something different. There is the challenge of sharing resources. Maybe schools can deliver at the TAFE level using the resources of the TAFE colleges. There are a few examples of that sort of thing going on. In the end, young people might do a training course in tourism and hospitality and find out that that is what they do not want to do. They do not want to have to pay for something like that. That is the advantage of having certificates I and II in the schools.[28]

25   Selby Smith, C et al, 2001, *The economics of vocational education and training in Australia, CEETs Stocktake*, ANTA and NCVER, pp. 77-79.

26   Mrs Marlene Boundy, State Program Manager, Futures Connect Strategy, SA Department of Education and Children's Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2003, Adelaide, p. 1033.

27   AEU, *Submission No. 72*, p. 61.

28   Ms Susan Hyde, District Superintendent, Central South West, SA Department of Education and Children's Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2003, Adelaide p. 1033.

Different charges

6.30   In Victoria there are also funding problems, with the need to subsidise or pass costs on to parents. Equity concerns were raised by careers educators, indicating that some students could not afford to select VET subjects.[29] However, where a course is delivered by TAFE, part of the costing to parents is already subsidised by TAFE. Using a system-wide response in Victoria, part of the cost of delivering VET in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) programs in schools is also absorbed by TAFE:

> A cooperative arrangement has been secured whereby TAFE Institutes have agreed to charge within a range of 60%- 80% of the TAFE recovery price. TAFEs have also been advised that no further fees (such as enrolment fees) should be charged to VCE students undertaking VET programs. These measures are estimated to cost approximately $4 million based on 2002 training delivery patterns. Costs are likely to increase in line with enrolment growth.[30]

6.31   Submissions received by the Committee indicated that the TAFE institutes were questioning their ability to continue subsidising the school sector as their funding was overstretched.[31] The funding mismatch between schools and TAFE is an issue that needs to be addressed at both the national and state and territory level. Similarly in NSW, the funding arrangements between TAFE and schools dissuades schools from sending students to TAFE as for every student attending a course at TAFE the school loses staff and global budget on a proportional basis. The TAFE thus gains money through its funding mechanism and the school loses it, yet they still have reporting requirements and pastoral responsibilities.[32] For other non-school targeted programs NSW and Victorian TAFEs have recently announced increased fee charges in attempts to cover their costs.[33]

6.32   Mr Malcolm Goff, Acting Deputy Director General, Training, of the Western Australian Department of Education and Training, indicated the importance of equity in funding of VET to ensure comparable outcomes:

> I think it is important that we take a principled stance that where we are delivering VET, whether it be in a school or in a TAFE, from

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29   Ms Julie Ryan, President, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1155.

30   Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, p. 4.

31   TDA, *Submission No. 83*, p. 4, Independent Education Union, *Submission No. 73*, p. 11.

32   Mr Bruce Norton, District Vocational Education and Training Consultant, NSW DET, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 July 2003, Junee, NSW, p. 735.

33   *The Australian*, 2 July 2003, 'Fee Hike for TAFE students'; *The Age*, 4 January 2004, 'Anger as TAFE fees soar $125'.

> a public funding point of view the commitment to deliver the same quality has to be assured. Therefore, you should not have differential funding. The delivery unit, whether it is VET in schools or TAFE, should be funded at the same level.[34]

6.33   Local industry partnerships and national VET associations recognise this need for funding formulae that do not disadvantage schools for using TAFE training, and for funding to be made available for the involvement of TAFE or other RTOs for targeted skills areas where schools do not have appropriate resources.[35]

6.34   The mix of Commonwealth and state and territory moneys through the national training system and through state and territory systems has resulted in different levels of funding going to the school and the TAFE sectors. The state governments have been critical of the Commonwealth's contribution. However, the Commonwealth's view is that its contribution should be absorbed as part of recurrent school funding to schools. From a national perspective, the degree to which recurrent school funding is providing the balance, additional to the ANTA funding as was the intention, is certainly not clear. Some VET in Schools is delivered by the TAFE system using VET recurrent funding.[36] Until there is a resolution on funding at the state/territory-Commonwealth level it will be very difficult to resolve the issue at the delivery level. There is a definite need for examination and resolution of the current funding distinction between the schooling, VET and the university education sectors and between the roles of Commonwealth, states and territories. The Committee urges that MCEETYA address this issue as a high priority.

6.35   Additionally, strong comments were presented to the Committee on the need for Commonwealth, state and territory governments to make an enhanced and ongoing commitment to appropriately funding VET in Schools. It was recommended that this not be at the expense of funding to TAFE colleges or other programs in schools, given the considerable funding demands they face.[37]

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34   Mr Malcolm Goff, Acting Deputy Director General, Training, WA Department of Education and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 920.

35   SCISCO, *Submission No. 59*, p. 5; VETnetwork, *Submission No. 27*, p. 5; and Victorian Electrotectechnology, Printing, Information Technology and Communications (EPIC) Industry Training Board, *Submission No. 13*, p. 9.

36   ANTA, *Submission No. 90*, p. 27.

37   AEU, *Submission No. 72*, p. 8.

> ## Recommendation 13
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> **The Committee recommends that MCEETYA pursue the resolution of funding responsibilities for vocational education between the Commonwealth, states and territories across the different sectors.**

Charges for government and non-government schools

6.36   Representatives from non-government schools were highly critical of the different charging arrangements applying to government and non-government schools accessing equivalent TAFE programs. This was deterring students from participating in programs.[38]

> Funding is a fundamental issue. I think independent school heads would agree that if the funding levels were equal across independent schools, Catholic schools and government schools, if the cost of courses at TAFE was less, we would have more students taking on those TAFE options.[39]

6.37   An option to try to deal with the different funding was discussed with independent schools' representatives. The model suggested is an extension of the recurrent funding formula for independent schools: a pro rata payment according to the SES indicator, i.e. a percentage of the Average Government School Recurrent Costs (AGSRC).[40] For example, if a school is funded at 50 per cent of AGSRC the subsidy that the school would receive for accessing VET in TAFE would also be at that 50 per cent level.[41] The option presented was acknowledged as a possible compromise model.

6.38   DEST's perspective on different charging systems between government and non-government schools is that it is only one aspect of a complex financial relationship. Fees are one area probably symptomatic of a requirement for greater national consistency.[42]

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38   Ms Gabrielle Power-West, Executive Officer - Post Compulsory/Curriculum, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 April 2003, Brisbane, pp. 331-332.

39   Mr Alan Ross, Member, Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1172.

40   The Commonwealth provides General Recurrent Grants at different rates for primary and secondary and non-government school students. These are expressed as percentages of estimated Average Government School Recurrent Costs (AGSRC).

41   Mr Alan Ross, Member, Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1173.

42   Mr Colin Walters, Group Manager, Vocational Education and Training Group, and Mr Tony Greer, Group Manager, Schools Group, DEST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 26 June 2003, Canberra, p. 697.

6.39   The Committee noted that that the view from TDA to the inquiry confirmed the comments of witnesses from the government and non-government school sectors.

> If we are to get quality results, however, adequate resourcing is essential. Funding of both government schools and TAFE remains tight, making it difficult to cope with the cost of providing VET in schools. VET in schools programs typically need more resources than the average Year 11 and 12 program in a traditional schooling environment. The funding issue is complicated by different arrangements and guidelines that apply to the two sectors.

> The funding models currently employed can create barriers to cooperation and in at least some jurisdictions there are disincentives for schools who might otherwise seek to outsource their VET delivery to TAFE providers.[43]

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that efforts be made to improve cooperation between school and TAFE sectors where geography and course offerings make that viable, in areas such as in co-location, human resources and administrative practices.

This should include a national review of charging practices by TAFE for government and non-government schools in order to:

- **determine more equitable practices to better reflect their relative costs and resourcing; and**
- **ensure that funding restrictions and differential charging practices do not act as a barrier to government and non-government school students accessing otherwise appropriate VET courses through TAFE.**

It should also include a consideration of ways of addressing other potential barriers to the greater take-up of suitable courses offered by TAFE or other RTOs, including factors such as transport, timetabling, certainty of course continuity and duty of care issues.

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43   Mr Phillip Clarke, National Board Member, TAFE Directors Australia, *Transcript of Evidence,* 20 March 2003, Canberra, p. 190.

Pathways

6.40   The Commonwealth and state and territory governments have embraced the notion of seamless pathways for students between senior secondary schooling, vocational education and training, and universities. Cross-sectoral delivery has been a key component of this with credit transfer as another bridge to enable smooth pathways across traditional academic boundaries. The drivers of this seamlessness were discussed in Chapter 2 and include the promotion of lifelong learning, improving efficiencies and equity considerations. Funding has already been presented as one barrier to improving pathways, a second is credit recognition and transfer, and administrative issues present a third barrier.

6.41   The second barrier to seamless pathways is inadequate recognition arrangements. Often this is associated with the perception of VET studies. Recognition arrangements vary across institutions. This leads to high costs and complexity in negotiating arrangements for recognition and credit to improve articulation.[44] The perception of the value of VET in education must be improved to a point where it is seen as a viable and valuable alternative to what has been traditionally called 'academic' study. One strategy is to ensure that qualifications attained during a VET program are recognised as a substantial achievement post-VET and provide a qualification or recognised credit for achievement should the participant progress to TAFE or university in the future. VET is one of a range of qualifications and experiences which students may carry with them at the completion of their secondary education.[45]

6.42   The Queensland Government commissioned two reports in 2002 to emphasise the need to strengthen pathways for young people from school to further education, training and employment and to provide broad-based education. *The Senior Certificate: A New Deal* (the Pitman report) recommends a single Senior Certificate that prevents students from being locked into a single pathway, allows a mix of VET and general education studies and enables students to change pathways without losing credit for their achievements to date. *The Review of Pathways Articulation* by Professor Margaret Gardner focuses on the connections between school, TAFE and university to improve the pathways available to young people.[46] This report found that:

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44   Selby Smith, C et al., 2001, *The economics of vocational education and training in Australia, CEETs Stocktake*, ANTA and NCVER, pp. 76-77.

45   Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations, *Submission No. 80*, p. 7.

46   Queensland Government, *Submission No. 93*, p. 6.

> There are barriers to effective transition from school based vocational education and training to vocational education with full recognition of the work undertaken in schools. There is a lack of transparency and clarity in arrangements for articulation and credit transfer from vocational education and training to higher education; and no clear understandings of how incomplete university qualifications will be recognised in vocational education and training. Differences in the approaches of the three education sectors make transition between them — with effective recognition of the prior knowledge and skills gained — complex, opaque and inconsistent. All these barriers make transitions for young people more difficult and time consuming.[47]

6.43   Similarly in this inquiry, concern was expressed to the Committee that a seamless transition was not available for VET students in schools to either the TAFE or university sectors. The Committee sees this as a major issue. One career adviser asked why, if government and schools are serious about VET certificates adding value and improving employability skills for young people, they are not put on a par with the academic studies. The example was given that in Victoria, when choosing possible students for tertiary programs and looking to distinguish students beyond the tertiary entrance score, there was no consideration of the completion of VET certificates, only VCE courses. Middle band bonuses for VET certificates were not being applied, and given that there are 32 of them this appeared as a substantial loss of information and credit when selecting students.[48]

6.44   The submission from the Victorian Government outlining the arrangements for recognition of VET when determining the tertiary entrance score, does not make mention of the middle banding issue.

> VET in the VCE combines both general and vocational studies and frequently involves a number of components, as described below:
>
> VCE VET units comprising VET modules/units of competence approved by the VCAA. Individual modules/units of competence are grouped together by the VCAA, recognised as VCE units and given a designated level of recognition in the VCE (1-2, 3-4). These VCE VET units contribute towards the completion of the VCE certificate and the VET qualification. VET in the VCE programs are now an integral part of the VCE and can contribute up to 8 of the

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47   Gardener, M, 2002, *The Review of Pathways Articulation through the post-compulsory years of school to further education, training and labour market participation*, Queensland Department of Employment and Training, and Department of Education, 2002, p. 12.

48   Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, Treasurer, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, Melbourne, 2 September 2003, p. 1156.

16 units required for satisfactory completion of the VCE. All VCE
VET programs with a unit 3-4 sequence make a contribution to the
Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER). Ten VET in
the VCE programs have the option for a study score which can
count fully in the calculation of the ENTER.[49]

6.45   In the Victorian Government's future plans an increased use of scored
assessment for VET in VCE programs is proposed, as well as a broader
range of post-compulsory offerings, including piloting and then wider
implementation of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).[50]
Credit arrangements to higher education providers also need to be
investigated. An overview of VCAL is provided in the following box.

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

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

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

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

Successful implementation of the VCAL in 2003 was expected to see an estimated
5,000 students undertaking the certificate and the development of strong local
partnerships to support delivery of the certificate.

Up to twenty new VCAL trials were to take place in 2003. The trials were to look at
courses providing access to the foundation VCAL level and progression from the senior
VCAL level. A further intention of the trial is to look at possible "themed" VCALs, each
giving students experience of a broad occupational sector such as land-based industry
or manufacturing. The final new trial will investigate ways in which the learning program
for VCAL can be contextualised, to meet, for example, the needs of indigenous
learners for whom a traditional learning context may not be appropriate.[51]

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49   Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, p. 16.
50   Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, pp. 14-15.
51   Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, p. 18.

Schools and TAFE

6.46   As noted in the previous sections, inadequate credit arrangements were cited as obstacles in pathways between schools and TAFE. TAFE Directors Australia cited concerns regarding assessment, accreditation, certification and articulation.[52]

6.47   Many schools have encountered difficulties with pathways and partnerships between schools and TAFE.[53] There needs to be greater recognition of VET in Schools as a legitimate pathway to employment, further training and non-VET options, including university. Qualifications achieved at school are not always given full credit when presented to another RTO. For instance, in Gympie in Queensland the State High School has had requests from TAFE for assessment pieces as evidence of students' competency, which suggests that the awarding of the qualification in itself is insufficient evidence of competency. Additionally, it is reported that private RTOs are making students repeat modules in which they are already competent.[54]

6.48   Incidents such as this make it clear that some in the broader VET sector do not recognise the qualifications awarded by schools, or do not apply recognition of prior learning (RPL) procedures, which calls into question the portability benefits of the National Qualifications Framework. Part of the response by the TAFE sector concerns quality assurance. The TAFE directors submission indicates that if VET in school programs are to have credibility with industry, and sound pathways are to be developed to higher level vocational courses, it is very important that appropriate quality systems and processes are in place and that the overall integrity of VET, as contained within the principles of the AQTF and requirements for RTOs, are maintained:

> It is TAFE Institutes' view that this is not always the case and it makes the process of auspicing schools' programs increasingly difficult, both in the amount of resources required and the lack of control over how schools conduct their assessment and delivery.[55]

6.49   The need for TAFE institutes to ensure that the competency standards are fully met to ensure that industry has confidence in the system is of primary concern. Schools argue that these standards are being met. However, the industry exposure and work placement requirements of Training Packages differ, which may give rise to perceptions of varying

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52   TAFE Directors Australia, *Submission No. 83*, p. 7.

53   *See for example*, Don College, *Submission No. 104*, p. 4.

54   Fraser Cooloola District Schools, *Submission No. 21*, pp. 1-2.

55   TAFE Directors Australia, *Submission No. 83*, p. 4.

quality. TDA suggested that the adoption of similar curriculum and administrative arrangements for National Training Framework (NTF) qualifications, the third barrier to seamless pathways, would assist in cross-sector cooperation and clearer pathways.[56]

Schools and universities

6.50 As stated previously, there is variation across states and territories in the way that VET qualifications at the senior certificate level are regarded by TAFE institutions or universities. It was reported to the Committee that there are significant barriers for recognition of those qualifications:

> VET courses which are Training Package based, competency based, very few of those qualifications will be recognised by universities for their full value, because universities regard learning outcomes rather than competencies as the requirement to satisfy their entry examinations. That is a major issue, not just for schools by the way, but for people who are articulating from post-school VET courses – TAFE courses – to universities. Normally you would only ever receive 50 per cent of that qualification as credit towards a university qualification, whereas the VET sector argues that there should be full credit.[57]

6.51 In the Australian Education Union (AEU) submission the conflict between the requirements of School-based New Apprenticeships and the need for a tertiary entrance score is highlighted. The effect of the conflict is compounded by the time an SBNA takes students away from other subjects. The extent to which this is an issue depends very much on individual students' aims and expectations for the future.[58]

6.52 Project work, funded by ANTA and managed by the NSW Department of Education and Training on behalf of a National Working Group, is progressing an approach which could enable VET in Schools competency assessments (with distinguishing levels of performance) to produce scores for inclusion in tertiary entrance information. Another component of the project has resulted in twenty universities agreeing to move towards implementing recognition arrangements of the achievement of VET in Schools students. It is hoped that this work will provide models and outcomes that will persuade other universities to adopt similar recognition approaches.[59] Further information on the status of and proposals for

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56 TAFE Directors Australia, *Submission No. 83*, p. 7.

57 Mr Rex Hewett, Federal TAFE Secretary, Australian Education Union, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1215.

58 AEU, *Submission No. 72*, p. 69.

59 DEST, *Exhibit No. 129*, Facts Sheets.

university and industry recognition of achievement in VET in Schools is provided in the publication *Expanding Opportunities for Youth*.[60]

6.53   The Queensland *Review of Pathways* recommended that in order to recognise the changes in the school curriculum, including the greater diversity of subjects undertaken in the senior years, and in particular university subjects and completed vocational education and training certificates, the tertiary entrance system be the subject of a future investigation.[61] An alternative strategy that may be considered is the use of three or four courses to determine the tertiary entrance score rather than the current five in Queensland.[62] This would allow more flexibility and be less likely to require the alteration of content of VET programs to focus on a greater knowledge component.[63] Portfolios of work and interviews have also been suggested as additional strategies to determine entrance.

VET and universities

6.54   A review of the use of Training Packages and the articulation between VET and the university sector concluded that the success of articulation so far has been mixed. Some improvements are acknowledged but in general it is patchy. There are more students moving from the university sector to VET rather than the reverse. Articulation usually involves local bilateral negotiation between individual RTOs and universities rather than centrally agreed and recognised processes.[64]

6.55   Prior to 1998 the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee (AVCC) developed national credit transfer arrangements for holders of VET qualifications with participating universities. This provided 33 per cent credit for a diploma in a related three-year undergraduate course, or 25 per cent credit for a diploma in a related four-year undergraduate course. However, this may not be a block credit because of differences in course structures between universities and TAFE. Since then universities have extended these arrangements but they have to be contacted individually to identify local credit transfer arrangements. The AVCC and the

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60   ANTA, *Exhibit No. 125.*

61   Gardener, M., 2002, *The Review of Pathways Articulation through the post-compulsory years of school to further education, training and labour market participation.* Queensland Department of Employment and Training, and Department of Education, 2002, p. 14.

62   Queensland Studies Authority Tertiary Entrance, Questions about overall position, <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/TertiaryEntrance/faqs/ops.html>.

63   Mr Bernie Fitzimons, Senior Education Adviser, Catholic Education Office, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2003, Adelaide, p. 1056.

64   ANTA, 2003, *High Level Review of Training Packages. Current Realities of Training Packages: Summary of key themes emerging from Phase Two.* ANTA, p. 19.

Commonwealth Government are sponsoring initiatives to encourage wider recognition.[65]

6.56   However, there is a perception that recognition and credit arrangements are poor.[66] Articulation is more evident in newer universities and dual sector institutions. Other research from the Training Package review concluded that successful relationships:

> can be found in senior college, where TAFE and senior high schools work together; in dual sector provision, as in combined university and TAFE institutions; in other emerging structures; and in local articulation arrangements of VET qualification into university degrees. Many of these successes are based not so much on national policy development but on local partnerships and collaborations that have emerged in contextual settings.[67]

6.57   This success through partnership and collaboration can be seen as a reflection of the importance of local and regional decision making. However, the Committee believes that the local arrangements should be facilitated more at a central policy level. If government and education authorities are advocating seamless pathways then improving the VET to university route is essential to provide another option for students in school so decision points are not so crucial in senior secondary years.

Summary

6.58   Suggestions to the Committee included the need to develop nationally consistent protocols for the formal recognition of student learning, qualifications and articulation pathways, by schools, the VET sector, universities and industry.[68] Other witnesses made similar comments that national uniform recognition of VET qualifications towards post-school entry would be of significant benefit.[69] However, this should not be at the cost of altering VET programs, resulting in alienating students (such as Jobs Pathway Programme participants) who would be unlikely to pursue a higher education pathway.[70]

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65   Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2003, AVCC National TAFE-University Credit Transfer Schemes,<www.avcc.edu.au/students/credit_transfer/acts.htm>.

66   Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, Treasurer, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1155; Mr Rex Hewett, Federal TAFE Secretary, Australian Education Union, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1214.

67   ANTA, 2003, *High Level Review of Training Packages. – Phase 1 Report. Changing Complexity and Interrelationships of Education and Training Sectors*, ANTA, p. 34.

68   Vocational Pathways Pty Ltd, *Submission No. 8*, p. 3.

69   Mr Rex Hewett, Federal TAFE Secretary, Australian Education Union, *Transcript of Evidence*, Melbourne, 2 September 2003, p. 1215.

70   Mr David Hawkey and Ms Lorna Hawkey, *Submission No. 40*, pp. 1-2.

6.59   The Committee notes that the major difficulties would be gaining
        agreement from the universities and from state and territory education
        authorities to a uniform approach. The National Working Group's
        identification of critical areas to address in recognition in 2001 are still
        appropriate in 2004. That is:

- Remove the barriers that assessment procedures for VET in
  Schools courses can set up for students wanting to keep their
  post-school options open, including the option for going to
  university
- Seek consistent quality and application of the NTF across
  Australian secondary schools
- Expand university admissions processes to recognise VET in
  schools achievement
- Promote the benefits and value of recognised VET in schools for
  all senior secondary students.[71]

6.60   The lack of uniform arrangements for the crediting of students' school VET
        studies towards tertiary entrance is a serious problem, which will continue
        to act as a disincentive to many students who might otherwise consider
        VET courses at school. The Committee welcomes the initiatives referred to
        above. Given that there has recently been some agreement in terms of
        uniform curriculum outcomes, the Committee encourages efforts to
        achieve greater consistency in pursuing the removal of barriers of
        assessment and the expansion of university admission processes for VET
        in Schools. The Committee urges state and territory, Commonwealth and
        university participation in such developments.

Recommendation 15

**The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Education
Minister coordinate educational authorities and universities to
accelerate work on nationally consistent approaches to developing
tertiary recognition arrangements for VET in Schools courses.**

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71   ANTA, *Exhibit No. 125*, Introduction.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and ANTA take action to provide greater recognition of TAFE qualifications for university entrance, so that this becomes a viable pathway to higher education for those pursuing VET options at and after school.

Successful examples

6.61   The news is not all bad, and there are many examples of staff and organisations managing the growth in programs and responding innovatively to the challenges of developing pathways to assist young people through education to post-school options. Examples of successful cross-sector arrangements were provided to the Committee in an established campus at Centralian College in Alice Springs, at Tooloola State High School in Gladstone, Queensland, and a recently purpose built campus at Mandurah Secondary College in Western Australia.

6.62   Centralian College is a multi-sector institution formed by an amalgamation in 1993. It offers senior secondary, vocational education and training and higher education courses. These courses are delivered either on the main campus in Alice Springs, in formal settings in other Northern Territory regional population centres (including Darwin) or in remote communities.[72]

6.63   The Gladstone schools have made significant progress with a regional initiative, Links for Excellence in Engineering. The program consists of partnerships between schools, business, TAFE and the university sector. As part of that relationship transport and Information Communication and Technology (ICT) resources have been developed to enable cross-campus access and cross-sector student enrolment and staff sharing.[73]

6.64   Other features of this arrangement also include alternative pathways to gain university entrance by the completion of School-based New Apprenticeships (SBNAs). The Committee heard that there are very strong relationships in the education sector within Gladstone. A key element of this is the strength of partnerships with industry. Central Queensland University has signed a memorandum of understanding with Tooloola State High for a pilot to develop engineering excellence. This is to aid the transition of school leavers into university. The university is also

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72   Centralian College, *Submission No. 30*, p. 1.

73   Gladstone Schools and Industry Network, *Submission No. 28*, pp. 11-12, *see also Exhibit No. 9.*

examining ways in which there might be guaranteed entry if a school leaver manages to satisfy certain predefined requirements.[74]

6.65   In Western Australia the Committee visited Mandurah Senior College in the city of Mandurah in August 2003, and was impressed by the cooperative commitment to *Pathways for Learning,* which is summarised over.

Peel Education and TAFE Campus, Western Australia

Mandurah Senior College commenced operations in February 2001 as the sole provider of government schooling for Years 11 and 12 students. The student population at Mandurah Senior College in February 2002 was 986 students, which has enabled the College to offer a wide range of educational programs. Four years ago, 8.6 per cent of the student population participated in VET programs, growing to 73 per cent in August 2003.

The College shares the Peel Education and TAFE Campus with Challenger TAFE and Murdoch University and is Australia's first co-located school. More involvement with the university came when the College opened, with a number of combined courses being offered between the three sectors, allowing for seamless learning through its *Pathways for Learning* concept. The three partners have negotiated arrangements to share facilities on site, such as ICT infrastructure, workshops, library, Food Technology Centre, Arts Centre and cafeteria.

The strength of the three institutions is described as being in the development of fields of study and pathways of learning. The organisations have concentrated on assisting young people from the secondary through to the university sector and accessing a number of opportunities through TAFE as an alternative entry into university.

An example that demonstrates the process is in Information Communication Technology. Students can come into the secondary system either university bound or non- university bound. They can complete Certificate I or Certificate II as part of their normal educational program and, that opens up the opportunity to do Certificate III with Challenger TAFE as an extension to their educational program while they are at Mandurah Senior College. As a result of the package, a student would complete secondary graduation; possibly have a tertiary entrance score if they are university bound; have a Certificate III qualification through Challenger TAFE, and also have access to complete two vendor courses, one in ARIES and one in CISCO.

Students can then go on and do the Certificate IV Diploma with Challenger TAFE on this site, which then opens up the opportunity to apply to Murdoch University and get credit for that program or pursue a business degree in IT in about half the normal time. The role with Murdoch University on site has been to build a UniTrack program, where students who are completing economics Year 12 tertiary entrance also have the opportunity to complete the first year economics university unit as part of that program.

The relationship with Challenger TAFE being on site is described as very beneficial and the opportunity to both auspice and profile hours with a whole range of VET subjects opens up opportunities and gives students experience in working with TAFE lecturers and building TAFE qualifications prior to completing Year 12.[75]

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74   Associate Professor Robert Prater, Head of Campus, Central Queensland University, Gladstone Campus, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2003, Gladstone, QLD, p. 425.

75   Mr Keith King, Principal, Mandurah Senior College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 4 August 2003, Mandurah, WA, pp. 864-866.

6.66   Other examples of proposed improved cross-sector arrangements include
        the proposed relocation of the Tropical North Queensland TAFE -
        Atherton Campus to the high school site. The partnership between
        Atherton State High School and the TAFE will strengthen secondary-TAFE
        links and build cooperation between Education Queensland and training
        providers. It is proposed that, among other aims, the co-location will:

        ■ provide a better coordinated education and training precinct for school
          students and community members;

        ■ support school students to 'mix and match' pathways, including
          vocational education, to encourage them to remain at school or in
          training; and

        ■ increase the exchange of teaching ideas and strategies between the staff
          of both educational sectors, which will provide a richer educational
          experience for TAFE and high school students.[76]

6.67   The Committee notes these very positive developments to maximise the
        use of physical infrastructure resources and encourage interchange and
        improved pathways. However, unless the funding differences are resolved
        tensions will persist to the detriment of cooperative arrangements and
        cultural change.

6.68   The development of multi-purpose campuses is not suitable for every
        environment, and Gladstone provides an example of successful regional
        development without co-location, but that initiative does involve the
        development of an industry specific skill centre to support engineering. In
        rural and remote areas such co-location is not possible and strategies that
        are successful in urban and large regional settings are not viable in more
        geographically dispersed communities with lower student numbers. The
        use of clusters is an example of one strategy that has been successful in
        some regions but less so in other rural and remote communities.

6.69   The Committee was impressed by the innovative approaches to
        addressing cross-sectoral issues that it saw, and by the obvious
        commitment by staff to providing students with pathway options best
        suited to their particular circumstances. The Committee believes that such
        approaches should be considered wherever possible, both in the
        realignment of existing educational services and in the development of
        new facilities.

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76   Queensland Government, *Submission No. 93,* p. 30.

Work placements and clusters

6.70   Another critical system factor affecting the quality of vocational education, and specifically VET in Schools, is the funding and arrangements to support work placements. Cluster arrangements allow the central coordination of structured workplace learning which enables students to access a comprehensive database of industry learning experiences, increasing their potential for securing appropriate work placements.

6.71   A significant benefit of clusters is the reduction in the time spent by teachers on the logistics of organising students to be in different schools. An example was given to the Committee in South Australia of the Southern Vocational College, a group of secondary schools in a cluster arrangement, where the clustering and coordination is managed through a central office based in one of the schools, to deliver or generate a range of programs.[77] Some clusters, such as Careerlink in Western Australia, are only involved in work placements; others combine work placements with coordinating program delivery.[78]

6.72   The management, requirements and support of structured work placements differ across states and territories, as discussed in Chapter 5. The most significant areas of concern identified by the VETnetwork were the travel and insurance costs of work placements and the competition for work placements, resulting in difficulty obtaining placements.[79] The organisation of the placements is dependent on a range of factors such as business and industry requirements, time availability of students and requirements for hours identified in training packages.

6.73   Industry, as represented by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), sees business participation in work placements as a significant component of vocational education and training, and is keen to continue representation on matters related to the Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework.[80] As highlighted from *The Cost of VET in Schools* survey discussed earlier in this chapter, industry views its partnership as integral to quality vocational education.

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77   Mr Ross Treadwell, Assistant Director, School and Preschool Technologies, SA Department of Education and Children's Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 August 2003, Hindmarsh, SA, p. 1020.

78   *For example*: Careerlink, WA, focuses on industry placements: Mrs Kathleen Davey, Executive Officer, CareerLink, Catholic and Independent Schools Cluster, *Transcript of Evidence,* 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 971; Hobart Education Business Training Partnership, provides a range of services from coordination of delivery to work placement services. HEBTP, *Submission No. 22*, pp. 1-2.

79   VETnetwork, *Submission No. 27*, p. 3.

80   Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Submission No. 95*, p. 24.

6.74   The submission of the South Australian Government noted the growth of systems in schools to manage work placements and the individual programs of students who need to achieve VET course outcomes.[81] Work placements are managed in a variety of ways including school management, school cluster management or external organisation of placements. Similar to a range of other issues involving VET provision, the best strategy depends on the local situation. Although cluster arrangements may work well in urban school settings, regional and rural settings may require different approaches. The Construction Industry Training Board in South Australia described well structured and monitored work placements as a key component of a quality VET program.[82]

6.75   Considerable debate has occurred on whether work placements should be mandated. NSW and Tasmania require VET students to participate. Hellyer College in Devonport, Tasmania, for example, manages this process by using college staff to seek work placements and workplace contacts:

> VET students at Hellyer College have the opportunity to participate in up to 240 hours or 30 days of workplace training. The nature of the workplacement program is determined in consultation with the needs of each specific industry, eg: Retail and Hospitality are one day a week in the workplace; Engineering prefers block of time; other programs run a combination of block and one day a week workplacements. The Hellyer College timetable is tailored to enable students to be in a workplace with minimal disruption to other studies.[83]

Regional factors

6.76   Students participate in vocational education in rural and remote areas in a higher proportion than in urban areas, and this has assisted with increasing retention rates.[84] VET plays a key role in sustaining a local workforce and viable employment outcomes, often through small business opportunities.[85] How VET is managed and supported in these areas is crucial to ensuring future pathways for young people.

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81   South Australian Government, *Submission No. 97*, p. 20.
82   Construction Industry Training Board, *Submission No. 37*, p. 9.
83   Hellyer College, *Submission No. 105*, p. 1.
84   NCVER, *Submission No. 82*, p. 4; Mrs Cheryl McDivitt, VET in Schools Development Officer, Hellyer College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2003, Burnie, Tasmania, p. 1352.
85   Mr Geoff Bloom, Executive Director, Rural Skills Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 August 2003, Canberra, p. 1139.

6.77   Tasmania, in particular, has explored ways in which VET in Schools might
        be used to encourage rural students to stay on at school. VET in Schools
        programs for Year 11 students now involve eighteen rural high schools
        and district high schools, in addition to the senior colleges.[86] There has
        been an increase in specialised programs, particularly in rural and remote
        areas where schools feel a need to adapt a program to the particular
        industry needs in their area and their own timetable and resourcing
        constraints. The Rural Retention Program supports three officers with the
        role of supervising and coordinating VET in Schools in rural districts.

6.78   Funding by the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEF)
        reflected the intent to promote the development of locally shaped plans
        and priorities. In the 2000-01 Budget an additional $9.285 million was
        provided to ECEF for a four year program to extend its Work-placement
        Coordinator arrangements into regional and remote areas of central and
        northern Australia, including the Northern Territory, Queensland and
        Western Australia.[87] With the transfer of ECEF functions to DEST plans for
        funding appear set to continue in this vein with future expansion into
        remote areas.[88]

6.79   The cluster arrangement is not seen to be as successful in rural and remote
        areas. Rural communities have difficulties in developing clusters and these
        clusters require the support of elaborate and costly transport
        arrangements. There are extra costs incurred in delivering vocational
        programs to regional and rural communities.[89] The Principal of Junee High
        School gave an example of the impact of requiring clusters in a rural area
        of NSW:

>   It is very much an urban model. You do not want workplace
>   coordinators competing with each other for employers in the major
>   centres. But it is a purely artificial link between our three towns.
>   There is not that competition neither because of distance nor
>   because of any social or economic ties. Junee is basically a satellite
>   of Wagga, and our transport and our work placement is all in that
>   direction. We believe that the work placement [coordinators] ought
>   to be within the school. VET is a mainstream part of the
>   curriculum, and the staffing of it ought to be a mainstream activity.
>   We should have workplace coordinators.[90]

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86   Tasmanian Government, *Submission No. 92*, pp. 2, 11.

87   DEST, *Submission No. 75*, p. 38.

88   Mr Tony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, Department of Education,
     Science and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 November 2003, Canberra, p. 1424.

89   Victorian Farmers' Federation, *Submission No. 43*, p. 3.

90   Mr Lee Wright, Principal, Junee High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 July 2003, Junee, NSW,
     p. 726.

6.80   Rural and remote locations have additional challenges in providing vocational education to their communities. Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia have a geographically dispersed population. For example, 56 per cent of Queenslanders live outside the capital city. VET programs are described as playing a pivotal role in aiding young people to progress from school to further education, training or employment. Due to relative isolation schools can be hundreds of kilometres from the nearest TAFE institute or private training provider. Many of these schools have difficulty accessing a broad range of employers to be involved in VET in Schools programs.[91]

6.81   In many rural areas, schools may be the only accessible VET providers, and may have a limited range of curriculum offerings. While this places considerable pressures on the school, it also enables the school to enhance community partnerships and establish networks with the community, employers and other education and training sectors. However, the opportunity to undertake the employment component of the school-based apprenticeship or traineeship is virtually non-existent in many rural and remote areas. The AEU recommends that special programs need to be established, with the employment component provided by government.[92]

6.82   Suggestions to the Committee on how to manage workplace components in rural areas and industries included the use of seasonal work and block work placements. Such placements may include holiday periods, which would then require alternative assessment arrangements to be made rather than by teachers. Block placements could reduce the amount of other work missed by the student and reduce the impact on other programs. This would also enable students to travel to or from rural areas to obtain work in their area of interest. Other strategies suggested include providing accommodation incentives for the employer.[93]

6.83   Research by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research has indicated that:

> The school VET purpose pathway to local employment appeared to be largely successful in terms of retaining students who otherwise may have left school early and improving their perceptions of their literacy and numeracy skills. It also provided for work placement students a pathway to local apprenticeships and a greater incidence of still living in the community two to three years later.[94]

91   Queensland Government, *Submission No. 93*, pp. 29-30.
92   AEU, *Submission No. 72*, pp. 58-59.
93   South Australian Farmers' Federation, *Submission No. 64*, p. 4.
94   NCVER, *Submission No. 82*, Attachment 3, *Exhibit No. 22*, p. 26.

6.84   Despite the barriers, there are many examples of small communities successfully delivering VET to young people. In Queensland, for example, a high school in the Darling Downs with 131 senior students offers ten different VET qualifications, and another school in the Cape and Gulf district with only 61 senior students offered nine qualifications in 2002.

6.85   The Committee was told that it is essential that rural and remote areas have access to support services and that they are not just available in the cities. It is acknowledged that it is more expensive to have some vocational education programs outside urban centres, but rural communities and young people should not be disadvantaged.[95] Given the favourable outcomes achieved so far support must continue and be enhanced.

6.86   A further alternative of relevance to rural and remote areas is the possibility of expanding the programs offered through distance education. The work of TAFE's Open Learning Institute in Queensland is suggested as a successful model, especially if supplemented by work placement in regional centres.[96]

6.87   In summary, the Committee notes that additional support is required to assist rural and remote communities:

> It is essential that students are not disadvantaged in the VET in Schools options available to them simply because of where they live. [97]

Funding arrangements for work placements

6.88   Other funding issues arose in Queensland, which were described as beyond local schools' control. The involvement of Local Area Cluster Programs such as ECEF clusters combined with Jobs Pathway Programmes (JPP) led to different costing arrangements that would disadvantage those schools in clusters that did not have a JPP. This affected forty out of fifty clusters.[98] Further consideration of additional support for schools such as the Jobs Pathway Programmes is discussed in Chapter 9.

6.89   The issue of the longevity of funding arrangements arose through the Committee's consultation with schools and organisations managing work placements. The lack of certainty of funding from one year to the next was described as problematic for many organisations:

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95   Mr Geoff Bloom, Executive Director, Rural Skills Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 August 2003, Canberra, p. 1139.

96   SCISCO, *Submission No. 59*, p. 3.

97   Queensland Government, *Submission No. 93*, p. 30.

98   Queensland Catholic Education Commission, *Submission No. 66*, pp. 3-4.

> From year to year, it is always a struggle in terms of ECEF funding for our structured work placement. You are chewing your fingernails as to whether you are going to get that so that you can continue your structured work placement for next year or whether you are going to have to dig deeper into the budget somewhere to be able to fund those things. So some certainty around the delivery of that would be great.[99]

6.90   Additionally, there was considerable criticism of the reporting requirements of the ECEF work placement funding. In Tasmania, Mr Michael Brakey, Principal of Hellyer College, commented that of the $20,000 received from ECEF, the college expended one third in meeting the requirements for receiving those funds. Acquittal of ANTA funding, on the other hand, was done more efficiently on a state-wide basis. The administrative requirements were a disincentive to participate in the ECEF program.[100]

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the period of funding for providers of work placement coordination be extended to a triennium basis in order to provide greater certainty and continuity of programs.

Employer involvement

6.91   The accessibility and availability of work placements has been discussed in Chapter 5. Suggestions were made that incentives should be given to employers to encourage them to take students on structured work placements. There is an additional cost to employers who participate in structured workplace learning programs but they receive no monetary incentives or tax concessions for the costs involved. However, employers who take on a School-based New Apprenticeship do receive financial incentives.[101] Access to structured work placements improves the quality

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99   Mr Jeffrey Major, Delegate for Geebung and Stafford District Principals, Queensland Secondary Principals Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, Brisbane, 9 April 2003, p. 372.

100   Mr Michael Brakey, Principal, Hellyer College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2003, Burnie, Tasmania, p. 1345.

101   Where employers take on School-based New Apprentices' monetary incentives encourage participation and cover a component of the employer's costs. Evidence to the inquiry prior to late 2002 highlighted problems with the incentives provided. From 1 July 2003 these were resolved following changes announced in September 2002. Dr Brendan Nelson, Minister for

of VET outcomes and encourages employers to employ school students as employees or as apprentices or trainees.[102]

6.92   The Committee recognises the costs involved but is also mindful of the contribution that students make, and the significant proportion of employers who have commented that they have recruited staff following work placements, thereby reducing the employer's recruitment costs. The Committee is also hesitant to introduce another level of bureaucracy but suggests that it is a possible area of further research.

6.93   Criticism was also made of the lack of government agency participation in providing work placement opportunities. In regional centres this would provide substantial assistance to schools and cluster coordinators, as many work placements occur in small business, and with the push to increase the number and quality of work placement experiences this is a potential target.[103] More discussion of employer involvement in vocational education is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Recommendation 18

> **The Committee recommends that agencies at all levels of government be encouraged to participate in supporting work experience and structured work placements.**

Location and transport

6.94   The Committee heard throughout the course of the inquiry that the cost of transport to work or training sites can act as a barrier to participation, for both teacher supervisors and for students. Within regional or urban centres the age of students and the access to businesses create challenges for students and schools to ensure attendance and participation in programs and work placements. ECEF identified this as a key factor affecting the impact of vocational education in schools.[104] As an example, in Wagga Wagga, the largest regional centre in NSW, transport is an issue more so for particular industries.

Education, Science and Training, *Cutting Red Tape – New Apprenticeships business incentive simplified*, media release, 26 September 2002, MIN 184/02.

102   Association of Independent Schools of Queensland, *Submission No. 81*, p. 11.

103   Mrs Helen Renshaw, Workplace Coordinator, Wagga Wagga Compact, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 July 2003, Wagga Wagga, NSW, p. 824.

104   ECEF, *Submission No. 84*, p. 48; *see also* Greater Green Triangle Area Consultative Committee, *Submission No. 4*, p. 1.

> In the hospitality industry you have to work split shifts. That is a problem when they do not have access to transport and most of them are not old enough to have a car and a licence, because they have to get to and from work at all sorts of different hours.[105]

6.95 Where there are sufficient student numbers more coordination is possible for the delivery of programs. In South Australia, for example, some students travel by organised bus or public transport to other schools in the broader region who offer different VET programs. This has been facilitated by organising cluster arrangements.[106]

6.96 A school's location can severely restrict its students' access to training and to workplace learning.[107] Transport issues are amplified in more rural or remote areas:

> Another concern for Temora is that it is wonderful to have skill centres in Wagga and skill centres in Young, but our students cannot access those because of the transport and the time it takes to get to those centres, so we have to provide our own facilities.[108]

6.97 The alternative strategy of using TAFE facilities has problems when the programs offered by the local TAFE campus are also limited. If students wish to access programs in centres at some distance then schools may pay for that transport. Transport was described as an issue for a NSW regional district looking at paying students to access, on the basis of equity, courses which are a long way away. Temora High School described the use of buses and taxis for taking students to courses at TAFE, 85 kilometres away at Wagga Wagga.[109] Even in Alice Springs, organising transport to the local TAFE provider costs Alice Springs High School in the vicinity of $10,000 per year.[110] Similarly in Western Australia, ANTA funding sustains the transport of students.[111]

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105 Mrs Janice Nulty, Hospitality Teacher, Wagga Wagga High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 July 2003, Wagga Wagga, NSW, p. 812.

106 Mr RossTreadwell, Assistant Director, School and Preschool Technologies, SA Department of Education and Children's Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, Hindmarsh, SA, 6 August 2003, p. 1020.

107 The Hamilton and Alexandra College, *Submission No. 1,* p. 4.

108 Mr Christopher Grant, Principal, Temora High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 July 2003, Junee, NSW p. 722.

109 Mr Christopher Grant, Principal, Temora High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 July 2003, Junee, NSW, p. 737.

110 Mr Justin Emerson, Teacher, Future Directions, Alice Springs High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 May 2003, Alice Springs, NT, p. 655.

111 Mr John Nelson, Post-Compulsory Education Consultant, Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 950; *see also* SWISlink *Submission No. 77*, p. 2.

6.98   Strategies adopted to address distance issues in work placements involve using local businesses first and delaying the student's work placement until the student is old enough in Year 12 to gain their license to drive.[112] Again, the transport and costs associated are exacerbated in remote regions. The Committee visited Nyangatjatjara College in Central Australia, a school specifically for Indigenous students, and the Principal, Mr Ian White, commented on the enormous expense in communications and transport, moving people around in vehicles to visit satellite campuses in outlying communities and accessing Centralian College facilities in Alice Springs. A strong argument has been made for Nyangatjatjara College to gain its own RTO status to ensure that more programs can be delivered on-site to reduce expenses and ensure that students have sufficient support to complete the programs.[113]

6.99   Transport to and accommodation in a regional centre adds major costs for a block of training. In Queensland, for example, it costs $1500 per student for students at Thursday Island State High School to fly to Cairns for one week of structured workplace experience in industries that are not available locally.[114]

6.100   In some industries, business has assisted with transport and accommodation requirements to place students in remote areas. The Western Australian Chamber of Minerals and Energy, in its Adopt a School/Adopt a Mine program has four partnerships in place to assist with structured work placements. This is partly supported through the Western Australian Education and Training Department, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy and participating mines. Issues being faced within these partnerships are practicalities associated with the distance, the expense, the site locations themselves and the limited number of participants who are actually able to engage in the program because of those issues. Duty of care, responsibility and insurance issues need to be resolved with the Department of Education and Training. The Committee supports the extension of similar schemes.

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112   Mrs Marie Knight, Vocational Education Coordinator, Junee High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 July 2003, Junee, NSW p. 746.

113   Mr Ian White, Principal, Nyangatjatjara College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 May 2003, Yulara, NT, p. 671.

114   Queensland Government, *Submission No. 93*, p. 29.

Adopt a School/Adopt a Mine, Western Australia

The Adopt a School/Adopt a Mine program began in 1999 with a partnership between Kanowna Belle Gold Mines and Churchland Senior High School, a northern suburbs high school in Perth. It started with a vocational mining module based around a structured workplace learning. It involves 120 hours of work, which students undertake in a block placement, where they are out of school for two weeks and working on site. They participate in a twelve-hour shift and the shift patterns that exist on site. There are restrictions according to safety and age.

Partnerships have developed between Lesmurdie Senior High School and Goldfields Australia, between the Swan Education District Office and Black Swan Nickel, which is also in the goldfields, and most recently between Perth Education District Office and Sons of Gwalia. Four partnerships are working at the moment, with up to ten students participating per year. Teachers can also participate in a two-week block placement.

There is a contributory fund for the facilitation of partnerships. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy contributes up to $5000, the companies themselves cover the balance of costs in accommodation and travel to and from the site. As the partnerships are Perth based it is an expensive proposition to get students to sites. They also cover the costs of meals and transport to and from the base where they are accommodated to the actual mine site. Some of the schools have asked students to contribute financially as well, perhaps $100 or $120 per student.[115]

6.101   An alternative strategy in less remote regions has been the purchase of a small bus to transport students (Years 8 to 12) between industrial sites and further training and education facilities. In Queensland Comalco has been involved in a partnership between education authorities and Tooloola High School to fund a bus.[116] However, another school twenty kilometres away still has similar transport issues. Other suggestions include increased access to online resources.

6.102   More broadly, the inability of young people to access safe, appropriate, reliable and cost-effective transport has been regularly highlighted in projects across the country as a barrier to young people accessing training and employment opportunities. The Dusseldorp Skills Forum (DSF) initiated a Transport for Young People project 2002/2003. One project in Victoria that was included was the Wimmera VET bus that assists students from eight Wimmera secondary colleges to travel to and from their training. Previously they had to rely solely on parents to transport them to the VET venues, thus excluding many students from accessing this opportunity. The young people are required to arrive at Horsham and Longerenong each Wednesday morning to meet their VET course requirements. Some students travel distances of up to 260 kilometres per day return journey. Yarriambiack Shire Council has appointed a Transport

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115   Mr Eamon Moore, Executive Officer, Education, Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 958.

116   Miss Robyn Sermon, Community Relations Superintendent, Comalco, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2003, Gladstone, QLD, p. 427; and Gladstone Schools and Industry Network, *Exhibit No. 9*, p. 12.

Coordinator to oversee the administration of the scheme. Funding has also been sought from state bodies to support the program, which has been enthusiastically supported by students.[117]

6.103   Other submissions to the inquiry support extending bus pass usage to work placements and other educational providers to assist students in regional areas such as the Macleay Valley in NSW.[118] Barriers to funding to assist with transport in regional, rural and remote areas need to be addressed.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities investigate and develop strategies to support rural and remote communities' transport needs and, where necessary, provide increased travel and accommodation assistance to allow more isolated students to access VET courses.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that an evaluation of the role of cluster workplace coordinators be undertaken for the purpose of:

- **increasing their effectiveness in forming the critical links between schools and industry;**

- **establishing structures to improve cooperative approaches between education and employment services in the community;**

- **assisting them to meet the increasing demand for work placements while also addressing the areas of local skill shortages;**

- **ensuring that rural and remote area needs are being met; and**

- **determining what extra resources and training are needed to effectively carry out this role, with the Commonwealth providing those extra resources.**

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117   Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2003, *Forum on transport and young people in rural and regional Australia*, pp. 12-15, <http://www.dsf.org.au/transport/forum.htm>.

118   Macleay Valley Workplace Learning Centre, *Submission No. 69*, p. 12; South Australian Farmers' Federation, *Submission No. 64*, p. 5; Victorian Farmers' Federation*, Submission No. 43*, p. 3; Nyangatjatjara College, *Submission No. 24*, p. 2.

| **Recommendation 21** |

The Committee recommends that relevant authorities address issues regarding work placements such as occupational health and safety, workers compensation, and clarifying the responsibilities of supervisors, which may be acting as barriers to more employers offering work placements.

Human resources

6.104   As noted in Chapter 5, the skill of the teachers and the quality of the programs are critical to the credibility of vocational education in schools.[119] The lack of industry experience of teachers has been cited as a major concern by industry.

6.105   The provision of vocational education and training does not appear to be determined by employment demand, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Rather, enrolments seem to reflect student interest and the capacity of schools to deliver, based on infrastructure, resourcing and teacher availability.

6.106   As outlined in submissions and oral evidence to the Committee, teachers involved in vocational education have heavy workloads that limit the time available for, and access to, professional development. This lack of access may have the effect of delaying the incorporation of vocational education and general education into a holistic framework. Associated with workload concerns is insufficient resourcing for the employment of suitably qualified teaching staff and coordinators. The availability of such staff was frequently reported as limited, affecting the provision of programs.

6.107   It was suggested that the reduced availability of teachers is associated with:

  ■ the increasing age of the teaching profession and a reluctance to take on additional demanding tasks;

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119   *See also* Professor Graham Dellar, Dean, Faculty of Education, Language Studies and Social Work, Curtin University of Technology, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 934; Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association, *Submission No. 45*, p. 3, *and* South Australian Farmers' Federation, *Submission No. 64*, p. 3.

- the reduced number of technical teachers that have been trained, for example in woodwork and construction;[120]

- lack of critical competence in VET teachers – especially in IT and specialist professional areas;[121]

- the criticism by business of a perceived lack of industry-relevant expertise;[122]

- the AQTF requirements;

- the heavy workload acting as a disincentive to take on vocational requirements; and

- lack of support and status in schools for vocational education.[123]

6.108   To gain a better understanding of teacher training and skills needs, in 2002 DEST completed a project to identify teacher education programs and qualifications across Australia and to provide information on the number of initial teacher education graduates by specialisation. In 2001 14,000 new teachers were expected to complete programs from the 410 teacher education courses, with 80 per cent of graduates from NSW, Victoria and Queensland. Forty percent of the 14,000 teachers were qualified to teach in secondary schools, with small percentages of teachers undertaking specialisations that would directly assist with vocational education and training.[124]

6.109   In some fields industry professionals are undertaking teacher training to become teachers. Strategies to support greater numbers of such a workforce need to be encouraged. Disincentives are often cited,[125] such as the time taken to complete qualifications, the cost of study and the salary on completion. A national review of teaching released in 2003, *Review of Teaching and Teacher Education Final Report, Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future – Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics*, addresses many of these issues. The report concluded that:

> immediate, vigorous and coordinated action by a range of stakeholders is required in the following broad areas:
> - energising the sciences and technology and prioritising innovation in schools;
> - planning and collaboration to attract and retain quality teachers;

120 Construction Industry Training Board, *Submission No. 37*, p. 8.

121 WorkingFutures, *Submission No. 35*, p. 5.

122 South Australian Government, *Submission No. 97*, pp. 4-5; *see also* National Meat Industry Training Advisory Council, *Submission No. 16*, pp. 1-3.

123 Construction Industry Training Board, *Submission No. 37*, p. 8.

124 Ballantyne, R and Bain, J, 2002, *Teacher education courses and completions*, DEST, Executive Summary.

125 Light Manufacturing Training Australia, *Submission No. 49*, p. 4.

- revitalising the teaching profession;
- strengthening teacher education and professional learning; and
- supporting future schools through leadership, teams and partnerships.[126]

Readers are referred to the review for a more complete discussion of action areas.

6.110   Clearly, the issues identified to the Committee are national and relate to a range of teaching areas, including vocational education. However, the issue of qualified and experienced industry practitioners taking up teaching does require urgent attention to review existing barriers and disincentives, while not compromising essential requirements for teaching.

6.111   The DEST report on teacher education programs indicated that since 1999 completions of teacher education courses have increased by more than 10 per cent per year.[127] States such as Victoria have supported initiatives to attract teachers to schools, such as websites, advertising and Teaching Scholarships and Graduate Recruitment schemes. This has resulted in some success in specific difficult-to-fill subject areas and geographic locations.[128]

6.112   However, high turnover rates and requirements for VET- specific skills are still causing concerns for schools. As a response to the insufficient supply of secondary teachers who can fulfil the AQTF requirements, TAFE teachers are involved with delivery in many schools in cooperative arrangements. Challenges for TAFE teachers include the different learning and support requirements of some students. The Victorian Government has identified the need for:

- The training, resourcing and upgrading of vocational education teachers within the secondary system, including increasing their knowledge of the Australian vocational education system and policy
- The need to ensure the currency of skills of vocational education teachers in the secondary system, including knowledge of the latest industry trends
- TAFE teachers may also lack current skills in sectors where technological development is rapid
- The need for some TAFE teachers to acquire the necessary pedagogical skills for dealing with school students.[129]

126 DEST, 2003, *Review of Teaching and Teacher Education Final Report, Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future – Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics, Agenda for Action,* p. 51.

127 Ballantyne, R. and Bain, J., 2002, *Teacher education courses and completions*, DEST, Executive Summary, p. 6; <http://www.dest.gov.au/highered/eippubs/eip02_3/default.htm>.

128 Education times, *Teacher recruitment program pays dividends*, Victoria. www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/edtimes/news3.htm

129 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, p. 25.

6.113   Commenting on the lack of support for VET teachers the VETnetwork also identified a lack of recognition & appreciation by industry of what teachers do and the qualifications and training they have. The VETnetwork acknowledged that this lack of understanding also exists in the reverse, with teachers not aware of or unable to gain the experience (through return to industry) of current changes in their vocational teaching areas.[130]

6.114   The Committee is encouraged by the production of the *National Statement from the Teaching Profession on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism*[131] and the establishment in 2004 of a National Institute of Quality Teaching and School Leadership. The Institute aims to complement arrangements to support and strengthen teaching and school leadership already in place in various state and territory school systems and in the non-government sector. The aims of the Institute are likely to address professional teaching standards, professional learning for teachers and school leaders, quality assurance, research into teaching and learning, induction, mentoring and succession planning for school leaders, and other ways to improve quality and recognise achievement.[132]

Teaching and award conditions

6.115   In some jurisdictions teaching and award conditions of the secondary teaching service and the TAFE sector have been aligned. One South Australian TAFE supports cross-service between TAFE and schools to ensure that there are no industrial relations barriers.[133]

6.116   Centralian College in the Northern Territory provides another example where cross-sectoral boundaries have been eliminated. The College has its own industrial award for lecturers and educational administrators:

> This award allows the Centralian College to operate 50 weeks a year. Educational Administrator positions (equivalent to principal and assistant principal levels) have five or six weeks recreation leave per year while lecturers maintain the more traditional twelve weeks leave. Hours of work can be anytime between the hours of 0730 and 2200 weekdays without penalty payments up to a

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130 VETnetwork, *Submission No. 27*, p. 3.

131 The National Reference Group on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism, 2003, *National Statement from the Teaching Profession on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism,* http://www.austcolled.com.au/projects/teacherstandqualprof/natstmtfromteachingprofmay2003.html

132 DEST, 2003, *Review of Teaching and Teacher Education Final Report, Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future – Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics,* Executive Summary, <http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/teachingreview/exec_summary.htm>.

133 Mr Steve Kelton, Director, Regency Institute of TAFE, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2003, Adelaide, p. 1087.

maximum of thirty hours per week. This flexibility allows for students to undertake classes at more suitable times to recognise their lifestyle and can also allow lecturers to do more on the job assessment and training as they can be working during hours that are often available to students for paid employment.

Centralian College lecturers can be employed through the minimum entry provisions in the award. This provides for a series of qualification bars beyond acceptable industry experience. All lecturers at Centralian College are required to obtain a Certificate Four in Workplace Assessment to meet the new Australian Quality Training Framework. Lecturers delivering NTCE [Northern Territory Certificate of Education] Courses are required to have a formal teaching qualification. Considerable flexibility is gained by having access to a wider pool of potential staff, particularly in addressing the issue of teacher shortage that is prevalent in regional and rural areas.[134]

6.117   It was reported to the Committee that many VET staff, particularly regional coordinators, are on short-term contracts that are 'rolled over' and that there is a lack security of tenure or finances for the continuation of their positions. These arrangements do not encourage people to take on VET in Schools or to remain in it.[135]

6.118   In a survey conducted by the VETnetwork, only 3 per cent of respondents identified industrial conditions for VET teachers as a concern. It was hypothesised that this low proportion probably reflects the fact that most practitioners are within a school and awards system. Yet ECEF has quoted six months as the average time for cluster coordinators before burn-out. The meeting of basic needs is crucial to sustainability and long-term performance. The lack of an award specifically for VET teachers and coordinators is reported as a problem, particularly for those cluster coordinators employed by a regional body outside the school.[136]

I would like to see some acknowledgement of the need for relief or remuneration for people who are taking on VET.[137]

6.119   The issues discussed above focus on teaching and VET support arrangements at a system level for vocational education. Staffing arrangements are also determined within a school, subject to resourcing limits. Teachers' availability and willingness to participate in VET has been

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134 Centralian College, *Submission No. 30*, p. 3.

135 Construction Industry Training Board, *Submission No. 37*, p. 8.

136 VETnetwork, *Submission No. 27*, p. 3.

137 Mr Brian Buckley, Principal, Lockhart Central School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 July 2003, Wagga Wagga, NSW, p. 833.

described as strongly influenced by the level of support and status of VET within the school, particularly by the school leadership.

School factors

School and teacher commitment

6.120   The importance of leadership in a school community cannot be overstated. The attitudes and actions of school leaders are powerful in sending messages of support for school activities, particularly in vocational education.[138] Solutions to challenges have been described as generated more through leadership and innovation at the school and local level rather than through system leadership. An example in Wagga Wagga, NSW, provides a summary of the school support that is required for successful programs:

> Within this RTO, if I make suggestions to others across the state you can see that there is leadership in the schools, and we have tried to increase the density of that leadership in relation to VET. In RTO meetings that I have been going to for years now I have increased the numbers who attend. I now bring a deputy and my VET coordinator and I notice that the others are starting to do that as well … more people in the school have a handle on what is going on and they are a conduit for the issues that are coming up. That is where some of the strength lies. They are also able to offer support, and the support for VET teachers in the schools in Wagga is quite strong.[139]

6.121   Adequate resourcing of positions is one clear way of providing support and status for vocational education. The staff member's time may not always be spent in the classroom, as there are also significant contact requirements with the community and business. It is more than an administrative role:

> there has to be a complete redefinition of the work of at least one person in each school. They may be non-teaching. One thing that keeps haunting me is principals talking about non-contact time. I say this is not non-contact time. This person is doing other work. If

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138 ECEF, *Submission No. 84*, pp. 46-47, *and* Mr Peter Brabin, Chief Education Officer, Wagga Wagga District Office, NSW Department of Education and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 July 2003, Wagga Wagga, NSW, p. 835.

139 Mr Glyn Leyshon, Principal, Kooringal High School, Member, District Management Committee, Wagga Wagga District RTO, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 July 2003, Wagga Wagga, NSW, p. 834.

> we are talking about changing learning, that learning does not just come from the classroom but from the community, peers, work and so on; you need someone to get out and harness all those learning opportunities. So I think we are looking at having at least a full-time person in each school doing quite different work.[140]

6.122   In Queensland it was reported that some individual schools are doing vocational education work a lot better than other schools. Some have fully embraced the challenges that come with the adoption of VET and have dramatically changed the organisation of how they deliver their services to the student cohort and their work with the community.[141] The Committee visited Robina State High School on the Gold Coast and was impressed by the commitment shown in this large school. The Principal's background in VET, and the support of senior staff, indicates the type of expertise and background that assists in bringing culture change.

6.123   The Australian Eduction Union suggested that appropriate leadership, coordination and support personnel should be deployed at the central, regional/district, and school levels with staff with specific full-time responsibility for VET in Schools.[142] The balance and flexibility for all positions needs to be prioritised but given the significant expansion of VET programs more support is clearly needed. Similarly, resourcing of other aspects of vocational education also requires direction from the principal. In Western Australia, for example, the level and emphasis of career education in schools is determined by the principal.[143] Career education is discussed more fully in Chapter 8.

6.124   Strategies such as the Principals and Vocational Education in Schools (PAVES) program, which was supported through the MCEETYA Transition from School Taskforce and ECEF, were seen as good initiatives. Ensuring that principals are supported in the process of introducing and entrenching VET as a worthwhile and viable pathway is one key way to effect attitudinal change. This would probably have more influence in schools than VET coordinators and career or guidance officers.[144]

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140   Mr Bernie Fitzsimons, Senior Education Adviser, Catholic Education Office, *Transcript of Evidenc*e, 7 August 2003, Adelaide, p. 1060.

141   Mr Ken Smith, Director-General, Queensland Department of Education, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 April 2003, Brisbane, p. 309.

142   AEU, *Submission No. 72*, p. 32.

143   Mr David Carney, President, Career Education Association of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 941.

144   Ms Gabrielle Power-West, Executive Officer - Post Compulsory/Curriculum, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 April 2003, Brisbane, p. 329; Mr John Neville, Executive Member, Queensland Secondary Principals Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 April 2003 Brisbane, p. 366.

6.125   The Committee notes that efforts to engage principals in further discussion regarding best practice and the advantages of vocational education need to be supported by appropriate funding and reporting regimes. Without such support professional development activities and forums will only lead to frustration.

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that appropriate national, state and territory associations be identified to support professional development and forums to encourage principals and school leadership teams to advance the VET agenda and more fully incorporate VET into the mainstream school curriculum.

Community and business factors

6.126   Another key component in determining the effectiveness of VET in Schools is community and business involvement in providing students with opportunities for experience in a workplace.

6.127   A large part of the success of vocational education programs depends on industry and community involvement. How this is encouraged and managed is a considerable challenge to education authorities. Most industries have been developing links with schools and other education providers, such as Rural Skills Australia.[145] Many industries highlighted to the Committee the need for greater association and support for industry links, identifying the need for more vocationally oriented teachers who understood and were sympathetic to industry.[146] Other industries have particular safety concerns that need to be addressed.[147]

6.128   The credibility of VET in Schools programs with business is often associated with how much industry contact the program has, the quantity of teachers' vocational exposure,[148] school facilities and student industry

145 National Farmers' Federation, *Submission No. 91*, p. 5.

146 Victorian Electrotectechnology, Printing, Information Technology and Communications (EPIC) Industry Training Board, *Submission No. 13*, p. 6.

147 National Meat Industry Council, *Submission No. 16*, p. 1.

148 Australian Industry Group, *Submission No. 76*, pp. 7, 9.

participation.[149] Concerns were expressed to the Committee on the quality of the programs offered, owing to:

- teacher qualifications and experience in industry;
- infrastructure in terms of facilities and resources;
- RTO status;
- the type of work placements; and
- the length of work placements.[150]

6.129 Another concern of industry is the format of the delivery of the VET in Schools. Industry generally prefers the more transparent stand alone delivery, which more closely mirrors post-school sector methods. The perception is that non-VET elements of subjects can overwhelm the embedded VET and assessment may not be appropriately competency based. Assessment authorities believe this perception to be unfounded given the AQTF requirements.[151]

Addressing the concerns of industry

6.130 In addressing the concerns of industry a major factor on a systemic level has been the range of perspectives that industry provides. For example, the Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) comments that it is difficult to provide one view of what industry needs or expects from VET in Schools. However, it is generally accepted that young people leaving school should have a mix of job specific, generic and underpinning employment related skills.[152] The Committee notes that determining the balance of that mix is a key challenge.

6.131 One response by education authorities to the concerns expressed on the quality of programs has been to ensure that the AQTF requirements as originally applied in the broader VET sector are being met in each jurisdiction. Additional auditing training has been provided to encourage greater standardisation in audit requirements across the states and territories, and to ensure that schools as RTOs are meeting registration requirements.

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149 Australian Seafood Industry Council, *Submission No. 33*, pp. 1-2.

150 See for example: ECEF, *Submission No. 84*, pp. 55-60; Construction Training Queensland, *Submission No. 14*, p. 2; PPTC Skills, *Submission No. 17*, p. 1; EE-Oz Training Standards, *Submission No. 41*, p. 5.

151 Mr Malcolm Salier, Chair, Australasian Curriculum Assessment and Certification Authorities, *Transcript of Evidence,* 1 October 2004, Hobart, p. 1387; ANTA*, Submission No. 90*, p. 30; ECEF, *Submission No. 84*, p. 56.

152 Australian Industry Group, *Submission No. 76*, p. 2.

6.132   Much of the focus has been at the input stage, to provide appropriately qualified and experienced staff, and industry standard facilities, as this has been a major concern of industry. Group Training Australia's view is that:

> employers are often dubious about the quality of the training being provided in schools by school teachers who are generally seen to lack any real industry experience and often train using facilities and equipment inferior to that which would be available in TAFE.[153]

6.133   Industry has been generally satisfied with schools involved in Certificate I qualifications, with increasing concerns about the capability of schools delivering Certificate II and III.[154] In addition, industry is concerned about the content and delivery of competencies. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry endorses the use of industry developed Training Packages for the delivery of VET in Schools and does not support the customisation of the Training Packages.[155] Ai Group's primary concern is the capacity of schools to deliver Training Package outcomes where School-based New Apprenticeships (requiring contracts of training) are not involved. As stated in the Ai Group submission, for the manufacturing sector the understanding of workplace competence is a central concern.[156]

6.134   Therefore, a key aspect of embracing VET in Schools as a credible source of employees is the quality of the work placement. Given the difficulties already discussed in this chapter in ensuring a safe and appropriate work placement, and the increasing demands on employers, the use of simulated on-the-job assessments is widespread and has been used in the TAFE environment. However, most employers are not supportive of this approach:

> Employers highly value on-the-job learning because of the learning styles available, the direct relevance of the skills acquired and the assurance of standards of the skills imparted. From an employer perspective, the quality delivery of VET in Schools is not possible without an on-the-job learning component. There has been a trend towards simulated learning in recent years, however, it is ACCI and member's view that while simulated learning provides a good grounding in pre-employment preparation, it should not be considered as a quality substitute for on-the job learning.[157]

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153 Group Training Australia, *Submission No. 42*, p. 7.
154 ECEF, *Submission No. 84*, p. 57.
155 ACCI, *Submission No. 95*, p. 1.
156 Australian Industry Group, *Submission No. 76*, p. 3.
157 ACCI, *Submission No. 95*, p. 11.

6.135 The state and territory boards of studies represented by the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) indicated in response to this criticism that education authorities are following requirements in the Training Packages, and that if alternative assessment and on-the-job work placements are required this should be specified:

> If industry believes workplace training/assessment is integral to the demonstration of competency, then it is ACACA's view that the relevant National Training Package should specify:
>
> • the amount of workplace training/assessment that should occur; and
>
> • those units of competency which should be delivered and/or assessed in the workplace.
>
> For those units of competency which can be delivered in a simulated environment, advice should be included in Training Packages as to the nature of that simulated environment.[158]

6.136 From the Tasmanian experience, the Hobart Education Business Training Partnership comments that the most successful thing about VET in Schools in their region is the significant work placement component, which is between 120 hours and 240 hours in a year. The programs that were most successful in the Hobart area have had dedicated, involved and interested industry partners.[159]

6.137 Part of the differing expectations of what is required of work placements relates to the expectations of the objectives of VET in Schools and vocational education. If generic workplace or employability skills are the main focus then the work placement requirements would be quite different from the development of job-specific skills. Recent efforts by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Business Council of Australia to develop *Employability Skills for the Future*, should assist in presenting a preferred view of industry of vocational education in schools.

6.138 The Committee notes that in order to assure industry that VET in Schools is a legitimate vocational pathway resulting in credible qualifications with the necessary skills, considerable action is required on a range of fronts, including teacher education and industry exposure, resources, facilities and work placements.

6.139 It appears to the Committee that such a fundamental question as: What are the expectations of VET in Schools? needs to be more rigorously debated and resolved to enable a more coherent approach to vocational education.

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158 ACACA, *Submission No. 99*, p. 7.

159 Ms Penny Driessen, Executive Officer, Hobart Education Business Training Partnership, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 October 2003, Hobart, p. 1408.

The Committee acknowledges that flexibility is required to meet student needs and industry requirements, but that to sufficiently and effectively support this important schooling development requires clearer direction.

Recommendation 23

> **The Committee recommends that MCEETYA and ANTA develop a consistent national approach to structured workplace learning, with an agreed mandated minimum which meets the needs of industry and the requirements of the National Training Framework and Training Packages.**

State and industry demand

6.140   Another industry issue requiring a more systemic response is the challenge of identifying areas of demand to match young people leaving school with current and potential employment markets.

6.141   The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry advocates that VET in Schools needs to be targeted to real local job opportunities, skill shortages and future demand.[160] This is related to industry's belief that VET choices offered to students are determined by the staff expertise available in a school rather than by the local industry demand for labour.[161]

6.142   The NSW Government indicated that courses are based on industry demand and student interest. Courses are developed in close consultation with industry.[162] ECEF indicated that a number of schools believed they were 'overtraining' in relation to regional employment but that there was no easy way to seek guidance.[163]

6.143   Overtraining in specific areas and having skill shortages in other employment fields returns to the need for articulating more clearly the purpose of vocational education and VET in Schools. It also raises the question as to whether industry requirements are better served by the development of sound generic workplace skills or by particular industry-specific training. These issues will be discussed further in the next chapter.

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160   ACCI, *Submission No. 95*, p. 1.

161   ECEF, *Submission No. 84*, p. 56.

162   Mr Bert Evans, Chairman, New South Wales Board of Vocational Education and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 25 February 2003, Sydney, p. 60.

163   ECEF, *Submission No. 84*, p. 56.

6.144   The challenge of providing accurate industry guidance on prospective
        employment markets will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter,
        as there is some debate on the effectiveness of such advice and predictions.
        However, the demise of the state Industry Training Advisory Boards
        (ITABs) through the withdrawal of Commonwealth funding was raised as
        an issue with the Committee. It was noted that the state ITABS were a
        good contact point to provide information on training issues and industry
        change,[164] and their closure has the potential to seriously inhibit industry
        engagement with schools.

Summary

6.145   This chapter has provided an overview of system factors that are affecting
        the successful implementation of vocational education, and more
        specifically VET in Schools. Inadequate funding models and the lack of
        comparable costings are hampering the ability of governments to come to
        agreement on appropriate funding. This has implications for different
        government and non-government schools and cross-sector arrangements
        with TAFE.

6.146   Articulation arrangements highlight the need for increased and more
        flexible recognition practices. The crucial issue of work placements was
        considered, identifying the need for greater flexibility in cluster
        arrangements to support and coordinate, especially in regional areas. The
        need for better transport in non-urban areas was a key issue for young
        people to access programs and work placements.

6.147   The Committee believes that the provision of adequate and appropriate
        staffing is a key quality issue for the success of vocational education.
        Considerable effort needs to be directed to this area to support committed
        staff. Leadership is also a key factor in schools, and can only be fully
        effective if the aforementioned issues are addressed. Finally, industry
        factors, concerns and needs were considered.

6.148   Not all those involved in education are convinced that industry demand
        should be the main driver of vocational education:

> The temptation exists for the government education system in the
> current economic and political climate to base its programs and
> curriculum on industry demand, just as the university sector

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164   NSW Department of Education and Training, *Submission No. 94*, p. 11; Ms Penny Driessen,
      Executive Officer, Hobart Education Business Training Partnership, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1
      October 2003, Hobart, p. 1412; Dr Erica Smith, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 July 2003, Junee, NSW,
      p. 757; Don College, *Submission No. 104*, p. 3.

determination of entry requirements has influenced the direction and delivery of high level intellectual streaming in traditional schooling endeavour. However, WACSSO reiterates that the object of public education is to ensure that all children and young people develop the skills and understandings necessary to shape their own lives and to be able to contribute constructively to the social, political and economic future of Australia.[165]

6.149   This statement demonstrates the competing demands that are being made of vocational education in schools: meeting industry and societal expectations which are sometimes seen as incompatible. The Committee considers that articulating differing expectations will assist in providing guidance to schools to then discuss the objectives of vocational education in schools with their respective communities.

6.150   The next chapter elaborates on the competing needs and how some of these issues can be resolved locally and Chapter 10 considers how a national approach will further assist.

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165   Western Australian Council of State School Organisations, *Submission No. 63*, p. 10.