



Catholic Education
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Further clarification of information provided by
Catholic Education SA to the House of
Representatives Education and Training
Committee (October 2002)

Summary of Growth of VET in SA Catholic Schools (1997-2002)

Title	1997	2002
Total schools	21	29 (of 30)
Total student participation	1,081	4,280
Total hours curriculum	65,201	381,603
Average Hours per student	60.31	89.16
School-Based Apprentices	Nil	59 (138)
Total student Structured Workplace Learning	436	956

Terms of Reference:

1. *The range, structure, resourcing and delivery of vocational education programs in schools, including teacher training and the impact of vocational education and other programs.*

The data that is provided above demonstrates the significant growth that this organisation has generated through the provision of ANTA funds. However, much of this growth must be attributed to schools significantly absorbing most of the cost of VET provision rather than any assumption that VET can be delivered at less than one ANTA dollar per curriculum hour. If this absorption is to be sustained, there needs to be a recognition that:

- Catholic schools attract relatively little state government support for VET
- Schools are currently targeting expenditure on other valuable aspects of learning to foster rather than sustain VET
- Pressure for broader subject offerings within a school impact significantly on infrastructure costs
- There is a significantly greater cost than for provision of general education, if certificate completion and advanced competencies are to be delivered and assessed in a credible manner.

Issues of 'spread' include ...

- a) Various forms of recognition of VET for tertiary entrance will challenge lasting school and community resistance to VET.
- b) Similarly, there needs to be acceptance that integration of Vocational Education into mainstream subjects could increase engagement, achievement and retention. This will facilitate spread and minimise the need for new VET subjects competing with existing subjects.
- c) A more consistent level of agreement across industries and with the education sector on the level of competence that can be achieved by a senior secondary student will make VET options more appealing to a wider student group.
- d) Research to confirm outcomes from VET in Schools programs for all stakeholders that will facilitate further uptake by students. Besides accreditation, other understated outcomes include soft/employability skills, future enrolments with TAFE and other RTOs, plus improved tertiary retention through greater familiarity.

Issues of 'depth' include ...

- a) Innovative delivery and assessment arrangements between schools, RTOs and industry that enable students to access a more complete VET program that retains workability and credibility for all parties.
- b) Greater opportunities for industry placement and VET-related training within the training of new and existing teachers. This would also provide opportunities for considerable promotion of the value of structured workplace learning and mutually beneficial school-industry partnerships.
- c) There needs to be greater parity in what constitutes a particular certificate level across industries and states.
- d) If the efficiencies of aligning Commonwealth to State and local VET initiatives is to be pursued, there needs to be agreement that Catholic and other non-government schools are included within such strategies.

2. The difference between school-based and other vocational education programs and the resulting qualifications, and the pattern of industry acceptance of school-based programs.

- a) The collaborative development and implementation of the VET IN SCHOOLS ARRANGEMENTS (VISA) Operations Manual and Self-Assessment tool exemplifies the scope to ensure the credibility of school-based delivery and assessment. In this states have developed a relatively efficient and effective partnership model between schools and TAFE that generates not only the delivery and assessment of programs but also significant outcomes for student achievement, transition and retention within the broader education and training sector.
- b) Development of hybrid delivery and assessment arrangements are introducing both short-term and more sustainable, long-term workability and credibility for programs. Issues remain around the definition of a full-time secondary student and variations in delivery costs when accessing VET courses.

3. Vocational education in new and emerging industries.

The low uptake of new and less conventional programs creates problems for schools to generate classes of sufficient critical mass to justify and afford a new course. Teacher training and creation of classes across a cluster of schools provide some solutions. However, work placement and training provision for emerging industries are often limited, particularly in rural and remote areas.

A shifting focus towards a need for generic skills that are applicable in a skill/technology/knowledge market, rather than a labour market, needs to be embraced as the primary new and emerging aspect of vocational education.

Industry Training Advisory Boards have convened Industry Area Teams in this state. Such an ongoing role would be highly beneficial for the continuing development and maintenance of programs that are both workable and credible for industry, training provider and school partners.

4. The accessibility and effectiveness of vocational education for indigenous students.

The issues noted in the submission have been validated by the initial findings of a DEST project, that is currently being undertaken by this organisation, to develop models for the support required to support the successful transition of indigenous youth.

Summary

- Catholic Education supports the introduction of broader frameworks for Vocational Education and Transition of Youth (*Footprints to the Future*). However it notes that ongoing and credible delivery of VET is a crucial component of these strategies. Therefore ongoing funding and joined-up approaches will be necessary to achieve successful outcomes.
- If Commonwealth strategies are to be aligned with those of the State, there needs to be assurance that this will be inclusive of Catholic schools.
- There is a continuing gap between the cost of quality VET programs and general education. This cost cannot be fully absorbed by schools. The additional resource implications for schools to embrace changes in learning, address changing accountability requirements and the dynamic nature of training packages, identify further need for ongoing Commonwealth support.