

Vocational education and training in schools

For the purpose of this report, participation in and provision of vocational education and training in schools (VET in Schools) is being regarded as a measure of progress towards the achievement of the ‘excellence goals’ because of its strong relationship to Goal 4 of the national goals:

To respond to the current and emerging economic and social needs of the nation, and to provide those skills which allow students maximum flexibility and adaptability in their future employment and other aspects of life.

However, it should be noted that VET in Schools also has close links with Goal 10:

To provide appropriate career education and knowledge of the world of work, including an understanding of the nature and place of work in our society.

National developments in 1998

This was the second year of a four-year program in which the Commonwealth, State and Territory education and training departments and agencies, and the non-government sectors all worked in partnership with industry to bring about major change in the program schools provide for students in their senior secondary years. By the end of 1998, significant changes had taken place, including:

- the formulation of a nationally agreed set of principles to guide the development of VET in Schools programs and part-time New Apprenticeships for school students
- the introduction of arrangements to recognise VET qualifications within the senior secondary certificate by all certification agencies
- the development of policies and procedures for the implementation of the National Training Framework within the secondary school sector by State and Territory sector authorities and school certification agencies, and the beginning of work to link school certificates and programs with training packages

- a significant expansion in the number of school students undertaking training as part of their senior secondary studies
- the involvement of approximately 50 per cent of these students in workplace learning as part of their senior secondary certificate. This has been supported by the development of tools, resources and training for effective learning partnerships between schools and industry
- the provision of VET in Schools programs by approximately 87 per cent of Australia’s secondary schools and colleges
- the establishment of programs which meet industry needs and which provide students with competencies for direct entry to the workforce, as well as for further education and training
- the signing of training agreements for nearly 1,500 part-time New Apprentices
- a substantial increase in the number, range and quality of partnerships developing between schools and industry at the state and local levels, the VET sector and Registered Training Organisations.

Participation in VET in Schools programs

One of the most significant developments in Australian senior secondary education over the last few years has been the dramatic increase in the number of students involved in VET in Schools programs. Table 3.29 shows the number of students enrolled in these programs in 1997 and 1998, and the number predicted for 1999. It reveals that in 1998 there was an overall increase of 24.8 per cent in the number of enrolments. Furthermore, an increase was apparent in every State and sector, with the exception of the government sector in Queensland, where enrolments in 1997 were already very high.

It is difficult to quantify the difference between student participation rates in 1998 and those of 1995, when vocational education was last a focus area for this report, because definitions of vocational education and the nature of student participation have each changed significantly during that time. However, it is clear that there has been a substantial increase. In Tasmania, for example, it was estimated in 1995 that 1.9 per cent of all year 11 and 12 students participated in ‘school–industry programs’, while in 1998, over 15 per cent of all year 11/12 students received

a VET Certificate or Statement of Attainment for AQF Certificate I or II qualifications. The picture is

similar in South Australia, where 1,230 students from all sectors completed accredited VET modules in 1995, compared to 13,576 students enrolled in VET modules in 1998.

Evidence of a substantial increase in enrolments in VET in Schools programs is also available from the ACT, where there has been a significant increase in VET enrolments in government senior secondary colleges since the 1995 report. Table 3.28 provides enrolment data for the period 1996–1998.

Table 3.31 shows the number of secondary schools participating in VET programs across the nation in 1997 and 1998, and the number predicted for 1999. The overall increase in 1998 compared to 1997 was 29 per cent and an increase was apparent in each State and sector. The total number of schools involved was about 87 per cent of all secondary schools in Australia, a dramatic change since the early 1990s, when only a handful of schools were participating.

The industries involved in VET in Schools programs are detailed in Table 3.30. The industry that attracted the greatest number of enrolments in 1998 was Tourism and Hospitality, with the Business and Clerical industry also accommodating large numbers.

The increased level of enrolments in 1998 placed considerable demands on the industries concerned. The increases occurred because States and Territories have recognised the importance and intrinsic value of structured work placements which are undertaken as part of VET in Schools programs. In some courses, these work placements are mandatory, while in others they are not mandatory but are considered to be highly desirable. The degree to which work placements are mandatory varies across States and industries. In 1998, approximately 50 per cent of the students enrolled in VET in Schools programs took up work placements as part of their course.

Table 3.28 VET enrolments, government colleges, ACT, 1996–98

<i>Year</i>	<i>Enrolments</i>
1996	1,105
1997	1,757
1998	2,498

Source: Dept of Education and Community Services, ACT

Table 3.29 VET in Schools enrolments, Australia

<i>State/Territory & sector</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>Projection for 1999</i>
<i>NSW</i>			
Government	14,014	16,433	16,843
Catholic school delivery	4,258	4,855	4,976
Independent school delivery	350	674	860
TAFE–delivered	23,600	24,500	25,112
<i>Vic</i>			
Government	7,674	8,813	10,300
Catholic	2,101	2,851	3,200
Independent	376	1,151	2,064
<i>Qld</i>			
Government	23,550	22,934	24,000
Catholic	4,200	(E)5,400	5,400
Independent	3,432	4,108	4,400
<i>SA</i>			
Government	2,417	8,907	10,000
Catholic	1,081	3,219	4,000
Independent	695	1,450	1,595
<i>WA</i>			
Government	1,991	3,828	7,168
Catholic	130	530	700
Independent	190	732	650
<i>Tas</i>			
Government	1,496	1,969	2,378
Catholic	78	139	189
Independent	n.a.	25	37
<i>NT</i>			
Government	(E)359	(E)984	900
Catholic	52	124	130
Independent	n.a.	48	70
<i>ACT</i>			
Government	1,757	2,498	3,424
Catholic	265	707	921
Independent	n.a.	112	156
<i>Australia</i>	94,066	116,991	129,473

Note:

- Statistics on part-time New Apprenticeships for school students are not included in this table.
- This table is based on statistics provided by States/Territories and sectors. Comparisons on the range and levels of activity across States/Territories should not be made due to the fact that enrolments are recorded differently from State to State in relation to length of courses and the degree to which structured learning and assessment occurs in the workplace. Accordingly, while an indicative total number of student enrolments across Australia can be provided, comparisons of growth with earlier years' statistics should only be made within individual States/Territories.
- Some States/Territories use VET in Schools estimates until the end of the calendar year when confirmed enrolments are collected.

n.a. Not yet available.

(E) Estimated numbers.

Source: State and Territory Education Departments

Table 3.30 Enrolments in VET in Schools programs by Australian National Training Authority industry groups, government schools, 1998 (per cent)

ANTA industry group

Communications	6.2
Tourism and Hospitality	21.5
General Training	8.7
Engineering and Mining	6.0
Computing	9.4
Business and Clerical	17.6
Others (each less than 4%)	30.6
Total	100.0

Source: State and Territory Education Departments

In Western Australia, all government school students had access to VET programs irrespective of their geographical location. There was considerable expansion of these programs in district high schools in 1998, and specially funded programs operated in the Kimberley region and in the central desert. Specific programs that operated in Catholic schools included:

- Hospitality and Tourism (Broome and Lombadina)
- Aquaculture, Automotive, Metals and Engineering (Geraldton)
- Building and Construction, Viticulture, Hospitality and Tourism (Bunbury and Busselton)
- General Industry Areas (Albany and Kalgoorlie).

VET in Schools in rural and remote areas

A number of systems provided additional support to VET in Schools programs in non-metropolitan areas. In South Australia, a flexible range of options was provided to enhance student access. Ready, Set, Go funds were accessed by rural and remote schools and clusters. Commonwealth School to Work funds supported five school-to-work transition programs for targeted students. The programs aimed to broaden the range of VET in Schools programs that could be accessed by targeted groups. Funding was provided to clusters of schools to develop school-to-work programs to encourage the participation of specific student groups, and some of the School to Work Programme pilots examined opportunities to access vocational education and training in rural and remote areas. Their reports informed other schools of progress on VET in Schools programs for students in rural and remote areas. The pilot projects included:

- a Group Training Company working with students
- trialling the delivery of the Retail Certificate by distance education
- exploring and actioning structured work placement opportunities for students in rural locations
- working with small business personnel to raise the profile of VET in Schools
- developing modules of simulated work placement.

A total of 13 Jobs Pathway Program brokers assisted South Australian secondary students. One of these brokers provided specialist services for students with disabilities. In 1998, attempts were made to improve the access of all students, especially those in rural areas.

Table 3.31 Schools participating in VET in Schools programs, 1997–99

State/Territory & sector	Number of schools		
	1997	1998	Projections 1999
<i>NSW</i>			
Government	377	396	400
Catholic	150	150	150
Independent	29	38	42
<i>Vic</i>			
Government	227	251	260
Catholic	69	80	90
Independent	32	44	64
<i>Qld</i>			
Government	222	243	251
Catholic	70	75	75
Independent	56	71	73
<i>SA</i>			
Government	42	113	120
Catholic	21	27	27
Independent	13	19	25
<i>WA</i>			
Government	57	100	136
Catholic	19	31	33
Independent	13	23	25
<i>Tas</i>			
Government	17	25	26
Catholic	4	5	5
Independent	n.a.	4	5
<i>NT</i>			
Government	10	12	18
Catholic	1	4	4
Independent	n.a.	4	5
<i>ACT</i>			
Government	8*	8*	8*
Catholic	2	3	3
Independent	2	5	5
Australia	1,441	1,731	1,850

n.a. not available.

* ACT has eight senior secondary colleges.

Source: State and Territory Education Departments

As well as these special programs, the application of VET funding in Western Australia recognised the additional costs associated with delivering the program in rural and isolated areas.

In Tasmania, rural and remote access to the program was directly supported through the appointment of a team of Rural Retention VET in Schools Development Officers, and by the progressive expansion of the program to rural and remote schools.

Students in rural and remote areas of Victoria were the focus of 1998 research conducted by the Victorian Industry Education

Partnerships on part-time work and opportunities for credit for VET. Also during 1998, the government sector of schooling in Victoria conducted a review of the provision of VET in Schools in rural areas and its recommendations will be progressively implemented during 1999. It was apparent at the time of the review that, despite problems associated with geographic location and small student cohort size, smaller Victorian rural schools had made a strong commitment to the provision of VET in Schools programs and took a range of innovative approaches to program delivery.

The Northern Territory experienced a significant increase from 1997 in the number of students participating in accredited VET programs, many in rural communities. A range of other VET activities were available in locations such as Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek, and planning commenced in many Community Education Centres for implementation in the more remote regions. The students in Katherine, for example, were able to participate in the very successful VET project implemented at Katherine High School in conjunction with the Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation, and those in remote Catholic schools were offered a variety of relevant activities including retail training, office administration and driver education.

Provision of VET in Schools for Indigenous students

Many systems and individual schools reported on special provision that they made for particular groups of students. The most frequently reported instances of such provision were in relation to Indigenous students. In New South Wales, the Department of Education and Training undertook a number of projects through the Commonwealth-funded Indigenous Education Strategic Initiative Programme. Focussing on the development of work-related and vocational learning skills, these projects were targeted at Indigenous students in years 9 and 10. Indigenous students wishing to undertake a TAFE-delivered course were given absolute preference if they met all course and subject prerequisites.

In Queensland, years 7 and 8 Indigenous students were targeted by the Aboriginal and Islander Careers Aspiration Pathways Program (AICAPP), which aimed to achieve a changing career pathways outlook for Indigenous school-leavers over the next two trienniums to 2003. The focal point for 1998 was a series of Career Expos across the State. In addition to the AICAPP initiative, the VET Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Remote Communities Program aimed to increase the VET opportunities for students located in Queensland's Cape and Gulf communities.

In South Australia, the AICAPP:

- supported years 6–12 Indigenous students by linking them with further education, training and employment opportunities
- supported school staff members by the organisation of professional development activities and the provision of relevant resources to support Indigenous students' career pathways
- coordinated the Indigenous component of the Work Skills Expo
- produced a *Pathways* newsletter.

A Project Officer: Vocational Education, was employed by the Anangu Education Services group to research current vocational opportunities for Anangu students, to consult community members and school staff to determine barriers to successful implementation of vocational education and to write a plan outlining recommendations for implementation of vocational education and training. Teachers and community workers were given the opportunity to undertake Workplace Assessor training courses, enabling them to deliver and assess VET modules. Trainers with specialised skills were brought into the Pitjantjatjara Lands to deliver VET modules to Anangu students.

Western Australian government schools saw a significant increase in the participation of Indigenous students in 1998. There were 171 students involved in VET programs compared to only 19 in 1996. Within the independent sector of Western Australia, the most active of the schools that ran individual school-based programs was Wongutha CAPS, a remote post-compulsory school for Indigenous students. The school had an enrolment of 50 students, all of whom undertook some vocational education. The programs offered included Hospitality, Agriculture, Metals and Engineering and Plant Operating Equipment.

Assessment, certification and accreditation of VET in Schools

In April 1998, MCEETYA endorsed a set of principles to underpin the implementation of VET in Schools. The six agreed principles and the implementation framework are designed to assist school accreditation authorities, other State and Territory agencies and industry in making appropriate arrangements to support the implementation of the National

Training Framework within the secondary school sector. The principles are:

- 1 Recognising Training
Boards of Studies, in agreement with State and Territory recognition authorities, will recognise VET in Schools only where it is delivered by providers who meet with Australian Recognition Framework registration requirements.
- 2 Meeting Industry and/or Enterprise Standards
Boards of Studies, in agreement with State and Territory recognition authorities, will recognise as VET in Schools, only those programs which deliver national industry and/or enterprise competencies/standards.
- 3 Pathways through Senior Secondary Certificates
VET in Schools will contribute towards qualifications defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), including senior secondary certificates or equivalents, and will provide multiple pathways which articulate with further training, education and, where appropriate, employment.
- 4 Ensuring Dual Outcomes
VET in Schools studies within the senior secondary certificate should also contribute to a VET qualification defined by the AQF.
- 5 Determining Priorities for the Delivery of VET in Schools
In determining priority areas for VET in Schools, account will be taken of national and regional/local skill shortages, industry needs and student demand. Opportunities for all groups of students to participate should be maximised, especially those under-represented in education and training.
- 6 Using Training Packages
Boards of Studies, in agreement with State and Territory recognition authorities, will develop accreditation and recognition procedures consistent with State and Territory VET legislation and the requirements of senior secondary certificates in each State and Territory, to enable training packages to be delivered.

During 1998, considerable development took place and, by the end of the year, the following progress had been made:

- All State and Territory Boards had agreed to comply with the MCEETYA definitions and principles.
- In all States and Territories, programs that did not deliver nationally recognised outcomes were being progressively phased out.

- A variety of models for the integration of VET within the senior secondary curriculum continued to operate across Australia.
- The contribution of VET towards the successful completion of the senior secondary certificate was occurring within each State and Territory arrangement.
- Policy changes relating to the contribution of VET to the calculation of the tertiary entrance rank were being considered across the nation.
- All State and Territories reported VET in Schools on their senior secondary certificates but the level of detail varied across States and Territories.

Accreditation and certification arrangements in States and Territories

At the end of 1998, the arrangements applying for accreditation and certification of VET in Schools in the individual States and Territories are as follows:

New South Wales

Dual-accredited vocational HSC courses are accredited by the NSW Board of Studies, for the purpose of meeting HSC requirements, and the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board, for the purposes of gaining an AQF credential. The courses are designed to meet industry training needs and are based on national industry competency standards where available. They also provide a clear pathway to TAFE and/or industry.

Dual-accredited vocational courses can be combined to enable school students to complete the structured off-the-job training component of a traineeship as specified in the Vocational Training Order, which details the work and training requirements for the successful completion of the traineeship. The Board of Studies also accredits vocational courses for delivery by private training providers. There are eight dual-accredited vocational HSC courses developed by the NSW Board of Studies that are available for delivery by school, TAFE and industry in NSW. These are:

- Industry Studies (with strands in Retail, Hospitality and Metal and Engineering)
- Building and Construction Content Endorsed Course
- Electronics Content Endorsed Course

- Furnishing Content Endorsed Course
- Hospitality Content Endorsed Course
- Office Skills Content Endorsed Course
- Retail Content Endorsed Course
- Rural Industries Content Endorsed Course.

The Content Endorsed Courses share most of the characteristics of Industry Studies, and TAFE and industry training courses give recognition to this prior learning. Courses developed by the Board of Studies have a mandatory workplace component of one-third of the hours of the course. This has increased the involvement of local industries and enterprises with schools.

During 1998, the Board of Studies initiated the development of seven industry curriculum frameworks for introduction in 2000. These frameworks are in Business Services, Construction, Information Technology, Metals and Engineering, Primary Industries, Retail, and Tourism and Hospitality. Additional frameworks will be developed for subsequent years. The frameworks will replace Industry Studies and other VET HSC courses that have been available in these industry areas, and will reflect the enhanced focus on units of competency within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

In NSW government schools in 1998, part-time traineeships in schools were being implemented within the context of the HSC and compliant with the requirements of the *Industrial and Commercial Training Act 1989* and the Board of Studies for the HSC. All the components of the off-the-job training were completed by the end of the HSC year. Various models were adopted to ensure student completion of all requirements.

Victoria

The Victorian Board of Studies recognises selected VET programs within the VCE. VET programs are assigned VCE unit values which contribute towards the satisfactory completion requirements of the VCE. They do not currently count as unit 3/4 (year 12) status, but plans are in hand to change this from 1999. Results from recognised VET programs can contribute to ENTER calculations as a fifth or sixth study score increment. There were 25 recognised programs in 1998.

Queensland

In 1996, the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies assumed accreditation, recognition and registration responsibilities for vocational education programs in senior secondary curriculum up to and including AQF Level II, as

delegated under the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act. Dual accreditation of VET programs is ensured by this process. Articulation arrangements for VET in Queensland schools include credit transfer and recognition of prior learning, in accordance with the Australian Recognition Framework.

South Australia

VET programs in schools are based on national industry skills/competency standards and relate to, or provide VET certificates within, the AQF and the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). They meet industry-identified requirements for structured workplace learning and assessment and take into account skills shortages and industry needs. Students in South Australia are able to count VET towards SACE in two ways:

- by completing SACE units that have VET competencies embedded in them
- by completing up to 400 hours of 'stand alone' VET.

Under the first option, students receive recognition from the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia for the SACE units received and separate certification from the Registered Training Organisation with which the school has worked. With the second option students are able to claim status of one SACE unit for every 50 hours of VET completion. A maximum of eight units may be claimed using this method.

Schools in all sectors delivered VET through one or more of three methods:

- as Registered Training Organisations
- through auspicing arrangements with Registered Training Organisations
- by purchasing training through Registered Training Organisations.

The majority of schools operated through a VET in Schools Agreement, whereby an auspicing agreement is established with a Registered Training Organisation. Through the VET in Schools Agreement the responsibilities of both the schools and the Registered Training Organisation and the personnel responsible for functions were documented.

Independent schools in South Australia generally deliver accredited VET programs under the auspices of Registered Training Organisations. Under these arrangements, schools deliver the VET program and the Registered Training Organisation provides a quality assurance oversight, and issues

the student certification. All arrangements meet the requirements of the Australian Recognition Framework.

Students in independent schools receive dual accreditation for their VET studies. The VET studies contribute to an AQF qualification from a training package, and also contribute to the SACE. During 1998, VET programs delivered in independent schools were undergoing the transition from accredited courses to qualifications from training packages. Formalised credit transfer arrangements were negotiated with TAFE SA between year 12 subjects and a wide range of VET sector courses. These arrangements provided automatic advanced standing for eligible students.

Western Australia

Certification is provided by the State's accreditation body, the Curriculum Council, whose Western Australian Certificate of Education certificates all aspects of vocational education. Many students undertake training with Registered Training Organisations, which issue Credentials and/or Statements of Academic Attainment. There is full recognition of training and credit transfers for ongoing training. Schools access programs through existing Registered Training Organisations, or by becoming accredited themselves, through the Training Accreditation Council.

Tasmania

School-industry programs have been developed in ways that maintain the integrity of both the nationally accredited training program components and the Tasmanian Certificate of Education components. In this way true industry-recognised outcomes and recognised general education outcomes have been achieved. Features of the system include the following:

- All state secondary colleges, some district high schools and some Catholic schools are Registered Training Organisations for delivery and assessment of endorsed training packages and courses that comply with the National Recognition Framework (ie training meets industry needs).
- Articulation and credit transfer arrangements are standard as endorsed by the National Training Framework and State Industry Training Boards, and administered by the Tasmanian State Training Authority.
- Certification is within the Australian Qualifications Framework.
- VET recognition arrangements for school students are achieved by the Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board

through direct reporting of VET attainment on the Tasmanian Certificate of Education.

Northern Territory

Accredited VET programs contribute towards the Northern Territory Certificate of Education. Students who successfully complete programs are generally able to apply for up to 12 units of credit towards the certificate. The Northern Territory Board of Studies recognises 50–60 hours of accredited VET as equivalent to one unit towards the certificate.

Australian Capital Territory

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies accredits vocational courses in government and non-government schools on the recommendation of panels which include representatives of the appropriate industries. Articulation into the TAFE system occurs through the process of credit transfer.

Evaluation of VET in Schools programs

To date there has been no national-level evaluation of the effectiveness of the VET in Schools programs. However, a number of systems have carried out evaluations of various aspects of their programs. In Victoria, for example, the University of Melbourne has conducted longitudinal research into the outcomes of VET in Schools programs as measured by the destinations of exiting year 12 students who have participated in these programs. This research has been conducted for the last three years and a discernible pattern has emerged. The information for 1997 exiting year 12 students indicated that in 1998:

- 32 per cent enrolled in further VET
- 21 per cent enrolled in university
- 17 per cent participated in apprenticeships or traineeships
- 11 per cent obtained full-time employment
- 6 per cent obtained part-time employment
- 4 per cent repeated or completed
- 8 per cent were unemployed.

The success of the program was indicated by the very high levels of students advancing to further education, training and employment, and the comparatively small percentage of students remaining unemployed.

The 1997 Review of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), aiming to further improve the VET in Schools arrangements, recommended:

- the establishment of procedures for the development of a graded assessment regime and the allocation of a VCE unit 1–4 status for VET programs
- the in-principle acceptance by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Committee of one VET program with graded assessment to be included in ENTER calculations
- the recognition of eight VET units to be used for satisfactory completion of the VCE
- the allocation of Group A and Group B status to VET programs, as for other VCE studies.

The implementation of these recommendations will enhance student pathways through the increased status of VET within the VCE. The Board of Studies will progressively implement them, commencing in 1999.

Students in remote and rural areas have been the focus of recent research conducted by Victorian Industry Education Partnerships on part-time work and opportunities for credit for VET.

In Queensland, the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (BSSSS) has conducted or commissioned evaluations of two major initiatives in the VET area resulting from new policy: BSSSS's role as the registration body, and the embedding of VET in Board and Board-registered subjects.

A pilot evaluation of schools' satisfaction with BSSSS's role in accreditation, registration and recognition found that in general schools had confidence in BSSSS's ability to provide this service in a speedy, efficient, cost-effective way.

The process of embedding VET was addressed in various Board evaluations in 1998. As part of the Board's established process of evaluating trial syllabuses, evaluations were conducted of the six Board subjects that feature embedded VET. The nine Subject Area Specifications (which form the basis of 28 new Board-registered subjects) were also evaluated. These evaluations identified various issues for further research and development, including the integration of competency-based and criterion-based assessment, while in general concluding that most of the new subjects were working well in schools.

