



Your ref:

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Enquiries:

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The Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Education and Training
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: edt.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

In response to your invitation to the Premier, the Hon. Colin Barnett, the Department of Education and Training has been requested to provide input to the Standing Committee on Education and Training's *Inquiry into combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions*.

The Western Australian Department of Education and Training's response (copy attached) should be considered in parallel with responses submitted by the Curriculum Council of Western Australia. In particular, comments concerning the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) and courses may also be part of a submission from the Curriculum Council.

As the jurisdictional curriculum authority, the Curriculum Council will provide comment on policy relating to courses. The Department of Education and Training provides comment on the implementation issues related to these policies for public schools and on a range of Vocational Education and Training initiatives relating to the Terms of Reference.

In brief, an overview of the current regime in Western Australia for transition from school to work has been provided with particular reference to legislative changes introduced at the beginning of 2006 that require a young person to remain in schooling or an approved option until the end of the year in which he or she turns 17. 2008 was the first year in which the legislation was fully implemented.

I invite the Standing Committee to contact this Department for further information if required. I look forward to the release of the Inquiry's findings.

Yours sincerely



MARGERY EVANS
A/DIRECTOR GENERAL

20.1.09
Att.

cc. Shawn Boyle, Director Social Policy Unit, Western Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet

**Attachment: Submission to the Commonwealth House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Education and Training: *Inquiry into combining
schools and work: supporting successful youth transitions***

**Measures taken by the Western Australian Government to support successful
transitions**

Preliminary comment

Comments concerning the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) and their courses may also be part of a submission from the Curriculum Council of Western Australia. As the jurisdictional curriculum authority, the Curriculum Council will provide comment on policy relating to courses. The Western Australian Department of Education and Training (DET) provides comment on the implementation issues related to these policies for public schools.

Introduction

In 2005, the Western Australian *School Education Act 1999* legislation was amended to raise the school leaving age (the *Acts Amendment (Higher School Leaving Age and Related Provisions) Act 2005* (the Act 2005).

The legislation was implemented in January 2006 and raised the leaving age for a young person in Western Australia to the end of the year in which he or she reached the age of 17 years. The change was in two steps:

- from 15 to 16 years of age in 2006-07; and
- from 16 to 17 years in 2008.

The Act required that all young people in Western Australia must either attend school full-time or undertake a range of other approved options. These include:

- full-time home-based schooling; full-time enrolment in a training institution (e.g. TAFEWA or a private registered training organisation (RTO));
- engaged in an apprenticeship or traineeship;
- undertaking a Community-Based Course;
- full-time in approved employment; or
- a combination program involving part-time schooling, training and/or employment.

By December 2008, the Department of Education and Training had deployed approximately 100 fieldworkers throughout Western Australia's 14 education districts to support young people making transitions from school to work and training. All young people wishing to leave full-time schooling are required to complete a Notices of Arrangements (NoA). The NoA serves to inform the Minister of the particular pathway chosen by the young person and, unless individual circumstances are altered, remains current until the end of year in which the person turns 17 years of age.

Whilst there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that significant numbers of young people combine varying hours of part-time/casual work with full-time study, Western Australia's Department of Education and Training does not collect specific data serving to substantiate either the veracity and/or extent of such activity, where this activity may exist outside of the NoA process, unless this is used as part of the student's Work Skills Endorsed Program.

Data collection processes commenced following implementation of the Raised Leaving Age (RLA) legislation provide an indicative breakdown of the number of young people engaged in education (school), training, employment and/or combinations of these activities although only on a full-time basis.

Table 1: Indicative engagement in education or approved alternative activity

	2006 Year 11s 15-16yo	2007 Year 11s 15-16yo	2008 Year 11s 15-16 yo	2008 Year 12s 16-17 yo
School (Private & Public)	26,338	24,461	25,432	19,657
Training (e.g. TAFE)	1,939	1,943	1,538	3,668
Apprenticeships & Traineeships	n/a	876	1,200	2,692
Combinations School/Training/Work	78	80	112	196
Employment in work with prospects'	904	1,145	909	2,292

To support the combining of school and work, supporting successful youth transitions, a systemic and systematic career development and transition support services strategy will need to be implemented in schools and supported in TAFE colleges, universities, the workplace and general community.

Itemised response to Terms of Reference

Glossary of terms used in response

ASBT	Aboriginal School Based Training program
GTO	Group Training Organisation
SAL	School Apprenticeship Link
SBA	School Based Apprenticeship
SBT	School Based Traineeship
SWL	Structured Workplace Learning
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WACE	Western Australian Certificate of Education

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

 - Work Skills Curriculum Council Endorsed Program: students are able to use their part-time work to gain credit for a maximum of two unit equivalents to the WACE. It does require students to provide the evidence.
 - Workplace Learning: on-the-job and Workplace Learning: employability skills (Endorsed Programs) – both allow for the use of SBT and SBA time and part-time work to be used for sign-off of skills and accumulation of hours.
- Identifying more flexible, innovative and/or alternative approaches to attaining a senior secondary certificate which support students to combine work and study.*

- Work Skills Endorsed Program – students are able to use their part-time work to gain credit for a maximum of two unit equivalents to the WACE. It does require students to provide the evidence.
 - The WACE – senior secondary schooling includes Year 10 to Year 12 and students can now accumulate credit towards the WACE over their lifetime.
 - The changes to the school leaving age have allowed for multiple arrangements to be made where young people can be currently undertaking school, part-time work and/or training, with school concurrently (refer to introduction for detail).
3. *Support that may be required to assist young people combining work and study to stay engaged in their learning, especially where work and study intersects with income support*
- Schools require resources and time to register Council endorsed programs. Support is required for students seeking credit for Work Skills (Endorsed Program) as the evidence required needs to be provided by the student. Schools will need to provide assistance to students with the documentation (a teaching and learning process) as well as on-going monitoring to ensure students meet reporting deadlines. This has implications for staffing levels for the education system/sectors as it is not part of a “normal” teaching load for staff. It is outside conventional curriculum offerings upon which staffing ratios are based.
4. *The potential impact on educational attainment (including the prospects for post-compulsory qualifications and workforce productivity).*
- Students undertaking SBTs and SBAs are able to attain VET qualifications as well as attain credit towards their WACE.
 - Work Skills provides two unit-equivalents towards the WACE (minimum of 20 units required).
 - The different forms of Workplace Learning available to students give a targeted approach to attaining employment skills as well as gaining units towards the WACE. The skills lists in the course and the endorsed programs are based on the employability skills, which are a good basis of the proposed national “Job Ready” Certificate.
5. *The effectiveness of school-based training pathways and their impact on successful transitions, including opportunities for improvement (particularly in relation to pathways to employment for disadvantaged young people)*
- The School Apprenticeship Link (SAL), available to Year 11 students, provides them with a range of trade opportunities – in particular trade areas – without having to make a decision concerning one trade. The SAL leads on to a SBT or SBA in subsequent years.

- The hours in the workplace and VET training undertaken as part of a SBT or SBA whilst at school can be credited towards a significant proportion of a student's WACE (at least 50%).
 - Changes to State legislation relating to SBAs in the second half of 2007 has led to the introduction of this strategy in schools. As awareness of the program grows, it is anticipated that the uptake in this area will grow.
 - Changes were made to the Aboriginal School Based Training (ASBT) program at end of 2008 including the removal of the Certificate I Work Readiness traineeship. However, Year 10 Aboriginal students will still be able to undertake work experience and a certificate I course to become work-ready – for example, Certificate I courses in Employability Skills, Leadership Skills and Industrial Skill. Year 11 and 12 Aboriginal students who are work-ready can now enter into an apprenticeship or traineeship pathway; and mentoring and pastoral care will have a high priority.
 - From 2009 Group Training Organisations will be funded at \$4,800 per trainee to coordinate, support and mentor year 10, 11 and 12 students in the ASBT program. There will be one GTO in each District Education area. There are 14 district education areas across Western Australia.
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