

**REPORT TO
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**STRATEGIC EVALUATION OF
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
IN SCHOOLS IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Establishing the value
for students, employers and the community of
vocational education and training in schools qualifications**

BERT EVANS AO

October 2005

Strategic Evaluation of Vocational Education and Training in Schools in New South Wales

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STRATEGIC EVALUATION OF VET IN SCHOOLS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose

In November 2004 the then Minister for Education and Training, Dr Andrew Refshauge MP, commissioned Bert Evans AO, Chair of the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training and of the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board, to conduct a strategic evaluation of vocational education and training in schools.

The central concern of this evaluation was to determine the value of vocational education and training in schools for students in terms of their participation, outcomes and satisfaction.

The evaluation also considered the value of vocational education and training in schools to employers and the community.

The evaluation proposed to provide contemporary information on students' experiences and to advise of issues and options to strengthen vocational education and training outcomes achieved by NSW school students.

Methodology

In constructing the strategic evaluation Mr Evans proposed that the principal source in determining value should be the students themselves.

To this end the major element of the evaluation was the *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, conducted by the University of Melbourne. This survey comprised telephone interviews with over 6,000 government school Higher School Certificate (HSC) students from 2004.

The University developed a sample comprised of a group of students who undertook a vocational education and training course as part of their HSC and an equivalent group who did not. By matching the students in the two groups according to their gender, prior achievement, geographical location and school, the University has been able to provide rigorous data on the contribution that vocational education and training has made to students' HSC participation, achievement, post school destinations and satisfaction.

While the findings of this survey make a major contribution to this report of the strategic evaluation, it is proposed that the comprehensive survey report by the University of Melbourne be published separately.

Between February and June 2005 focus consultations were conducted with parties involved in, or affected by, vocational education and training (VET) in schools. Consultations included:

- NSW Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission, Association of Independent Schools
- NSW government and Catholic Education Commission schools, teachers and students
- NSW Local Community Partnership representatives responsible for coordinating student workplacements
- NSW Teachers Federation
- NSW Teachers Federation - TAFE Teachers Association
- NSW Secondary Principals' Council
- Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of NSW
- Employer and industry associations with experience of VET in schools
- Unions NSW
- Individual employers
- Australian Council of Private Education and Training
- NSW Industry Training Advisory Bodies
- NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training
- NSW TAFE Commission Board
- Department of Education and Training Regional Directors
- TAFE NSW Institute Directors
- NSW Schools Consortium
- NSW VET Consultative Group
- Professor Tony Vinson

The destinations survey and stakeholder consultations have been complemented by additional data analysis and examination of relevant current VET in schools research.

The evaluation largely considers issues for government school students, particularly as these students were the focus of the destinations and satisfaction survey. However, given the potential implications for all HSC students, non-government school systems were consulted and visited. In drafting recommendations, account has been taken of implications for both government and non-government schools.

Project Coordination

The Strategic Evaluation of VET in Schools in New South Wales was coordinated by David Collins, General Manager, State Training Services, Department of Education and Training.

Additional assistance was provided by Julie Duncan, Lindy Peisley and Ian Balcomb.

2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON VALUE

As the *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales* by the University of Melbourne shows, students have resoundingly endorsed the value of the NSW vocational education and training in schools program.

Students' enthusiasm for VET in schools is unequivocal.

Melbourne University reports that "the value of VET in schools in New South Wales cannot be overstated. [The study] shows that HSC VET students successfully access a broad range of study and labour market destinations, and that they also unequivocally endorse the value of their VET in schools subjects".¹

This evaluation reached the same conclusion.

The student survey results were mirrored in almost all of the extensive consultations conducted for the evaluation. The consultations confirmed that New South Wales has a VET in schools program that is working to the benefit of students, employers and the community.

Any future debate about the program must face this reality. The hard evidence is now there for all to see. VET in schools is clearly making a difference for NSW students, adding value to their school participation, their HSC achievement and their preparation for the transition to post school education, training and work.

Thirty five percent of NSW Years 11 and 12 students are now taking a vocational education and training subject as part of their HSC. These students are making informed choices based on the attractiveness of the courses and their mode of delivery, and their perceived value in preparing students for a life beyond school.

"Never underestimate the value of VET in schools", a quote from a leader in the hospitality industry, may accurately reflect the majority view of employers involved with the program. Employers frequently described students as "work-ready" and said "VET was something of substance".

From a school Principal's perspective the most representative statement may be "thank goodness for VET in schools".

When asked about whether VET in schools is of value to students one representative group of teachers retorted "absolutely". As the Melbourne University report attests, this statement may accurately represent the view of the majority of students engaged in VET in schools.

It follows that as there is significant value in VET in schools for students and employers, there is also great value for the community.

¹ Polesel, John, et al, *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, October 2005, p i.

The diversity and relevance of VET curriculum is providing opportunities in the HSC for students following all post school pathways.

VET in schools is clearly increasing opportunities for high levels of achievement by the full range of students.

- “Nearly one-quarter [of 2004 HSC VET students] entered university, emphasising the fact that VET programs do not cut off the option of higher education”,² Melbourne University reported.
- 28 percent entered further VET study, mainly in TAFE.
- 10 percent became apprentices and 6 percent became trainees.
- 28 percent are currently working.
- Just 17 percent of students said that they would like to have taken courses that were not available, suggesting the NSW VET program is well focused.
- VET in schools is improving outcomes for students with a disability.
- Increasing numbers of Aboriginal students are participating in, and achieving, qualifications through VET in schools.

Many students see the courses as part of their broader development in a similar way that students may see value in many of their general education subjects.

Students consulted wanted to: get skills; get a qualification before they left school; learn about work; and decide what they want to do when they leave school.

Nine out of ten 2004 VET students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that doing the HSC was worthwhile. Melbourne University argues that “this endorsement points to the utility of the certificate in creating diverse and effective pathways for students with a range of needs”.³

VET in schools improves student retention

Schools and students consulted suggested VET in schools has had a major impact on retention from Year 10 through Years 11 and 12.

- School Principals suggest that in many schools without VET, retention would be dramatically lower.
- 6 out of 10 students surveyed reported that their VET program influenced their decision to stay on at school to Year 12.
- 74 percent of boys with the lowest level of prior achievement said VET influenced them to stay on.
- Almost 50 percent of students with the highest level of prior achievement reported the same view.
- 75 percent of VET students said they would have liked to study VET courses before Year 11.

VET students are more work-ready than other school leavers

VET in schools students are more likely than other students to say their HSC helped them “a lot” to understand the world of work.

² *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, p 17.

³ *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, p 5.

- Employers value the competencies and employability skills gained by students.
- Employers, teachers and students say VET courses increase students' self confidence.
- Students valued highly the contribution of workplacement in making them work-ready.
- 90 percent of VET students reported that their workplacement raised their confidence.

VET in schools improves students' transition from school to work

VET students make informed career choices. Some started their course with a clear focus on a career, others developed that focus during their VET course. Many said they would not be seeking careers in their VET field. None of those consulted hesitated to say that their VET course was of great value to them.

- VET students are more likely to say their HSC helped them "a lot" to get their current job, get skills and knowledge for their current job.
- 69 percent of VET students said their VET subject made it easier for them to get a job.
- Around 20,000 employers provided over 56,000 workplacement opportunities for students in 2004.
- 16 percent of students who did a workplacement gained a job with their workplacement employer.
- There was total agreement from industry parties consulted that VET courses give students a competitive edge in their transition to the labour market.

There is scope for improvement of VET in schools to increase the value for students

Despite high levels of participation by the full range of students there is a persistent view that VET is a lesser HSC option. This has had a negative impact on support from some Principals and teachers. It may also see parents who are keen to encourage their children towards a tertiary destination steer them away from VET in schools.

- The categorisation of VET as Category B for calculation of the Universities Admission Index continues to send a strong message that VET is not valued as highly as other subjects and may discourage some students seeking tertiary outcomes.
- As only one 2 unit Category B course can be included in calculating the Universities Admission Index, ambitious students may be prevented from packaging complementary VET courses such as Metal and Engineering, and Information Technology to achieve a richer VET skills base.

The interest expressed by 75 percent of VET students in commencing VET before Years 11 and 12 and the high incidence of local approaches to programs for Years 9 and 10 across the state at present, lends weight to arguments that a formal approach to VET before Year 11 should be investigated seriously.

- Some parties consulted, including the Catholic Education Commission, raised questions about the risk of streaming and the resource costs of opening VET up to additional cohorts.

- The NSW model of VET in schools has VET as a strong component of a broad HSC qualification rather than as a separate stream.
- Consideration of the expansion of VET into the compulsory years should be carried out in a way that broadens and strengthens current curriculum offerings, rather than establishing an alternative pathway which might narrow students' options.

Students carry the burden of balancing time away from school with other school requirements. Students say that they miss out on other education activities if they are away from school to travel to, and attend, TAFE or for their workplacement or traineeship. Students say that pressure is on them to catch up on what they have missed.

Action is needed to ensure that participation in VET in schools provides a benefit for students rather than a cost to their overall development.

- The Secondary Principals' Council stressed that "greater flexibility is essential in the organisation of both schools and TAFE in order to allow students to attend courses at both".
- Through the consultations a number of schools were encountered that have made great efforts to incorporate VET within the curriculum and operations of the school, providing regular scheduling of VET at a time that does not conflict with other subjects. It was apparent that this may not have been an easy task but clear that the forward thinking approach taken by these schools was paying off in terms of student participation, enthusiasm and achievement.
- Department of Education and Training (DET) Regional Directors highlighted the importance of valuing VET students and the VET approach to teaching and learning. They recognised tension in some schools between VET and non-VET teachers and reinforced the need for greater action by schools to build VET into their timetabling and organisation to meet the needs of all students.
- Some Principals consulted described the need for VET courses to be "embedded" in the school curriculum and operations; so they are integral to the schools' curriculum offerings, and school programming and operations ensure students are able to gain the maximum benefit from VET courses without encountering disadvantage in other subject areas.

The government schools funding model is seen by many as a barrier to students gaining the best outcomes from VET in schools, discouraging schools from allowing students to attend TAFE or to take on part-time traineeships. It is viewed by many as a cost to schools, with the risk of staffing losses where significant numbers of students are taking activities out of school.

- This perspective on the funding model is potentially reducing options for students and preventing them from accessing what may be the most appropriate VET delivery options in their region. It may also encourage schools to equip themselves with facilities and teachers to deliver VET courses, where high quality delivery may be available through the local TAFE campus.
- Several school Principals mounted a persuasive rebuttal, arguing that given the strong apparent retention effect of VET in schools, rather than losing the equivalent of two units for each student taking TAFE delivered VET or a traineeship, schools were gaining the equivalent of eight units for students who might otherwise have left school.

Only a small percentage of students moving into further vocational education and training request credit for their VET in schools.

- Students may need better information on their entitlement to credit for their VET in schools qualification when they enrol in further education and training or register as an apprentice or trainee.
- While students have demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with their VET in schools courses, seventy four percent of which are delivered by schools, the TAFE Teachers Association Council has raised questions about the value of qualifications delivered by schools relative to those delivered by TAFE.
- DET School Regions, Catholic Dioceses and the Association of Independent Schools are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) under the Australian Quality Training Framework. Teacher qualification requirements are endorsed by industry with VET training for teachers largely delivered by TAFE NSW.
- For schools, as with TAFE NSW, it is their responsibility as an RTO to ensure that standards for teachers and facilities are being met. From the perspective of the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB), the body responsible for registration and monitoring of RTOs, there should be no expectation that school systems as RTOs may take a more relaxed approach to compliance than other RTOs.
- With over a third of NSW Years 11 and 12 students now taking VET, it is not possible to return to the 1980s, to a situation where all delivery was conducted by TAFE NSW. TAFE does not have the capacity, nor can schools meet the cost of the increasing demand for VET from senior secondary students through TAFE alone.
- A much higher level of cooperation needs to be achieved between schools and TAFE NSW to oversight the planning and resourcing of VET in schools and to ensure the quality of delivery within regions.

The requirement for part-time school based trainees to meet the regulatory requirements of the VET system as well as the educational requirements of the Higher School Certificate is seen as a disincentive to participate in this program.

- Students are required to complete 1,500 hours of workplace training over 36 months, however, most attempt to complete this within the 24 months of Years 11 and 12. This poses challenges for students to make up work they may miss when they are away from school. Students expressed concern that despite this additional workplace activity traineeships are only recognised as 2 unit HSC courses, similar to other VET in schools subjects.
- Students undertaking automotive, hospitality or manufacturing engineering traineeships may articulate into the second year of related apprenticeships. The evaluation did not uncover significant interest in opening up part-time apprenticeships. However, it is recognised that the availability of apprenticeships may provide broader learning opportunities for a number of students.

The findings arising from this survey and the consultations are highly significant. So much so that those who have until now failed to fully embrace VET in schools or, indeed, resisted its introduction, should carefully consider these findings, and reassess their position.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and issues examined in this report, a number of actions are recommended to strengthen outcomes achieved by NSW VET in schools students.

To strengthen VET in schools in New South Wales the Minister should:

1. issue a Statement of Purpose for VET in schools to:
 - a. confirm the quality, relevance and value of the NSW model of HSC vocational education and training
 - b. reinforce the status of VET within the Higher School Certificate
 - c. demonstrate the levels of students' achievement of nationally recognised qualifications and of the Universities Admission Index
 - d. demonstrate the contribution VET makes to students' transition to post school education, training and employment
 - e. acknowledge the extent of NSW industry support for the NSW model of VET in schools
2. request that the NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee consider options to remove the classification of HSC VET courses as "Category B" to:
 - a. eliminate any impact this classification may have on perceptions of the value of VET in schools
 - b. encourage students to package complementary courses that would lead to a richer skills and knowledge base or more extensive workplace experience
3. consider options for inclusion of recognised vocational education and training courses before Years 11 and 12 that:
 - a. recognise the interest of 75 percent of VET students surveyed in commencing VET earlier
 - b. broaden and strengthen the current curriculum available to students
 - c. support progression to VET in Years 11 and 12 without limiting students' options
 - d. provide rigorous opportunities for achievement by the full range of students
4. consider extending the mandatory requirement for workplacement to other HSC VET in schools courses, in consultation with industry, school sector agencies and TAFE NSW.

To strengthen the quality of VET in schools teaching and learning the Minister should request that Department of Education and Training:

5. assist schools to ensure that VET subjects are a central component of school curriculum and operations and are valued equally with other HSC subjects through:
 - a. planning and timetabling arrangements that provide opportunities for participation in TAFE delivered VET, traineeships or workplacements to

- maximise the benefits students may gain from VET subjects without being disadvantaged in other subjects
 - b. formal arrangements for cooperation between schools and TAFE to ensure the most appropriate use of resources to maximise opportunities for students
- 6. advise schools and TAFE Institutes on the application of the Department of Education and Training funding model for VET in schools to:
 - a. ensure that the funding model is not being held up as a barrier to participation in TAFE or part-time school based traineeships
 - b. demonstrate to schools the positive impact that inclusion of diverse VET opportunities within school curriculum may have on student retention and participation
 - c. show the positive effect on school resources achieved when, through increased student retention, rather than losing the equivalent of two units for each student taking TAFE delivered VET or a traineeship, schools gain the equivalent of eight units for students who might otherwise have left school
- 7. establish a network of high level regional VET in schools committees comprising schools, TAFE NSW, local industry and the community. These committees should be responsible for:
 - a. overseeing the planning of VET in schools delivery to ensure local industry relevance and most appropriate use of school, TAFE and industry resources
 - b. monitoring the delivery of VET in schools to identify and respond to issues of quality assurance
 - c. supporting professional development including “teacher in industry” opportunities and assessment moderation exercises
 - d. monitoring student transitions from school to further education and training
 - e. reporting regularly to the joint forum of DET Regional Directors and TAFE NSW Institute Directors on issues including regional participation and outcomes in VET in schools, quality assurance and student transitions to ensure the effective implementation of the Government’s VET in schools policy.

To strengthen VET in schools students’ transition to post school vocational education and training the Minister should request that the Department of Education and Training:

- 8. identify options to maximise the level of credit transfer available for VET in schools students to post school VET including:
 - a. packaging VET courses under the HSC so that students can achieve higher levels of competence
 - b. increasing opportunities for workplace training and assessment
- 9. review the Vocational Training Guideline that was established in 2001 to provide credit transfer to apprenticeships and traineeships to:
 - a. define maximum possible recognition for students’ VET in schools programs when they move into apprenticeships and traineeships

- b. increase industry commitment to credit transfer for VET in schools students moving into apprenticeships and traineeships
10. develop a credit transfer plan to be issued to all government and non-government VET in schools students to:
- a. describe students' specific entitlements to credit transfer from their VET in schools course into related further education and training
 - b. define the reduction in the nominal term of apprenticeships or traineeships available, to which students are entitled
 - c. assist students to secure recognition on enrolling in post school programs
11. seek support from the Board of Vocational Education and Training to extend its project *Improved VET outcomes for people with a disability* to:
- a. improve the capacity of service providers, including New Apprenticeships Centres, to assist young people with a disability to access employment and further education and training
 - b. assist schools to link students with a disability to service providers to improve access to employment and training opportunities
 - c. provide information to schools, students, parents and employers on employment and training support options for students with a disability.

To strengthen opportunities for school based part-time traineeships and apprenticeships the Minister should:

12. seek industry commitment to flexible options to achieve competence in part-time traineeships to:
- a. enable a reduction in the current 1,500 hour duration required for these programs
 - b. encourage participation in higher level traineeship qualifications
 - c. improve integration of traineeships within the NSW Higher School Certificate
13. request advice on options to recognise school based traineeships as four unit rather than two unit HSC courses to:
- a. recognise the more intensive requirements of the work based traineeship pathway in comparison with other VET in schools courses and other HSC subjects
 - b. increase opportunities for participation in part-time traineeships by students
14. request that the Board of Vocational Education and Training open up eligibility to the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Training Program for school based part-time trainees to:
- a. support increased participation of government and non-government school students
 - b. strengthen alignment of school based part-time traineeships with the NSW VET system

15. write to NSW industrial organisations and peak councils that are registered with the NSW Industrial Relations Commission requesting they apply to the Commission to establish appropriate award arrangements for part-time apprenticeships in schools.

To strengthen understanding of the value of VET in schools for students the Minister should:

16. publish the report, *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, prepared by the University of Melbourne, for wide distribution to schools, TAFE NSW Institutes, industry, the community and others with an interest in VET in schools

17. commission an annual survey of VET in schools students to track student destinations and measure student satisfaction with VET and the HSC

18. commission a longitudinal study focusing on study and work destinations of the 2004 cohort over a further two to three year period to gauge longer-term benefits of HSC VET subjects in comparison with non-VET subjects.

4 THE NSW MODEL OF VET IN SCHOOLS

Background

The highly charged national debate about skills shortages has placed intense political focus on vocational education and training in schools. Great weight is being put on the role of schools in increasing our national skills base, particularly for trades related occupations.

Vocational education and training is not new in NSW schools. The State has implemented high quality, industry relevant vocational courses as part of the Higher School Certificate since 1985, when it introduced Joint Secondary Schools TAFE courses.

Schools moved into delivery of HSC vocational education and training in 1992 when the Board of Studies NSW introduced the Industry Studies course. Industry Studies could be delivered by schools that met VETAB quality assurance requirements. It led to the HSC, a VET qualification and, through the HSC examination, it provided eligibility for university entrance.

Securing their Future

New South Wales asserted its priority for quality and industry relevance in VET in schools through *Securing Their Future: The NSW Government's Reforms of the Higher School Certificate*.⁴

Based on extensive consultation and research the Government established principles for a high quality, industry oriented model of vocational education and training in schools. These principles were consistent with national policy directions on VET in schools and industry priorities proposed by the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training:

To guide the development of vocational education and training within the Higher School Certificate, the Government affirms that vocational education and training courses should:

- *be potentially appropriate for all students in the HSC and should be accessible to all, including those who move from secondary to higher education*
- *be offered in sufficient variety to satisfy different student needs*
- *contribute to the broad education of students*
- *be recognised by both secondary and vocational education accreditation authorities*
- *be offered in response to demand established from industry needs, using the State Training Profile⁵*
- *offer training relevant to the industries in the State Training Profile rather than merely to narrowly focussed occupations or the specific needs of single enterprises*
- *result, on successful completion, in the award of a vocational qualification under the AQF⁶ or in clearly established credit towards such a qualification*

⁴ *Securing Their Future: The NSW Government's Reforms of the Higher School Certificate*, 1997, p 2.

⁵ After 1997, the annual State Training Profile was replaced by the three-year NSW Strategic VET Plan and the NSW Annual VET Plan.

⁶ Australian Qualifications Framework

- *have clear links to post-school destinations, particularly further VET and employment*
- *be developed in collaboration between the secondary education and VET sectors and industry*
- *have a component of structured workplace training to allow for competencies to be developed and assessed in the workplace to the extent deemed appropriate by, and available in, industry.*⁷

The strategies for strengthening VET in the HSC included:

- *remove duplication in offerings in the same content area*
- *bring all vocational education and training courses within a coherent curriculum framework under broad industry groupings, consistent with the State Training Profile*
- *determine which vocational education and training courses can count towards university entrance.*⁸

Industry Curriculum Frameworks

The current model of NSW VET in schools is based on the principles of *Securing Their Future*. In particular it:

- is delivered by schools, TAFE NSW and private providers, all of whom are registered training organisations, required to comply with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)
- leads to a Nationally Recognised Qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), which may provide credit towards post school qualifications
- contributes to the HSC and may count towards the Universities Admission Index (UAI)
- includes a component of mandatory workplace training for most students.

The Industry Curriculum Frameworks, developed by the Board of Studies based on National Training Packages, meet all these criteria. They currently account for 80 percent of Years 11 and 12 VET enrolments.

Frameworks are developed in consideration of industry need and student interest. They currently cover:

- Business Services
- Construction
- Information Technology
- Metal and Engineering
- Primary Industries
- Retail
- Hospitality
- Tourism
- Entertainment

TAFE NSW offers students a number of courses in industry areas outside the frameworks, often targeting local industry needs or student interest.

⁷ *Securing Their Future*, p 16.

⁸ *Securing Their Future*, p 17.

The Board of Studies endorses these courses for HSC purposes, as it has done with a number of locally developed school courses. These TAFE delivered courses usually do not include a workplace component or count to the Universities Admission Index.

Since 1998, a growing number of students, approximately 1,400 in 2004, have combined their VET in schools course with a registered part-time school based traineeship, mainly in the retail and automotive industries. Traineeships provide students with paid employment and a certificate of proficiency as well as a VET qualification and the HSC.

Workplacement

A strength of the NSW model of VET in schools is the mandatory inclusion of workplacement in Industry Curriculum Framework courses.

Students develop and practise industry competencies through a minimum 70 hours of workplacement in a real or simulated workplace setting. In some cases, competencies are also assessed in the workplace. Inclusion of workplacement has been a priority for industry and bodies such as the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET).

A measure of the industry support for this aspect of VET in schools is shown by the fact that in 2004 around 20,000 employers provided more than 56,000 workplacement opportunities for students.

In 2004 in New South Wales, 81 percent of VET in schools enrolments included a workplacement. This compared with 72 percent in Victoria and 22 percent in Queensland,⁹ completing over 2 million workplace training hours¹⁰.

Managing workplacement has been a significant challenge for teachers and schools. To ease this responsibility, since 2001 the Board of Vocational Education and Training has provided up to \$3.3 million to coordinate workplacement through local industry partnerships. In recent years these funds have been matched by Commonwealth funds of \$3.4 million.

NSW VET in schools students now have equitable access to workplacement support through a network of 51 incorporated Local Community Partnerships of schools, TAFE and industry.

In 2005 the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training has proposed a rearrangement of Local Community Partnerships across Australia to correspond to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) areas. BVET recommended that this initiative does not undermine the equitable arrangements that are applying across New South Wales.

AQTF Compliance

New South Wales has ensured that all VET in schools courses are delivered by schools, TAFE Institutes and other RTOs that meet the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework.

⁹ Confidential draft - National VET in Schools for the 2004 school year.

¹⁰ Excludes additional placements undertaken by students.

TAFE NSW Institutes are registered training organisations, with each campus or college a delivery site. Similarly, DET School Regions are RTOs, and their schools are delivery sites. Catholic Dioceses and the Association of Independent Schools have taken a similar approach.

School sector RTOs have implemented policies and processes required under the AQTF, including systems for internal auditing, risk management and assessment validation.

Teacher Qualifications

The growth of VET in schools in New South Wales has been supported to no small degree by the commitment and enthusiasm of teachers.

New South Wales has taken a high road approach to ensuring VET in schools is delivered by qualified teachers, particularly in comparison with other states and territories. School teacher capacity and qualifications are an issue that has attracted the interest of industry, TAFE NSW and other RTOs.

AQTF standards and training package requirements in relation to teacher and assessor qualifications, competence and experience are met through recognition processes and retraining and professional development programs that are endorsed by industry and conducted for school VET teachers by the Department and, in most cases, TAFE NSW.

New South Wales has established entry benchmarks for teachers. Teacher training programs build upon these. For example, to enter training for the Hospitality Framework teachers must have a:

- qualification to teach Home Science or Home Economics or
- degree with a major (i.e. three years of degree level study) in food technology or
- certificate II or higher level qualification in hospitality/cookery.

Teachers then receive training in methodology for competency based training and assessment, training in the relevant training package and workplace. All teachers achieve the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training and at least the same level of industry specific VET qualification as they are delivering and therefore meet AQTF standards for trainers and assessors.

Industry specific training and the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training are delivered by TAFE NSW on a fee for service basis. For Entertainment, industry specific training is conducted by the National Institute of Dramatic Art.

Teachers must also maintain current industry knowledge. Using Hospitality as an example again, teachers must spend at least 30 hours in industry over any two-year period.

VET is now incorporated in many NSW pre-service teacher training degree programs and industry personnel have been encouraged to retrain as school VET teachers with advanced standing in degrees and diplomas.

Industry Involvement

NSW industry is an active partner in VET in schools policy development and implementation. Representatives of BVET, NSW Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs), National Skills Councils, employers associations and unions are involved at all levels of VET in schools including:

- confirming industry need for courses and the suitability of entry level courses for 16-18 year olds
- demonstrating the capacity and willingness of the industry to provide appropriate workplacement opportunities
- endorsing course structures and teacher training and resource requirements
- participating in VET teacher retraining.

Local level industry support is also a significant component of the NSW model. With employers participating in planning committees, Local Community Partnerships and providing workplacements. As mentioned above, around 20,000 employers provided over 56,000 workplacement opportunities for students in 2004.

In addition, employers provided industry placements for school teachers undertaking retraining and for trained teachers maintaining industry currency.

5 PARTICIPATION

In 2004 there were over 69,000 enrolments in VET in schools courses in New South Wales. This comprised 53,935 students who took at least one VET course as part of their HSC, with 39,874 in government schools and 14,061 in non-government schools.

In just five years since the introduction of the new HSC, VET in schools participation has grown to over one third of all Years 11 and 12 students.

Seventy four percent of enrolments were in school delivered courses, 26 percent in TAFE NSW.

Year	DET	CEC	AIS	TAFE	Total
2000	23,857	7,952	1,292	15,557	48,658
2001	28,554	9,785	2,096	15,120	55,555
2002	34,057	10,625	2,866	16,874	64,422
2003	36,937	10,835	2,656	16,753	67,181
2004	37,225	11,179	3,310	17,849 ¹²	69,563

Source: DET – Data are derived from Board of Studies data as at end of June 2004 and from TAFE NSW data.

DET: Department of Education and Training, CEC: Catholic Education Commission, AIS: Association of Independent Schools

Table 2 gives a snapshot of 2004 VET student enrolments for each school sector, broken down by industry course area and delivery sector (that is, whether courses were delivered by a school or TAFE). This table also shows the number of Year 12 students who chose to take the optional HSC examination for their Industry Curriculum Framework courses. This exam enables students to count their VET in schools towards their Universities Admission Index.

Hospitality and Information Technology are clearly the most popular courses for students, although participation is also significant in Business Services, Retail, in trade areas including Construction, Metals and Automotive and other areas of skills shortage including Child Studies.

With regard to skills shortages, in 2004 enrolments rose in Construction by 794 (15.3%), Hospitality by 1,115 (5.8%), Metal and Engineering by 176 (7.6%) and in Automotive by 253 (13%).

School Based Part-time Traineeships

In 2004, 792 students commenced a school based part-time traineeship, with approximately 650 students continuing their traineeship from the previous year, bringing the total of students participating across the three school sectors to 1,440 during that year.

¹¹ Students enrolled in more than one VET course (minimum 120 hours for initial courses) are counted for each enrolment.

¹² Students in TAFE delivered courses are drawn from all school sectors. The TAFE delivered total in 2004 includes 15, 236 DET students, 1,720 Catholic students and 893 independent students.

Table 2 NSW HSC VET Course Enrolments (Years 11 and 12) in 2004 by Course, Home Sector and Delivery Sector														Year 12 Exam Candidates
	DET			CEC			AIS			Total			%	
	School	TAFE	Total	School	TAFE	Total	School	TAFE	Total	School	TAFE	Total	Total	
Business Services	3963	679	4642	1468	94	1562	294	29	323	5725	802	6527	9%	2,123
Construction	3630	550	4180	1580	78	1658	118	45	163	5328	673	6001	9%	1,460
Entertainment	1151	154	1305	194	21	215	128	16	144	1473	191	1664	2%	369
Hospitality	13333	837	14170	4349	196	4545	1526	204	1730	19208	1237	20445	29%	7,078
Information Technology	6897	989	7886	1706	65	1771	728	61	789	9331	1115	10446	15%	4,031
Metal and Engineering	1763	334	2097	304	36	340	58	9	67	2125	379	2504	4%	617
Primary Industries	1587	236	1823	256	14	270	102	19	121	1945	269	2214	3%	598
Retail	3632	483	4115	1104	31	1135	88	10	98	4824	524	5348	8%	1,573
Tourism	0	970	970	1	134	135	30	36	66	31	1140	1171	2%	382
Accounting	0	751	751	0	65	65	0	35	35	0	851	851	1%	386
Board Endorsed Courses	1269	9253	10522	217	986	1203	238	429	667	1724	10668	12392	18%	NA
Total	37,225	15,236	52,461	11,179	1,720	12,899	3,310	893	4,203	51,714	17,849	69,563	100%	18,617

Source: DET – Data are derived from Board of Studies data as at end of June 2004 and from TAFE NSW data.

DET: Department of Education and Training, CEC: Catholic Education Commission, AIS: Association of Independent Schools

Notes:

1. Students are counted more than once if they have enrolled in more than one course.
2. The final column shows HSC students who were enrolled for optional HSC examinations in 2004 for framework courses. The Board-developed course in Accounting does not include an external exam, but marks derived from TAFE assessment may be included in UAI calculations.
3. Government sector enrolments for 2004 include 665 VET enrolments by students undertaking the HSC through TAFE NSW.
4. A small number of courses are delivered by private VET providers on behalf of schools.

Table 3 School Based Traineeship Commencements by School Sector, 2000-2004

School Sector	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Government Students	181	282	558	582	664
Non-government Students	53	48	132	99	128
Total NSW School Students	234	330	690	681	792

Source: DET Integrated Vocational Education Training Systems database.

By far the largest number of commencements was in Retail (394), with 82 in Automotive and 61 in Hospitality. This is partly a reflection of employment opportunities in these industries. It also reflects partnership arrangements between the school sectors and major corporate employers; including McDonalds and Big W in retail and the automotive employers Toyota, Ford, Holden and Mitsubishi that are involved in the T3 initiative.

The T3 program is an innovative school based traineeship program established as a joint venture between schools, TAFE NSW and Toyota. Since 2001, 250 students have participated in the T3 program in New South Wales. In 2002 the first cohort of 49 students graduated, with 98 percent articulating into higher level qualifications (as part of either the apprenticeship pathway for Automotive Vehicle Servicing or the Certificate III in Business) and retaining employment with the dealership.

Equity Participation and Achievement

Participation by individuals from equity groups is growing strongly with additional support provided for students from rurally isolated schools, students in Juvenile Justice Centres and students with a disability.

2004 saw a 59 percent increase in the participation of Aboriginal students in VET courses, from 1,114 in 2003 to 1,767 in 2004.

This growth was supported by many local projects under the *Learning Works Program* targeting increased retention to Years 11 and 12 by promoting interest in and access to VET.

The number of students with a disability accessing HSC VET courses also increased in 2004, continuing a trend of the last four years.

This is a major achievement as students with a disability are able to embark on a relevant pathway to post-school options with an HSC that includes recognised VET credentials.

Table 4 shows government school enrolments in VET in schools courses by Aboriginal students and students with a disability from 2001-2004.

Table 4 NSW Government School Students – Years 11 and 12 HSC VET Enrolments by Equity Group					
Year	Total Students	Aboriginal		Disability Support	
		Number	%	Number	%
2001	40,849	NA	NA	1,124	2.80%
2002	47,703	NA	NA	1,723	3.60%
2003	50,538	1,026	2.03%	1,913	3.79%
2004	51,796	1,619	3.13%	2,096	4.05%

Source: DET - Data are derived from Board of Studies data as at end of June 2004 and disability data collected by the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate.

AQF Qualifications Achieved

In addition to gaining the HSC, students who successfully complete VET in schools courses gain a certificate or statement of attainment under the Australian Qualifications Framework. Qualifications for school delivered courses are issued by the Board of Studies NSW on behalf of school sector RTOs and by TAFE NSW for TAFE delivered courses.

At the end of 2004, 20,123 Year 12 school students were issued with an AQF credential through school sector RTOs, 62 percent (12,496) were at AQF VET certificate II level.

Table 5 shows qualifications and statements of attainment awarded to Year 12 students for school delivered courses in 2004, by qualification level and sector. The table does not include qualifications issued by TAFE NSW. Eligible Year 11 students also received credentials from school sector and TAFE RTOs.

Table 5 Year 12 VET Credentials 2004 – School Delivered Courses				
Qualification Level	Government Sector	Catholic Sector	Independent Sector	Total
Certificate I	1,608	748	77	2,433
Certificate II	8,681	2,731	1,084	12,496
Certificate III	75	3	54	132
Statement of Attainment toward Certificate I	353	210	4	567
Statement of Attainment toward Certificate II	2,933	1,434	81	4,448
Statement of Attainment toward Certificate III	20	0	27	47
Total	13,670	5,126	1,327	20,123

Source: Board of Studies data as at March 2005.

In total, 16,294 AQF VET qualifications were issued by the Board of Studies to NSW VET in schools students and 3,501 were issued by TAFE NSW. These figures do not include statements of attainment.¹³

¹³ NSW AVETMISS data for 2004 (draft).

UAI Achievement

Students undertaking the 240 hour Industry Curriculum Framework courses can sit for an optional HSC examination. Achievement in these exams can be used to calculate the Universities Admission Index (UAI). Students who take the Board of Studies developed course Accounting can use the HSC marks from their TAFE assessments for UAI purposes. Only one of these courses can contribute to the UAI for an individual student because of their designation by universities as Category B.

In 2004 14,970 VET students, approximately 80 percent of those eligible, chose to sit for the optional HSC examinations in Industry Curriculum Framework courses in 2004, with a further 418 completing Accounting.¹⁴ Overall, 83 percent of the students who undertook optional VET exams in 2004 applied for, and received, a UAI.

Table 6 shows the percentage of students in each VET examination and in Accounting who received a UAI and the maximum UAI achieved by individual students in each of these courses in 2004.

Accounting and Information Technology had the highest proportions of students receiving UAIs and Construction and Metal and Engineering the lowest.

Individual students in all of the VET courses were able to achieve UAIs of over 90; in most cases in the very high 90s. Students in Accounting, Entertainment and Information Technology all achieved UAIs above 99.

Table 6 UAI Eligibility and Maximum UAI by Course, Year 12 2004			
Course	Examination Enrolment	Eligible for a UAI (%)	Maximum UAI
Accounting	418	95.9	99.90
Business Services Exam	1,637	84.3	98.15
Construction Exam	1,189	70.0	93.65
Entertainment Exam	323	79.3	99.65
Hospitality Exam	5,818	83.8	98.50
Information Technology Exam	3,502	89.7	99.15
Metal & Engineering Exam	491	66.8	91.75
Primary Industries Exam	515	76.1	98.50
Retail Operations Exam	1,144	76.5	94.45
Tourism Exam	351	86.3	97.10
All Examined VET Students	15,388	83.1	99.90

Source: *Report on the Scaling of the 2004 NSW Higher School Certificate*, Table A1.

Typically, approximately half of the VET students who receive UAIs apply for university entrance and around half of those who apply receive at least one offer of a university place.¹⁵

¹⁴ NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee, Technical Committee on Scaling, *Report on the Scaling of the 2004 NSW Higher School Certificate*, 2005, Table A1. Students who undertook more than one VET exam are counted for each.

¹⁵ Professor George Cooney, Presentation to VET in Schools Teachers, 2004.

6 SATISFACTION

Unquestionably, VET is now an integral and valuable component of the NSW Higher School Certificate. It is timely for the Government to reassert the quality, relevance and value of the NSW model of HSC vocational education and training. A high level statement would benefit students and parents in making education and career choices, schools in planning and resourcing, and industry in supporting school education and training.

Students themselves provide the best measure of the value of VET in schools. Motivated by peer experiences and the attraction of the practical learning approach offered by these courses, over 35 percent of all Years 11 and 12 students now take a VET course in the Higher School Certificate. In government schools participation is over 40 percent.

Ask students why they are taking a VET course and their answer may not be because their goal is to work in the industry in which they are training. Many students see the courses as part of their broader development, in a similar way that students may see value in many of their general education subjects.

Students consulted for this evaluation reported that they wanted to: get skills; get a qualification before they left school; learn about work; and decide what they want to do when they leave school. Some started with a clear focus on a career, others developed that focus during their course. Many said they would not be seeking careers in their VET field. However, none of those consulted hesitated to say that their VET course was of great value to them.

Melbourne University reports that its “study clearly demonstrates that the value of VET in schools in New South Wales cannot be overstated. It shows that HSC VET students successfully access a broad range of study and labour market destinations, and that they also unequivocally endorse the value of their VET in schools subjects”.¹⁶

VET in the HSC

The University asked VET and non-VET students a range of questions about their school experience to ascertain whether VET had influenced levels of satisfaction and views of achievement. For VET students the responses were strongly positive.

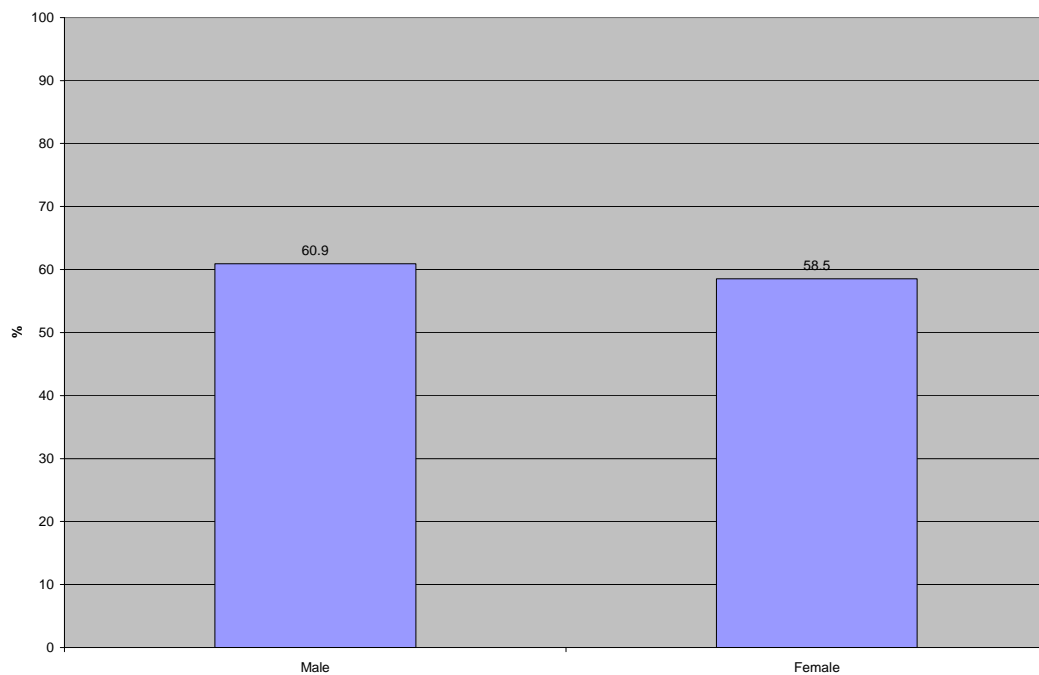
Nine out of ten 2004 VET students agreed or strongly agreed that doing the HSC was worthwhile. Melbourne University argues that “this endorsement points to the utility of the certificate in creating diverse and effective pathways for students with a range of needs.”¹⁷

VET has also increased the attractiveness of the HSC for many students. Schools and students consulted suggested the availability of VET has had a major impact on retention from Year 10 through Years 11 and 12. School Principals suggest that in many schools, without VET, retention would be much lower.

¹⁶ *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, p i.

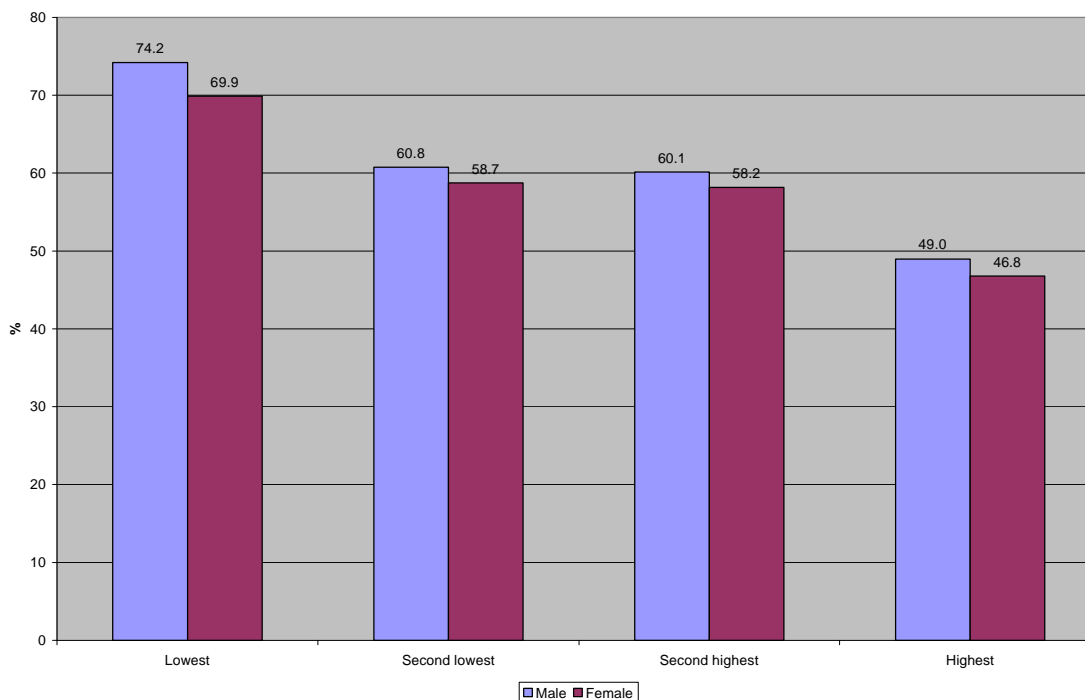
¹⁷ *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, p 5.

Figure 1 Option of HSC VET Influenced Decision to Stay on at School to Year 12¹⁸



This view is borne out by Melbourne University which found that 6 out of 10 students reported that their VET program influenced their decision to stay on at school to Year 12. This is particularly the case for boys with the lowest level of prior achievement, 74 percent of whom suggested VET influenced them to stay on. Yet the answer was the same for almost 50 percent of those with the highest level of prior achievement.

Figure 2 Option of HSC VET Influenced Decision to Stay on at School to Year 12 by Gender and Prior Achievement



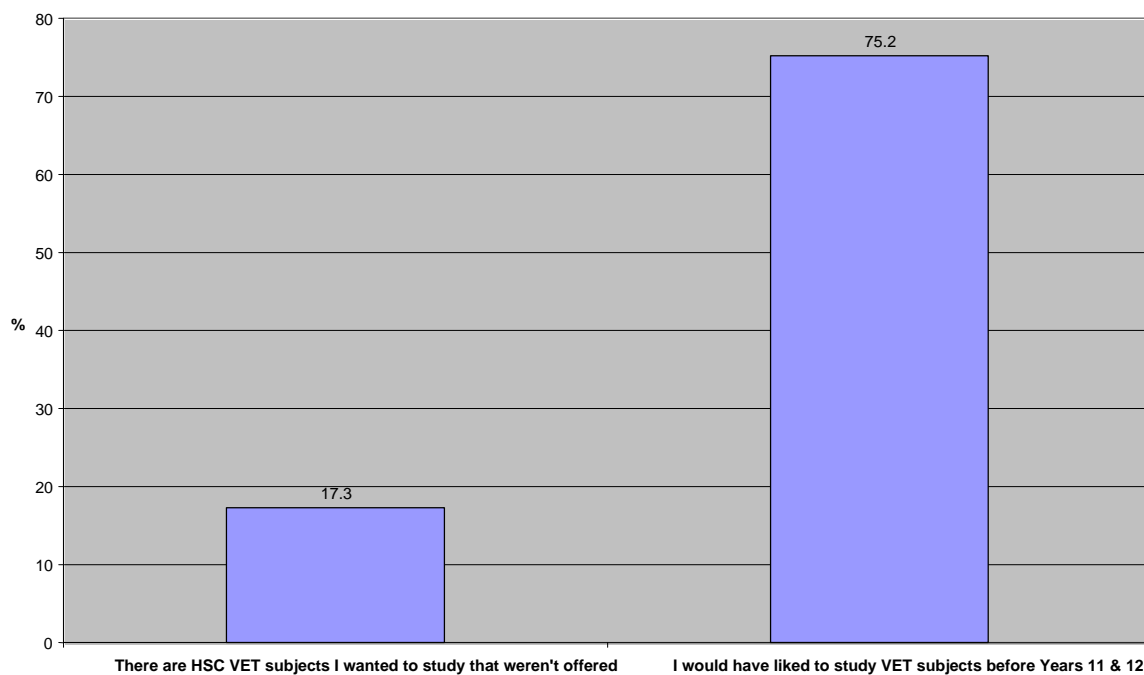
¹⁸ Figures 1-7 are taken from the *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*.

These findings support the argument that VET is clearly providing value by delivering diversity in the HSC that engages the interests and meets the learning needs and aspirations of a broad range of students, as well as increasing their opportunities for achievement.

VET in the Compulsory Years of Schooling

It also supports the argument for considering the introduction of recognised vocational education and training programs in the compulsory years of schooling. Seventy five percent of VET students reported that they would have liked to study VET subjects before Years 11 and 12.

Figure 3 Views of VET Subjects Offered



The Department of Education and Training’s *Report of the Review of Aboriginal Education* raises this issue saying there was “much debate about Vocational Education and Training (VET) being provided in Stage 5 and perhaps as early as Stage 4.” The report cautioned about parent/caregiver concern “that Aboriginal students may be channelled into VET courses because it was seen to be an easier option.”¹⁹

In regional consultations over a number of years, BVET has heard strong views from Aboriginal communities regarding the potential benefits for Aboriginal students’ learning and retention if VET were available before Year 11.

The participation and achievements of Aboriginal students in VET in schools have continued to grow strongly in recent years. HSC VET may be seen to be contributing to the increased retention of Aboriginal students from Year 10 to Year 12 and to better educational and employment outcomes. However, support for retention of Aboriginal

¹⁹ NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc and DET, *The Report of the Review of Aboriginal Education*, 2004, p 123.

students to Year 10 and through to Years 11 and 12 may enable a more substantial increase in Year 12 completion by these students. Expansion of VET before Year 11 may be one way of making a substantial contribution to achievement of this goal.

The Board of Studies and Board of Vocational Education and Training have recommended to the Minister that a pilot program of VET in the compulsory years be trialled. This pilot would be conducted at a variety of schools across the state, including some with a high Aboriginal student population.

Introduction of VET courses before Year 11 attracted varied views in consultation with some, including the Catholic Education Commission, raising questions about the risk of streaming and the resource costs of opening VET up to additional cohorts.

However, the strong support from survey respondents for VET before Years 11 and 12 and the high incidence of local approaches to programs for Years 9 and 10 across the state at present, lends weight to arguments that a formal approach to VET in the compulsory years should be investigated seriously.

In introducing VET in the new HSC, New South Wales ensured that VET would be a strong component of a broad HSC qualification. The State chose not to establish VET as a separate stream. The value of this approach was borne out in the consultations and the survey with strong indication that achievement in VET enhances student engagement and retention, and commitment to achievement across the HSC.

While this evaluation supports the expansion of VET into the compulsory years, this should be carried out in a way that broadens and strengthens current curriculum offerings, rather than establishing an alternative pathway which might narrow students' options.

Relevance of VET Curriculum

Only 17 percent of VET students indicated that there are HSC subjects they wanted to study that were not offered. The intent of this question was to identify industry areas not covered by the current range of HSC courses available. The consultations suggested, for example, that Aged Care and Sport and Recreation should be considered as Industry Curriculum Framework courses.

It appears that in the majority of cases students identified current subjects that may not have been available at their school. This suggests a strong overall satisfaction with the current range of courses available but lends weight to an argument for better regional planning and coordination to increase access to the range of courses for students.

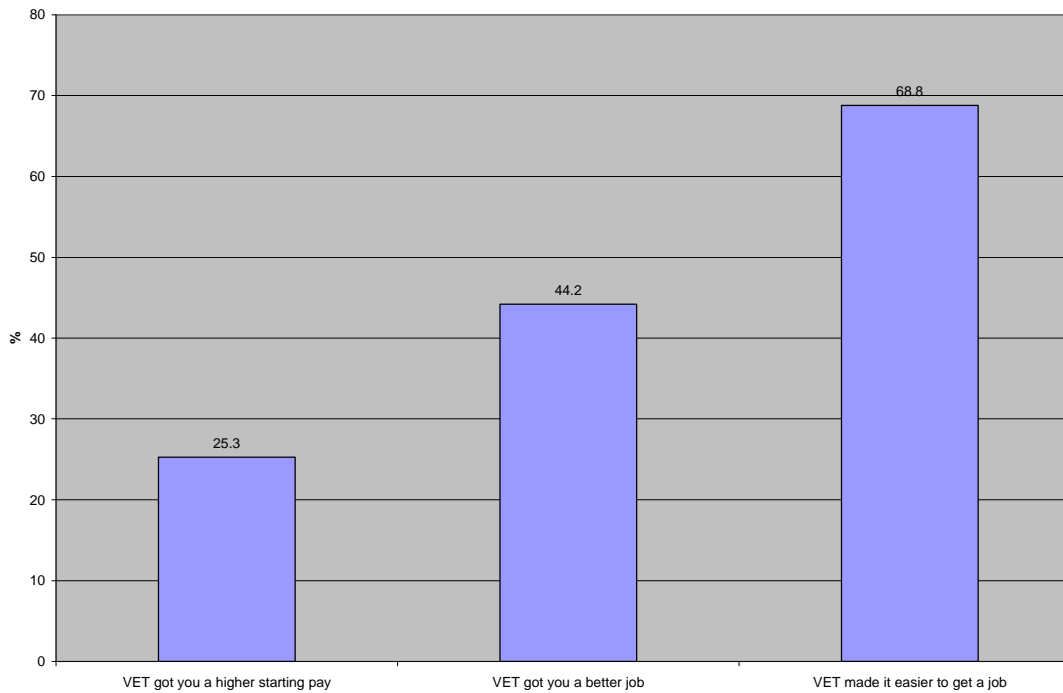
Student Views on Preparation for Work

Melbourne University reported the resounding value that VET students perceive they gained in their transition to work. "VET graduates considered themselves to be better prepared than non-VET graduates to make an effective transition to work and study, on most measures."²⁰

²⁰ *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, p i.

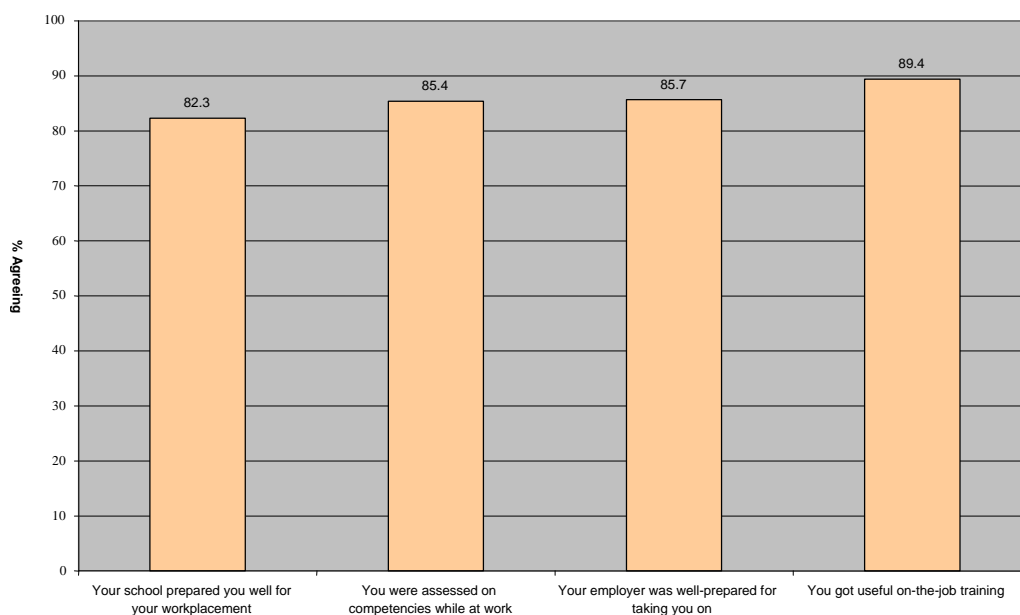
Sixty nine percent of VET students said their VET course helped them understand the world of work. Sixty percent said it helped them work out the career they would like and gain the skills and knowledge needed for their current job. Over 40 percent said their course helped them get their current job.

Figure 4 Influence of HSC VET on Transition to Labour Market



Of VET students who are now working, rather than studying, seven out of ten students said their VET course made it easier to get a job, 45 percent said it helped them get a better job and 25 percent believed it helped them get a higher starting pay.

Figure 5 Views of Workplacement



Students required to do workplacement as part of their VET course reported high levels of satisfaction with their experience.

Ninety percent of students said they got useful on the job training and over 80 percent said they, and their employer, were well prepared for the experience.

Considering the value added by workplacement, 90 percent of students said it built their confidence, 81 percent said it helped them succeed in their VET subject and 72 percent said it helped them decide what type of job they wanted to do.

Schools and students reported in consultation that a secondary benefit of workplacement was that it was getting students jobs. Of the VET students surveyed whose destination was employment, 16 percent reported they were now working with their workplacement employer.

Students consulted were enthusiastic about how workplacement adds value to their learning, provides the opportunity to apply their skills in the real world and helps them decide where they want to go.

Industry parties consulted expressed strong support for workplacement, though the hospitality and retail industries argued that student achievement would be improved if the minimum duration of 70 hours over two years was increased to allow for more extensive workplace experience. Longer workplacement was suggested to support increased competency development and more extensive credit transfer with post school vocational programs.

The strong student and industry support for workplacement, reinforces its inclusion as a mandatory component of industry curriculum framework courses. It also suggests that expansion of workplacement to other VET in schools courses should be considered.

Integrating VET in School Organisation

In terms of satisfaction, the greatest criticism by students of VET in schools relates to balancing time away from school with other school requirements. Students consulted report that they miss out on other education activities if they are away from school to travel to, and attend, TAFE or for their workplacement or traineeship. Students say that pressure is on them to catch up for what they have missed.

The Secondary Principals' Council also reported this concern for students, suggesting that "greater flexibility is essential in the organisation of both schools and TAFE in order to allow students to attend courses at both". The Council also argued that co-location of TAFE and school facilities would assist in the provision of vocational educational and training programs.

The Secondary Principals' Council cited examples of schools that have made great efforts to incorporate VET within the curriculum and operations of the school, providing regular scheduling of VET at a time that does not conflict with other subjects.

Through the consultations, a number of schools were encountered where such action has been taken. It was apparent that this may not have been an easy task but clear that

the forward thinking approach taken by these schools was paying off in terms of student participation, enthusiasm and achievement.

The DET Regional Directors identified the contribution vocational education and training can make towards the culture of schools. They highlighted the importance of valuing VET students and the VET approach to teaching and learning. However, the Regional Directors also recognised tension in some schools between VET and non-VET teachers. They reinforced the need for greater action by schools to build VET into their timetabling and organisation to meet the needs of all students.

Some Principals consulted described the need for VET to be “embedded” in the school curriculum and operations. This was not to suggest VET competencies be submerged in general education courses, as has been the practice in some other states. Rather, it is the notion that VET in schools be integral to the school’s curriculum offerings and that school programming and operations ensure students are able to gain the maximum benefit from VET courses without encountering disadvantage in other subject areas.

The Funding Model

The government schools funding model has been held up as a barrier to students gaining the best outcomes from VET in schools. It is seen as discouraging schools from allowing students to attend TAFE or to take on part-time traineeships.

The model adopted by the Department in 2000 sees a proportion of school funding follow a student from school to TAFE, or another registered training organisation. The model was intended to support the sustainable growth of VET in schools. It is viewed by many as a cost to schools, with the risk of staffing losses where significant numbers of students are taking activities out of school.

This perspective on the funding model is potentially reducing options for students and preventing them from accessing what may be the most appropriate VET delivery options in their region. It may also encourage schools to equip themselves with facilities and teachers to deliver VET courses, where high quality delivery may be available through local TAFE campuses.

This view of the funding model was promoted by a number of parties consulted. Some schools said they could not bear the loss of funding incurred to pay for TAFE training when they send a student to an external provider. TAFE says it is losing business because schools are reluctant to risk incurring possible funding losses.

A persuasive rebuttal was mounted in the consultations by school Principals who saw the argument that the funding model is a barrier to releasing students as a deficit interpretation of the policy.

This rebuttal suggested that given the strong apparent retention effect of VET in schools, rather than losing the equivalent of two units for each student taking TAFE delivered VET or a traineeship, schools were gaining the equivalent of eight units for students who might otherwise have left school. Given the strong concerns about the funding model, including those of the NSW Teachers Federation, the Department should consider how it

can promote this model more positively to overcome possible school resistance to supporting student participation in TAFE or traineeship programs.

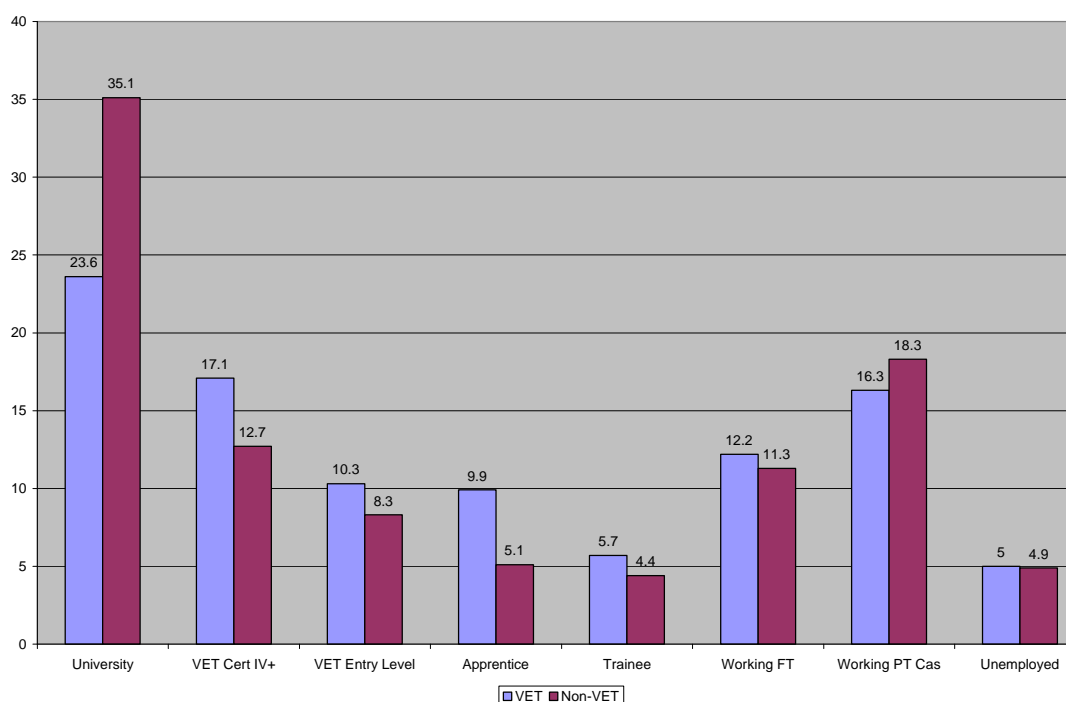
Schools need to continue working to integrate or embed VET in schools within school curriculum and operations to ensure VET in schools participation is a benefit rather than a cost to students.

7 DESTINATIONS

The NSW model of VET in schools is delivering on the promise of *Securing Their Future: The NSW Government's Reforms of the Higher School Certificate*²¹ for a program that fulfils HSC as well as VET regulatory needs; meets industry skill requirements; supports collaboration between schools and industry and provides curriculum diversity for students.

Data from the Melbourne University survey of destinations and satisfaction shows that in terms of value, the promise that VET in schools should meet the needs of all students “including those who move from secondary to higher education” and “have clear links to post-school destinations, particularly further VET and employment” has been realised.

Figure 6 Statewide Estimates of Destinations of 2004 Government School HSC VET and Non-VET Students



VET in schools is clearly providing opportunities and supporting achievement for the full range of students. As Melbourne University reports:

“Nearly one-quarter entered university, emphasising the fact that VET programs do not cut off the option of higher education. A further 28 percent entered a VET destination, mainly in TAFE. One in ten became apprentices and over one in twenty became trainees. Overall, two-thirds entered a study or training destination. Of the remainder, most were working, and only one in twenty graduates was unemployed at the time of the survey.”²²

²¹ *Securing Their Future*, p 2.

²² *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, p 17.

Transition to University

It is significant in the context of the new HSC, to see almost a quarter of VET students progress to university. VET has been seen by many to be an alternative for those students not looking for a tertiary pathway. Indeed this evaluation shows that, in terms of retention and achievement, VET is providing great value for these students. However, the study also demonstrates it is of value for those who do seek to go to university.

Schools consulted argued that the debate about the merits of VET versus general education has largely, but not totally, been won. They cited examples of schools such as McIntyre High School in New England, where the integration of VET within the senior schools program was seen as a major drawback for students. At McIntyre most students who progress to university have done at least one VET subject.

Those consulted suggested that the view held in some quarters about VET as a lesser HSC option may have had a negative impact on support from some Principals and teachers and may see parents who are keen to encourage their children towards a tertiary destination steer them away from VET in schools.

Consultations showed the categorisation of VET as Category B for calculation of the Universities Admission Index continues to send a strong message that VET is not valued as highly as other subjects and may discourage students seeking tertiary outcomes. Action was sought to remove this distinction or seek a new means of determining university entrance that would not discriminate against VET subjects.

Research undertaken for the Board of Vocational Education and Training at the time of the introduction of the new HSC suggested that universities may require evidence that these courses provide a solid foundation in basic thinking skills, underpinning knowledge and understanding. This may be an issue related to how these factors are assessed and reported by the Board of Studies or may raise questions about how the outcomes of VET in schools are communicated.

Category B status also limits the number of VET courses students may take because the outcomes of only one Category B course may be included in calculating the Universities Admission Index. Schools and industry representatives suggested that this meant that ambitious students could not package complementary courses such as Metal and Engineering and Information Technology to achieve a richer VET skills base.

Industry parties consulted acknowledged the value of VET for students seeking to progress to the full range of destinations. Employers want tertiary educated staff as well as those with VET qualifications, and promoted the value of VET in schools in providing greater understanding of the workplace for students moving straight to university.

Industry parties consulted were concerned that the current classification of VET courses might discourage high achieving students, who may seek tertiary qualifications before entering employment, from taking VET in schools.

The retail industry presented an interesting perspective on pathways to university, suggesting VET in schools students who move into work with major employers in that

industry may be sponsored by their employers to take tertiary qualifications, with some employers meeting the cost of HECS.

Transition to Post School VET

The Melbourne University survey showed that a higher proportion of VET students are entering further education and training than non-VET students. While non-VET students are more likely to move into university courses, VET students are much more likely to access higher level VET courses, apprenticeships or traineeships, or gain full-time work.

Gender differences for VET students are worth considering.

Table 7 Statewide Estimates of Destinations of Government School HSC VET and Non-VET Students by Gender²³

Males	University	VET Cert IV+	VET Entry Level	Apprentice	Trainee	Working FT	Working PT Casual	Unemployed
VET	19.4	14.2	9.1	19.2	4.1	11.0	17.3	5.7
Non-VET	32.1	12.2	6.8	9.5	4.0	12.7	17.3	5.3
Females	University	VET Cert IV+	VET Entry Level	Apprentice	Trainee	Working FT	Working PT Casual	Unemployed
VET	27.3	19.5	11.3	1.7	7.1	13.3	15.4	4.4
Non-VET	37.8	13.2	9.7	1.0	4.8	9.9	19.1	4.5

The University study found that young women are more likely than young men to proceed to university, a higher level VET qualification or into a traineeship. They are less likely than males to be unemployed. Male students are much more likely to move into an apprenticeship.

Melbourne University suggests VET in schools has great value in “steering students, especially girls, into middle level training” and points out that a “much higher proportion of VET in school graduates [are] entering apprenticeships and traineeships”.²⁴ The University suggests “VET students access a much broader range of education and training destinations [than non-VET students], highlighting once again the contribution made by VET programs to broadening the effectiveness and range of pathways offered by the HSC”.²⁵

The study points out that HSC VET students are much more likely to combine work and study than non-VET students, citing this as an important advantage for students seeking to survive in an increasingly costly tertiary environment.

This finding would tend to support evidence suggested in consultations that many VET in schools students, particularly in hospitality or retail, may not be seeking careers by taking those courses but rather, seeking qualifications to support them financially through other post school destinations, such as university.

²³ Tables 7-9 are taken from the *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*.

²⁴ *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, p 20.

²⁵ *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, p 20.

Transition to the Same Field of Study

During the consultations, the issue was raised that many students are not proceeding into a career or further education and training in the same field in which they had taken their VET in schools course. In particular, this was seen as an issue in the context of responding to skills shortages.

Melbourne University investigated this issue using classifications from the Australian Bureau of Statistics to link VET in schools with post school VET study.

Engineering and Related Technologies, Health, Creative Arts, Management and Commerce, and Society and Culture had the highest rates of transition to the same field of study, with fifty per cent or more of students who continued in education and training entering the same field post school.

However, Agricultural, Environmental and Related Studies and Food, Hospitality and Personal Services had the lowest rates of transition to the same field of study.

These findings suggest that VET in schools provides value in establishing pathways into related post school VET programs. However, the evidence cited earlier about students seeking qualifications that will assist them to support themselves financially, whilst at university or travelling, suggests another form of value that students find in VET in schools.

When questioned about the transition of students from school into further education and training or employment in the information technology industry, a representative of the industry suggested that students were taking the course because they wanted information technology in their careers rather than a career in information technology.

Transition for Students with a Disability

The strong growth in VET in schools participation by students with a disability has raised the issue of transition to employment for these students. In many cases students, including those with intellectual disabilities, may be completing units of competence or modules rather than full qualifications through their VET in schools program.

The NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training recently managed a project to help students with a disability make better post-school transitions to work. The project assisted students with physical and intellectual disabilities to move into post school employment.

The project worked with 32 students, almost half of whom were placed in jobs. Five entered further education and training. The project demonstrated the value of VET in increasing students' work readiness and supporting transitions from school to work. The majority of students who were placed in employment gained work in the industry in which they had undertaken their VET program. Four students were employed by their workplacement employer.

The major outcome of this project was to identify the range of interventions and brokerage options that can assist students with their post school transition. It highlighted

the need for increased information and training for service providers and for schools in implementing the actions needed to support students with a disability.

BVET should be encouraged to build on this project to improve the sustainability of measures that can provide effective support for students with a disability to enter post school employment and training.

8 CREDIT TRANSFER

Another measure of the value of VET qualifications for students is the credit students gain towards post school vocational qualifications or against the nominal term of an apprenticeship or traineeship qualification.

Securing Their Future: The NSW Government's Reforms of the Higher School Certificate anticipated that HSC VET courses would “result, on successful completion, in the award of a vocational qualification under the AQF²⁶ or in clearly established credit towards such a qualification”.

Compliance under the Australian Quality Training Framework requires registered training organisations to recognise the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by other registered training organisations and to implement policies of recognition of prior learning. This should ensure recognition of students' VET in schools achievements in post school VET courses that they subsequently undertake.

With the introduction of the new HSC in 2000, the Department established a Vocational Training Guideline that specified that students who have successfully completed VET in schools courses are eligible for a reduction in the term of their apprenticeship or traineeship that is at least equivalent to the duration of their VET in schools course.

Credit Transfer to Post School VET

Melbourne University asked students who are now in a VET destination whether they asked for credit towards that VET course. Overall 28.2 percent said they did ask for credit. For students who continued in the same field of study as their HSC VET course, this level increases to 38.3 percent.

This low level of request for credit suggests that students may need better information on their entitlement to seek credit for their VET in schools qualification when they enrol in further education and training or register as an apprentice or trainee.

Seventy six percent of students who asked for credit reported that they received some credit towards their qualification. Sixteen percent did not know if they had received any credit and 8 percent said they received no credit.

Table 8 Amount of Credit Granted as a % of All Students Asking for Credit

Amount of credit	Number	%
1-5 modules	158	42.5%
6+ modules	50	13.4%
Unspecified credit	75	20.2%
Unsure whether given credit	60	16.1%
No credit	29	7.8%

²⁶ Australian Qualifications Framework

Only 25 percent of VET in schools students moving into an apprenticeship or traineeship received a reduction in the term of their training contract.

Table 9 % of Apprentices and Trainees Reporting Training Shortened Due to HSC VET Course

Response	All apprentices/trainees	Apprentices/trainees in same field
Yes	19.0%	25.4%
No	81.0%	74.6%

The response on credit transfer to VET qualifications is a much more positive picture than had been anticipated following consultations for the review.

Improving Credit Transfer under the AQTF

School sector agencies, teachers and some industry parties reported concerns that students were being refused credit for their VET in schools qualifications by TAFE NSW and other providers, suggesting they were being compelled to repeat the content of these qualifications and that students may be “wasting their time”.

Limited evidence was provided of refusal of credit though this seems to be a strongly held perception across the school sectors. Consultation with TAFE teachers suggests concern with the capacity of school teachers to deliver to industry standards may be at the heart of the issue.

Members of the TAFE Teachers Association (TAFETA) Council suggested students may be moving from school to TAFE without the competencies for which they have been assessed and certified at school. The Council expressed views about differing standards applying between TAFE and schools.

In a written submission summarising the views expressed at the consultation the TAFETA stated: “A certificate II does not appear to be taught at the same level in TAFE and schools. It is right that industry standards should operate, but whether all schools have a clear idea of what these are, is uncertain.”

The submission also stated that the TAFETA believes “that no VET course should be taught by a teacher other than one with the same extensive knowledge and experience that TAFE teachers have.”

The expansion of VET in schools in New South Wales has been achieved through a partnership between schools, TAFE NSW and industry, though it is a partnership that has involved an ongoing level of tension.

That tension appears to revolve around the suitability of schools and school teachers to deliver VET, a view that VET delivery should occur in TAFE NSW not schools, and a preference of some industry sectors for more significantly work based training.

With over a third of NSW Years 11 and 12 students now taking VET, it is not possible to return to the 1980s, to a situation where all delivery was conducted by TAFE NSW. TAFE does not have the capacity, nor can schools meet the cost of the increasing

demand for VET from senior secondary students through TAFE alone. For these reasons, it is absolutely imperative that a more accommodating position be adopted by both sectors.

The issues raised by the TAFETA must be considered in terms of AQTF compliance.

The requirements school teachers must meet to deliver VET in schools are covered in detail elsewhere in this report. In short, school teachers must have:

- a teaching qualification
- a VET qualification at least equivalent to, and in the industry of, the qualification they will deliver
- a certificate IV trainer and assessor qualification
- ongoing industry experience.

These requirements are endorsed by industry. In most cases the training is delivered by TAFE NSW.

TAFETA argued that “it needs to be recognised that trades courses must involve TAFE teachers and facilities”. It is worth noting that a major association covering trade industries took a counter position, suggesting that the capacity of TAFE to deliver is better, but “the teaching isn’t necessarily better. School teachers tend to be younger and more invigorated”.

This evaluation unequivocally endorses the value of the NSW model of VET in schools, delivered by schools and TAFE NSW, particularly considering the high level of demand and the significant levels of satisfaction of the full range of students participating in VET courses. For the model to work far more effectively, however, there needs to be far greater collaboration and cooperation between schools and TAFE than exist at present. A structure needs to be put in place at the regional level in an endeavour to achieve this goal.

As with all large systems it is to be expected that working within such a framework there may be variations in the performance of individuals. For schools, as for TAFE, it is the responsibility of the RTO to ensure that standards for teachers and facilities are being met.

From the perspective of VETAB, the body responsible for registration and monitoring of RTOs, there should be no expectation that school systems as RTOs may take a more relaxed approach to compliance than other RTOs.

School-TAFE Partnerships

Government schools have the opportunity, through their partnership with TAFE NSW, to implement systems for continuous improvement.

The alignment of School Regions with TAFE NSW Institutes allows for better regional planning, resourcing and professional development for teachers. By working together, schools and TAFE may determine the most appropriate approach to meet students’

needs and may overcome some of the concerns held by students about the burden they must carry by being out of school to attend TAFE or to do a traineeship. Teacher professional development might include joint activities on assessment moderation.

A partnership approach should lead to better delivery and assessment and better outcomes for students.

Options to Increase Credit for VET in Schools

The data compiled by Melbourne University suggests the amount of credit students are achieving may be relatively low.

Over the past year the Department has worked with industry to look at greater flexibility in apprenticeships and traineeships. Included in this work has been an examination of options to reduce the nominal term of apprenticeships and traineeships.

Graduates of the recently developed TradeStart@TAFENSW program are likely to achieve up to one year off their apprenticeship. Graduates of some existing traineeship and prevocational programs are already achieving similar levels of recognition.

The current Vocational Training Guideline allows VET in schools students to seek a reduction in their apprenticeship or traineeship that is equivalent to the duration of their VET in schools program. It is appropriate to review this decision to consider whether more extensive credit might be appropriate.

It is also appropriate to consider how the credit available to VET in schools students might be increased. Industry representatives indicated that increased workplace training time would be necessary to enable students to apply and practice skills learned in class. In one case it was suggested that the hours be doubled.

One option may be to make an explicit link between VET courses and the Board of Studies Work Studies course, which allows for a significant component of workplacement. Delivery and assessment of skills in the Work Studies course by a VET teacher may enable greater competency achievement for students and afford more extensive credit towards post school programs.

9 SCHOOL BASED PART-TIME TRAINEESHIPS AND APPRENTICESHIPS

At the time of conducting this Strategic Evaluation national political interest in part-time apprenticeships for school students intensified. The Commonwealth was seeking tenders for Australian Technical Colleges and the Council of Australian Governments was considering an approach to expanding trade apprenticeships in schools.

This placed a greater emphasis on apprenticeships and traineeships than had been identified in the evaluation's terms of reference.

Participation

In 2004 over 1,440 students were taking part-time traineeships across twenty-five industry areas. There is no provision in state industrial awards for part-time apprenticeships and no students are enrolled in Certificate III apprenticeship programs for their HSC.

While availability of part-time apprenticeships is a strong political issue, it was not a high profile issue in consultations for the evaluation, with limited interest expressed in introducing apprenticeship arrangements in schools.

Consultations suggested that this may be due to the strengths of the current NSW model of VET in schools, namely that students are enrolled in national qualifications that may provide credit transfer towards an apprenticeship qualification and that students undertaking traineeships in areas such as hospitality and automotive (T3) are effectively completing stage one of an apprenticeship while exiting school with a full Certificate II qualification.

Feedback also suggests that the complexity of the school based traineeship model and the demands it places on students may be an obstacle to expansion of traineeships as well as to participation in apprenticeships.

Integration with the NSW HSC

In introducing school based part-time traineeships New South Wales determined that as well as meeting requirements for the HSC the programs must meet the regulatory requirements of the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act, including:

- paid work under an appropriate industrial arrangement
- a training agreement or indenture signed by both the employer and the trainee and then registered with DET
- a training program delivered by a registered training organisation that meets the requirements of a declared traineeship in New South Wales and leads to a nationally recognised AQF VET qualification.

The demands that this places on students must be acknowledged. School based trainees must complete the hours of work and training that are required of a full-time trainee in the same traineeship - up 1,500 hours of work and training. At the same time

they must complete the work required for the balance of their rigorous HSC program and, as students reported in the consultation, try and squeeze in their other extra curricular activities.

To respond to the issue of high work-load there is provision for students to begin the workplace component of the traineeship in Year 10 or complete it in the year following the HSC. Students have up to 36 months to complete their traineeship.

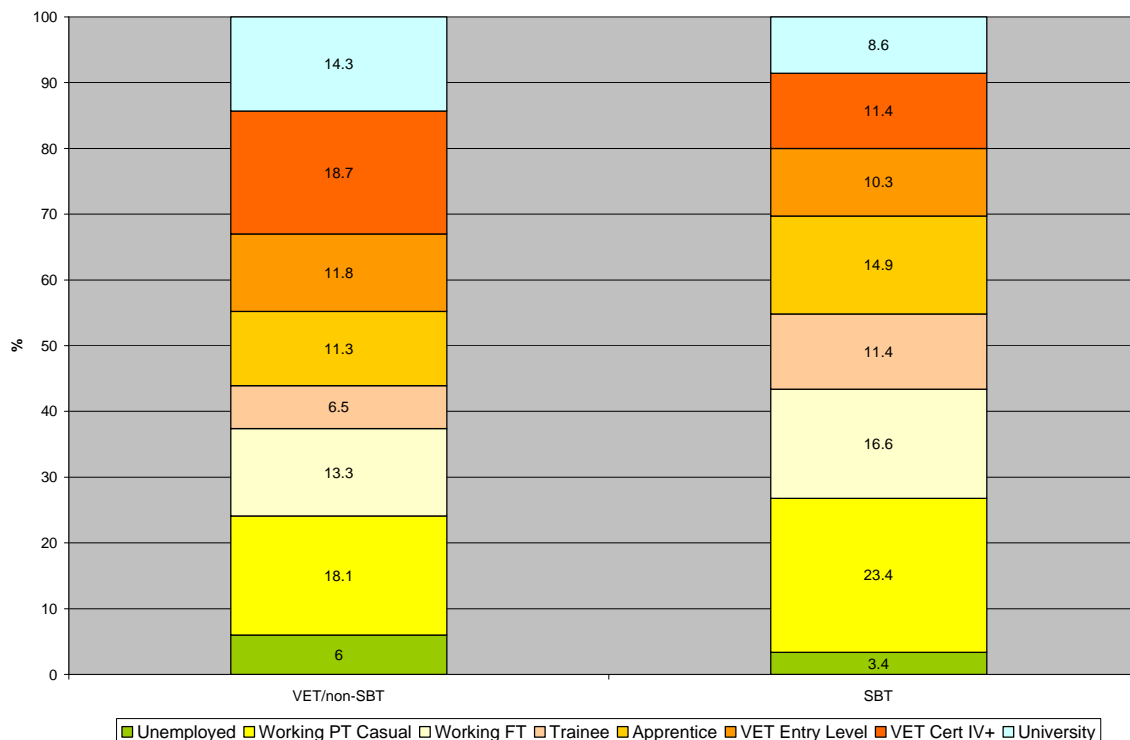
As reported earlier, where schools have not embedded or integrated this activity within their timetabling, the pressure on students increases, with students and teachers consulted reporting the challenges for students needing to catch up with courses missed when their traineeship has required them to be away from school.

Employer Views on Part-Time Traineeships

Employers are generally supportive of traineeships, recognising the workplace training content and employment outcomes. While some industries express a preference for traineeships over other VET in schools courses, others have reported that the complexity of establishing a school based traineeship, with lines of approval to the Department of Education and Training for the traineeship and the Board of Studies for inclusion in the HSC, may be a disincentive for employers.

Students who have completed school based traineeships have no doubt about their value.

Figure 7 Destinations of HSC VET SBT and Non-SBT Students



SBT: School based trainee

Transition to Post School VET and Work

School based trainees surveyed were more likely than other HSC students to report that their HSC subjects had “helped them gain their current job and that these subjects helped them gain the skills and knowledge needed to perform that job.”²⁷

In comparison with other VET students, school based trainees also reported a much higher rate of transition into post school apprenticeships and traineeships and, compared with all HSC graduates, a much lower rate of unemployment (3.4 percent).

School based trainees are more likely than other VET students to have entered employment. However, it is worth noting the higher proportion of former trainees employed on a part-time or casual basis.

The T3 automotive traineeship example demonstrates both the potential and the challenges of part-time traineeships. While this program has been achieving excellent results for students for over four years, its numbers have not grown over that time. According to some consulted, including the Secondary Principals’ Council, this can be attributed in part to a student view that T3 is too hard, requiring students to work during holidays to make up their hours and work in their own time to make up subjects missed at school.

In consultation, quite diverse views were heard from schools, teachers and Principals regarding part-time traineeships.

Balancing the HSC and a Traineeship

Schools agreed success is likely to be greater where the traineeship is integrated within the school curriculum, therefore minimising the need for students to “catch up” on missed work.

The 1,500 hour time demand of the traineeship was seen as a challenge for students. While the need to maintain traineeship integrity was acknowledged, the comparison with other states which have more limited requirements for workplace hours, suggests that this issue should be considered.

The suggestion was also raised that this additional workplace training requirement should see traineeships recognised as four unit HSC subjects rather than two unit subjects, equivalent to other school and TAFE delivered courses.

The government schools funding model was promoted by some as a disincentive to schools to offer traineeships, with the risk that time away from school would reduce funding to a school.

Funding of Delivery

Catholic schools also raised the question of access to Apprenticeship and Traineeship Training Program funding. They argued that current participation in traineeships in their -

²⁷ *Destination and Satisfaction Survey of 2004 HSC VET Students in New South Wales*, p 15.

sector is constrained as it is funded out of the sector's share of ANTA²⁸ VET in Schools funds (\$1.54 million in 2004), which are also required to meet other priorities such as teacher professional development and infrastructure. The Catholic Education Commission argued that as part-time school based traineeships are required to meet VET regulatory standards they should be funded out of VET resources.

Views of Part-time Traineeships

Two polarised views of part-time traineeships for school students, encountered during the consultations, can be illustrated by the experiences of two schools.

In discussions with schools in the New England region, Warialda High School argued strongly about the value of traineeships for school students. Warialda is a school of 245 students in a rural community facing declining employment opportunities. Over recent years Warialda has redefined itself as a community school with strong connections with the community, TAFE NSW and local business. Vocational education and training is a key element of this approach. Of its 77 Years 11 and 12 students, 90 percent are doing VET. Thirty six are school based trainees. Warialda students start their traineeships in Year 10, in industries including childcare, automotive, information technology, business services, hospitality and horticulture.

Warialda sees traineeships as giving its students the best possible start in life, increasing potential for employment outside the town. It suggests its trainees "go out into the world and come back to Warialda as leaders".

In contrast, a regional non-government senior college with a strong vocational focus has less engagement with the traineeship system.

Over two decades, the college has established a national reputation as a provider of high quality vocational education and training in schools.

It has approximately 120 students engaged in a wide variety of vocational programs.

The college has very strong industry links. All students spend some time each week in structured workplace training. The school does not have a program of part-time traineeships and in 2005 only 3 students are undertaking traineeships.

The college argued that traineeships may not be in the best interests of students, with training contracts potentially narrowing the opportunities for students to develop a breadth of vocational skills that would maximise their options for employment.

Part-time Apprenticeships

Among the range of part-time traineeships available in NSW, those in automotive, hospitality and manufacturing engineering all provide credit towards associated apprenticeship qualifications. Trainees may articulate into the second year of an apprenticeship.

²⁸ Australian National Training Authority

NSW employers and unions have not established provision for part-time apprenticeships under State Awards. Availability of employment and training conditions is a fundamental requirement to establish part-time apprenticeships. While the evaluation did not uncover significant interest in opening up part-time apprenticeships for school students, the availability of industrial arrangements for part-time apprenticeships may expand learning opportunities for a number of students under the HSC, which would be welcome.

10 DESTINATION AND SATISFACTION SURVEY

The Melbourne University destination and satisfaction survey provides a rich source of information on the views and outcomes of 2004 government school HSC students.

Through the survey, students have provided a contemporary account of how their participation in VET in schools has helped them make the transition from school to their diverse destinations.

While the survey itself was quite straightforward, its planning and execution were a complex legal and administrative undertaking.

Close consultation with Melbourne University in developing the survey instrument and sample has resulted in an informative and constructive report that will inform policy and implementation of VET in schools in New South Wales.

New South Wales should capitalise on the robust mechanism that has been developed for analysing student's perceptions and destinations, establishing an annual survey of students' destinations. The lessons learned in conducting this survey would serve to refine the content and process of such surveys in the future.

The current survey is a snapshot of students' experience a little over five months after completing their HSC. It is to be expected that experiences of many students would change considerably over the first twelve months after school. There would be great value for New South Wales to make a longitudinal study of these students, investigating their experience and attitudes over another two to three years.

11 CONCLUSION

For VET in schools students, value can be given no single meaning.

Students are gaining value from participating in VET courses by:

- learning about the world of work
- making decisions about their future pathways and careers
- gaining competencies and qualifications that are helping them secure jobs or enter and progress through post school education and training including university
- gaining confidence and self awareness that assists them as they move from school into broader society.

Students are gaining value from a model of VET in schools that:

- has as its foundations the Australian Quality Training Framework, the Australian Qualifications Framework and the Higher School Certificate
- offers opportunities for learning in schools, TAFE NSW, other registered training organisations and the workplace
- is strongly supported by industry and employers, particularly at a local level.

To increase value for students:

- the lingering perception that VET in schools is not equivalent to general education should be dispelled
- schools and TAFE NSW need to increase cooperation to improve planning, delivery and quality assurance of VET in schools
- schools need to integrate VET within their curriculum and operations to ensure students are not disadvantaged when they participate in external VET activities
- students need greater support in seeking credit transfer and options to increase the amount of credit transfer available must be explored.

The views of students are the greatest measure of the value of VET in schools. The survey of students by Melbourne University provides a particularly encouraging picture of satisfaction and achievement by NSW VET in schools students.

It shows that the current approach to VET in schools is working for students and provides a strong framework to build upon.

12 LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIS	Association of Independent Schools
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
AVETMISS	Australian VET Management Information Statistical Standard
BVET	NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training
CEC	Catholic Education Commission
DET	NSW Department of Education and Training
HSC	Higher School Certificate
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SBT	School based trainee
TAFE NSW	NSW TAFE (Technical and Further Education) Commission
TAFETA	TAFE Teachers Association
UAI	Universities Admission Index
VET	Vocational education and training
VETAB	Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board