

Vocational Education and Training in Public Schools: Enhancing Student Career Options

A Research Report on Vocational Education and Training in
Australian Public Schools commissioned by the Australian Education
Union

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Foreword

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in its broadest sense is a vital ingredient for enabling people to build on comprehensive primary and secondary education and to enhance their life opportunities. It broadens cultural understanding, expands employment skills and knowledge and encourages participation as active citizens in society.

The growth of VET in schools has the potential to provide new career and further education options for young people at school and for those contemplating leaving school. It challenges schools to provide for their students an alternative to higher education.

However there are considerable tensions in the way vocational education is implemented in schools stemming mainly from government inability to satisfy the human and physical resource needs of schools engaged in these programs.

This Report provides a national snapshot of VET in Schools programs and highlights the essential ingredients for success. It also contains policy proposals for debate including recommendations to improve VET in Schools arrangements in states and territories.

The researchers are to be congratulated on the depth of analysis contained in the Report. It builds on positive examples and challenges identified by practitioners and the researchers in the course of their work and provides a valuable basis for further discussion about the current and future structure and operation of VET in Schools programs.

We would like to thank the hundreds of AEU members and other educators who contributed their views to this Report. It the first comprehensive study of this area of education and training.

The AEU commends the Report to all. Let the debate begin.

Rob Durbridge
AEU Federal Secretary

1. Introduction: Nature of the Report

This report arises from a research project (the AEU project) undertaken by the Australian Education Union (AEU) into vocational education and training (VET) in public schools. The AEU, represents 155,000 members working in public schools and TAFE Institutes in all Australian states and territories. VET in Schools is an important issue in that the number of students undertaking VET in Schools has increased exponentially over the last decade with current estimates of over 200,000 students enrolled in some form of VET in a school setting, the vast majority of whom are in public schools. Policy and practice in this area impinge on debates about the youth labour market, senior secondary curriculum reform, pathways to further education and training, life-long learning and students at risk. Furthermore, they have implications for school budgets, timetabling, working conditions and workloads.

The AEU began developing policies in relation to VET in Schools in the 1990s. It was clear, however, that the rapid rate of growth and change called for an examination of the current state of play.

The purpose of the project was to identify and describe the contexts, policies, and practices relating to VET in Australian public schools to better inform the further development of AEU policy in this area at national and state/territory levels. Additionally, the report was to provide the basis for the AEU submission to the House of Representatives Inquiry into Vocational Education and Training in Schools.

This report of the project has several aims:

- to describe the policy and practices in each state and territory;
- to discuss the impact of these policies and practices on the work of teachers and analyse the issues for teachers and students;
- to provide recommendation for future AEU federal and state/territory policy and action.

Research for this project was undertaken over a period of approximately six weeks from late July to early September, 2002 and included:

- semi-structured discussions with relevant officers of AEU Branches and Associated Bodies in each state and territory;
- semi-structured discussions with and/or correspondence from teachers and school administrators in selected schools across Australia (including visits to schools in all states and territories except the Northern Territory);
- semi-structured discussions with relevant personnel in various state/territory departments of education and training, and boards of studies;
- semi-structured discussions with and/or correspondence from TAFE teachers in selected TAFE institutes;
- a review of policy documents, reports and research literature.

The researchers were Dr John McCollow from the Queensland Teachers Union and Ms Wendy Currie from the New South Wales Teachers Federation. The reference group for the project consisted of Rob Durbridge, AEU Federal Secretary, Rex Hewett, AEU Federal TAFE Secretary, Darcel Moyle, AEU Federal Aboriginal Education Officer and Michaela Kronemann and Roy Martin, AEU Federal Research Officers.

The Report includes a section on key themes identified in the research which require further examination and debate. There is also a set of draft policy proposals which it is hoped will assist the AEU in developing a more detailed national policy position.

The Report also includes an extensive review of available literature and reports now to be supplemented by the forthcoming House of Representatives Inquiry into VET in Schools.

VET in Schools is a complex area where there has been and continues to be considerable debate and change. It was not possible in the time available to the researchers for this project to capture the contexts, policies, and practices in this area in the sort of depth and breadth which they deserve. It was possible, however, to identify and describe some key issues that deserve attention both in terms of the development of AEU policy and in terms of the House of Representatives inquiry.¹

The researchers wish to acknowledge the assistance of a number of officers in Branches and Associated Bodies as well as the members who gave up their time to talk to us and welcomed us into their schools. In particular the assistance of Darcel Moyle, Federal Aboriginal Education Officer, in writing the section on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues was invaluable.

¹ The terms of reference for the Inquiry are included as an Appendix to this document.

2. Key Themes

A number of themes were identified in the course of research and preparation of the VETIS Report for the AEU. Where these themes suggest immediate solutions, draft policy proposals have been adopted for consideration of the AEU, its Branches and Associated Bodies and public policy makers. However a range of other themes did not so readily suggest solutions.

In these cases the authors suggest that a process of further discussion and debate should take place within the AEU and its Branches and Associated Bodies before draft policy proposals can be finalised. These issues are outlined below as are some initial questions designed to stimulate further discussion.

2.1 *The Nature of VET in Schools*

VET in Schools is but one part of schooling and the schooling reform agenda and VET in Schools is itself characterised by multiple and not always compatible objectives. The role of VET in Schools needs to be considered in a perspective that takes into account the wider social and educational responsibilities of schools. It appears to have been assumed that a model of VET based on post-employment industry-based training can just seamlessly be slotted into the school curriculum with no attention needing to be paid to its effect on the other roles schools are expected to play or their effect on it. Educational providers in schools (and TAFE) have been excluded from the table when it comes to formulating the national VET framework and are then expected to accept and adopt it holus bolus with no recognition of the problems that might create for them.

There is a need to clarify and prioritise the objectives and expectations for school-based VET. A key point of contention is identified by the Dusseldorf Skills Forum (1997 p. i):

In particular confusion exists about whether it is most appropriate for senior school students to take part in a broad generic orientation towards work and employment, or whether it is most appropriate for them to undertake a more focused preparation for particular occupational and industry pathways.

For some schools and students VETIS is delivered in the form of “taster” courses, which allow students to experience various aspects of the world of work and receive accredited qualifications without necessarily committing to a specific vocational pathway. For other students VET in Schools is undertaken for the purpose of opening up a particular vocational pathway.

Furthermore, vocational education in schools also forms part of a number of other reform agendas relating, for example, to broader concerns about the relevance and effectiveness of the senior secondary school curriculum, the promotion of lifelong learning and the situation of youth who experience difficulties in making transition from school to further education and training, employment and adult life generally.

There is a pressing need, as Malley et al. (2002a p. 9) argue, to define, connect and prioritise the “economic, social and educational objectives” associated with the provision of vocational education in schools.

Some Questions:

To what extent is there a consensus about the role and nature of VET in Schools?

How appropriate are current models of training for entry-level training as provided in schools?

How should VET relate to the other roles that schools are expected to play?

2.2 Quality

There is widespread concern in industry (both employers and unions) that VETIS students, whilst having a comparable qualification, do not have comparable skills and abilities to others with the same qualification who have obtained their qualification post school, whilst part of the paid workforce. There are two issues here. First, there is the issue of institution- versus workplace-based training. This is a debate that has relevance not just to schools but to other RTOs. The second is specifically about the quality of VET delivery by schools.

The research undertaken for the National Training Council “was unable to find any concrete evidence to substantiate these concerns in relation to schools” but noted that perceptions were important as “it is critical to the success of VET in Schools that employers have confidence in VET delivery in schools” (BSSSS 2002b p. 4).

There are some legitimate concerns about the availability and quality of student work placements in at least some VET in Schools courses, about class sizes, and about the degree to which teachers in schools meet AQTF human resource requirements, particularly in regard to relevant industry experience.

Employers are uncomfortable with embedded models of VET delivery, preferring stand-alone models. Employer concerns relate mainly to their perception that embedding VET makes subjects unnecessarily complicated, that the non-VET elements of subjects can overwhelm the embedded VET, and that non-VET assessment regimes may be used in place of competency-based assessment.

Putting aside for the moment the question of the empirical accuracy of the employers’ perceptions of the nature of embedded VET programs, it is clear that their criticism is based on a particular perspective on the goals of VET — one which privileges the obtainment of specific work place competencies. However, VET in Schools is driven by

a variety of not always compatible goals.

Embedded models of delivery may “muddy the waters” somewhat from an industry perspective but from an educational perspective which seeks to integrate vocational and academic studies, they make very good sense. A valid judgement about the quality of VET programs in schools would need to consider and weigh up the sometimes competing claims of the various agendas that are driving it.

To date, the debate about the relative quality of VET programs in schools compared to other RTOs has been conducted on the basis of anecdotes and perceptions (the reliability of both being unknown). AQTF quality assurance audits provide a basis for addressing some quality concerns. However, AQTF compliance is an incomplete measure of quality, which does not adequately reflect the range of objectives and expectations associated with VET in Schools. There is a need for more empirical research to bring some rigour to this debate.

Some Questions:

To what extent are concerns about the quality of VET in Schools based on differing perspectives, expectations and priorities?

Other than AQTF compliance audits what steps can be taken to ensure high quality provision of VET in Schools?

What steps can be taken to address legitimate concerns about the limited access by VET in Schools students to appropriate structured workplace learning?

2.3 Funding and Responsibilities

Because of the joint responsibilities of the two levels of government for funding school and vocational education and training, there may confusion over which level of government and which funding model should be adopted to fund VET in school programs.

The Commonwealth led reforms to VET/TAFE through MCEETYA policy initiatives and seed funding through ANTA (\$20m per annum) for VET curriculum and learning materials and teacher education and training programs, and through ECEF (\$25m per annum) for co-ordination of work placement and school/industry linkages. However Commonwealth funding was not allocated for direct delivery or the additional cost of equipment, classrooms/workshops or other forms of non-traditional classroom delivery. Furthermore ANTA is generally seen as responsible for funding developments in post compulsory education, not secondary education.

While some schools have been involved in providing vocational education for many years, the new requirements of training packages for competency-based training,

demonstrated workplace competence and experience and adoption of flexible delivery in teaching impose additional costs on an already stretched system.

Some Questions:

Should the Commonwealth provide funding for new education initiatives such as expansion of VET in school programs (including part time New Apprenticeships) or at least pay the additional costs of these programs?

How can states better deal with changes in demand and cost of VET in school programs at the local level?

Are there better means of reducing the higher cost of delivery of VET in school programs by improving co-operation/co-ordination with other vocational education institutions?

Does funding of VET in Schools through “user choice” and competitive tendering create unnecessary competition and duplication between public RTOs and between public and private RTOs?

What principles would underpin a new funding model?

2.4 Qualifications

The quality of learning is influenced by the qualifications and experience of teachers. An important issue for teachers of VET is their capacity to work across sectors yet there are differing qualification standards for secondary education and post secondary education that may act as a barrier to cross sectoral co-operation. For example where teacher registration bodies exist at State and Territory level VET/TAFE teachers may not satisfy qualification registration requirements but meet the AQTF RTO standards by holding a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, hold a technical/vocational qualification and have extensive industrial experience. On the other hand secondary teachers may have a teaching degree and extensive teaching experience but not satisfy the AQTF RTO technical qualification and industrial experience requirements.

Some Questions:

Do the specifications in ANTA training packages impose an unnecessary restriction for teachers of VET in school programs?

Do state teacher registration requirements impose an unnecessary restriction for teachers of VET in school programs?

What models of cross sectoral co-operation are most successful for delivering and assessing VET in Schools programs?

2.5. Planning and Consultation

The reforms to the VET system over the last ten years have been industry led involving major decisions being made employers associations and trade unions to the exclusion of teachers, other education workers and their representatives the education unions. The development of competency standards and VET training packages has occurred without the involvement of teachers/trainers and assessors who in large part deliver and assess students undertaking training programs. There are no representatives of educators in the structures of the ANTA or on the ANTA Board.

Some Questions:

Who and what organisations should be involved in VET in school decision making structures?

What role can teachers and educators play in VET in school developments?

What models of decision making are needed for the VET sector?

2.6. Curriculum and Assessment

The VET sector has adopted competency-based training for teaching and assessing and developed industry training packages based on competency standards aligned to qualifications as the method of regulating the national VET system. Curriculum is developed by RTOs to provide for a range of pathways with a focus on workplace demonstration of skills and knowledge to achieve competency.

A key debate concerns attempts to integrate VET with, or embed VET, in the general secondary school curriculum. While there are sound educational arguments for integrating VET and general studies, so far attempts to achieve integration have been marked by practical/organisational difficulties, have run up against traditional cultural assumptions about the nature of academic study and questions from industry about the quality of VET so delivered.

Some Questions:

Is a competency-based training system compatible with a curriculum based system?

How can workplace assessment of competency best be achieved for VET in Schools programs?

How can academic or vocational learning be recognised?

To what extent is the integration of VET and general studies in secondary schools a desirable and achievable goal?

2.7 Tertiary Entrance and Articulation

The inclusion of secondary school VET course achievements in tertiary entrance requirements is important for the articulation to a range of post-secondary education, including TAFE. Some states have dual accreditation systems that provide credit for a variety of post school pathways including the transition to work. Although nearly 60 per cent of school leavers do not go on to university, valuing VET courses towards tertiary entrance requirements is a way of improving secondary retention rates and post-secondary education choice.

Some Questions:

To what extent should articulation of VET in Schools courses to tertiary entrance requirements be a priority?

What models of articulating VET in Schools to tertiary entrance requirements are appropriate and workable?

2.8 Relationship between VET and non-VET subjects

There are “tensions” between VET and non-VET subject areas in many schools. Teachers cite having larger class sizes in non-VET subjects, having to build the timetable around VET requirements, and having to provide “make up” work for students doing SWL as examples of issues which could grate on teachers teaching non-VET subjects.

In at least some schools, little effort has been made to explain to teaching staff generally the rationale for offering VET and to convince them of its place in the curriculum. As a result, some teachers remain unconvinced about the value of VET in Schools. They believe that their working lives have been turned up-side-down to accommodate VET and that the subject choices of students have been unduly influenced by the mistaken view that VET will deliver employment.

Conversely, other teachers point to specific examples in their direct experience where VET has provided the only positive experience in some students’ entire school lives. The latter teachers are able to recount numerous examples of students who were heading for failure, who found self assurance and self-esteem through VET and gained skills that led to rewarding and satisfying jobs.

At least some teachers believe that the amount of money being spent on VET in Schools could be better spent on general education needs, particularly where general subject resourcing needs are not being met. Lack of adequate resourcing certainly exacerbates the tensions between VET and non-VET subjects.

A Question:

What practical steps can be taken to reduce the friction between provision of VET in Schools and the provision of the general secondary school curriculum?

2.9 Equity

Equity discussions relating to VET generally or VET in Schools have focused on increasing the participation and improving the outcomes of disadvantaged groups. While this is important, initiatives have been criticised for being mainly reactive and piecemeal and largely taking for granted existing social structures, institutional frameworks and cultural assumptions. Moving beyond this level of critique to make equity a core issue in VET by examining the complex relationships between cultural assumptions, institutional arrangements, and individual/group outcomes is a task still largely ignored. In relation to gender equity, for example, Connole (quoted in Butler and Ferrier 1999 p. 5) argues, that the approach is to take arrangements suitable for men and then make “unsatisfactory running repairs to the system to accommodate women”. Similar statements could be made about approaches to equity in VET for Aboriginal students or students with disabilities, that is, that these approaches are generally about making accommodations *within* existing arrangements.

A Question:

What would need to be done to make equity a core issue in VET?

2.10 Students “at Risk”

VET in Schools is seen as potentially providing important opportunities for “at risk” students. In some schools academically at risk students and students with special needs undertake generic VET courses such as “work readiness” or “workplace practices” and/or are encouraged to undertake industry-specific VET. Most teachers see these courses as providing useful and marketable skills to students. However, other teachers express concerns about the over-representation of low-achieving students or students with special needs in the groups undertaking generic vocational courses. This is seen as reinforcing the stereotype of VET as a second-class, lower-status option, which in the long run undermines its usefulness to students.

On the other hand, some teachers have reported that the hope that VET could provide a

useful option for students who were previously alienated from secondary schooling was in their view largely misplaced. In the words of Collins, Kenway and McLeod (2000a p. 134) “for the most disadvantaged students, VET is too demanding and comes too late”.

A Question:

How can VET in Schools meet the twin objectives of being seen as of equal status and rigour as general (university preparation) courses and of providing a real alternative for students alienated from and at risk of leaving school?

2.11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues

Historically, policy approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education have served to further marginalise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their communities from the education process, rather than foster an approach based on the rights of these students. Whilst there have been significant improvements in recent years, statistics show us that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students continue to be the most disadvantaged group of students in Australia. Indigenous student retention rates in the post compulsory years continue to be about half (36.4 per cent of Indigenous students complete Year 12) of that of non-Indigenous students (73.3 per cent).

Some Questions:

Should VET in Schools be provided to compulsory aged Indigenous students?

What types of pre-service and in-service training do teachers need to access prior to and when working with Indigenous students?

What types of training need to be provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers to enable them to perform broader roles in VET in Schools programs? Should this training be nationally accredited?

2.12 Organisational/Workload Issues

The array of VET in Schools programs being implemented across Australia are operating on a great amount of energy and goodwill from teachers. The workload burden on school teachers is only too obviously affecting their lives to an unacceptable degree and the issues that arise from this for unions are immense and on a variety of fronts.

The VET in Schools agenda is notable for its failure to address funding needs, and to understand the every day work of teachers and schools, the demands on them and the diversity of work they do. There has been no concession to the re-organisation of work patterns, teacher workload, curriculum demands, staffing, physical spaces, hours of

school and much more.

It is also clear that the administrative and accountability processes associated with VET in general and VET in Schools in particular are taking a toll in terms of teachers' workloads. Much more effort and expense is devoted to accountability mechanisms in relation to the effort and expense devoted to professional development, industry release, support, and advice to teachers.

To accommodate the demands placed on schools by the inclusion of VET in the curriculum, some schools have had to reorganise their structures. This has occurred to varying degrees in different states/territories and in different types of schools.

Some Questions:

What case and capacity is there for review/reform of AQTF compliance requirements to minimise unnecessary demands on teachers' time?

What steps can the AEU and its Branches and Associated Bodies take to address workload issues for teachers arising from VETIS?

What strategies should be adopted by the AEU and its Branches and Associated Bodies in relation to the pressures to change school organisational structures to accommodate VETIS?

3. Draft Policy Proposals

Note: Included in the draft policy proposals are policies and practices that already exist in some states and territories. The intention is that they apply in all jurisdictions consistently across Australia.

3.1 *The Nature of VET in Schools*

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should endorse the following principles in relation to VET generally and VET in Schools in particular:

- *All Australians should have an equal right of access to and participation in high quality VET irrespective of their location, their capacity to pay or other factors.*
- *Educational disadvantage requires specific redress but must also be tackled within the wider context of socio-economic, employment and other barriers which disadvantage many Australians and lead to marginalisation, poverty and disconnection.*
- *A high quality VET system must be inclusive of and balance the needs of students, industry, educators, local communities and society.*
- *Quality and effectiveness are the key principles underpinning the future development of vocational education and training.*

A representative national body — including representatives of government, industry, unions (including education unions) and public VET providers (both TAFE and Schools) — should be established with the responsibility of developing a coherent national policy position that clarifies and prioritises the objectives and expectations for school-based VET. This body must be consulted by, provide advice to, and be involved in decisions made by ANTA and other national bodies developing and implementing the National Training Framework. Establishment of this body underpins many of the other recommendations in this Report, and the AEU regards this as an imperative and fundamental necessity.

To inform the deliberations of this body, MCEETYA should commission critical research on the theory and practice of VET in Schools and its relationship to the other objectives and expectations that schools are expected to achieve to ensure curriculum is diverse enough to cater for all post-school pathways.

The vast majority of VET in Schools is at entry-level standard. Requirements and standards for provision of VET courses ought to reflect this. While consistency in the criteria and processes for RTO registration should be maintained, modification of AQTF compliance standards and of National

Training Package requirements in relation to entry-level VET should be considered.

3.2. The Quality of VET in Schools

Quality assurance processes relating to VET in Schools should take full account of the complexity of the roles that schools play.

A quality improvement program should be jointly funded by the Commonwealth and states and territories to provide for quality improvement strategies including:

- *staff development, teacher training, return to industry and acquisition of vocational qualifications;*
- *curriculum development that is broad-based and meets the needs of a competency-based system;*
- *innovation projects;*
- *initiatives to increase flexible provision and co-operation with other public VET providers;*
- *improved planning and consultation with local communities and stakeholders;*
- *increased co-operation between TAFE and schools in delivery of VET.*

Empirical research (informed by a critical analysis of the purposes of VET in Schools) should be undertaken on the quality of VET programs in schools.

3.3. Planning and Governance

New representative consultative and advisory bodies should be established at the state/territory level to allow for the participation and representation of all stakeholders in the shaping of VET directions. These bodies should include representatives of each education sector – TAFE, universities and schools – and include education union representatives.

Representative state/regional/area bodies should be established to work co-operatively on the development of a whole of government approach to industry planning, employment related issues, education and training, and community welfare and support services. A key term of reference for these bodies should be the facilitation of local/regional partnership models of VET provision involving schools, TAFE institutes, local business and industry, and community groups.

School VET needs must inform State Training Plans along with industry and community strategic plans. Planning should be informed by local schools and

TAFE institutes, as well as by government, industry, enterprises and the community. Overall planning processes should facilitate the identification at the regional and local level of existing and emerging industry/labour market needs and articulation arrangements that meet this need.

All education systems should ensure that their senior management group includes someone with direct knowledge of and responsibility for oversight and co-ordination of VET in Schools policy and implementation.

3.4. Funding/Resourcing

Funding for VET in Schools should be ongoing and recurrent and based on per capita grants for the number of VET in Schools students. The funds should be additional to ANTA funding.

State and Territory Governments must also make an enhanced and ongoing commitment to appropriately funding VET in Schools. This must not be at the expense of funding to TAFE colleges or other programs in schools.

Current funding levels and allocation models for VET in Schools should be reviewed as a matter of urgency in every State and Territory. This review should include consideration of the impact of funding models on the quality of programs, general and specific services and on student and community access. The outcomes of such reviews should be aggregated nationally and form the basis of a national review of policy directions, including the appropriate level of contribution from States/Territories.

The provision of VET to secondary school students should avoid wasteful duplication of public funds and should be underpinned by co-operative arrangements between schools and TAFE.

Base (profile) funding for TAFE must be increased and allocated in order to support services provided to schools so that schools and students are not denied access to these services due to their cost.

Access to Commonwealth, State and Territory funding for VET programs should not be submission based. Schools/teachers do not have the resources for constant and lengthy submission writing.

3.5. Organisational/Workload Issues

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should urgently consider ways to deal with the excessive workload of VET teachers and administrators in schools, including, for example, staffing buffers, improved clerical assistance, reappraisal of RTO registration.

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments need to refine the interpretation and implementation of VET in Schools compliance with the AQTF standards. Adequate resourcing should be provided to alleviate the workload of teachers and ensure that their professional and industrial rights are guaranteed.

System and national data should be collected and reported on the workload and staffing implications of the implementation of VET. This data should form the basis of a review of the impact on teaching and learning conditions with a view to developing guidelines on funding and on staffing structures which enhance quality, effectiveness and fairness for education workers and students.

Appropriate leadership, co-ordination and support personnel should be deployed at the central, regional/district, and school levels with specific full-time responsibility for VET in Schools.

There needs to be an enhancement of career and vocational guidance services in schools

Professional development needs of VET teachers should be better integrated into mainstream professional development arrangements in states and territories. Funding should be available and specifically targeted to schemes to allow VET teachers to meet AQTF standards in relation to qualifications and experience, and for programs for teachers to ensure they meet the needs of the full range of students, in particular students with Indigenous backgrounds.

Governments should ensure that class sizes for VET in Schools do not exceed those for the same courses in a TAFE college.

Time spent by teachers supervising and assessing students in the workplace should be recognised as teaching time in industrial instruments. Appropriate compensation for travel time, costs and responsibility in relation to work placements should be negotiated.

AQTF compliance requirements should include compliance with industrial awards and agreements pertaining to staff in the training organisation and the relevant industry areas.

3.6. AQTF Compliance Issues

A review of AQTF implementation should be undertaken at Commonwealth, state and territory levels with a view to:

- ensuring the highest standard for delivery and assessment of VET programs;*
- developing consistent implementation guidelines about interpreting valid requirements;*
- establishing the validity of various requirements/benchmarks;*

- eliminating unnecessary paperwork/workload associated with compliance requirements and reducing bureaucratic pressures on schools and TAFE colleges;*
- providing mechanisms of advice and support, including considerably more professional development, in meeting AQTF standards.*

3.7. Teacher Qualifications and Experience

Systems and teacher education institutions should ensure that professional development (pre- and in-service) for teachers of VET in secondary schools is based on the following:

- a broad-base in pedagogy, curriculum and assessment theory and practice (including as a minimum all competencies contained in the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training) linked to recognised general teaching qualifications;*
- appropriate industry qualifications and experience meeting AQTF compliance and National Training Package requirements.*

This will require changes to pre-service education courses and the provision of additional funding to schools to facilitate industry placement and training for teachers.

As part of the process of defining and prioritising the multiple goals of entry-level VET, the proposed national body, in consultation with the AEU and its state/territory Branches and Associated Bodies, should review requirements to set appropriate criteria for the qualifications of teachers and assessors in terms of industry qualifications and experience and teacher education qualifications. In particular, the extent to which teacher qualifications meet the criterion of Certificate IV, Assessment and Workplace Training should be examined and a nationally consistent approach adopted.

States and Territories should put in place programs to ensure the adequate supply of appropriately trained and accredited VET school teachers. This

should include arrangements to:

- *encourage and support industry qualified personnel in identified priority areas to undertake teacher education;*
- *strategically release teachers to industry.*

In addition, the problem of ensuring a supply of accredited casual relief teachers who meet the AQTF standards must be addressed at state and territory level.

Teachers new to VET, regardless of whether already experienced teachers, should be entitled to an induction process and a mentor.

Return to industry programs and any other requirement of VET teachers in relation to specific VET professional development and/or qualifications, should be recognised within state/territory professional development industrial requirements or recognition processes where these exist. To enhance the flexibility of use of staff across sectors teacher registration authorities should have coverage of TAFE teachers.

3.8. Curriculum and Assessment

In developing a coherent policy that clarifies and prioritises the objectives and expectations for school-based VET, the proposed national body should put curriculum and assessment issues at the centre of their considerations.

The Commonwealth and State governments in collaboration with the states and territories should establish a fund to support development of learning strategies and materials for use in schools and TAFE institutes to support National Training Packages.

Reviews of National Training Packages should make more explicit the “underpinning knowledge” in the competency standards and broaden the outcomes of the courses to include those explicitly related to fostering knowledge, understanding and values and to preparing learners for further education and training, employment and full and active participation as citizens.

The review of training packages should also ensure that assessment measures used in training packages are consistent and do not cause barriers to access to further education, training and employment.

In defining and prioritising its multiple goals, the broader educational and generic work-related, as opposed to industry specific, dimensions of entry-level

VET should be given greater emphasis in the AQTF and National Training Packages than is presently the case.

The AEU should initiate a national response to the Employability Skills for the Future project. The outcome of this response should inform the AEU's campaigning with the Federal Government, ANTA, state and territory governments, particularly in relation to MCEETYA and MINCO, and state and territory labor councils and the ACTU.

3.9 Tertiary Entrance Articulation

States and Territories should continue to explore and develop mechanisms for counting VET for the purpose of tertiary entrance. This should not, however, be achieved by a broad strategy of including an increasing number of Certificate III competencies into VET in Schools courses.

State and Commonwealth governments should provide support for school systems to increase and enhance pathways to further education and training for all students, increase knowledge in the community about these alternative pathways and promote acceptance of their legitimacy among secondary school students and their families. In particular, information about the value of TAFE pathways should be highlighted and disseminated to schools and students.

All skills and knowledge should be included in tertiary entrance requirements.

3.10. Relationship between VET and non-VET subjects

Following the development of a coherent national policy that clarifies and prioritises the objectives of VET in Schools, state education systems should provide resources, support and professional development to schools to allow teachers of all subjects to understand and support the role of VET in Schools. Funding for VET should be at a sustainable level to achieve the outcomes expected of schools and reflect its position within the broad aims of schooling.

3.11. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decision-making structures should be created within the new bodies proposed in earlier recommendations.

The Commonwealth, States and Territories should work together to ensure that all teachers to be employed in the public education system must have completed a comprehensive sequence of Indigenous Studies in their

undergraduate courses as a precondition to their employment. Such studies should include studies of Indigenous histories, languages and cultures, Indigenous teaching and learning processes and practices.

A mapping exercise should be conducted to determine the disparities between the employment, training and career pathway options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers (AIEWs) across each State and Territory. This mapping should inform the development of a set of competency standards for AIEWs.

An urgent investigation should be conducted into the number and levels of post-compulsory school aged Indigenous children accessing the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). VET in Schools, or other appropriate programs, must be urgently put in to place to prevent this from occurring.

3.12. Issues of Access and Equity

In developing a coherent policy that clarifies and prioritises the objectives and expectations for school-based VET, the complex relationships between cultural assumptions, institutional arrangements and outcomes for individuals and groups must be examined and addressed.

The Commonwealth and States and Territories should ensure that culturally appropriate services, programs and support structures meet the needs of disadvantaged students and local communities. Such a program would best be part of an Education Equity Program (EEP) linked to a Disadvantaged Regional Areas Program (DRAP) which would provide resources for a whole of government approach combining industry policy, labour market programs, job creation, job placement, education and training and community welfare support and services.

Funding models in the states and territories must recognise that some schools and TAFE institutes face higher costs than others because of their location and/or student profile.

The Commonwealth should contribute additional funds on a dollar for dollar basis to the states and territories to assist schools with VET programs specifically targeted to disadvantaged students.

Access to VET (including to school-based apprenticeships/traineeships) should be funded and made available to students of compulsory school age where there are sound reasons for doing so.

3.13. Interface between Schools and Other VET Providers

Plans for the development of school-industry links and the use of appropriately qualified industry and VET staff in VET in Schools programs should be built upon the goal of developing a co-operative model of the provision of programs with other public schools and TAFE institutes.

Schools and clusters of schools should be encouraged to establish links and strategic alliances/partnerships with local industry organisations, community and TAFE as a means of strengthening school-industry-community links.

Arrangements should be put in place to facilitate the use of appropriately trained teachers across the schools and TAFE sectors, with attention being paid to the culture, working conditions, expectations and needs of each sector.

State and territory education and training authorities should encourage the establishment of consultative education groups at the local level, with representatives of both TAFE and schools, to determine where and how best to deliver the range of VET in Schools courses. These consultative groups should involve classroom teachers and senior managers and have an overall planning role.

The structures and resourcing of the vocational education system should reflect the role of TAFE as a vital public asset that is the predominant provider of VET. State and territory education departments should ensure that public schools do not use private providers unless there is no public provision available.

Steps should be taken to ensure that the VET system is, in fact as well as in theory, a system of nationally recognised qualifications and accreditation. This may mean altering the way National Training Packages are constructed and/or establishing representative bodies, at the level of clusters of schools and TAFE colleges, to co-ordinate accreditation arrangements between schools and TAFE.

3.14. Employer Involvement

Funding for the development and continuation of the relationships between schools and employers must be ongoing.

State and territory governments should develop and fund methods of educating employers about the importance and nature of work placements, their role in ensuring successful training of VET in school students, and the expectations they can reasonably have about the students. Peak industry groups, such as The Business Council of Australia, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Australian Industry Group must be persuaded to take greater responsibility for the provision and quality of work placement. They and local Chambers of Commerce should be engaged to reach small

businesses.

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should ensure that where large industry is involved in VET in Schools it is on the basis that all students have a right of access to the programs.

Where particular schools and teachers have developed good relationships with local businesses, funding should be made available to the school or district to develop those relationships, expand them and extend them to a wider group of schools and employers.

3.15. Student Work Placements

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should support the expansion of structured work placements as a part of VET in Schools. Co-ordination of these should be centrally funded with dedicated co-ordinators with experience (wherever possible) in industry, training and schools.

Specific Commonwealth funding for industry links in relation to the organisation of work placements should continue. This funding should be ongoing.

The role of the ECEF should be reviewed by MCEETYA after substantial consultation with schools and teachers currently engaged in VET programs with SWL components.

The ECEF Review should include consideration of the structure and composition of the ECEF Board and the appointment of educationalists including an AEU representative to the Board.

State and territory governments should ensure, through appropriate arrangements, that the burden of organisation and supervision of Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) that currently falls to teachers is appropriately regulated and rewarded or compensated.

State and territory governments should establish arrangements to ensure that extra staffing is available to allow for students absent on work placements to catch up work missed.

The issue of VET teachers being on-call as emergency contacts for work placements out of school hours (including during school vacations) should be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

3.16. School-based Apprenticeships/Traineeships

The school-based apprenticeship/traineeship program should be reviewed with particular attention to the following issues:

- *adequacy of funding;*
- *organisational implications for schools and education systems;*
- *inconsistencies in approaches and take-up amongst states and territories;*
- *employer support;*
- *relationship with other VET provision in schools;*
- *industrial arrangements and training agreements;*
- *access and equity issues;*
- *staff and local training and development.*

State, Territory and local governments should engage further in school-based apprenticeships/traineeships by providing the opportunity for students to train in the public sector and/or publicly funded projects, particularly in rural areas.

3.17. Student Protection and Duty of Care Issues

In order to ensure that employers provide work placements that deliver meaningful and appropriate work place learning and are not exploitative, systems should:

- *provide resources to schools to support workplace learning including full-time work placement co-ordinators preferably with appropriate industry experience;*
- *establish and resource mechanisms at the systems level to encourage and monitor appropriate behaviour by employers in the use and treatment of students in structured work placements;*
- *review models of student work placement to define and identify best practice.*

Funding for the training of teachers in workplace health and safety and in the nature of their responsibilities in relation to student work placements must be included as a part of the funding for VET in Schools.

4. Overview of Government Policies²

The last decade has seen impressive growth in the provision of VET in Schools (VETIS). Between 1996 and 1999, there was a 116 per cent increase in enrolments in VET courses in schools — following a 128 per cent increase from 1995 to 1996 (Malley et al. 2002b p. 45). In 2002 it is estimated that more than 200,000 students in more than 2000 schools are undertaking some form of VET in Schools (Maslen 2002 p. 5). For many of these students, the VET will be recognised not only for the purpose of AQF certification but also for their senior certificate and an increasing number of students are including VET in their pre-tertiary secondary studies. In 2001, over 10,000 students undertook school-based apprenticeships/traineeships (ANTA 2002). In 2000, just over 10 per cent of all VET delivery in Australia occurred via VET in Schools and it is expected that this figure has risen since then (NSW 2002 p. 5)

VETIS is part of the National Training Framework, which is designed to be “a co-operative federal system of vocational education and training with strategic input by industry” (ANTA 2002b p. 1) and to ensure consistency, quality and national recognition of qualifications. The National Training Framework, which consists of National Training Packages (NTPs) and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), is overseen by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and its Ministerial Council (MINCO). However, while each state and territory subscribes to and applies the AQTF, each has its own training agency which administers VET, including registering training organisations and accrediting courses.

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), the body consisting of state/territory and Commonwealth ministers of education, training and youth affairs, endorsed a New Framework for Vocational Education in Schools in 2000. The framework has eight basic features:

- explicit and well-articulated pathways;
- community partnerships;
- lifelong learning skills and attributes;
- enterprise and innovation;
- career information and guidance and access to student services;
- individual assistance for students at risk;
- supportive institutional and funding arrangements;
- monitoring and evaluation.

VET is one of the six key elements of the framework:

- VET,
- enterprise and vocational learning,
- student support services,

² The information reported in this section has been gathered from documents produced by various state authorities and, in some cases, from discussions with officers of these bodies. Particular use was made of the report “The AQTF and VET in Schools: A Report to the National Training Quality Council” (BSSSS 2002b).

- community and business partnerships,
- effective institutional and funding arrangements, and
- monitoring and evaluation.

The framework is accompanied by an implementation strategy which sets out outcomes to be achieved over the years 2000-2004.

One of the purposes of the New Framework was to “improve mechanisms for co-ordinating policy, programs and resource management ... [and] progress more co-ordinated and integrated approaches” (MCEETYA 2000a p. 7). However, despite the adoption of a national framework and implementation strategy, “in each state and territory there is a unique set of administrative arrangements, related to registration, accreditation, recognition and quality assurance functions” (BSSSS 2002b p. 2). There is still a considerable distance to be travelled before the “objectives associated with the provision of vocational education are ... coherently connected or prioritised” (Malley et al. 2002a p. 9). Teachers in schools have had to cope with the implications of this policy incoherence — in particular, unevenness in delivery, with states having quite different patterns of involvement by students in VET, and unevenness in the pattern of demands placed on VETIS teachers and therefore in their working conditions. A good deal of the differences amongst states is grounded in the different interpretations of the national agenda in general, and the new AQTF Standards in particular, by the various states and territories.

The following overview of state and territory requirements illustrates differences attributable to state and territory administrative and financial arrangements and to their philosophical and educational position in relation to VETIS.

4.1 VET in Schools, the Curriculum and Tertiary Entrance Requirements

In the **AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**, VETIS courses are developed by schools or groups of schools against guidelines produced by the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS). The BSSS then accredits the course after approval by a panel, which includes ITABs. Many courses are embedded in the senior secondary curriculum but some are stand-alone courses. Students mostly gain a Certificate I or II qualification.

There are dual reporting requirements to both the education system, through the BSSS, and the VET system. This requires two methods of assessment: a grade-based (criterion referenced) assessment and assessment against NTP competencies (competency-based). Schools must also report VET outcomes (certificates awarded) to the BSSS. Assessment in Years 11 and 12 for all subjects, including VET, is school-based with external moderation.

The ACT Scaling Test is used in Year 12 to scale school results for tertiary entrance.

The BSSS issues:

- a Year 12 Certificate which lists results for all units, courses and nationally recognised vocational qualifications completed during Years 11 and 12;
- a Tertiary Entrance Statement (for eligible students) on which the Universities Admission Index (UAI) is recorded.

Some VET in Schools courses, such as IT, contribute towards tertiary entrance but most do not. Around 20 per cent of the 1999/2000 cohort who did a VET course are now at university. This data is from a destination survey and therefore not necessarily a true representation of the number of students who gained a VET qualification and a University Admission Index (UAI).

In **NEW SOUTH WALES** the Board of Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) accredits VET courses which meet the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Vocational courses studied in Years 11 and 12 are mostly at Certificate I and II levels and, if Board of Studies (BOS) approved, they are dual-accredited for the Higher School Certificate (HSC) and the VET system. They are developed in such a way as to ensure there is little overlap with other HSC subjects. If overlap does occur, exclusion conditions apply to the two subjects. VET courses fall into three categories:

- Industry Curriculum Frameworks (ICFs). These are developed by the BOS and contain a range of courses that fit together in a Framework. The courses are based on the National Training Packages. While the units are taken from the NTPs and the pattern of units meet the NTP requirements, the BOS decides whether a particular pattern of units, or a larger number of units, will be required for completion of the ICF than is necessary to meet the requirements of the NTP. There are currently seven ICFs: Information Technology; Tourism and Hospitality; Primary Industries; Retail; Metal and Engineering; Construction; and Business Services (Administration). A new entertainment industry framework will be introduced in 2003. These are available in 120, 180 and 240 hour courses, and are available in the preliminary HSC (Year 11) or the HSC (Year 12). VET extension courses are available. Decisions about which VET courses are available are based on a list of criteria developed by the BOS, which includes employment prospects, industry support and availability of entry level qualifications.
- Board Developed courses, such as the TAFE accounting course.
- Board Endorsed courses, which can be developed, for example, by a school, TAFE or a system. They must be based on a NTP if available and contain a structured work placement component.

There is no grade-based assessment (criterion referenced) of VET subjects for the HSC as there is for other subjects. What is recorded on the HSC is satisfactory or unsatisfactory completion of the competency-based assessment. There are thus no dual assessment requirements. The BOS has been contracted by the Department of Education and Training (DET) to issue the credentials for VET courses on behalf of the school district, which is the RTO. Schools must provide records of students'

competencies to the district and the BOS.

HSC subjects (except VET) are assessed internally as well as externally via the HSC examination, with each contributing 50 per cent of the final mark awarded. VET is only internally assessed and no mark is recorded.

Students studying ICF or Board Developed courses have the option of sitting for an HSC examination. It is the mark gained on this exam that counts towards the UAI. Only one VET course can be used in the calculation of the UAI. The VET courses count for 2 of the minimum 10 units students must undertake for the HSC to be eligible for a UAI.

In **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**, the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA) sets curriculum for Years 11 and 12, is responsible for assessment of student achievement, and issues the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). Senior subjects are either school assessed (SAS), publicly assessed (PAS), publicly examined (PES) or a combination of these.

VET courses can contribute to SACE in three ways:

- VET embedded within SSABSA accredited subjects — VET can be embedded in any accredited subject, including compulsory subjects like English and Maths. The endorsed national competency standards must be clearly mapped against the SACE learning outcomes.
- VET recognised as SACE units — VET units of competency that total 50 nominal hours achieve one SACE unit. The maximum number of units that can be accumulated in this way is eight. Students study eight free choice units. VET subjects count as free choice units. Students study 22 units for SACE and 16 of these must be at a satisfactory level.
- VET approved as SSABSA subjects — These are centrally developed, school assessed and externally moderated. Students can complete 2 units at Stage 1 (Year 11) and 2 at Stage 2 (Year 12). In Stage 1, achievement is reported as "satisfactory achievement". At Stage 2 students receive a grade, a subject achievement score, a verbal description and a scaled score. Scaled scores are used for calculating the University Aggregate and the Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER). The SSABSA negotiates with universities and TAFE on a case by case basis in relation to tertiary entrance.

While the SSABSA lists the title of SSABSA accredited subjects on the Record of Achievement, it does not list competencies or units achieved. Thus, if the VET competencies are embedded in a SACE subject, it is that subject that appears on the student's record. Lists of competencies achieved are reported by the relevant RTO.

In South Australia, the majority of students taking VET courses enrol in only one or two modules that are embedded in SACE subjects, rather than a full certificate course. This accounts for the fact that fewer students in South Australia than in other states receive a certificate level by the end of Year 12.

Currently in the **NORTHERN TERRITORY**, VET in Schools is offered as stand-alone and is based on training packages and nationally accredited courses. Many schools deliver VET under a cluster arrangement whereby school, TAFE and other RTOs combine resources in order to comply with requirements for delivery.

In Year 11 (Stage 1), students follow the Northern Territory curriculum. In Year 12 students follow the South Australian curriculum. VET is packaged into 50 nominal hour units (off-the-job) equalling 1 unit of credit towards the Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE), with 100 hours structured workplace learning gaining 1 free choice unit of credit. Stage 1 contains compulsory-required and free choice units (subjects), with VET available in both, all of which contribute towards the NTCE.

Currently in Stage 2, only some National Communication modules contribute towards Stage 2 requirements but these do not contribute towards the Tertiary Entrance Rank. As a result the bulk of VET is undertaken in Year 11.

The NTCE requires successful completion of 22 units of study, although more units may be attempted. VET may contribute up to 12 of these units.

From 2002, the Northern Territory will offer the SSABSA Stage 1 and 2 subjects. Assessment instruments for some subjects could be competency-based or, in situations where VET is embedded in curriculum, assessment tasks can yield a criteria-based result and a competency-based result

In remote areas, VET in Schools is offered to students who are 15-19 years of age and, therefore, not necessarily in Years 11 and 12. In urban and regional areas VET is delivered to students in Years 11 and 12.

VET qualifications are issued by the school, as the RTO, or the RTO if delivery is under partnership arrangements. The number of units of credit granted for VET is recorded on the NTCE Record of Achievement. The units are identified as VET. VET does not contribute to the Tertiary Entrance Rank in the Northern Territory.

In **QUEENSLAND**, VET has been embedded into seven Board of Senior Secondary School Studies³ subjects (which contribute to a tertiary entrance (OP) score) and thirteen study area specifications (SASs) for Board-Registered subjects. These subjects embed units of competency at the Certificate I and II level, with the exception of

³ On 1 July 2002, the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies was amalgamated with the Queensland School Curriculum Council (which had overseen P-10 curriculum) and Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority into a new curriculum and assessment authority, the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA).

the Board subject Information Technology, which allows students to complete a Certificate III qualification.

Board-Developed Syllabuses with Embedded VET	
Board Subjects	SASs
Agricultural Science Business Communication and Technologies Business Organisation and Management Hospitality Studies Information Technology Marine Studies Technology Studies	Agricultural and Horticultural Studies Arts in Practice Business Computer Studies Early Childhood Practices English Communication Hospitality Practices Industrial Skills Literacy and Numeracy Marine and Aquatic Practices Physical Recreation Trade and Business Mathematics Tourism

VET qualifications are based on NTPs, where available, or on nationally endorsed competency standards. Most VET in Queensland state schools is embedded but some is stand-alone. Stand-alone VET is reported on the senior certificate but does not contribute to tertiary entrance score. Included in the stand-alone VET are three VET courses accredited by the Board which were developed by the three schooling sectors. These are the Certificate I in Work Education, the Certificate I in Work Readiness and the Certificate II in Workplace Practices.

Student achievement in embedded VET is dual assessed using criteria-based assessment for the purposes of reporting overall subject results (including the VET component) and competency-based assessment for the VET component. A subject result does not automatically credit a student with units of competency or modules. Both overall subject results and VET outcomes are reported on the senior certificate. Stand-alone VET, of course, does not require “double assessment”.

VET in Schools in **TASMANIA** refers to accredited, industry specific training programs, delivering competencies from NTPs and providing a credential or credit toward one within the AQTF. VET programs are normally only available in Years 11 and 12.

The Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) and the TCE Statement of Results record achievement of accredited VET courses, assessment of which is competency-based. All Year 11 and 12 courses are internally assessed, while pre-tertiary courses (which do not include VET courses) are also externally assessed, with final awards determined by a combination of moderated school assessment and external ratings. VET courses are dual-assessed, once for the TCE (criterion based) and once for the AQTF (competency-based).

Only the pre-tertiary subjects contribute towards tertiary entrance. To be eligible for tertiary entrance, students must complete four pre-tertiary courses, at least three in Year 12.

In 2002, the Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board (TASSAB) will be considering wider recognition of syllabuses and VET for tertiary entrance. Currently no VET courses contribute towards tertiary entrance.

In **VICTORIA** successful completion of VET approved for the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) provides dual accreditation for the VCE and the Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER) and a nationally recognised VET Certificate issued by an RTO. Where satisfactory completion is at Unit 3/4 level, the student's VET results are included in their VCE results.

Eight of the sixteen units required for the VCE can be recognised VCE VET units. Each course has full status within the VCE unit 1-4 structure. Most programs include a unit 3-4 sequence. VCE VET units are based on the relevant training package and reflect specific industry competency standards, and are developed by the VCAA. The competencies used to develop the program are selected for their relevance to and suitability for secondary school students and for VCE units. The courses are usually stand-alone.

VET units only count towards the VCE to the extent that there is no significant duplication between the VCE VET program and the VCE studies. All units of VET competence contribute to the award of a VET certificate regardless of any duplication with VCE studies.

The ENTER is administered by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC). For eligibility for an ENTER, a student must have received a study score for accredited VCE studies undertaken.

Provisions for VET in the VCE contributing toward the ENTER are:

- Satisfactory completion of the unit 3-4 sequence — All VCE VET programs with a unit 3-4 sequence make a contribution to the ENTER.
- The availability of a study score for a program — In this case the study score contributes directly to the ENTER, either as one of the student's best four studies (the "primary four") or as a fifth or a sixth study. Currently ten programs have a study score.
- Where no study score is available, students may receive an ENTER increment, which is calculated as 10 per cent of the average of the scaled scores of the student's primary four VCE studies.

In 2002, 20 schools and two TAFE colleges are trialing the Victorian Certificate of

Applied Learning (VCAL). This is an alternative to the VCE for Year 11 and 12 students for whom the VCE has little relevance, or who have disengaged (or are in danger of disengaging) from school and learning.

The VCAL contains three levels (foundation, intermediate and senior) and includes four curriculum strands: literacy and numeracy; industry specific (which can include accredited VET courses); work related skills (which can also include VET courses); and the personal development skills unit. Some VCE units can be included, and if the student wishes to change from VCAL to the VCE, they will gain credit for these. The trial is currently being evaluated and will be expanded in 2003.

In **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**, about two-thirds of VET in Schools is embedded in Curriculum Council accredited subjects and about a third delivered as stand-alone. Embedding decisions are made at school level. Western Australian schools use both competency-based and criteria-based assessment.

VET courses offered in schools are either training package based or other accredited courses. The latter courses are being phased out. As of 2002, all VET in Schools contributing to the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) must be NTP based, or be nationally recognised VET where a training package is not available, in order to be recorded on the Statement of Results. Schools offer Certificate I and II qualifications in most industry areas, with partial completion of Certificate II qualifications available in some industry areas. One agricultural college offers a Certificate III qualification.

Stand-alone VET is recognised as subject equivalent for WACE purposes. The maximum credit allowed for stand-alone VET is four full-year subjects (440 hours).

Under the present arrangements, VET qualifications and VET statements of attainment are issued by the school, if it is an RTO, or the auspicing RTO. These achievements are also acknowledged on the Statement of Results issued by the Curriculum Council. From 2002, the Curriculum Council will be responsible for issuing VET qualifications, VET statements of attainment and Statements of Results acknowledging VET achievements, for schools that have training provider status. For schools registered as RTOs or in partnership arrangements, the RTO is responsible for issuing the VET qualification and VET statement of attainment while the Curriculum Council will issue the Statement of Results.

4.2 Requirements to teach and assess VET in Schools

While for TAFE a degree in Adult Education is recognised in the **ACT** as the equivalent of Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, school teachers must

complete a minimum of the three assessment units of the Certificate IV. Teachers undergo an RPL process through the Canberra Institute of TAFE (CIT), the costs of which are borne by the school, although some funds have been made available by the Department of Education and Community Services (DECS). School funds have to be used if schools decide that it's necessary to have more teachers trained than those currently delivering VET. Teachers who complete the three units required by the AQTF Standards are credited with the full Certificate IV.

If required by the relevant NTP, teachers undergo one week of industry experience per year. They do this during "stand-down" time at the end of the year, which in the ACT is available since Year 11 and 12 students are at senior colleges and there are no junior classes. This does, however, mean that other duties are not performed and it is difficult to find accredited casual relief teachers. If it were to occur during term time, the cost in replacement teachers would be \$1,000 per teacher for one week of industry release.

VET delivery in a **NSW** public school requires a teacher qualification (in the relevant teaching area) and a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. TAFE teachers are deemed to have the equivalent of Certificate IV. School teachers are automatically granted RPL for about 75 per cent of Certificate IV but have to complete the three assessment units. The contract for determining school teachers' achievement on these units was granted to the South West Sydney Institute of TAFE. Teachers demonstrate their competencies via portfolios of their work. They receive one day's relief to complete this work. Some districts were providing this relief from district funds, and it was only at the insistence of the NSW Teachers Federation, that this became an entitlement for all VET teachers. Teachers report that one day is certainly not enough time to organise and complete the required work.

Other requirements, such as industry experience, exist to the extent that they are requirements of the relevant NTP, but all teachers must demonstrate competencies at least to the level they are teaching.

In **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**, where a school is an RTO, teachers delivering VET must possess the minimum assessment competencies in the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. Where VET in Schools is auspiced by an RTO, the RTO has the responsibility to ensure that the school has the capacity to deliver and assess the courses offered. Teachers in South Australia are required to complete Certificate IV, which is delivered by TAFE, generally via demonstration of the competencies, with some RPL granted.

In **WESTERN AUSTRALIA** VET in Schools is delivered by school teachers with relevant VET qualifications, TAFE staff or trainers from other RTOs. Trainers must fulfil training package and AQTF requirements and possess a minimum of the three assessor units of competency in Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training or its equivalent. The RTO is responsible for ensuring the quality of VET delivery. If delivery is to students who are not post-compulsory there must be a trained teacher in the room, to satisfy duty of care requirements.

The requirements for teaching and assessing VETIS in **QUEENSLAND** are determined by Curriculum Advisory Committees (CACs). CACs are chaired by Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB) nominees and include nominees or representatives of ITABs, unions, TAFE Queensland, tertiary institutions, parents, the Subject Advisory Committee (SAC) and secondary teachers.

Teachers delivering and assessing VETIS must meet certain minimum requirements, including:

- possessing content competencies at least to the level being assessed,
- meeting agreed industry relationship/currency requirements,
- possessing a teaching qualification.

In Queensland schools, personnel delivering VET must be registered teachers. (There is a rarely-used exception procedure which allows for a course to be delivered by a person without teacher qualifications who meets AQTF standards for the delivery of VET under the supervision of a registered teacher where no registered teacher is available to deliver the course.) Where stand-alone VET is delivered by a TAFE institute or private RTO, the RTO must meet the human resource standards but is not required to use a registered teacher.

The Training Recognition Council in Queensland has recognised that “a range of indicators”, including possession of a teaching qualification, may be used to demonstrate compliance with the human resource standards in relation to facilitation and assessment. This means that trained teachers are not generally required to complete a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training or the national competency standards of assessment in the Certificate IV.

In **TASMANIA** deliverers of VET are required to possess a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. Government school teachers are required to provide evidence of their competence in all areas of Certificate IV. Interestingly, TAFE teachers in Tasmania also have to do Certificate IV, for some of which they are granted RPL, but they must submit work to demonstrate their competencies.

The Department of Education's *VET in Schools Framework Policy* notes that teachers are to be supported in developing and maintaining the skills and qualifications to teach VET. However, according to teachers interviewed for the AEU research project, that support is not adequate. The Framework Policy nonetheless lists teachers' own responsibilities to maintain their capability to teach VET through professional development, maintenance of contact with employers and participation in co-operative and partnership arrangements.

In **VICTORIA** a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, or the national competency standards of assessment in the Certificate IV, plus a teacher qualification are required to deliver VET in Schools. However, where schools are auspiced by a

TAFE institute or another RTO, not all individuals involved in the delivery of VET may meet these requirements.

In **WESTERN AUSTRALIA** training providers should possess Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training and have skills at least equal to the level being taught and assessed and relevant industry experience. They are not required to be qualified teachers. Most VET in Western Australian public schools is auspiced by a TAFE institute and not all individuals involved may meet the AQTF human resource requirements.

4.3 RTO Arrangements

In all states and territories, annual registration fees apply to registration as an RTO.

The **ACT** Accreditation and Registration Council (ARC) has been delegated the responsibility for the registration of RTOs and the accreditation of VET courses, by the BSSS.

All secondary colleges in the ACT have been required to become RTOs. They can, however, decide whether to auspice delivery to another RTO or deliver training for another RTO. The secondary colleges are registered as RTOs by the BSSS.

NSW VETAB provides for the registration of RTOs. Public schools in **NSW** are registered to provide a range of VET courses under the umbrella of their school district which is the RTO. There are 40 school districts. If a course is not within the scope of a school's registration it may arrange for delivery by another RTO such as another school or TAFE.

There are three models for the delivery of VET in Schools in **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**:

- The school delivers the course under the auspices of an RTO. Quality assurance occurs under a memorandum of agreement with the RTO.
- The school purchases training that is delivered by an RTO. The delivery can occur on the RTO site or the school site, or the school may deliver and the RTO assess. The latter option is rarely used.
- The school itself registers as an RTO.

Currently there are only about three public schools registered as RTOs in South Australia.

Schools seeking registration as RTOs in the **NORTHERN TERRITORY** do so with the Employment & Training Authority (NTETA). Schools must register with the NTETA or work under partnership arrangements. All government schools deliver some VET under partnership arrangements as members of cluster groups, where one course is delivered to a number of schools by one provider — be it another school, TAFE or outside provider. Clusters may include both government and non-government schools.

The scope of registration of government schools in the Northern Territory is overwhelmingly for the delivery of Certificate I and II level courses. Some schools offer Certificate III level courses (in the Business and Clerical, and Computing industry areas) and one school offers a Certificate IV course in Sport and Recreation.

Due to the transient nature of the population there is a need for current, comprehensive recording. Consequently, RTOs are encouraged to sign-off each element of competency as it is achieved.

In **QUEENSLAND** the BSSSS (now QSA) has been delegated responsibility for accreditation, recognition and registration functions in relation to VET in Schools up to and including AQF Certificate II qualifications (and for three Certificates III in the Information Technology subject). The BSSSS may also embed modules/units of competency, above AQF Certificate II in Board courses. Almost all state high schools are registered as RTOs through the BSSSS and most students are undertaking VET in Schools with the individual school as the RTO.

Applications can be made by schools for registration to deliver courses outside the Board's delegation. These applications go first to the Board and then to the Training Recognition Council for approval. Schools may also seek registration directly with the Training Recognition Council; however, this is extremely rare. Schools are registered as RTOs for a period of five years.

RTOs in **TASMANIA** are registered by the Tasmanian Accreditation and Recognition Committee (TAReC), a standing committee of the Tasmanian State Training Authority (TASTA), which is supported by the Office of Post-Compulsory Education and Training (OPCET).

All public secondary colleges are RTOs. If they wish to provide a course which is outside their scope of registration, they may do so under the auspices of another RTO, such as the Tasmanian Institute of TAFE.

From 2000, **VICTORIAN** schools have had two options in relation to RTO compliance:

- Form a partnership with an RTO, whereby delivery and assessment of units of competence or modules would be conducted under the auspices of the RTO. Under this option the following may occur:
 - Shared delivery
 - Delivery on behalf of the school by the RTO
 - Delivery by the school of the whole program under the auspices of the RTO

The responsibility for meeting all requirements under the ARF rests with the RTO.
- Register as an RTO itself. Under this option, the school applies to the Office of

Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) through a Training Recognition Consultant (TRC) for the provision of specified qualifications. The school is then responsible for all aspects of delivery, assessment and quality assurance, and the awarding of Certificates. The school as an RTO may contract services for delivery and assessment, but is responsible for quality assurance.

The new Victorian Qualifications Authority has the role of accreditation, registration and certification, but has delegated the last two to other authorities while maintaining overall responsibility for standards and quality.

The delivery of VET in Schools in **WESTERN AUSTRALIA** requires the approval of the Minister for Training and the Minister for Education. Currently most schools are not RTOs, though some are. The vast majority of VET in Schools is delivered through partnership arrangements with RTOs (mainly TAFE colleges). RTOs can provide VET directly, or more commonly “auspice” delivery by the school. Those schools which have RTO status are registered by the Training Accreditation Council (TAC).

From 2002, schools may gain RTO status under Curriculum Council quality assurance arrangements developed in collaboration with the Training Accreditation Council (TAC). These schools may offer VET Certificate I and II qualifications as part of a Curriculum Council course of study only. VET at higher levels can only be delivered through partnership arrangements. The Curriculum Council will issue VET qualifications. It is expected that these new arrangements will see a growth in the number of schools registered as RTOs.

4.4 AQTF Compliance

In all states and territories where schools are RTOs they are externally audited against the AQTF Standards or, if they are delivering VET on behalf of an RTO they are internally audited by that RTO in relation to courses they deliver on its behalf.

As RTOs, **ACT** colleges undertake self-assessments and are externally audited for compliance with the AQTF Standards. Schools must write an application and be assessed according to the Registered Standards and Evidence Guide produced by the BSSS.

In **NSW** the district, as the RTO, each with a full time VET consultant, has responsibility for ensuring schools within the district comply with the standards. Districts conduct internal audits of schools and the district itself is externally audited.

As part of the **WESTERN AUSTRALIAN** Curriculum Council’s quality assurance measures each school offering VET as a training provider will be required to have an industry representative in each industry area of scope, who can be contacted by the Curriculum Council to monitor the school’s progress in that industry area. Also, schools are to ensure that student record books and assessor record books are being completed in order to provide evidence of achievement and reflective processes.

Schools offering VET under partnership arrangements must have a written agreement that outlines the conditions of the arrangement. These arrangements are monitored by the TAC.

From 2002, the Curriculum Council will assume the functions for validation (initial registration audit) and monitoring (external auditing) of schools registered as RTOs. For schools operating under partnership arrangements with RTOs, registration and auditing procedures will be applied to the RTO by the TAC against AQTF Standards.

4.5 Interface with TAFE

Schools in the **ACT** are encouraged to reach partnership arrangements with other schools, Canberra Institute of TAFE (CIT), industry (including group training companies) and the community. However, there are few examples of courses delivered to school students through CIT. Costs involved for such delivery are \$300 per student. Schools find this prohibitive. It must be paid from the ANTA funds the school receives, or, if these funds are insufficient, students can be asked to pay. Since students can't be forced to pay, and many families cannot afford to pay, the only alternative if there are insufficient VET funds is for the school to pay from the general school budget.

As explained under **Funding** below, there are no costs to public schools in **NSW** if a VET course is delivered by TAFE. The disincentive to use TAFE is a staffing loss to the school when students attend TAFE.

While schools are encouraged to form relationships with TAFE for the delivery of VET, the impact this has on the school's staffing and general revenue acts as a barrier to such productive relationships.

As few schools in **SOUTH AUSTRALIA** are RTOs, the majority deliver VET courses or modules of VET courses under the auspices of a TAFE college. What this usually means, however, is that the school delivers the course.

In **TASMANIA** the *Draft Policy Proposals of the Working Party - for consultation - Post-Compulsory Education in Tasmania* (OPCET undated p. 6) recognised the overlap between TAFE and schools and colleges, and that alternative pathways require flexibility between the sectors. It reflected on the efficient and effective use of resources and the issue of duplication, concluding that a "co-operative approach that aims to maximise the use of existing staff and infrastructure" needed to be developed. However, as with other states and territories, the rhetoric has not been transformed into reality. Interestingly, the draft policy proposals of this working party did not canvass this issue or ways of achieving it.

While the Department of Education claims to actively support the development of partnerships between schools and colleges, clusters of schools and colleges, enterprises, industry and community organisations, there appears to be little commitment to developing closer relationships and collaboration with TAFE.

In **VICTORIA** the VCAA encourages partnerships with TAFE. In a section on schools deciding about the best VCE VET program, the VCAA says: "Questions such as the content of the VET program, who can teach them and what equipment is required may best be dealt with in partnership with TAFE" (VCAA 2002a p. 3).

The VCAA (VCAA 2002b p. 2) suggests that a "memorandum of understanding" detailing agreed outcomes of the partnership be developed between the school and the training partner to formalise arrangements regarding such matters as: content to be covered, costs, logistics of student attendance, enrolment details and recording of results, liaising on progress, details of work placement etc.

In 1996, the government encouraged the establishment of local, cluster based management and delivery arrangements whereby cost sharing between groups of schools and TAFE colleges could also be managed, particularly in relation to: common timetabling; use of vacant TAFE facilities; use of spare teaching resources at cost, by negotiation; sharing specialist teaching resources at cost, by negotiation; inclusion of school teachers in appropriate professional development.

The establishment of Local Learning Networks (LLENS) is aimed at facilitating this.

Funding arrangements, however, mean that the costs to schools in purchasing delivery from TAFE are prohibitive (see **Funding** below), and most relationships between schools and TAFE amount to little more than paper auspicing agreements.

In **QUEENSLAND**, TAFE institutes are generally restricted from using profile funding to deliver VET to high school students. This means that schools are effectively discouraged from using TAFE as a VET provider as TAFE would only provide services at market rates. There are, however, some co-operative programs.

In **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**, schools are encouraged to develop co-operative relationships with TAFE colleges and many VETIS courses are auspiced by TAFE colleges. However, schools must still pay a fee for service to TAFE and, on the evidence provided during the AEU project, the negotiation of an appropriate fee is a sore point between schools and TAFE.

In no state or territory except **NSW** are there any restrictions on public schools' use of private providers. In NSW, the Department of Education and Training has put in place tight restrictions on public schools' use of private providers. It is the view of the DET that wherever possible public institutions should deliver VET to public school students. If the school cannot provide a course and wishes to use a private RTO, it must prove, with appropriate TAFE signatures to this effect, that TAFE was approached and is also unable to deliver the course. Schools must complete appropriate paper work that explains their use of these providers.

4.6 Student Work Placements

The **ACT** Schools in Industry Placement Scheme (SIPS) assists schools find work

placements for their students. Work placements are thus centrally co-ordinated and are highly structured. Work placements, however, are not mandatory unless stipulated in the relevant NTP.

In theory, these placements are not to occur outside the hours of 7am and 7pm on school days. They are not to occur on holidays, weekends or school vacations. In reality, work placements sometimes occur at weekends. Teachers are required to be the emergency contact.

It is stipulated that there should be no displacement of work or job opportunities for paid employees because of student work placements.

All **NSW** HSC VET courses incorporate a mandatory structured work placement, where competencies are developed and can be assessed in the workplace. In a few instances, because of the shortage of work placement opportunities, the BOS writes into the Framework a stipulated number of hours of the work placement that can be done in a simulated workplace environment. In a small number of schools, skills centres and/or practice firms have been established, which provide the avenue for simulated work placements.

There are work placement co-ordinators in most areas. They are funded through a combination of Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP) funds and state government funds via the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET). It should be noted that these co-ordinators are not necessarily teachers, though many are, and their pay and conditions are unregulated.

Students undertaking a course which requires work placement on a construction site, must complete the Board of Studies' *Occupational Health and Safety for Construction - General Induction Course*, which has been approved by Workcover and must be delivered by a trained, registered and accredited teacher, before the work placement begins.

While work placements are a "priority" in **SOUTH AUSTRALIA** they are not mandated. In 2001, while 60 per cent of VET students were engaged in work placements, only 25 per cent of them participated in structured workplace learning (SWL).

Work placement is not mandatory in the **NORTHERN TERRITORY** unless stipulated in the curriculum document of the relevant VET qualification or training package. Nevertheless, 120 hours of structured work placement is strongly recommended in most industry areas. 100 hours of work placement is granted status of one NTCE unit. Work placement enhances the off-the-job training and allows for alternative assessment instruments to be employed.

Work placement is recommended but not a mandatory element of most VET offered in **QUEENSLAND** schools. In some courses it may be required by the curriculum document of the relevant VET qualification or the NTP.

VET courses in **TASMANIA** normally involve a period of SWL. Work placements, called vocational placements to distinguish them more clearly from work experience, are directed to the development of specific and general workplace competencies, regulated by the Tasmanian Training Agreements Committee (TTAC) and involve SWL.

Students doing accredited VET courses also complete a separate course, entitled "Vocational Placement". This syllabus provides the means for delivering on-the-job elements of VET courses, such as SWL, and school-based activities relating to entry-level work-related competencies and general workplace skills and knowledge. It is only available in years 11 and 12.

This syllabus allows some time for both teachers and students to organise and complete vocational placements, although for the teachers the time is increasingly encroached upon and is viewed as totally inadequate for the associated workload.

There is some ECEF funding available for partnership arrangements organising links with other schools and industry, such as the Hobart Education Business Training Partnership (HEBTP).

Schools arrange their own work placements and all negotiations with the employer are done by the individual teacher. There are no district work placement co-ordinators.

In **VICTORIA** work placements are not mandatory for all VCE VET programs. However, where there is a requirement, the VCAA points out that it is a three-way partnership between the teacher, RTO and workplace supervisor, and will require meetings to monitor programs and student progress. In 1999, 50 per cent of all VET students participated in a work placement program.

Liaising with the supervisor/mentor on selection and placement of students, monitoring students progress, informing parents of workplace procedures, discussing problems with students, facilitating the resolution of problems arising in the workplace and overseeing recording of assessment results, are seen by the VCAA to be the role of the school co-ordinator, as they are in all states and territories.

Work placement has been strongly emphasised in **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**. Up to 2002, structured workplace learning was a non-negotiable criterion for VET in Schools. SWL contributes to completion of the WACE through SWL subjects. SWL has been based on Curriculum Council accredited skills lists. Schools are now building their SWL programs into NTPs.

4.7 School-based Apprenticeships/Traineeships

There were 94 School-based Apprenticeships/Traineeships (SBAs) in the **ACT** in 2000. While there must be a training agreement in place, signed by both the employer and the trainee or apprentice approved by the Office of Training and Adult Education,

there does not seem to be a mechanism for ensuring that all School-based Apprentices/Trainees have a training plan in place.

The SBA is undertaken during Years 11 and 12.

In **NSW** there were around 457 commencements across all sectors in 2002, with a large proportion of these (around 330) in government schools. In NSW there is a requirement that students complete the traineeship by the end of Year 12, with a small amount of latitude for completion after the HSC.

A number of arrangements have been established in NSW with large corporate employers, such as Toyota, McDonalds, Coles, Big W, Holden. Another has been established with the Attorney General's Department targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who undertake Certificate II in Business Services. The latter are located in western Sydney and regional areas of NSW.

SBAs in **SOUTH AUSTRALIA** may begin and, possibly, complete their traineeship while they are still at school. The trainees usually complete the training component on-the-job or with an RTO (few schools are RTOs) and drop one or two school subjects to accommodate the required work towards satisfactory completion of competencies. On satisfactory completion of these competencies they are then granted equivalent status for the dropped SACE units through the "recognition of VET in the SACE" policy with SSABSA (South Australian Department of Education Training and Employment 2002 p. 21).

In 2001 there were 362 SBAs (in government and non-government schools) (South Australian Department of Education Training and Employment 2002 p. 22), the majority of which (267) were in Sales and Personal Services. It is not easy to arrive at the correct figures. Another departmental document, *The New Framework for Vocational Education in Schools* (South Australian Department of Education Training and Employment 2001 p. 26) quotes the figure as 553 in December 2000.

By September 2001 few SBA arrangements had been approved in **TASMANIA**. OPCET has substantially completed work on the development of arrangements in two areas, Office Administration and Public Sector and these are currently being piloted.

Use of the Vocational Placement Syllabus enables a school to allocate a teacher resource to administer the trainee's program and liaise with other parties. However, this would only be an effective resource if a school had a number of School-based Apprentices/Trainees.

In **VICTORIA** there has been little take up of this option. Participation was just over half a percent of VCE students in 2001. The SBAs are in a small number of industries, mainly retail and hospitality. Only one quarter of Victorian schools have students in the

program (there were 840 students in 2000) and completion rates are only 58 per cent.

Schools are encouraged to find suitable employment opportunities for students through, for example, the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP), New Apprenticeship Centres (NACs) or group training organisations.

The OTTE funds the off-the-job training delivered by TAFE and private RTOs for apprenticeships and traineeships for students whose training agreements were registered from 1 January 2001.

QUEENSLAND has the highest take up of school-based apprenticeships/traineeships, accounting for approximately half of the Australia-wide total. Factors that have been identified as contributing to Queensland's relative success in comparison to other states/territories include:

- early establishment of industrial relations arrangements to support SBAs,
- a marketing campaign to sell the benefits of SBAs to schools, students, parents and employers,
- provision of additional incentives to group training organisations for taking on SBAs,
- user choice funding,
- a school-based apprenticeship and traineeship advisory committee including representatives of group training organisations and education systems. (Grace 2002 p. 2)

Andrews et al. (2000 p. 2) note that the Queensland program has good outcomes including lower cancellation rates than ordinary apprenticeships/traineeships and improved school retention rates.

Interestingly it appeared that many SBA positions were "created" by the program rather than "filled" by the program". The program was also "highly valued" by stakeholders, including participants, parents, teachers and employers.

However, Andrews and his colleagues (2000 pp. 3-6) also identified a number of problems with the program:

- The program had not been well integrated into schools — systems had a "laissez faire" approach to the program, schools had timetabling difficulties, students were disadvantaged by heavy workloads and the need to "make up" missed school work;
- Resourcing for the program was inadequate and funding "lagged" activity;
- Funding did not encourage "experimentation and learning about the labour market" but assumed that all students were committed to a specific vocational

- outcome;
- Marketing was ad hoc and disjointed — employers find themselves approached by various agencies, programs such as the [then] ASTF promoted structured work placements “compete” with school-based apprenticeships/traineeships;
 - User choice was causing inefficiencies in curriculum delivery;
 - One day per week models of on-the-job training were inadequate for skill formation;
 - Not all students who should have access to the program were able to access it.

4.8 Funding

Colleges in the **ACT** rely on funding that is a portion of the funds the government receives from ANTA. They receive a base funding grant combined with an amount calculated from previous and current enrolments. The latter is a combination of current enrolments and previous outcomes based on certificates awarded. A separate grant applies for School-based Apprenticeships/Traineeships. The ANTA contribution to VET in Schools in the ACT in 2000 was \$666,921. Teachers fear that these funds are about to end and do not believe they can manage using general college budgets.

Schools also receive funds from ECEF to support vocational placements. These funds are channelled through a taskforce which then distributes it to schools.

\$300,000 was allocated in 2001 to school-based skill centres, which included five school/community skill centres and three school practice firms.

Schools in **NSW** receive some funding based on the number of VET students. Funding is also distributed to district offices. The distribution of district VET funds is decided by the district VET committee, which generally decides that most should go to schools for use by teachers, for example, for relief days for professional development, audits or attendance at VET network meetings.

The costs associated with schools' use of TAFE to provide VETIS delivery is covered by the DET centrally, via a movement of funds within the DET. Schools themselves do not have to pay a purchase price to the TAFE college. However, when students attend a TAFE college they are then determined to be part-time students at their school. Schools lose general funding and staffing entitlements because of this. This loss makes it more difficult for the school to run other courses and provide a full general education curriculum and pastoral care activities, and therefore acts as a strong disincentive for the school to enter into delivery arrangements with TAFE.

In 2001, each of the 40 school districts received a \$4,000 grant to establish and co-ordinate SBAs, regardless of the number of such trainees each district had. In 2002 each district received a \$1,000 base grant with extra funds based on a distance and

isolation factor, senior student enrolments and participation in SBAs. In the past, \$500 per trainee was allocated to the co-ordinating school. From 2001, this allocation was made to the district, which is responsible for appropriate distribution of the funds, which could be to establish a SBA co-ordinator. This is said to be in response to the increasing corporate partnership model.

Work placement co-ordinators are funded through a combination of the ECEF and State Government funding. In 2001, the latter provided \$2 million via the Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET).

Schools in **SOUTH AUSTRALIA** receive set funding for VET which is a distribution of the ANTA money. From this money, schools must pay for registration if they choose to become an RTO, auditing, and payment to TAFE if TAFE delivers a course, the fee for which is a set amount. This amount varies according to the industry area. The amount due to TAFE per student is generally more than the amount the school receives for that student, and the school has to pay the difference. The department view is that they have funded the school, yet the greatest component of the costs is in teacher salaries. This means that if one or two students wish to do a course at TAFE, the financial costs to the school are great. It costs the same to pay for a teacher whether he/she is teaching 22 students or 18, with the other four attending TAFE. There is little incentive for a school to send students to TAFE. There is no payment to TAFE for auspicing arrangements.

Schools find themselves in the position where either the school pays the extra costs to TAFE or institute a user pays system with the students. Schools are averse to this latter arrangement with the result that school funds are used or courses are not offered.

The result of these arrangements is that it is often cheaper for a school to deliver VET courses than to purchase delivery from TAFE, but it is cheaper for them to deliver the course under the auspices of TAFE than to become an RTO themselves.

Schools do not receive any funding for the work or necessary payments in relation to registration, nor are they provided with funds to enable them to complete the auditing process, other than the general VET funds all schools receive. This is said to be because schools would be double dipping if funds were made available for this purpose.

The state funds regional development boards to co-ordinate co-operative relationships between schools and industry, through Enterprise and Vocational Education (EVE). Funds are allocated via cabinet submissions. EVE, also using state government money, provides some funds for professional development, work placement co-ordination, teacher training and can fund teacher release to industry. How these funds are used varies from region to region. Each region has a full-time VET co-ordinator. Some funding comes from ECEF, but most is from the state government.

With the school leaving age increasing to 16 in 2003, most believe that VETIS will become more important. Funding of around \$30m is being announced for Future

Connect to deal with the ramifications of this decision. This money will be divided among a number of state agencies and the Social Inclusion Unit, but some will be directed to EVE.

In **TASMANIA**, colleges receive a set amount of funding for VET. From this funding they pay delivery costs, professional development of teachers, facilities etc. It is not common for students to attend TAFE or for TAFE to deliver courses to students at school. However, when this does happen, there is a set fee payable for each student of \$1.50, this amounting to about \$150 per student per course. (Private schools buy time from TAFE at cost of service.)

To provide this, TAFE use their part of the 40,000 Annual Student Contact Hours (ASCH) set aside for VETIS. There is some use of TAFE excess capacity, while OPCET pay for some.

There are also purchasing agreements with TAFE using funding allocated for partnerships. These partnerships are usually heavily subsidised by industry and are particularly industry based and aligned with real labour market needs, where the program profile more closely resembles industry profiles.

ECEF funding, which in the past has been partially used to provide work placement co-ordination, is now used in other directions, such as the development of industry links.

There are two elements to the funding arrangements for VET in **VICTORIA**:

- A contribution towards the purchase of specialist resources from RTOs, such as off-the-job training, and
- A base per capita grant of \$80, which will be increased to a maximum of \$120 per student for rural schools, to support program delivery. Certificate II in Food Retail (McDonalds) and Certificate II in Information Technology do not attract per capita funding, as they are either totally delivered in the workplace or are within the capacity of schools to deliver (with the exception of the Cisco Networking Academy Program and Certificate III in IT, which will attract the funding in an effort to address skill shortages in the IT area). Per capita funding can be used for a range of purposes including purchase of specialist resources, professional development, RTO registration costs, program planning, curriculum materials, work placements, industry links.

Prices paid to TAFE institutes are negotiated within the price range per scheduled student contact hour of 60-80 per cent of the TAFE recovery price. Schools negotiate for the best price within this range, as well as the scheduled hours. Schools must pay for a full year's delivery even if a student withdraws. TAFE institutes are advised that this is a fee for service. No additional fees (e.g. enrolment/tuition) may be charged.

Schools that are not RTOs pay an auspice rate to the TAFE institute of 40 per cent of

the TAFE recovery price for the negotiated hours, for the purpose of paying for the quality assurance and certification of programs delivered by the school.

The costs payable to TAFE and the negotiated hours vary considerably depending on the VET course. As an example of the costs involved, the cost of auspicings for ten students might be around \$800, while the delivery by TAFE could be up to \$8 per student per contact hour.

In **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**, total VET in Schools funding ...

... that is additional to the standard provision for senior school programs is as follows:

- *staffing allocations;*
- *VET in Schools funding*
 - *provided directly to schools,*
 - *administered by EVE branch (e.g. some professional development),*
 - *Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEF) funding to support clusters in the development of partnerships. (Department of Education 2002 p. 26)*

The amount of funding per VET enrolment received by the school is based on a complicated formula which uses \$.21 per student training hour as its base but is weighted by industry area, and according to whether the school is an RTO, delivery is auspiced by a TAFE college or the training is purchased at user choice rates. A multiplier is applied for smaller schools. For the purchase of both on-the-job and off-the-job training the salary transfer is calculated on the average staff salary at .25 FTE per day per 20 students. Schools receive a base rate of \$.34 per student hour to cover the additional costs incurred for on-the-job training.

In **QUEENSLAND**, funding for VET in Schools is provided through five program areas. Program A provides funding to schools based on Year 11 and 12 enrolments in Board subjects or SASs with embedded VET (see explanation above). Schools receive \$2 per enrolment in a Board subject/SAS strand with a partial VET certificate embedded; \$5 per enrolment in a Board subject/SAS strand with a Certificate I embedded; \$10 per enrolment in a Board subject/SAS strand with a Certificate II embedded and \$20 per enrolment in a Board subject/SAS strand with a Certificate III embedded. Schools receive 70 per cent of these funds in April and 30 per cent in October.

Program B provides funding for school-based apprenticeships/traineeships. Schools receive \$500 per commencement or \$600 per commencement for Indigenous students, rural students or students with disabilities. The grant is paid in March for commencements from November to February, in July for commencements from March to June, and in November for commencements between July and October.

Program C provides funding for stand-alone VET. This program provides two levels of payment: a base payment to assist with the establishment of the course and a payment based on enrolments. The base payment is \$1000 for Certificate I courses, \$2000 for Certificate II courses and \$3000 for Certificate III courses. The enrolment payment is \$6 per student in a Certificate I course, \$12 per student in a Certificate II course and \$24 per student in a Certificate III course. Schools receive 70 per cent of funds in April and 30 per cent in October.

Program D provides funding for special schools only and delivers a grant of \$3000 per school. Program E provides \$3000 per school for P-10 schools that deliver VET.

5. Issues for Teachers, Schools and Systems

5.1 The Nature of VET in Schools

“VET (vocational education and training)” is defined by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA 2000a p. 21) as:

... appropriately accredited and industry-specific entry level training programs that deliver competencies endorsed within the National Training Framework (NTF) and certification of industry accredited training aligned to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

In this paper this is the definition that will apply when the term VET is used. However, as noted by MCEETYA, VET is but one element of “vocational education” and it will also be necessary at points to address issues about vocational education generally or about other elements of it (e.g. enterprise and vocational learning, student support services).

There are three main arrangements for the delivery of VET in Schools:

- stand-alone VET;
- VET embedded in a course of study;
- VET included as part of a school-based apprenticeship/traineeship.

Combinations of these arrangements are also possible. For some students, VET in Schools is delivered in the form of “taster” courses, which allow students to experience various aspects of the world of work and receive accredited qualifications without necessarily committing to a specific vocational pathway. This would be the case for many, if not most, students undertaking subjects with embedded VET. For other students VET in Schools is undertaken for the purpose of opening up a particular vocational pathway. This would be the case for almost all students undertaking school-based apprenticeships/traineeships.

Increasingly the success of VET in Schools is measured by participation rates and completion rates. Speaking to VET teachers in schools it becomes clear that what they see as the success of a program is often different from the view of bureaucrats and researchers. They talk about the students as individuals, the changes particular programs bring about in motivation for school in general, or students’ increased prospects of finding a job, the improvement in a student’s self esteem and self awareness, or the sense of achievement many students have never experienced before. These are important factors that are often masked by statistics, but are what schools are good at. Over and over again this research project found that, when asked why young people should do VET at school rather than anywhere else, teachers replied that school provided a familiar, nurturing and supportive environment for students who more often than not are not ready yet for other forms of education, training or work.

A VET teacher in Queensland who had worked in both sectors set out what she took to be the differences between VET in TAFE and VET in Schools for post-compulsory students:

Some students prefer TAFE. They say they don't get treated like a kid. They like not having to go to class if they are bored, etc. They like not having to wear a uniform ... and there are more options at TAFE. But other kids need the support. Schools track attendance. They know about the family situation and your personal problems. Teachers are more caring. And the kids have their peer group around for support and friendship.

In South Australia, two students who were interviewed for the AEU project explained their reasons for choosing VET in Schools courses. Both had chosen to pursue the courses for different reasons. One had never completed more than Year 7, and at the age of 16 decided she needed to return to school, part time. The other had particular aims in relation to future work for which his VET courses were particularly relevant, but at the same time wanted to complete his SACE. Both chose to pursue these courses at school because of the supportive environment. While there are undeniably students for whom a more adult environment such as TAFE is appropriate and desirable, the need some students have for the supportive environment of a school should not be ignored when looking at the success of VET in Schools.

There are, however, two important points that need to be emphasised:

- VET in Schools is but one part of schooling and the schooling reform agenda;
- VET in Schools is itself characterised by multiple and not always compatible objectives.

In relation to the first point, Marginson (1993 p. 16) notes:

... education [and schooling] performs different social roles. These roles are subject to conflicting interpretations, and are not always compatible with each other.

Some of the difficulties that schools have had with the implementation of VETIS may be due to conflicting demands relating to the other roles that schools must perform.

The current phase of growth in VET in Schools⁴ derives from a push to make secondary schooling more relevant to the world of work — an impetus neatly captured in the title of the 1992 Mayer Report *Putting General Education to Work*.⁵ This response to the pressures of economic globalisation manifested itself in many western countries from the late 1980s/early 1990s.

⁴ Malley et al. (2002b pp. 27-41) identify four “broad periods of policy shift” in relation to vocational education in Australian secondary schools. The current period “began in late 1992 and is still continuing” (p. 34).

⁵ Besides the Mayer Report, other key early explications of this project were the Finn Report (1991) and the Carmichael Report (1992).

However, vocational education in schools also forms part of a number of other reform agendas relating, for example, to broader concerns about the relevance and effectiveness of the senior secondary school curriculum, the promotion of lifelong learning and the situation of youth who experience difficulties in making transition from school to further education and training, employment and adult life generally.⁶

The role of VET in Schools needs to be considered in a perspective that takes into account the wider social and educational responsibilities of schools.

AEU policy on VET in Schools is based on the belief that all students have a right to a broad, rich, general education and that it is the responsibility of educational institutions to provide equitable access to a quality general education for all students. VET is therefore merely one option provided to students in the context of their general education. (Newcombe 1999 p. 1)

VET in Schools can contribute to making secondary schooling more relevant and rewarding for students but it is not a panacea for all the challenges and problems faced by schools and students. The links, for example, that are drawn between enhancing the delivery of VET in Schools and increasing retention rates and addressing the needs of the youth “underclass ... who are neither at university, at work or in training” (Frost 2000 p. 46) are often simplistic, ignoring the complex array of social factors which contribute to the alienation of youth from society. As Schofield (2001) notes in relation to VET generally:

Neither economic growth nor social equity can be achieved through education and training alone. VET policies are not a substitute for full employment and income distribution policies. VET policies must be part of a larger political package that addresses the question of labour mobility, rising inequality and diminished work and family life.

Malley et al. (2002a p. 7) note that the role of VET in Schools is itself contested, subject to “multiple ... objectives and expectations imposed ... by separated central agencies”. A key point of contention is identified by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum (1997 p. i):

In particular confusion exists about whether it is most appropriate for senior school students to take part in a broad generic orientation towards work and employment, or whether it is most appropriate for them to undertake a more focused preparation for particular occupational and industry pathways.

VET in Schools has expanded considerably since this observation was made in 1997,

⁶ During the 1990s and into the present century as VET in Schools has grown, there have also been a number of reports and reviews that have focused on broader concerns about the senior secondary school curriculum and outcomes — e.g. the McGaw Report (1996) in New South Wales, the Commonwealth Government’s Footprints to the Future Report (2001), and the Western Australian Post-Compulsory Education Review (2002).

yet the debate continues.

Malley et al. (2002a p. 9) argue that “the growing set of economic, social and educational objectives associated with the provision of vocational education are not coherently connected or prioritised”. Policy makers have not had a knowledge of schools. It appears to have been assumed that a model of VET based on post-employment, industry-based training can just seamlessly be slotted into the school curriculum with no attention needing to be paid to its effect on the other roles schools are expected to play or their effect on it. Educational providers in schools (and TAFE) have been excluded from the table when it comes to formulating the national VET framework and are then expected to accept and adopt it holus bolus with no recognition of the problems that might create for them. A deputy principal at a rural school in Queensland summed up the situation with this question: “Does anybody from schools talk to these Ministers before they pass things at their MCEETYA talkfests?” There is an urgent need to re-evaluate the specific characteristics, objectives and expectations of entry-level training and how it relates to the general educational needs of secondary school students. This is a process that needs to include governments, industry (employers and unions) and VET providers (in schools and TAFE).

The exclusion of training providers generally and schools specifically from the key decision-making forums that set the VET agenda has also meant that ownership and understanding in schools of the rationale for VET and of the reasons for various requirements of the AQTF is patchy. VET in most schools relies on the (often sorely tested) good will and enthusiasm of a minority of teachers and school administrators; it is rare for the VET agenda to be well understood and supported by all staff.

Based on her research, Spark (1999 p. 25) comments that “some schools are not taking the time to reflect on the purpose and scope of VET provision in senior secondary schools”. She quotes a school principal as saying that

There is a growing appetite amongst senior secondary schools for VET programs. However, this move has not always been undertaken in a smooth, co-ordinated and collaborative manner. The need for reflective practice at this point is imperative, otherwise the original intent of VET studies could be lost in the rush for student numbers and associated “kudos” in aligning with industry.

A vocational education co-ordinator interviewed for this AEU project made a similar comment that “principals are encouraged to increase VET enrolments — there needs to be more attention on the quality of what is actually being offered”.

Malley et al. (2002a p. 17) suggest a conceptualisation of vocational education, based on the work of Benson (1992), which is useful in thinking through the role of VET in Schools. They argue that three “structural reforms” are necessary:

- the integration of vocational and general studies;
- the integration of secondary and post-compulsory education;
- the integration of education and work.

However, the conceptual and practical difficulties attending these reforms are considerable. In relation to the integration of vocational and general studies in schools, for example, states and territories have approached the task in different ways — none of which has proved unproblematic. (Issues arising from the various approaches of the states/territories are considered below in the section on curriculum and assessment.) Schools have achieved much in the last decade in terms of the provision of VET. However, the ways in which schools are currently funded and called to account for their VET provision do not allow schools to engage with all of these dimensions and therefore foster “unevenness in provision” (Malley et al. 2002a p. 9) rather than integration.

The Dusseldorp Skills Forum argued in 1997 that “it is now appropriate to reduce unhelpful diversity between the States in the ways that school-industry programs and vocational education in schools are approached” (p. ii). Despite the development by MCEETYA of the “New Framework for Vocational Education in Schools”, a “growing list of policy expectations has promoted an unclear and fuzzy perception of what is now the primary goal” (Malley et al. 2002a p. 23) of VET in Schools and the problem of “unhelpful diversity” remains.

If the federal and state/territory governments are as serious about VET in Schools as they claim, they must take steps to ensure that the appropriate on-going funding, administrative and industrial arrangements are in place to facilitate its success. At present this is clearly not happening. Implementation of VET in Schools is occurring in such a way that the well-being of neither students nor teachers is assured. For quality to be a guaranteed outcome, government commitment must replace bureaucratic pressures and rhetoric.

Draft policy proposals

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should endorse the following principles in relation to VET generally and VET in Schools in particular:

- *All Australians should have an equal right of access to and participation in high quality VET irrespective of their location, their capacity to pay or other factors.*
- *Educational disadvantage requires specific redress but must also be tackled within the wider context of socio-economic, employment and other barriers which disadvantage many Australians and lead to marginalisation, poverty and disconnection.*
- *A high quality VET system must be inclusive of and balance the needs of students, industry, educators, local communities and society.*
- *Quality and effectiveness are the key principles underpinning the*

future development of vocational education and training.

A representative national body — including representatives of government, industry, unions (including education unions) and public VET providers (both TAFE and Schools) — should be established with the responsibility of developing a coherent national policy position that clarifies and prioritises the objectives and expectations for school-based VET. This body must be consulted by, provide advice to, and be involved in decisions made by ANTA and other national bodies developing and implementing the National Training Framework. Establishment of this body underpins many of the other recommendations in this Report, and the AEU regards this as an imperative and fundamental necessity.

To inform the deliberations of this body, MCEETYA should commission critical research on the theory and practice of VET in Schools and its relationship to the other objectives and expectations that schools are expected to achieve to ensure curriculum is diverse enough to cater for all post-school pathways.

The vast majority of VET in Schools is at entry-level standard. Requirements and standards for provision of VET courses ought to reflect this. While consistency in the criteria and processes for RTO registration should be maintained, modification of AQTF compliance standards and of National Training Package requirements in relation to entry-level VET should be considered.

5.2 The Quality of VET in Schools

A recent report to the National Training Quality Council (BSSSS 2002b p. 4) noted that:

Industry expressed concerns that students undertaking institutionally based VET do not exit with the same skills as those whose training has occurred largely in the workplace. There are perceptions that schools which are offering VET are not meeting the same standards as other RTOs.

A similar statement is made by the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA 2002 p. 2):

There is widespread concern in industry (both employers and unions) that VETIS students, whilst having a comparable qualification, do not have comparable skills and abilities to others with the same qualification who have obtained their qualification post school, whilst part of the paid workforce.

The ACT VET Half-Yearly Outlook June 2001, (ACT OTAE 2001 p. 34) noted that

The Building industry is grappling with complex assessment issues and there is some concern expressed by ITABs about the adequacy of VET in Schools assessment.

Based on interviews conducted for this AEU project, the concerns expressed above are shared by some TAFE teachers. Several TAFE teachers (and education union officers with responsibility for TAFE) specifically articulated concern about the quality of school-based VET and provided anecdotes about school certificated VET students who did not have the essential competencies. Cases of local TAFE institutes not recognising VET qualifications obtained at a school were also reported by school teachers.

There are, as the National Training Quality Council report (BSSSS 2002b) notes, two issues raised in criticisms of school-based VET. First, there is the issue of institution-based versus workplace-based training. This is a debate which has potential relevance not just to schools but to some other RTOs. The second is specifically about the capacity of schools and school teachers to provide quality VET.

The research undertaken for the National Training Quality Council “was unable to find any concrete evidence to substantiate these concerns in relation to schools” but noted that perceptions were important as “it is critical to the success of VET in Schools that employers have confidence in VET delivery in schools” (BSSSS 2002b p. 4).

School administrators and teachers in schools visited as part of this AEU project stated that the employers who were familiar with their programs were very happy with them and that criticisms often came from people who were not in possession of the facts. “I wish they would come down and see what we are doing before making critical comments”, stated one Western Australian principal. In NSW many teachers proudly gave examples of students who gained immediate employment on completion of VET in Schools courses, while one Tasmania school reported that almost all their automotive students gained employment quickly and many of their music students were in bands that had a lot of work, some of which had won awards.

One rural district VET co-ordinator in South Australia made the point that School Industry Links there were working so well that local industries were employing large numbers of students who studied VET in school. He had never heard anything to suggest that there was any concern about the quality of the training these young people had received.

The same ACT document cited above (ACT OTAE 2001 p. 34), in which concerns are expressed about the adequacy of assessment in school-based VET in the building industry, goes on to report that: “the building industry is taking deliberate steps to market itself in schools, at national and local levels”. The good relationship some ACT colleges have developed with the Master Builders Association has resulted in the construction industry recruiting apprentices from the college students who have completed Certificate II through VET in Schools.

A Queensland teacher who had experience in both the TAFE and schooling sectors and in industry and who currently works as a liaison person with schools, TAFE institutes and local industry made the following statement:

There are some excellent and some poor quality VET courses in schools — but the same is true of TAFE ... Some criticisms are valid but others are based on prejudices. For example, a particular employer or TAFE institute may have a preference for a particular system and may not recognise that a student who has learned a different system actually has satisfied all the requirements of the training package.

There appear to be some legitimate concerns about the availability and quality of student work placements in at least some VET in Schools courses. Some TAFE teachers interviewed did not believe that, where student work placement occurred as part of VETIS, there was the same quality and level of supervision as provided through TAFE programs.

While the goal of incorporating quality training in an actual work place into VET courses is undoubtedly desirable, there should also be some careful thought about and examination of how crucial an issue this is across the various industry areas and levels of VET qualifications (remembering that what is needed in relation to a Certificate III in building and construction may not be needed for a Certificate I in computing). Some schools (e.g. in rural areas) face considerable difficulties in arranging SWL. Nevertheless, where structured work placements occur, they must meet agreed standards both in terms of training and assessment and workplace health and safety.

In Western Australia, it was claimed by some TAFE teachers that not all VET classes in schools conformed to the class size requirements observed in TAFE colleges. As noted below in the section on organisational/workload issues, there are pressures on schools in relation to balancing the class size demands of VET courses (and schools must balance competing claims from VET and non-VET subjects), so, in the absence of data, this allegation cannot be dismissed (in relation to any state or territory).

Another concern is the degree to which teachers in schools meet AQTF human resource requirements (see section on teacher qualifications and experience below), particularly in regard to relevant industry experience (e.g. “the woodwork teacher teaching construction”, BSSSS 2002b p. 14).

There is a suspicion amongst some employers that, even though the providers of VET in Schools are subject to the same AQTF compliance requirements as other RTOs, schools are somehow able to “get around” the requirements. The research conducted for the NQTC (BSSSS 2002b) found no evidence to support this. Interviews conducted as part of this AEU research project also indicated that, while meeting the AQTF human resource requirements was a major headache for schools (and in some cases threatened their capacity to continue to offer some VET courses), the compliance

requirements of the AQTF were being enforced as stringently on schools as on other RTOs.

The VET system is structured around the needs of industry and current quality measures reflect this. However, schools have much wider responsibilities than meeting the needs of industry and the economy. Many critics of the quality of VET provision in schools fail to recognise or acknowledge the legitimacy of the other roles that schools must fulfil or the tensions that arise from meeting these disparate responsibilities.

For example, as discussed in the section on curriculum/assessment, employers are uncomfortable with embedded models of VET delivery, preferring stand-alone models. Employer concerns relate mainly to their perception that embedding VET makes subjects unnecessarily complicated, that the non-VET elements of subjects can overwhelm the embedded VET, and that non-VET assessment regimes may be used in place of competency-based assessment.

Putting aside for the moment the question of the empirical accuracy of the employers' perceptions of the nature of embedded VET programs, it is clear that their criticism is based on a particular perspective on the goals of VET — one which privileges the obtainment of specific work place competencies. However, as noted elsewhere in this AEU report, VET in Schools is driven by a variety of not always compatible goals. Embedded models of delivery may “muddy the waters” somewhat from an industry perspective but from an educational perspective which seeks to integrate vocational and academic studies, they make very good sense.

From a teacher's perspective, VET in Schools is about such things as increasing student knowledge, motivation, self development, self esteem and self awareness, as well as providing specific employment-related competencies. A valid judgement about the quality of VET programs in schools would need to consider and weigh up the sometimes competing claims of the various agendas that are driving it. Currently the debate is carried on as if there is an agreed definition of what constitutes a quality program. Until such time as there is a much more thorough theoretical explication of the purposes of VET in Schools, such an assumption is unwarranted.

To date, the debate about the relative quality of VET programs in schools compared to other RTOs has been conducted on the basis of anecdotes and perceptions (the reliability of both being unknown). AQTF quality assurance audits provide a basis for addressing some quality concerns. However, AQTF compliance is an incomplete measure of quality which does not adequately reflect the range of objectives and expectations associated with VET in Schools.

The criteria for measurement of successful outcomes from VET in Schools ought to include a more realistic appraisal of what constitutes success for a range of individuals in a range of contexts and ought to encompass the broad aims of schooling. “There is a

need to clarify and prioritise” objectives and expectations (Malley et al. 2002a p. 31) and a need for more empirical research to bring some rigour to this debate.

An example of what one school is achieving follows. Measures of success of its programs cannot be confined to empirical measures of outcomes that take little account of the broader aims of schools and the types of support systems they are able to provide.

At one secondary school in Adelaide (visited for the AEU project) the bulk of the VET provision relates to adult programs. Most of these adults are women over the age of 23. The school has found that the support provided by the school and the teachers has meant that they cater to adults who would not have undertaken any training if they had not enrolled at the school. There are 570 FTE adults, which translates to 1200 people. The school sees itself as providing clients for TAFE, people who would not otherwise have taken up a training pathway. The Community Services course grew out of a school course for continuing students and emerged from the expertise in the school relating to a SACE course. Those doing the course now are mostly women who have been out of the workforce for a long time.

Some of the adult students enrol in SACE and some do not. They are aged between 17 and 80. For the Community Services course, the school is auspiced to provide the VET with the local TAFE college as the RTO.

In Years 8 and 9, students take some technical subjects, for example, word processing skills, which might lead them into a VET subject, e.g. a Certificate II in IT. They also learn generic work skills such as first aid, which are developed by teachers of VET in the senior school. The school provides a range of formal programs from office skills to engineering in conjunction with a large local industry, where students do work placements. During the work placements they are assessed by workplace assessors on the job under the auspices of the local TAFE college. Some of the VET courses are embedded in SACE and some are stand-alone. In relation to work placements, students attend three or four two week blocks during the year. The school has a number of school-based trainees mainly in manufacturing, generally employed through a group training company, and placed with the local industry mentioned above. Their part-time work extends for 20 weeks a year and is completed at the ends of terms, at the end of the year and in the school holidays. The TAFE college is supportive of the program.

In Year 9 some students are doing Certificate I in Retail, which is delivered through normal classes, such as English, Science, SOSE. They can continue with the competencies, have them assessed and gain a Certificate of Attainment. The school emphasises the importance of "employability" skills, embedding these in the compulsory years subjects. These skills have lately been emphasised by employers as what they want, but have been removed from many courses as the National Training Packages have been developed.

One aspect that this school believes might impact on perceptions of quality is the fact

that school students doing VET courses are often younger and less mature than those attending, for example, a TAFE college. The school points out that a number of its teachers also teach part-time at night at TAFE.

Draft policy proposals

Quality assurance processes relating to VET in Schools should take full account of the complexity of the roles that schools play.

A quality improvement program should be jointly funded by the Commonwealth and states and territories to provide for quality improvement strategies including:

- *staff development, teacher training, return to industry and acquisition of vocational qualifications;*
- *curriculum development that is broad-based and meets the needs of a competency-based system;*
- *innovation projects;*
- *initiatives to increase flexible provision and co-operation with other public VET providers;*
- *improved planning and consultation with local communities and stakeholders;*
- *increased co-operation between TAFE and schools in delivery of VET.*

Empirical research (informed by a critical analysis of the purposes of VET in Schools) should be undertaken on the quality of VET programs in schools.

5.3 Planning and Governance

Malley et al. (2002a p. 6) identify a major concern about the way in which VET in Schools has been developed and implemented:

The continual interplay between ... stakeholders within a federalist framework has ensured that, in Australia, the development of vocational education has not been even and has been contested, even when national goals have been apparently agreed. Much of the struggle has occurred because dominant policy goals have often been developed and imposed by hierarchical systems of the federal government and State governments without proper consideration and knowledge of practice at schools or communities.

Despite VET in Schools nominally being an integrated part of a national training framework, there is considerable variation amongst the states and territories in policy

and practice, with schools being expected to respond to sometimes conflicting agendas (e.g. agendas designed to encourage partnerships versus agendas encouraging competitiveness) being driven by a number of state and federal agencies.

Not only has the VET agenda been hierarchically imposed on schools, but it is an agenda that relies for its success, not on appropriate support and funding, but on rhetoric about successful outcomes and the goodwill and commitment of countless thousands of teachers, for whom the rewards are often measured by individual student success rather than government devised accountability criteria.

“There is too much chopping and changing” said a Western Australian careers and vocational education officer interviewed for the AEU project. “VET co-ordination is like tap dancing on a moving surface”, said a Queensland co-ordinator. Similar sentiments were expressed by teachers and administrators in all states and territories — and interestingly these views have been reflected by some ITABs and employers providing work placements.

Moreover, differences in interpretation and implementation of the national agenda have led to increasing workloads in specific and different areas for teachers in different state and territories.

A problem in at least some schooling systems is that VET in Schools has not been sufficiently integrated into the overall policy and decision-making structure. In Queensland, for example, responsibility for the oversight and co-ordination of VET in Schools policy and implementation is assigned to relatively small unit with no direct links to the senior management group of the Department of Education.

While local and regional bodies, including representatives of government, schools, TAFE and industry, have been formed in some areas to assess emerging vocational education and training needs and plan provision, governments need to pursue more active and widespread development of a whole of government approaches to industry planning, employment related issues, education and training, and community welfare and support services. The view that it is possible for education and training on their own to fix all the employment related issues facing young people and employers is neither realistic nor helpful.

Draft policy proposals

New representative consultative and advisory bodies should be established at the state/territory level to allow for the participation and representation of all stakeholders in the shaping of VET directions. These bodies should include representatives of each education sector – TAFE, universities and schools – and include education union representatives.

Representative state/regional/area bodies should be established to work co-

operatively on the development of a whole of government approach to industry planning, employment related issues, education and training, and community welfare and support services. A key term of reference for these bodies should be the facilitation of local/regional partnership models of VET provision involving schools, TAFE institutes, local business and industry, and community groups.

School VET needs must inform State Training Plans along with industry and community strategic plans. Planning should be informed by local schools and TAFE institutes, as well as by government, industry, enterprises and the community. Overall planning processes should facilitate the identification at the regional and local level of existing and emerging industry/labour market needs and articulation arrangements that meet this need.

All education systems should ensure that their senior management group includes someone with direct knowledge of and responsibility for oversight and co-ordination of VET in Schools policy and implementation.

5.4 Funding/Resourcing

A review of the literature conducted by Malley et al. (2002a p. 39) revealed that research supported the conclusion that “resourcing is a significant issue for schools”. This was borne out by the fact that funding/resourcing issues were raised at every school visited as part of the AEU project as key issues. Schools are experiencing significant financial pressures in relation to the delivery of VET. A deputy principal at a large metropolitan high school in Queensland, interviewed for the AEU project, stated “schools are given no scope in terms of funding to support VET”. A VET co-ordinator at a rural Western Australian school stated “resourcing is barely sufficient to do what we do”. In South Australia, it was reported that the funds made available to schools for VET did not meet their needs. While professional development in a variety of forms was a necessary part of meeting AQTF standards, the bucket of money provided, according to one co-ordinator, is “inappropriate to maintain and develop the skills of VET teachers,” with the result that most of the costs are borne by the schools themselves.

Spark (1999 p. 7) characterises the growth in VET in Schools as occurring “at the margins of senior secondary education and training in terms of infrastructure arrangements such as timetabling and school/system allocation of financial and human resources”. She notes that “schools in states which provided structural support ... were able to implement VET more successfully” (p. 24).

At the meeting of the ANTA Ministerial Council (MINCO) in May 2002, the states and territories requested an additional \$40m per year contribution for VETIS by the

Commonwealth. This would increase its contribution from \$20m to \$60m per year for the period 2002-2004. This request, along with a request for growth in targeted funding, was not supported by the Commonwealth.

A submission to ANTA MINCO prepared by NSW (2002) on VET in Schools funding, was predicated on three facts:

- 10 per cent of VET provision in Australia was delivered via VET in Schools programs in 2000 and this figure is predicted to rise (in fact, to have risen already).
- There has been no increase in the Commonwealth contribution to the cost of provision since 1997 (\$20m per year).
- The costs associated with VET in Schools cannot be absorbed into State and Territory Budgets.

The MCEETYA Framework for Vocational Education in Schools commits systems to achieving sustainability in relation to funding. The NSW paper debates what this means, saying that integration into budgets and sustainability of funding does not mean that existing education budgets should be stretched to resource these programs (p. 10).

The NSW paper is blunt: There is an implication that ANTA VETIS funding may cease after 2004 (p. 10). For NSW the real operating costs for VET in Schools in 2001 was \$75m (including implementation for government and non-government schools). NSW share of the ANTA funding was \$6m (p. 11).

The NSW paper explores the major cost items for VET in Schools. What is notable in this list is the inclusion of items that the NSW government is either not funding, or not funding adequately, such as the work involved in AQTF compliance, "co-ordinating, organising and supervising work placements including the cost of restructuring timetables, changing school organisation and teacher time", "implementing an ongoing commitment to teacher professional development including maintaining teacher currency of industry standards (particularly with changes to training packages), complying with all requirements for assessment and reporting, and conforming with current and future changes to the National Training Framework" (pp. 8-9).

Given that the states/territories, through MCEETYA, committed to the VET in Schools agenda, and committed to the demanding requirements that are now part of the national VET agenda, particularly in relation to the new AQTF standards, it's a bit of a conundrum how they thought this was going to be funded, if they didn't do it. The NSW submission to ANTA MINCO says that without additional Commonwealth funds, "the capacity of schools to pursue an agenda of continuous improvement, to continue to strive for quality and provide young people with real and valued vocational opportunities cannot continue under the current funding arrangements" (p. 13). Their commitment should have presupposed a level of funding on their own part concomitant with the task.

It is clear that although the Commonwealth funds provide only a small proportion of NSW's financial commitment, its absence would indeed be felt. Not only is there an

argument for the continuation of Commonwealth funding, there is also a strong argument for its enhancement. In addition, if the Commonwealth were to end its financial contribution to VET in Schools, it will have shifted a substantial financial responsibility to the states/territories. Instead of the Commonwealth providing a percentage of the funding to TAFE for entry-level training, the states would be funding it via VET in Schools.

Of equal concern is the transfer of resources to VET by states and territories from other education and training activities in order to implement sustainability.

MCEETYA acknowledged in 1999 that "VET in Schools is more expensive than general education" (p. v). Important additional costs to schools of VET include the purchase of VET from non-school RTOs, equipment and facilities (set up and maintenance costs can be substantial), co-ordination and supervision of SWL, and staff industry release and training. Schools are being required to devote increasing amounts from other areas of their budgets to sustain VET programs. Some individual teachers personally subsidise the costs of VET through doing professional development and industry renewal in their own time, as well as travelling to and supervising work placements in their own vehicles and in their own time. One rural Western Australian VET co-ordinator interviewed for the AEU project covered hundreds of kilometres each week to oversee SWL placements using his own vehicle. While there is an argument for "mainstreaming" VET funding in school budgets, this would only be defensible where a realistic analysis of the costs of VET has been carried out.

It is not uncommon for schools to pass along a proportion of the costs of purchasing VET provision from a non-school RTO to students. Arrangements vary considerably but in at least some cases, courses are offered on a full-cost recovery basis. This is particularly the case with privately developed and licensed courses, such as the Cisco and Aries ICT courses. In one state, for example, of three high schools offering the Cisco course, one fully subsidised the cost for students, while the others charged students \$300 and \$500 respectively. In its 1999 submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Quality of VET, the AEU cited one case where students were charged \$2000 for a Certificate II course in Hospitality. Where student fees for VET are significant, this is clearly an equity issue.

... although VET in Schools is often described as an opportunity for disadvantaged students, or for those who are disengaged or disaffected with secondary schools, the additional cost incurred in undertaking a VET in Schools program makes yet another opportunity for already advantaged students. (AEU 1999 p. 61)

Emphasis on the creation of a largely artificial training market and on excessive competition and "efficiency" undermines the capacity of public VET providers to fulfil their wider community responsibilities and leads to reduced access, narrowing of programs and objectives and threats to the quality of individual programs and the national system.

Where TAFE colleges are the RTOs for school-based VET, the need for schools in some states to negotiate a price with the local TAFE college leads to the inequitable situation where some schools pay more than others. In some cases purchasing provision and/or auspicing from TAFE is too expensive as the school cannot afford to subsidise the full cost and the families cannot afford to pay. Some schools are making decisions about whether they or a TAFE college should deliver a VET course based on factors that have more to do with funding, workload and staffing issues than sound educational reasons. The actual reasons differ from state to state and are dependent on the funding decisions made at state level.

The competitive funding model in Victoria and the staffing implications in NSW are just two examples that act as a barrier to co-operation between TAFE and schools. The resultant situation is counterproductive to achieving quality outcomes.

The provision of VET to secondary school students should avoid wasteful duplication of public funds and should be underpinned by co-operative arrangements between schools and TAFE. These co-operative arrangements are unlikely to occur where schools must enter into purchasing agreements with TAFE institutes, or where schools suffer staffing reductions as a consequence of such co-operation. State and territory governments should be encouraged to put in place funding and staffing policies whereby schools are not disadvantaged by deciding that a TAFE college is a more appropriate place for their students to do a VET in Schools course.

The AEU project discovered that an important theme in some states was the uncertainty of funding for VET in Schools.⁷ There was a fear that the ANTA funds would stop and that when they did, VET in Schools would end. None of the teachers interviewed believed their state/territory governments would provide the necessary funds. They were equally certain that schools could not cover the costs themselves.

A number of teachers interviewed in the AEU project, particularly in the Northern Territory, South Australia and the ACT, commented that funding for a range of programs was based on submissions. They commented that a great deal of time (more often than not their own time) was taken up writing submissions year after year to gain access to funds for programs they believed their students should have an automatic and on-going right to. One school in South Australia commented that in writing submissions for funding, for example, for *Framing the Future* funds, schools were competing with each other or with TAFE colleges for the same money.

⁷ The issue was raised in South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory. Interestingly, uncertainty of funding was not a topic raised with the AEU researcher in NSW, perhaps because the use of ANTA funds occurs in a more centralised fashion, via the Department itself or through VET funding to district Offices. In fact, in NSW teachers commented that they were quite happy with the funds made available to them through the district offices for a variety of purposes. It must be pointed out, however, that these funds are not available for extra staffing to alleviate the huge workload associated with reporting and recording, and workplace assessment and supervision.

Draft policy proposals

Funding for VET in Schools should be ongoing and recurrent and based on per capita grants for the number of VET in Schools students. The funds should be additional to ANTA funding.

State and Territory Governments must also make an enhanced and ongoing commitment to appropriately funding VET in Schools. This must not be at the expense of funding to TAFE colleges or other programs in schools.

Current funding levels and allocation models for VET in Schools should be reviewed as a matter of urgency in every State and Territory. This review should include consideration of the impact of funding models on the quality of programs, general and specific services and on student and community access. The outcomes of such reviews should be aggregated nationally and form the basis of a national review of policy directions, including the appropriate level of contribution from States/Territories.

The provision of VET to secondary school students should avoid wasteful duplication of public funds and should be underpinned by co-operative arrangements between schools and TAFE.

Base (profile) funding for TAFE must be increased and allocated in order to support services provided to schools so that schools and students are not denied access to these services due to their cost.

Access to Commonwealth, State and Territory funding for VET programs should not be submission based. Schools/teachers do not have the resources for constant and lengthy submission writing.

5.5 Organisational/Workload Issues

There is an astonishing array of VETIS programs being implemented across Australia, many of which are indeed impressive. But they are operating on a great amount of energy and goodwill from teachers. The workload burden on school teachers is only too obviously affecting their lives to an unacceptable degree and the issues that arise from this for unions are immense and on a variety of fronts.

It is also clear that the bureaucracy that has built up around VET in general and VET in Schools in particular — and the associated administrative and accountability processes — is astounding and wasteful, both in financial terms and in terms of teachers' workloads.

5.5.1 Co-ordination

Co-ordination of VET in Schools involves a myriad of activities and falls upon people occupying a range of positions. In many cases there is no cluster or district based co-ordinator and tasks such as ensuring AQTF compliance, compiling compliance documentation, organising VET within the school timetable, liaising with RTOs, organising SWL, performing work site OHS inspections, ensuring that student VET attainments are certified, and arranging teacher professional development and industry placement fall upon a teacher. In some, but not all schools, clerical assistance is provided. It is not uncommon for the school VET co-ordinator to have a teaching load and other school responsibilities (such as senior schooling co-ordination or head of department responsibilities).

The importance of co-ordination and partnerships between providers of VET at local and district levels was illustrated time and again in the research conducted for the AEU project. Despite the obstacles to co-operation posed by such factors as competition in the training market, there were examples of co-ordinated approaches which bore real dividends for participating schools and their students. An important aspect of such arrangements was the existence of an external support including a co-ordinator/facilitator position. It was seen to be important that the co-ordinator be someone with some standing and an understanding of schools, VET and industry — someone who could provide advice and professional development, facilitate networking, negotiate with employers and RTOs, etc., not just someone who carried out clerical and administrative tasks.

Spark's (1999) research supported the use of non-teaching district or regional VET co-ordinators as well as in-school VET co-ordinators to support schools. Spark (1999 p. 33) identifies the following potential roles for VET co-ordinators:

- *bringing VET culture into the school and to both VET and non-VET teachers,*
- *ensuring the quality of courses;*
- *networking with stakeholders — industry, external providers, state departments, ANTA, workplaces, ASTF, VETnetworkers, etc;*
- *training industry supervisors;*
- *developing course resources;*
- *liaising with work placement brokers;*
- *developing cross school links to co-ordinate cohesive regional delivery.*

Spark's (1999 p. 8) research team concluded that the VET co-ordinator's role was "crucial". Spark notes in particular the way in which regional VET officers in Tasmania co-ordinate VET provisions across schools and "convene industry management courses which provide advice and support to schools" (p. 10). Malley et al. (2002a) comment on the "strong and vibrant informal network[s]" (p. 22) and "co-ordinated youth education and employment programs" (p. 18) made possible through (the then) ASTF

funding but note that “these groups are precariously placed as they are currently dependent on temporary government funding” (p. 18).

Arrangements for VET co-ordination vary from state to state. In NSW each of the forty districts has a full time VET consultant, while schools within the district usually accommodate VET co-ordination by allocating the supervision to a head teacher of a particular curriculum area. There is provision for a head teacher VET, but this new option has not yet been taken up to any considerable degree.

There are very few district-based VET co-ordinators in Queensland, but one school cluster provided a full-time cluster level co-ordinator, school-based VET co-ordinator positions and clerical support. Schools were able to determine the level of support they wished to avail themselves of from the cluster co-ordinator, who provided an excellent resource in the community, liaising with local employers, etc.

Many schools in Victoria are part of loosely and voluntarily organised local consortia. One school visited is part of such a consortium, although this is not functioning at the moment, since its organisation relied on the voluntary work of one (very committed and energetic) person.

In Tasmania, each senior secondary college has a VET Development Officer and there are three covering each of the rural areas, while South Australian schools are divided into twenty regions each with a state funded Regional Development Board whose role includes assisting in arranging work placements, monitoring them and supporting local co-operative arrangements. Each region has a full-time VET co-ordinator and some also have a number of project officers.

5.5.2 Career and Educational Guidance

Career, vocational and educational guidance services in schools have been strained severely in recent years as resources for these services have not kept pace with the expansion of vocational education. The pressures on these services are especially acute in systems such as Queensland, where guidance officers perform a variety of counselling and pastoral functions in addition to providing career and curriculum advice.

5.5.3 Teachers' Workload

In relation to the workload of individual teachers, Spark (1999 pp. 54-55) reported that teachers identified “time constraints” as constituting an important “barrier to continued VET provision at their schools”.

In every state and territory, what was constantly reported during the AEU research was the excessive workload associated with teaching VET courses. This echoes Spark’s 1999 research, which found that “VET teachers in senior secondary schools say that they are working very hard with greatly increased workloads and are in need of support”

(p. 8).⁸ Most of the teachers interviewed for the AEU project had taught and still teach other subjects in the senior school curriculum, so they have a comparator.

The workload revolves around the following (some of which vary from state to state):

- Assessment — Inordinate amounts of paperwork are associated with assessing long lists of competencies and validating these assessments.

In those states that report VET in grades for the senior school credential, teachers must assess and report in different ways to two different authorities, the school assessment authorities and the VET system. Schools must ensure that student VET attainments are certified.

- Work placements — Tasks include organisation of work placements, supervision of students on work placements, liaising with host employers
- AQTF compliance audits — In some states the accountability processes are onerous and overly bureaucratic.
- RTOs — Where the school is not the RTO, teachers must liaise with the RTO.
- Embedding VET competencies in syllabuses — In some states where embedding occurs, teachers perform this task at school level. In others it is done by taskforces of teachers and then put out for consultation to other schools.
- Timetables — VET courses and SWL must be incorporated into the school timetable.
- Professional development — Professional development needs are specific to teaching VET in Schools, and relate to adult learning (particularly where there are re-entry students), liaison with community and employers, and the nature of the training agenda.
- Industry experience — In some states teachers must meet industry standard competencies and maintain industry currency in their own time.
- Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training — Again, in some states, teachers complete this requirement in varying degrees in their own time.
- Networking — Many teachers attend regular local network meetings.
- Duty of care — Some teachers are required to be on-call as an emergency contact person for out-of-school-hours work placements, including during school holidays in some states. Teachers conduct risk assessments of workplaces, induction of supervisors and assessors of students in workplaces in relation to workplace health and safety issues.
- Post-school destinations — Many schools track and report on students' post-school destinations.

This list of workload issues is corroborated by the analysis of a survey of secondary

⁸ Examples of statements made by secondary teachers to Spark include: “We’re finding it’s been too much work for our VET teachers” (p. 72); “Our teachers ... [have] done a fabulous job in the circumstances but they haven’t been given the breathing time” (p. 72); “So much paperwork .. the workload is so very heavy” (p. 52); “Work levels for teachers are ridiculous” (p. 52). It is worth noting that Spark’s research was conducted *before* the more stringent compliance requirements of the AQTF were in place.

college VET teachers recently conducted by the AEU Tasmania Branch.

Some teachers interviewed for the AEU project, across various states and territories, stated that while they recognised the value of VET to many students, they were feeling the effects and did not know how long they could continue to teach VET.

At a small rural central school in NSW, the VET co-ordinator reported to the AEU researcher that two of their dedicated teachers have refused to teach VET next year. They want to return to teaching their traditional subjects. Whether they are able to do this remains to be seen.

Teachers can feel caught in VET teaching. Given that it is costly to train VET teachers, funds are only available for a limited number to go through the accreditation process, unless the school decides to train another teacher out of their own limited funds. Therefore, more often than not, if the school has one accredited teacher neither the department nor the school itself will train another. The teacher is then expected to teach the VET course every year, regardless of their expertise in other areas of the curriculum.

A committed VET teacher in rural NSW said:

I am not against work and I work long and hard in and out of school. However I have come to the conclusion that I would like to have some quality time with my family on the weekend without feeling guilty because I haven't completed all my VET requirements due to lack of time ...

Talking to teachers in the region they love teaching VET. They do not mind the normal paperwork that goes with teaching but the VET paperwork is over the top. It has to be addressed for the sanity of all ...

I have been told by one staff member who works with me, who is not a VET teacher, to step back and slow down and get a life. How can I when I am committed to meeting deadlines set by VET requirements?

One district in a rural Tasmania reported during the AEU research that VET teachers and co-ordinators are having trouble coping with the workload.

Some teachers are saying they no longer want to teach the National Training Package VET courses, while others try to be all things to all people. Stress levels are very high, as is the instance of stress leave among VET teachers in district high schools.

This had become so apparent that the district ran a series of stress management courses and a two day workshop on time management. Some VET teachers kept log-books, logging 50 and 60 hour working weeks over a continuous period of time.

In these Tasmanian district high schools finding relief for teachers to attend professional

development has been extremely difficult, so teachers tend to go during non-teaching hours, with the result that they lose their administration time.

What is compelling is that all of these teachers have a firm belief in the value of VET in Schools yet they are finding that the demands are too great to handle.

In some schools VET teachers are given one or two lessons off to compensate for the workload, but this arrangement is ad hoc, and dependent on the ability of the school to provide the time, or an assessment of its priorities. The smaller the school the less likely this is to happen.

5.5.4 Reorganisation of School Structures

To accommodate the demands placed on schools by the inclusion of VET in the curriculum, some schools have had to reorganise their structures. This has occurred to varying degrees in different states/territories and in different types of schools.

As noted elsewhere in this paper, while structured work placements occur in Queensland, they are not generally a compulsory element of VET courses. While this has probably meant that Queensland schools have not had the same level of pressures on their timetables as, say, Western Australian schools where SWL has been a compulsory element of VET, it was still mentioned as a significant issue by Queensland teachers and school administrators interviewed for the AEU project.

In the ACT and Tasmania, where Years 11 and 12 are taught almost exclusively in senior colleges, little reorganisation has been necessary. At a senior high school in Victoria this was also the case. In some of these colleges, a day has been set aside for VET, without the sort of impact this would have on organisation of a Year 7-12 school.

In some 7-12 schools in NSW and some schools in other states, a realistic assessment has been made about the extent to which it is justifiable to re-arrange the entire school organisation to accommodate some students engaged in what is really only one part of a broad curriculum. But other schools have totally reorganised their timetables. In a large NSW school with a long history of VET provision, timetables have been reorganised and period lengths changed (including some four hour blocks for VET subjects). Some VET is taught in these blocks until 5.30pm, which can prove to be a problem with casual relief teachers. The school has become a skills centre in four industry areas. Head teachers with VET teachers in their faculties have formed a subgroup of the school's executive. Some VET courses are run off-line, often to accommodate the attendance of students from other schools. To do this, the school needs to use the four hour blocks of time. One teacher who runs two IT VET courses, one off-line in four hour blocks and the other on-line in 75 minute periods, finds that she gets through more work with the latter than the former, mainly because of the inability of students to concentrate on one subject for extended periods of time.

On a broader scale, in NSW a wholesale re-organisation of some clusters of schools

has occurred in the past few years. These are generally called "collegiate groups" and mainly consist of a senior high school, usually linked to a TAFE college, which may have a presence on site, and sometimes linked with a university, with feeder junior high schools. Until these arrangements, the division of high schools into senior and junior schools was a rarity in NSW. According to the NSW Government, the changes are for a variety of reasons, among which is the ability to offer a broad curriculum. This has been highly contentious and the expansion of the number of such groups has been put on hold by the government. One slightly different arrangement will see a senior college, surrounded by a number of 7-12 schools, with students bused between campuses depending on the subjects they have chosen.

One further issue that requires discussion relates to the arrangements made in various states for students of one school to attend another school to do a VET course. In NSW this is reasonably common and on occasions has required reorganisation of schools' timetables.

The students are enrolled part time at the school delivering the course and thus the school attracts staffing and funding for the student. There are a number of examples where private school students attend a public school to do a VET course. In Tasmania, where this also happens, if the student is from a private school, that school pays a fee to the school delivering the course.

There are numerous examples in NSW where schools send their students to anything up to five other schools to do VET courses. It is considered quite normal for students to move between schools in a cluster, or between campuses in a collegiate group.

5.5.5 Industrial Issues

The VET in Schools agenda is notable for its failure to address funding needs, and to understand the every day work of teachers and schools, the demands on them and the diversity of work they do. There has been no concession to the re-organisation of work patterns, teacher workload, curriculum demands, staffing, physical spaces, hours of school and much more.

Some of the industrial implications of VET in Schools have been dealt with by AEU Branches and Associated Bodies, but some have not. Conspicuous specific examples of industrial issues include:

- excessive workload,
- reorganisation to the school day,
- supervision of work placements,
- requirements to be on-call outside school hours and in school holidays,
- requirements that teachers perform risk assessments of host workplaces in

- relation to Occupational Health and Safety and Child Protection,
- tracking of and reporting on students' post-school destinations,
- completion of Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training, gaining recent industry experience and gaining or demonstrating relevant industry competencies in teachers' own time,
- VET audit requirements.

The extent to which these are issues in different states and territories is to a certain degree dependent on each state or territory's interpretation of the AQTF Standards and implementation of the national agenda.

Draft policy proposals

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should urgently consider ways to deal with the excessive workload of VET teachers and administrators in schools, including, for example, staffing buffers, improved clerical assistance, reappraisal of RTO registration.

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments need to refine the interpretation and implementation of VET in Schools compliance with the AQTF standards. Adequate resourcing should be provided to alleviate the workload of teachers and ensure that their professional and industrial rights are guaranteed.

System and national data should be collected and reported on the workload and staffing implications of the implementation of VET. This data should form the basis of a review of the impact on teaching and learning conditions with a view to developing guidelines on funding and on staffing structures which enhance quality, effectiveness and fairness for education workers and students.

Appropriate leadership, co-ordination and support personnel should be deployed at the central, regional/district, and school levels with specific full-time responsibility for VET in Schools.

There needs to be an enhancement of career and vocational guidance services in schools

Professional development needs of VET teachers should be better integrated into mainstream professional development arrangements in states and territories. Funding should be available and specifically targeted to schemes to allow VET teachers to meet AQTF standards in relation to qualifications and experience, and for programs for teachers to ensure they meet the needs of

the full range of students, in particular students with Indigenous backgrounds.

Governments should ensure that class sizes for VET in Schools do not exceed those for the same courses in a TAFE college.

Time spent by teachers supervising and assessing students in the workplace should be recognised as teaching time in industrial instruments. Appropriate compensation for travel time, costs and responsibility in relation to work placements should be negotiated.

AQTF compliance requirements should include compliance with industrial awards and agreements pertaining to staff in the training organisation and the relevant industry areas.

5.6 AQTF Compliance Requirements

As noted elsewhere in this paper, across Australia there is evidence that schools have been and are taking seriously the task of being AQTF compliant.

Knowledge of AQTF requirements and progress towards ensuring compliance has been particularly strong in schools which are RTOs themselves.

Where schools are auspiced to provide VET through a TAFE or other RTO or where they rely on an external RTO to provide VET, there was evidence that teachers in schools were less knowledgeable about AQTF requirements. One Western Australian VET co-ordinator stated that:

There has been poor communication between the RTO and schools about how to meet AQTF standards. This has caused friction. RTOs are not providing adequate guidance about AQTF requirements and then are coming down hard on schools about not meeting standards.

One school visited in Victoria (not an RTO) had very little knowledge of the requirements and when asked what action the school had to undertake in relation to audits, commented that that was the responsibility of the RTO (a TAFE institute) under whose auspices VET courses were delivered. The actual response was: "they take care of that".

On the other hand, in NSW where Department of Education and Training school districts are RTOs, thus covering all schools in the district offering VET courses, the schools visited were well aware of the requirements and the district VET Consultants were responsible for ensuring internal compliance of the schools within their districts.

Quality control processes have become more complex, involve more standards and are

more demanding since the introduction of the new AQTF Standards. These have been hierarchically imposed on schools with no input from educators and subsequently the processes take little or no account of the realities of delivery of VET in a school setting. Some benchmark indicators appear arbitrary — they “set conditions without demonstrating how they affect quality or quantity of students outcomes” (Malley et al. 2002a p. 8). Furthermore, AQTF compliance requirements do not adequately reflect the range of objectives and expectations associated with VET in Schools (particularly those arising from broader social and educational agendas).

Quality control processes are highly bureaucratic and require an excessive amount of time and documentation. This causes alienation and undermines the commitment of schools and teachers to VET. At almost all schools visited as part of this project, at least some teachers and school administrators commented negatively about the processes associated with demonstrating AQTF compliance, which were seen as excessively detailed, time-consuming and bureaucratic.

At a Victorian school where the principal had considerable experience in and knowledge about providing VET, the AQTF paperwork requirements were described as an issue about which he was “peeved”. A VET teacher in a Queensland high school stated that “teachers are demeaned by the requirements of VET”.

Several teachers stated that the additional workload and implicit mistrust of teachers in delivering VET had caused them to seek to be moved back to teaching non-VET subjects only. “I love teaching VET”, stated one Queensland teacher, “but the paperwork is driving me out”. Another in Tasmania said he was “insulted that so much more proof is required that assessment is done properly”.

In any other TCE subject, the authorities accept professional judgement”. That the requirements on VET teachers are more demanding in terms of the proof required than they are on other teachers became apparent at an internal VET audit in NSW attended as part of the AEU research. Teachers were asked how they validated assessment of competencies. Professional judgement, as would be the case with other subjects, was not enough. Cross-referencing assessments with other providers was required. Teachers were also asked whether another teacher walking into the class would be able to see where the students were up to. Indeed, this is really no more than would be required in any faculty area, but the teachers had to show how this would work.

Much of the pressure on teachers comes from unrealistic expectations, some imposed by the AQTF standards, but some by state departments. In NSW there are reports of “mock” audits in some districts. Similar actions in other districts are called “practice” audits.

A teacher in Tasmania believes that her main job of teaching students is taking second place to the work associated with compliance. It is her view that “the audit should be a focus for allowing teachers to teach well, yet it has taken over and become an end in itself”. In order to deal with the workload she said she “needs to divide up what she

must do - is this a student-teacher thing or something outside that relationship?" Another teacher at a Tasmanian senior college agreed that "teaching and learning time is impinged on by administration ... I don't mind record keeping but would want a valid form, not ticking boxes for the sake of it".

A seriously overworked VET co-ordinator in a difficult South Australian school commented that she was "like the meat in the sandwich". Part of her job is to document the school's compliance with the new AQTF Standards. To do so means that, among other things she must ensure that the teachers meet the standards relating to qualifications and experience. She must sight evidence that they meet the requirements and receives the "brunt of their displeasure at being asked to provide documentary proof". She says teachers "feel demeaned by these demands".

In the ACT, where all colleges are required to be RTOs, there is no allowance for the time involved in audits. In one college two teachers spent three days in training relating to audits. To produce a draft application for the audit, which is the first step before the audit itself, cost one college \$1,000, which was the cost of relief for the week it took one teacher to write the application.

The school then had to conduct internal audits on each course it offers and is unhappy about the fact that "when the audit panel arrives in the school there will be no teachers on it because it is too expensive to replace teachers for the five days intensive training and the time involved in the auditing process itself". In the past there have been teachers on the panels. Systems clearly need to standardise procedures and participation in the audit process.

Also in the ACT co-ordinators were particularly disgusted that they were required to show receipts to prove that they had purchased the relevant National Training Packages and not just copied them. One stated:

The National Training Packages are extremely expensive and need to be routinely replaced as the training packages are continually updated. This is undoubtedly user pays, bureaucracy and profit making taken to extremes.

As those parts of the National Training Package used in VET courses in ACT schools are determined by a taskforce and are the same for all schools, these teachers believe it should not be necessary for all schools to purchase the whole NTP, which ought to be available on the department's website.

ACT teachers also noted that public schools are part of a system and that much of what is required at the audit is generic and could be provided by the department. As the AEU ACT Branch noted (AEU ACT 2002 pp. 8-9):

The registration of each school/college as an RTO in the ACT has led to duplication of effort across the system. This will only increase as the requirements of the AQTF are pursued. A review of the decision to register each school/college as an RTO should be carried out with an accompanying

examination of alternatives. There is scope for the Department of Education and Community Services to be a “project manager” within the ACT to develop the generic components of RTO submissions and maintenance of generic administration requirements rather than duplicate this effort across the system.

ACT teachers also commented that "time spent on audits is time lost to the students – teaching, nurturing, welfare support etc".

Other teachers, for example in NSW and Queensland, thought the audit was an excellent quality assurance process, but that it needed to be adequately resourced.

The available resources and guidance clearly differ from state to state but the real constants are the overly bureaucratic nature of the compliance requirements and the impact on teachers' workloads. Streamlining compliance processes, much of which can occur at the state/territory departmental level, would assist teachers to meet the requirements within appropriate time-frames and in what they would see as meaningful and constructive ways.

A clear view emerged from the AEU project that, in terms of quality assurance, far too much effort and expense is devoted to accountability mechanisms in comparison to the effort and expense devoted to professional development, industry release, support, and advice.

Although this AEU project did not focus on the impact of compliance requirements on TAFE colleges/institutes, it would seem that the views expressed above by school teachers are shared in many instances by TAFE teachers.

Draft Policy Proposal

A review of AQTF implementation should be undertaken at Commonwealth, state and territory levels with a view to:

- *ensuring the highest standard for delivery and assessment of VET programs;*
- *developing consistent implementation guidelines about interpreting valid requirements;*
- *establishing the validity of various requirements/benchmarks; eliminating unnecessary paperwork/workload associated with compliance requirements and reducing bureaucratic pressures on schools and TAFE colleges;*
- *providing mechanisms of advice and support, including considerably more professional development, in meeting AQTF standards.*

5.7 Teacher Qualifications and Experience

There are two dimensions to the teacher requirements for the delivery of VET in Schools within the Australian Quality Training Framework: requirements relating to competence in training and assessment, and requirements relating to content (knowledge and skills) and teacher industry experience. These are set out in the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations (standard 7) and in training packages. Additionally, in terms of the broader educational role of schools, there are requirements set by individual states and territories relating to general teaching qualifications.

The way in which VET in Schools is delivered (eg. directly by the school, by TAFE, or by a private RTO, and whether VET is embedded or stand-alone), and the general requirements for teaching in a school (eg. whether there is a registration process) are examples of system and school-based factors which affect how these issues are played out.

5.7.1 Industry qualifications and experience

Generally, providers of VET (in any setting) are required to possess content competencies to at least the level being assessed.

What constitutes the appropriate type, length and recency of industry experience varies from industry area to industry area and is generally stipulated in the National Training Package. Concerns have been expressed about the use of teachers without full industry qualifications and experience on the grounds of:

- inability of those without considerable industry experience to translate the theory into industry practice;
- the potential to undermine the status of the trade or profession (industry area);
- potential for insufficient emphasis on Occupational Health and Safety in the VET curriculum;
- recognition/acceptance by industry of the course undertaken or qualification gained by the student.

Schools are aware that concerns have been expressed about the quality and recency of industry experience of some teachers delivering VET in Schools. In some cases these concerns are largely based on anecdotal and suspect information; however, it is true to say that meeting appropriate human resource standards in relation to teacher industry experience has presented a challenge for schools. Key issues include:

- Relevance of experience — Some teachers have training and experience in an allied or related field to the industry area where they are delivering VET (or education/training in an academic context without workplace experience). The degree to which this training and experience should be considered relevant can be a matter of debate. During discussions with TAFE teachers, for example, concern was expressed about secondary manual arts teachers delivering VET for which they did not have a trade certificate. The SDA (2002 p.3) reports “widespread concern” in industry that teachers “often lack understanding of the workplace and the industry concerned”. It was stated by a QSA officer in

Queensland that “many of these concerns are based on out-of-date perceptions of the backgrounds and training of school teachers”. Some secondary teachers interviewed for the AEU project felt that an unreasonably high bar was being set in terms of industry experience given the generic nature and level of the competencies assessed at AQF certificate level one and two in most industry areas.

- Recency of experience — In some areas, there have been significant changes in the industry in recent years. Where a teacher’s industry experience is not recent, the question of what constitutes sufficient exposure to current practice is often a difficult one. In some cases, documentation of visits to various work sites may be sufficient, in others sustained direct experience of working at a site or sites may be needed.
- Provision of industry experience — The degree to which schools have access to funding to support the release of teachers to gain/update their industry experience varies. In Western Australia funds are specifically provided to allow teachers to update industry experience relevant to the VET course they teach.

In Queensland and Tasmania no funds are specifically earmarked for this purpose, with the result that in Tasmania it rarely occurs. In Tasmania teachers are expected to do this in the "period of productivity", that is, the period after Year 12 students leave, but with competing responsibilities this rarely occurs.

Even where funding is provided, some teachers are reluctant to take extended time away from their classes and continuity of educational provision looms large as an issue for some school administrators where a significant number of teachers may need to be released for industry experience. In many schools, the difficulty of finding casual/temporary relief (accredited or otherwise) is a real issue.

A number of examples were given in discussions during the AEU project with teachers and school administrators in the various states of teachers who had undertaken to update their industry experience in their own time.

- Availability and suitability of industry placements — The availability of suitable placements was a particular issue at rural schools but was also commented on in some metropolitan schools visited for the AEU project. At one Queensland school, teachers commented on the lack of understanding amongst employers about the purpose of teacher work placements and the resulting failure of employers to provide suitable work. In one case a teacher with a sophisticated knowledge of computers and computer networks (who maintained the school’s computer network) was placed with a small local employer to undertake rudimentary IT tasks. In an ACT school, teachers told of an occasion where the school funded an industry placement in a travel agency only to find that the employer was not sufficiently aware enough of the importance or purpose of the placement, which in the end was "not a real experience".

- Industry experience not counting as professional development for purposes of requirements in industrial agreements — For example, teachers interviewed for the AEU project in the ACT believed that it was quite reasonable that teachers be required to "top up" any industry experience or previous industry qualifications. They did not, however, believe it was reasonable for teachers to do this in their own time and at their own expense, or for it not to be recognised as legitimate professional development. In NSW, many teachers complete the relevant TAFE Certificate course in their own time, and often at their own expense, though some funding is available through the district VET Committee.
- Inconsistencies from industry to industry — The requirement to update skills varies from NTP to NTP. For example, there is no requirement in the Metals package, whereas in Hospitality the workplace requirement for teachers is 30 hours over 2 years.

5.7.2 Training and Assessment Requirements

There are differences among the states/territories in regard to how the teacher requirements of the AQTF relating to training and assessment competencies are deemed to be met. In Queensland, subject to production of verified documentation, trained teachers are credited with meeting the standards in relation to facilitation and assessment and are not required to undertake RPL or further training to obtain a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. In all other states and territories, teachers are required to undertake training and/or RPL to receive formal recognition of having met these requirements — though there are differences amongst these states/territories about how this is done and apparently some inconsistencies in the degree to which compliance has been/is occurring (both within and between states). In Tasmania, even TAFE teachers have to demonstrate their competencies to gain Certificate IV after gaining RPL for some of it.

Schools in all states and territories visited as part of the AEU project reported that systems and schools were taking seriously the task of being AQTF compliant, including in relation to training and assessment requirements.

Given that AQTF Standard 7 specifically countenances recognition of "demonstrated equivalent competencies" in relation to these requirements for training and assessment, it is surprising that only one state has made use of this option. This may reflect opposition from industry based on a lack of knowledge of the nature of teacher education and teaching practice.⁹

In those states where teachers were required to undertake further training and/or RPL, there was a nearly unanimous view that these processes constituted a poor utilisation of

⁹ The SDA (2002 p. 3) states "there is widespread concern at the industry level that many of those delivering VETIS do not meet the trainer and/or assessor requirements set out in the training packages".

resources. The value added was minimal in relation to the expenses and time incurred. Schools were required to provide funding not only for the training/RPL process but also for replacement teachers. Classes were disrupted. In many cases individual teachers undertook completion of the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training in their own time and at their own expense.

While some teachers and school administrators stated that aspects of the training — relating to competency-based assessment and in particular demands of assessment in actual workplaces — were useful, many commented along the lines that the training was “insulting” or a “waste of time” in that it assumed that trained teachers were unaware of basic issues and techniques in relation to instruction and assessment. A teacher in NSW found the work attached to Certificate IV “infantile” in light of her training and experience. In one Victorian school, teachers saw the requirement to Complete Certificate IV as being imposed from outside the education system by non-educators. It should be noted, however, that it is education and training departments that are interpreting the requirements in this particular way. This is one area which has contributed to a view that schools are being required to jump through hoops merely for the sake of jumping through hoops by the requirements of the AQTF.

AQTF standard 7 allows for some of the competencies required for assessment and training to be “shared” amongst the persons delivering VET and for deliverers to be “supervised” by someone who has all the competencies. These provisions are relevant where schools deliver VET in co-operation with a TAFE institute or private RTO and should provide a basis for relieving some of the pressure that schools feel regarding AQTF compliance. Unfortunately, it appears that a number of schools in these arrangements are unsure of what is required of them in terms of meeting these requirements of the AQTF.

5.7.3 Teaching Qualifications

Another inconsistency between the states relates to whether deliverers of VET in Schools are required to be trained teachers. It is ironic that a rigid insistence in some states/territories on possession by VET teachers of a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training is accompanied by a laissez faire approach in relation to teacher qualifications. Where post-compulsory students were undertaking VET delivered directly by a non-school RTO, there did not appear to be a requirement in any state or territory for the deliverer to be teacher trained. While there did not appear to be widespread use of un-teacher-trained personnel to deliver VET in Schools where the school was the RTO or was auspiced by an RTO to deliver VET, in some states teacher training is not a requirement. For example, in one Victorian school visited for the AEU research, VET is organised mainly on Wednesdays and involves out of normal school hours teaching. Some of the problems associated with this have been solved by the employment of sessionals with specific expertise. Sessionals may not be teacher trained.

There is a legitimate concern that the use of cheaper Certificate IV qualified non-

teachers to deliver VET in Schools could proliferate, driven by the need to contain the costs to schools and schooling systems of the expansion of VET. (This is similar to the concerns TAFE teachers have in relation to their teacher qualifications.) Additional concerns include:

- the potential for widespread use of such personnel to undermine the professionalism of teaching;
- the likelihood that such positions would be precarious forms of employment (ie. fixed term or casual);
- the lack of knowledge on the part of such personnel of broader educational and pastoral responsibilities of schools.

The intersection of these practices and teacher registration is yet to be fully played out and outcomes will affect the ability of schools to use some TAFE teachers. In Tasmania, where a registration system is being established, there is some concern over whether TAFE teachers will be able to teach VET in Schools without registration.

The new registration system requires teachers to be four year trained, while the TAFE teacher qualification (Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education) is a three year degree. There are currently discussions about how the university might deal with this in its education degrees.

5.7.4 General Issues

A key concern expressed by schools in relation to VET teacher requirements was the potential difficulties posed by absences (eg. due to long service leave), transfers or resignations of key VET qualified staff. "Upskilling teachers" has been an area of "real struggle", according to a Queensland VET co-ordinator, "in one case in our area a school invested in upskilling a teacher only for that teacher to take a job in a private school".

This problem could be particularly acute in schools which are small, rural, have a high staff turnover, and are RTOs themselves rather than operating in partnership with a TAFE institute. Indeed, teachers in most states reported that the absence of accredited casual relief teachers threatened their ability to take leave. This has led to increased anxiety for teachers and administrators as well as moral pressure on VET teachers not to take leave.

The loss of a key staff member could effectively put an end to a VET program. Teacher training issues in general have on occasions led to cancellation of some courses. One South Australian rural school cancelled the retail course when problems with the retail industry, associated with the level of training needed, resulted in no training being available. On the other hand, a Tasmanian school brings in a chef to teach commercial cooking. When this occurs, the person usually has TAFE teaching experience and has a school teacher with them all the time. This does, however, involve a considerable cost to the school.

There appears to have been little planning at the central level in some states relating to ensuring a supply of teachers qualified to teach VET in Schools. In NSW, because of an ongoing shortage of VET school teachers, the Department of Education and Training has begun schemes to improve the number of VET trained teachers. Some already qualified teachers are being retrained as VET teachers at departmental expense. Those already employed by the department complete the course full-time on full pay. Collaboration with universities has resulted in courses specifically designed to allow people with TAFE qualifications to gain advanced standing and complete initial school teacher qualifications. Entrants are provided with a scholarship and guaranteed employment immediately following completion in areas of shortage. The NSW DET also centrally provides emergency training for teachers when there is a need, for example, to replace a teacher on maternity leave or if the demand requires a school to expand its VET provision. This amounts to an average of four to six days' relief depending on the Framework, for which the school pays. There is definitely a view in schools that the DET should pay for this.

At the same time, there needs to be a greater recognition that the training requirements for VET teachers place a burden on them over and above the burden on other teachers, since they are in addition to the professional development pressures that all teachers face. A Tasmanian VET co-ordinator said that:

... in the last four or five weeks of the school year, VET teachers are inundated with professional development requirements far in excess of what is required of teachers in other subjects, yet they are also teaching other subjects and are expected to meet those requirements as well. It's annoying that VET is expected to take priority because the requirements are mandated.

Draft policy proposals

Systems and teacher education institutions should ensure that professional development (pre- and in-service) for teachers of VET in secondary schools is based on the following:

- *a broad-base in pedagogy, curriculum and assessment theory and practice (including as a minimum all competencies contained in the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training) linked to recognised general teaching qualifications;*
- *appropriate industry qualifications and experience meeting AQTF compliance and National Training Package requirements.*

This will require changes to pre-service education courses and the provision of additional funding to schools to facilitate industry placement and training for teachers.

As part of the process of defining and prioritising the multiple goals of entry-level VET, the proposed national body, in consultation with the AEU and its state/territory Branches and Associated Bodies, should review requirements to set appropriate criteria for the qualifications of teachers and assessors in terms of industry qualifications and experience and teacher education qualifications. In particular, the extent to which teacher qualifications meet the criterion of Certificate IV, Assessment and Workplace Training should be examined and a nationally consistent approach adopted.

States and Territories should put in place programs to ensure the adequate supply of appropriately trained and accredited VET school teachers. This should include arrangements to:

- *encourage and support industry qualified personnel in identified priority areas to undertake teacher education;*
- *strategically release teachers to industry.*

In addition, the problem of ensuring a supply of accredited casual relief teachers who meet the AQTF standards must be addressed at state and territory level.

Teachers new to VET, regardless of whether already experienced teachers, should be entitled to an induction process and a mentor.

Return to industry programs and any other requirement of VET teachers in relation to specific VET professional development and/or qualifications, should be recognised within state/territory professional development industrial requirements or recognition processes where these exist. To enhance the flexibility of use of staff across sectors teacher registration authorities should have coverage of TAFE teachers.

5.8 Curriculum/Assessment

Writers such as Frost (2000) note that the growth of VET provision in secondary schools sits well with a number of aspects of the broader educational reform agenda.

VET is seen as helping to increase retention rates by providing a more relevant and attractive curriculum to the majority of secondary students who do not go on to higher education; it has challenged the “dead hand” influence of universities on secondary school curriculum, it has promoted greater flexibility in the delivery of educational services to students, it has encouraged the use of contextualised approaches to teaching and learning (which have been particularly effective with “at risk” students), and it has broken down barriers between school-based and community-based learning.

Nevertheless, the use of National Training Packages as the basis for VET in Schools has been problematic:

*The term “Training Package” is an unfortunate one, as it implies that the packages are training manuals or curriculum documents. Much of the material written about National Training Packages and their place in the National Training Framework implies that they **were** intended to replace curriculum. Certainly the presence of assessment guidelines and the absence of teaching/learning guidelines in the endorsed components has led to the perception that the system is now assessment driven and that teaching is somehow unimportant. As the Training Packages have been progressively released, there is a growing understanding in the “VET community” that they are inadequate on their own and that a great deal of resources need to be made available for curriculum materials to support the Training Packages ... Materials produced by the Curriculum Corporation are of a high standard, but they are inadequate in scope and in quantity to meet the needs of teachers and students. (AEU 1999 pp. 56-57)*

While these concerns are not specific to VET in Schools, they are particularly relevant to schools given the broader educational expectations schools are expected to meet.

5.8.1 Embedded v Stand-Alone VET

The “embedding” of VET in general secondary subjects would seem to be an excellent way of addressing these concerns. However, while there is general rhetorical support for integration of general and vocational education in secondary schools (see, for example, Boston 1998), VET policy actually works against this goal. The VET agenda makes no concession to the general educational demands put on schools, that is to say, schools are expected to adapt flexibly to the requirements of the AQTF with no reciprocal flexibility being shown in terms of AQTF requirements — “schools have had to adopt the post-secondary school competency model of vocationalism and embed it [without alteration] within a general education framework” (Malley et al. 2002a p. 8).

This means, for example, that it is generally “easier” (e.g. in terms of administrative planning, curriculum and assessment workload, and teacher time) to offer VET separately (e.g. as stand-alone) than to embed it into general education courses. This means that students are far more likely to be “streamed” into either VET or traditional academic routes.

Separate pathways are attractive as they are administratively easier and are supported by deep prejudices and misconceptions about the way human beings learn. (Boston, quoted in Spark 1999 p. 18)

Embedding of VET creates a number of problems. While some states/territories have

provided assistance to schools in embedding a competency-based curriculum and assessment system in general education subjects, the conceptual and practical implications of doing so have generally not been satisfactorily worked through. This has resulted at the system level, for example, in the review timelines for NTPs being out of kilter with the review timelines for subject syllabi.

At the school level, it has resulted in dual assessments, which in some cases deliver anomalous results. In Queensland, for example, because of the differing natures of criteria versus competency-based curriculum and assessment, in the same student group there can be a student who achieves “limited achievement” in terms of criteria-based curriculum and assessment but “competent” in terms of competency-based assessment and another student who achieves “sound achievement” in terms of criteria-based assessment but who is not adjudged to have met competency requirements (see also Malley 2002a p. 38 and Spark 1999 p. 52).

A Western Australian VET co-ordinator, interviewed for the AEU project, stated that even though he did not think the workload implications of dual assessment were substantial, “it certainly increases teacher stress”. On the other hand, in relation to the effect of dual assessment, a number of classroom VET teachers as well as some co-ordinators interviewed in South Australia and the ACT for the AEU project commented that their workload had more than doubled. A number of them believed there should be a move to stand-alone courses, for a variety of reasons, but mainly because embedding VET creates too much work and is too difficult for teachers and the outcomes for the students are not clear. One co-ordinator believed that “stand-alone” VET would be more straightforward.

The issue is not clear cut and it should be noted that not all teachers would agree with the sentiments some have expressed here.

A related issue is that of “graded” competency-based assessment. This idea, which has the support of some employers and VET providers in and outside of schools, would bring competency-based assessment more in line with criteria-based assessment. The AEU (1999 p. 56) has observed:

There are suggestions that being assessed as merely “competent” or “not competent” can remove a student’s motivation to do his/her best, so it has pedagogical implications for teachers in the development of teaching and learning strategies in line with National Training Packages.

There are also suggestions that employers want more information about a prospective employee than is provided by a “competent” assessment against standards ... With regard to university entrance, the issue is that the calculation of university entrance scores usually involves assessment that ranks students in order of merit.

An officer of the former Queensland BSSSS interviewed for the AEU project stated that employers do not support a move to integrate competency and criteria-based

assessment. Indeed, schools and education systems receive feedback from employers that they prefer stand-alone models of VET to integrated/embedded approaches. For example, the SDA (2002 p. 3) states:

Where VET is embedded in school certificate subjects, it is more likely that the person delivering the subject will be a normal teacher with limited or no practical workplace or industry experience. While the academic part of the subject is likely to be delivered competently, it is also likely that the linkage between the academic and the workplace will be deficient.

Such views can act as a disincentive for schools to integrate general and vocational education and as an incentive to “stream” students.

Queensland offers three general education SAS subjects “English Communication”, “Literacy and Numeracy” and “Trade and Business Mathematics”. These courses exemplify some of the contradictions of the quest for integration of VET and general education. On the one hand, these courses embed VET into subjects that are Board-registered and they are popular in terms of the number of schools which offer them and students who enrol in them.

On the other hand, the former BSSSS (2002a p. 11) reports that “there can be no doubt” that these subjects are “creating difficulties in schools”. It reports that the “anger and frustration” (idem.) about these subjects is greater than for other subjects with embedded VET. It appears that it is sometimes the case that assignment to teach these subjects is made on the basis of “filling in” the timetables of those teachers who have “missed out” on teaching, for example, academic maths or English.

Furthermore, because there is no National Training Package for the general education and training industry area, the embedded VET is outdated. One Queensland teacher said “why would schools want to jump through all the hoops to be able to offer these subjects with embedded VET when the VET qualifications achieved do not lead to anything?”

Despite these problems, there is strong support in at least some schools for an embedded model of VET delivery in schools. One Queensland deputy stated that he worried there were moves afoot to “get rid of SASs ... and let schools offer them as stand-alone VET”. He stated that “

The inherent problem with this is that one of the reasons that VET has been taken up so successfully by schools and students in Queensland is that VET receives subject achievement levels as a Board-registered subject ... the issues may be difficult, but SAS subjects have been very successful because they have given a real legitimacy to senior students doing vocational education at school ... any reduction in the standing of these subjects would do VET students in Queensland schools a great disservice.

Some teachers in NSW (and to a lesser degree Tasmania and South Australia) believe

that integration can occur in ways other than embedding VET in already existing subjects. A balanced curriculum and subject choice, for example, is seen by some as able to achieve a similar outcome. Some teachers in South Australia thought "VET should be an alternative pathway, but with embedding in SACE subjects it is not". Farmer and Karpinski (2002a p. 11) call this ...

... a real dilemma e.g. embed Tourism modules into our Stage 1 Tourism course (which then gives a group 1 unit, but also does require more teacher/student work) or deliver the modules as stand-alone units which then become part of the free choice SACE pattern. What to do? It really depends on who you talk to.

Still, in South Australia, embedding is the most common option, albeit fraught with workload issues. At one South Australian school catering for many adult re-entry students it took one and a half years to work out where in the curriculum certain competencies were to be embedded.

The school also offers some stand-alone VET recognised for SACE but only at Level I (except in IT where Certificates II and III are offered). At another South Australian school catering for re-entry students, many who initially choose to do VET in SACE decide in the end that they do not want to do SACE.

NSW has attempted to integrate stand-alone VET and academic routes without "streaming". In NSW stand-alone VET courses are reported as competency-based for inclusion in HSC certification. Inclusion of one VET course in calculation of the UAI is accommodated via an optional external criterion-based exam.

Teachers in NSW report that the stand-alone VET offered in the HSC, with the requirements of specific NTPs built into an Industry Curriculum Framework that is competency-based, provide courses that are relevant to many students who find other criterion based senior courses do not meet their needs.

5.8.2 Certificate Levels

Despite fears from some employers and RTOs (including TAFE institutes) that there is an agenda for schools to assume responsibility for a wide range of VET at above Certificate level II, the evidence is that the overwhelming majority of VET offered in schools is at Certificate I and Certificate II levels. As Malley et al. (2002a p. 8) note there has been a failure in the AQTF to address the specific nature of entry-level training for secondary school students. Rather it is assumed that one training model (based on higher level, industry-specific, post school training) is equally applicable to all levels of vocational education.

Nonetheless, "increasing the depth of student programs resulting in higher levels of completion of modules, units of competence and AQF qualifications" is listed as one of

the priorities facing South Australia (South Australian Department of Education Training and Employment 2001 p. 23).

Yet, a recent attempt to include Certificate III construction competencies in VET in Schools in South Australia was rejected by SAABSA.

There have been discussions recently in NSW, not without debate and dissension, about incorporating more Certificate III competencies into the Frameworks. The proponents of this view are motivated by the attempt to bring more "rigour" into the Frameworks, and to make them more compatible with the demands of the universities in relation to calls for enhanced contribution of VET to the UAI. Opponents view this as a move away from the original intent of incorporating VET into the school curriculum, and ignoring the attempt to move senior schooling away from the control of universities. The opponents would be supported in South Australia by Farmer and Karpinski (2002a p. 11) who note that a number of students, particularly those "at risk", are already experiencing difficulties with VET:

The bottom line is many of these students have not been successful as they lacked the high level skills needed to balance both the school and the workplace. Often these students have had difficulty organising themselves, have struggled with aspects of learning, and attended irregularly. In the under resourced world of schools, they have fallen through the cracks.

This debate will not be easily resolved and is further discussed in the section on Equity below.

In the ACT some teachers reported that, with each revision, some National Training Packages are becoming increasingly complex and demanding at Certificate I and II levels. As they do so, their purpose within the school curriculum changes and the opportunity for students to gain a certificate level qualification at school recedes.

A co-ordinator interviewed in Tasmania commented that Certificates I and II were once entry-level courses but that the bar had been raised by the National Training Packages and that this was a problem for schools and some students.

At the same time it was also reported by teachers in the ACT that changes to the Community Services NTP mean that while Certificate II gives exposure to the industry that is about all it does. It now does not give a valued exit point and there are no common units between Certificate II and Certificate III. The result is that schools are wondering why they should offer it.

Teachers in the ACT also pointed out that the value of each VET course to students differs. With some courses "Certificate II really only gives students recognition to get onto a waiting list to do Certificate III at CIT", while others, such as construction, give students a real opportunity to move into an apprenticeship. "Because of the relationship with the Master Builders Association, employers take apprentices from colleges with Certificate II", reported one ACT VET co-ordinator.

5.8.3 Employability Skills

The same co-ordinator commented that employability skills that were once a component of the old TAFE courses are now not included in the National Training Packages which are concentrating on industry specific technical skills. The same comment was made in South Australia, where one school has found that embedding "employability" skills into subjects in the compulsory years helps ensure students gain these competencies. Yet what constitutes employability skills is open to debate.

Several states have developed non-industry specific work readiness/work education courses. Some of these do not deliver VET competencies/certificates while others do. These courses may also be offered during the compulsory years of schooling. Comments on such courses were generally quite favourable and some teachers commented on their relevance for students with disabilities (specifically with intellectual impairment) and "at risk" students who may not be "ready" for industry-specific VET. Further exploration of the role that these types of courses can play in the context of a re-evaluation of entry level training is warranted.

Interestingly one high school principal in South Australia with a strong background in VET commented that "the Key Competencies and Enterprise Education are actually more challenging than VET, which is not a substitute for the deeper thinking involved in the workplace". He also thought that "VET has not yet made a significant difference to young people and we may need to change our thinking and models".

The issue of "employability" skills is currently being discussed, not only at the school level but also at the national level. A project conducted by the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, funded by the DEST and ANTA, was based on a definition of "employability" skills as those:

... required not only to gain employment but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions. (Commonwealth of Australia 2002 p. 3)

Among the items about which the report was commissioned by DEST to provide advice on were:

- *possible new requirements for generic employability competencies that industry requires, or will require, in the foreseeable future, since the Mayer Key Competencies were developed.*
- *a proposed suite of employability skills, including an outline of assessment, certification and reporting of performance options that suit both industry and education. (Commonwealth of Australia 2002 p. 2)*

This report extends the Mayer Key Competencies to include "non-skill-based

behaviours and attitudes" (Commonwealth of Australia 2002 p. 5).

The project "identified an Employability Skills Framework that can contribute to the thinking and curriculum development of the Australian education and training system" (Commonwealth of Australia 2002 p. 5).

The project's findings have profound implications for the education and training sectors, but also for the union movement. Included in these is the following:

The identification of personal attributes as critical to employability will require further consideration by education and training providers regarding how they can address these attributes and provide advice to the individual. A number of enterprises and organisations in the research also suggested that there would be benefit in reviewing and redeveloping aspects of current documentation and practice used by education institutions to record student attainment so that the documents better reflected the personal attributes and skills attained by the student. (Commonwealth of Australia 2002 p. 6)

The Employability Skills Framework is a detailed list of skills and their elements. The elements go beyond the Key Competencies in that they specifically include the application of these competencies to the enterprise, include such elements as "being assertive"; "establishing and using networks"; "developing a strategic, creative, long-term vision"; "being willing to learn in any setting — on and off the job" and are of varying levels of difficulty and complexity.

It will be important for the union movement and education and training sectors in particular to participate in the debate about what application, if any, this framework should have in education and training.

There is an urgent need to re-evaluate the specific characteristics of entry-level training, its consistency across subjects and states and how it relates to the general educational needs of secondary school students.

Finally, if the place of generic vocational education skills are worth re-evaluating in post-compulsory VET in Schools, it is also worth noting that "there is evidence of considerable success in increasing school retention rates of some groups of young people where innovative, and interesting and well-resourced VET programs are available to students in Years 9 and 10" (AEU 1999 p. 52). This is discussed further in the section on "Equity Issues".

Draft policy proposals

In developing a coherent policy that clarifies and prioritises the objectives and expectations for school-based VET, the proposed national body should put curriculum and assessment issues at the centre of their considerations.

The Commonwealth and State governments in collaboration with the states and territories should establish a fund to support development of learning strategies and materials for use in schools and TAFE institutes to support National Training Packages.

Reviews of National Training Packages should make more explicit the “underpinning knowledge” in the competency standards and broaden the outcomes of the courses to include those explicitly related to fostering knowledge, understanding and values and to preparing learners for further education and training, employment and full and active participation as citizens.

The review of training packages should also ensure that assessment measures used in training packages are consistent and do not cause barriers to access to further education, training and employment.

In defining and prioritising its multiple goals, the broader educational and generic work-related, as opposed to industry specific, dimensions of entry-level VET should be given greater emphasis in the AQTF and National Training Packages than is presently the case.

The AEU should initiate a national response to the Employability Skills for the Future project. The outcome of this response should inform the AEU's campaigning with the Federal Government, ANTA, state and territory governments, particularly in relation to MCEETYA and MINCO, and state and territory labor councils and the ACTU.

5.9 Tertiary Entrance Articulation

In a number of states, arrangements are in place for VET to count for university entrance scores (either through embedding it in board of studies courses or through mechanisms for counting stand-alone VET). Further development of pathways to tertiary study through VET in Schools is being pursued in most states and territories.

The idea that VET should contribute to university entrance score calculations is one strand of the push to integrate VET and general secondary studies. The allegations that senior secondary school curriculum is unduly dominated by the demands of university entrance and that a higher status accrues to courses that contribute to university entrance are now fairly well accepted by schools and teachers, but whether working out ways to allow achievement in VET courses to count for university entrance is the best

way to address this issue remains a legitimate point of debate. On the one hand, a case can be made that such an approach merely re-enforces the hegemony of the tertiary entrance score over secondary curriculum, and the main focus should be on opening up alternative pathways to tertiary study. On the other, a case can also be made that inclusion of VET in the calculation of university entrance scores means that VET in the senior school does not result in "streaming".

As noted above in the section on curriculum/assessment, there have been recent discussions in NSW about incorporating more Certificate III competencies into the Industry Curriculum Frameworks in order to bring more "rigour" into the Frameworks and make them more compatible with the demands of the universities in relation to calls for enhanced contribution of VET to the UAI.

Opponents have viewed this as a move away from the original intent of incorporating VET into the school curriculum, which undermines attempts to move senior schooling away from the control of universities.

The overwhelming majority of students undertaking VET in Schools are not seeking immediate post school entrance into a university. Spark (1999 p. 28) reports that only 10 per cent of students doing VET in secondary schools said they were planning to go to university. Fullarton (2001 p. 55) research indicates that participation in VET in Schools is not associated with "a pathway to tertiary entrance". Facilitating the counting of achievement in VET towards tertiary entrance score calculations does create additional options for some students and increases the status of VET courses. It should be supported on this basis. However, this should be only one part of a broader project of not only increasing pathways to further education and training for all students but also increasing knowledge in the community about these alternative pathways and acceptance of their legitimacy among secondary school students and their families.

Draft policy proposals

States and Territories should continue to explore and develop mechanisms for counting VET for the purpose of tertiary entrance. This should not, however, be achieved by a broad strategy of including an increasing number of Certificate III competencies into VET in Schools courses.

State and Commonwealth governments should provide support for school systems to increase and enhance pathways to further education and training for all students, increase knowledge in the community about these alternative pathways and promote acceptance of their legitimacy among secondary school students and their families. In particular, information about the value of TAFE pathways should be highlighted and disseminated to schools and students.

All skills and knowledge should be included in tertiary entrance requirements.

5.10 Relationship between VET and non-VET subjects

Cumming and Carbines (1997 p. 22) reported that in the schools which they studied there was a “tension” between vocational and traditional school subjects:

Despite sustained efforts to engage all teachers in the process of reform, pockets of strong resistance remain in all schools and colleges to any further expansion of vocational initiatives. A common statement from teachers of traditional subject areas in the schools studied, for example, was that, while they regarded the broadening of vocational options as desirable, it was invariably at their expense. They argued that time and resources had been taken from their areas to support vocational options ...

Based on interviews conducted for the AEU project, tensions between VET and non-VET subject areas remain in 2002. Teachers cited having larger class sizes in non-VET subjects, having to build the timetable around VET requirements, and having to provide “make up” work for students doing SWL as examples of issues which could grate on non-VET teachers.

Professional development needs of VET teachers are on-going and mandatory. Generally, the funds provided for VET do not cover these costs and, while some VET teachers do this in their own time, some general school professional development funds are used, thus causing resentment among other teachers.

Some of those teachers interviewed believe that their working lives have been turned up-side-down to accommodate VET and that the subject choices of their students have been unduly influenced by what they see is the mistaken view that VET will help them get a job. Spark (1999 p. 28) provides a typical quotation from a VET teacher:

Some non-VET teachers are adverse to VET. Others are confused about it. There is some resentment about finances allocated to voc ed as well as other income from outside sources.

Amongst many non-VET teachers (and some VET teachers), the jury is still out about the place of industry-specific VET in Schools. Some remain unconvinced about its value. Others interviewed for the AEU project pointed to specific examples in their direct experience where VET provided the only positive experience in some students' entire school lives.

The latter teachers were able to recount numerous examples of students who were heading for failure, finding self assurance, self-esteem through VET and gaining skills that led to rewarding and satisfying jobs.

In terms of the disruption caused by the demands on VET students — relating, for example, to work placements — one Tasmanian teacher said the it was a "challenge for other teachers, particularly of pre-tertiary courses, to accommodate lots of VET students in their classes".

A VET teacher in a NSW school (interviewed for the AEU project) was concerned about the amount of money being spent on VET. When asked to clarify, she stated that she was not suggesting that schools and teachers did not need the VET resources they received, but that better use could be made of the money on general education needs.

In another NSW school, there had continued to be resentment from teachers in other curriculum areas, who felt that their subjects needs were not being met, about the amount of the school's general resources devoted to VET. This is also appears to be the case in schools in other states, particularly where the costs to the school for the delivery of VET are greater than the amount the school receives to run VET. In South Australia, one school VET co-ordinator said,

... if the school wants to drive VET, they will put more money into it. There is definitely resentment about the school resources being poured into VET.

This situation is likely to be exacerbated if the sustainability and integration policies of ANTA MINCO are adhered to by both the federal and state/territory governments. (See discussion of this above in the section on funding/resourcing.)

A Queensland VET teacher who works as a facilitator across a group of government and non-government schools felt that some schools had failed to “make the case” for VET and “bring everyone on board”. She felt that “support structures in schools” were “crucial” in determining the level of support for VET amongst teaching staff. “Where schools lay the groundwork, there is a far better chance that general teachers will be supportive.”

Draft policy proposal

Following the development of a coherent national policy that clarifies and prioritises the objectives of VET in Schools, state education systems should provide resources, support and professional development to schools to allow teachers of all subjects to understand and support the role of VET in Schools. Funding for VET should be at a sustainable level to achieve the outcomes expected of schools and reflect its position within the broad aims of schooling.

5.11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues

Professor Marcia Langton (2002), in her recent Dr Charles Perkins Memorial Oration outlined what she called the “impending social crisis” confronting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the next decade. This crisis, she stated, will be brought about due to rapid population increases, and continued “inadequate government responses to the present status of Indigenous people in relation to their health, housing, education and employment conditions” (p. 14). She goes on to argue that “fresh strategic policy

thinking is required to identify and establish the arrangements that would enable effective dealings by all stakeholders to minimise the impact of the predicted crisis in Indigenous socio-economic conditions”, and flags the notion of a “framework agreement and national partnership arrangement aimed at settling matters in contention between Indigenous and settler Australians” (p. 14).

Effective development of policies and programs must, in all senses reinforce and reaffirm the fundamental rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to determine their own futures. As Behrendt (2001 p. 47) states:

Without a rights framework, there is no ability to create and protect the rights to economic self-sufficiency and Indigenous peoples, families, and communities will only be dependent on welfare. Even worse, they will remain dependent on the benevolence of Government.

Discussions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers have revealed that this type of “benevolent” policy development and delivery acts to subtly reinforce the notion of powerlessness and deficiency within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, where participants see themselves as on the receiving end of a policy approach designed to relieve them of their incapacities, and further perpetuate their invisibility, rather than promote the recovery of basic and fundamental human rights.

In relation to VET in Schools, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers have cautiously welcomed some of the recent policy developments, particularly those that foster local-level partnerships through the process of agreement-making. This, however, needs to be tempered with an awareness of the hegemonic relationship between education systems and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which perpetuates educational disadvantage and which must be challenged and overcome.

Since 1989, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy has been the foundation of successive Federal Government’s approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The four broad goals of the policy (see McRae et al. 2000 pp. 165-166) are applicable to VET in Schools:

- involvement of Indigenous people in education decision-making;
- equality of access to educational services;
- equity of educational participation;
- equitable and appropriate educational outcomes.

Whilst there have been significant improvements in Indigenous education and training since the advent of the policy (Robinson and Bamblett 1998), Indigenous students continue to be Australia’s most educationally disadvantaged group with lower participation/retention rates to Year 12, lower levels of academic achievement, higher

rates of absenteeism and higher levels of disciplinary suspension than non-Indigenous students (Bourke et al. 2000).

In recognition of the roles that schools play in perpetuating educational disadvantage for Indigenous students, the AEU has determined Indigenous education and training to be a key strategic priority, and thus a focal point for work across the Union.

Schwab (2001 p. 1) points out:

Research shows a persistent and troubling drop in retention as Indigenous students move toward the post-compulsory years, and a relative over-representation of Indigenous students in vocationally oriented school courses. While some have expressed concern at what appears to be a lack of engagement with academic courses, there is no doubt that many young Indigenous people are purposefully pursuing the practical, hands-on learning VET in School courses can provide ... While vocational education is increasingly popular with Indigenous students, not all forms provide the appropriate cultural "fit".

Schwab (p. 6) defines "cultural fit" as "the alignment of curriculum, delivery and pedagogy with local Indigenous cultural assumptions, perceptions, values and needs" and argues that for VET programs in schools for Indigenous students to succeed, "this alignment is essential".

Ownership of VET in Schools programs by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is crucial to ensuring that this alignment occurs. As ATSIPTAC (1998 p. 8) has stated:

Research on educational disadvantage has consistently pointed towards the importance of local solutions, with high degrees of community participation and direction. This is of even greater importance in the case Indigenous communities because of our high degree of education and economic disadvantage, the relative isolation of many of our communities, and our identified need for cultural sensitivity and identity within education programs.

Schwab (pp. 7-8) further goes on to identify six key factors that can facilitate cultural fit and promote local community ownership. These have some similarity to the four successful strategies identified by McRae et al. (2000 pp. 111-112) in schools that provided VET to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The headings below are taken from Schwab but the descriptions include material taken from McRae et al:

- Community-based education and training — Provision of VET in a community setting can be an important factor for Indigenous students who have experienced little success in "mainstream" education. Alternatively, schools can make effective use of Indigenous mentors to build a sense of group and cultural identity.
- Community relevance — At the basic level this refers to the VET course

delivering skills to the students which are useable in the local community, but it also refers to a broader goal of community capacity building.

- Commitment to Indigenous employment — Articulation of VET programs to labour market outcomes is a key issue. Schools need to work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other stakeholders to identify employment and further education and training options. Provision of workplace experience and career information and advice is important.
- Balancing the expectations from two cultures — Programs should reflect Indigenous culture, local circumstances and Indigenous learning styles and also be implicit in the incorporation of western cultural mores and circumstances, such as the meeting of mandated industry standards, employee/employer relationships and set out mutually agreed parameters.
- Pushing the boundaries — Schools must be willing to challenge existing assumptions (including racial stereotypes) and be innovative to develop and deliver flexible courses.
- Leadership and committed, competent staff — Leadership is needed so that there are clear directions set in terms of engaging with the local community and being “independent, efficient and innovative”. Teachers must have high expectations for Indigenous students.

How these factors play out in schools is influenced by local context. Where, for example, a school is located in a remote Aboriginal community, identification of community leaders may be straightforward but the development of links to jobs may be quite difficult. On the other hand, a city school may be able to readily identify job opportunities but may have more difficulty establishing links with the Indigenous community.

It is clear that many of the complexities faced by VETIS teachers in schools are further magnified by the complexities of developing and delivering VETIS programs which are relevant to, and meet the needs of, Indigenous students and their communities.

Teachers working with Indigenous students and their communities must have a high level of skill in communicating in a cross-cultural setting and producing effective pedagogical practices, along with the range of skills required to effectively implement VETIS.

To be a teacher in contemporary Australia, one must know about Indigenous students, their communities, their needs, their heritage, and have the ability to develop appropriate pedagogical approaches to meet these needs.

There is ample research which signifies our failure as a nation to provide teachers with the professional skills and knowledge required to work effectively with Indigenous students. Further, lack of access to this sort of training contributes to the low level of learning outcomes achieved by Indigenous students. Evidence gathered from teachers working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has consistently pointed to

the need for adequate pre-service and in-service training in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. Numerous policy positions have also argued for this. Governments should therefore ensure that all undergraduate teacher education programs, within an agreed time-frame, build in significant and assessable mandatory Indigenous studies units.

Comments from teachers with experience in Indigenous community schools in Queensland (interviewed for the AEU project) were generally supportive of the view that the factors identified previously in the work of Schwab (2001) and McRae et al. (2000) did enhance the chances of VET in Schools programs delivering valuable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. They did, however, point out a number of practical difficulties:

- Articulation of VET in Schools programs with labour market outcomes presents a real and considerable challenge in communities where few employment opportunities exist and where the jobs that do exist can attract wages that are less than the amount paid through the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme. (No training is required to obtain CDEP employment.) One teacher interviewed was at a remote school that had made effective use of opportunities provided by the local mine — but many other remote Indigenous communities do not have access to a viable locally-based industry.
- Work placements are difficult to find in some communities.
- There are difficulties in accessing long-term funding arrangements.
- In some locations it is particularly difficult to recruit teaching staff who had *both* the appropriate qualifications and experience to deliver VET in Schools *and* the ability to teach effectively in an Indigenous community. Given the high teaching staff turn-over rate in some communities, sustaining a VET in Schools program over a number of years is a big ask.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the local area often do not have the qualifications required to deliver programs.
- Current arrangements and requirements for the delivery of VET in Schools did not encourage schools to be innovative or to incorporate culturally appropriate pedagogy and curriculum.
- Establishing community-based programs was hampered by the “red tape” involved in working with other government departments and agencies in the community.
- Low English literacy and numeracy levels amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and a high drop-out rate prior to senior secondary schooling limit the capacity of these students to benefit from VET in Schools.

The former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Training Advisory Council (ATSIPTAC 1998 p. 7) goes further in the classification of these practical difficulties, defining them as barriers, which can be classified as cultural, pedagogical, structural

and economic. Further, they argue for a range of changes, including:

- greater variety in the areas of knowledge in the secondary curriculum;
- more diverse and culturally appropriate forms of assessment;
- structural changes in the school certificate to incorporate appropriate forms of learning;
- development of structured links between employment outcomes and education and training.

Whilst these suggestions were not discussed with AEU members during the development of the AEU research report, it is clear from the broader issues identified by teachers, that there is more work to be done in identifying the cultural, pedagogical, structural and economic barriers to VETIS implementation in Indigenous communities in order to develop effective solutions.

Australia's national strategy for vocational education and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 2000 – 2005, *Partners in a Learning Culture* (ANTA 2000b), has identified a "focus on participation and outcomes for Indigenous students in VET in Schools programs" as a key strategy in its *Blueprint for Implementation*. Identification of barriers impacting on Indigenous students' access and participation in VETIS programs is noted in strategy 4.1. This has resulted in a range of project-based activities developed through the Wadu strategy, funded through ANTA and project managed by the Education Career and Enterprise Foundation (ECEP). This strategy resulted in the development of a teaching resource, designed to assist teachers to better implement VET in Schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Additionally, the Commonwealth Government (DEST 2002) has released the *Working Together for Indigenous Youth Framework* (2002-2004), in which Key Element Number 3 requires the identification and removal of "barriers inhibiting dramatic and sustained improvements in the opportunities for Indigenous students beyond the compulsory years of education" (p. 5).

Ironically, the development and implementation of these strategies designed to identify and reduce barriers, quite possibly create additional barriers, or exacerbate existing ones. Although these strategies have worthy intentions, and many have produced worthwhile outcomes, it still remains that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, along with their communities and their teachers often feel burdened by the complexity of arrangements originally designed to assist them.

The *Working Together for Indigenous Youth Framework* is an interesting case in point. Whilst the development of a national framework aimed at the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the post-compulsory years should be seen as positive, the effectiveness of a framework which covers a two year period must be questioned, particularly when there is a mere \$6m allocated to redress what must be one of the

most appalling social indicators of the inequity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians – the fact that the retention rate for Indigenous students in the post-compulsory years is just under half the rate for non-Indigenous students. It is further perplexing when you consider the clear correlation between education, employment and the reduction of economic disadvantage, and the potential amelioration of future imprisonment.

This framework states: "...that sufficient funds already exist for committed people to make a difference" (p. 6), and that:

Just as the commitment of Government and business to support the intervention strategies is critical, so too is the commitment of the local Indigenous people to fully participate in the strategies and actively contribute to the partnership. In many cases the contribution may also be financial. (p. 5)

Yet, a recent Inquiry into Indigenous funding by the Commonwealth Grants Commission clearly refutes the notion of "sufficient funds". It states: "While the level of funding made available for programs to address specific Indigenous disadvantage has increased since the mid 1990s, it remains small in comparison with the level of disadvantage" (CGC 2001 p. 217).

Teachers also express their frustration at levels of funding, particularly those projects funded through the National Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NEILNS), where funds are being reduced annually by the Commonwealth. There is also concern about an over reliance on Commonwealth funding, particularly where the salaries of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers (AIEWs) are funded through the Commonwealth. One AIEW indicated that he has been working as a contract worker for the past five years. This means that he does not receive holiday pay or sick pay.

The importance of the role of the AIEW has been cited in numerous reports, including Mc Rae, et al, and a Seafood Training South Australia (2000), report that states:

One of the critical components of the project is the ability of AIEWs to support the project, both within the schools and at a community level. (p. 4)

Given the role that these workers play in providing support to teachers and students, along with developing local community linkages, it is essential that their employment conditions are improved. Additionally, appropriate training needs to be developed and provided through the National Training Framework to ensure that AIEWs are adequately prepared to take on new roles, such as co-ordinating VET in Schools projects.

At the local level, teachers stressed the importance of having a co-ordinator, such as an AIEW, who had credibility with teachers, the local community, other government agencies and local employers. At the systemic level, *The Review of Education and*

Employment Programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Education Queensland 2000a p. 19) noted that in Queensland there was no specific consideration of the needs of Indigenous students in the Department of Education's approach to VET in Schools. While the subsequently produced *Partners for Success* (Education Queensland 2000b) strategy for improving the education and employment outcomes of Indigenous students does address matters relevant to the delivery of VET in Schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, the degree to which this strategy has been integrated into the overall approach to VET in Schools is debateable.

For teachers in remote schools in the Northern Territory, continuity of funding appears to be a problem. Teachers reported to the AEU researchers that "funding guidelines" had "changed without adequate consultation". Teachers stated that VET for Indigenous students "should be a priority" but the uncertainty about funding ("endless submissions") made it difficult to sustain programs. Comments from teachers working with VET equity in South Australia included that "Aboriginal communities need time to establish programs and the programs need time to develop credibility, yet the sources of funding are constantly shifting".

Within the AQTF Standards, the Access and Equity Standard must be more specifically and demonstrably applied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. For example, in "oana mallacka" (Tasmanian Department of Education 2002 p. 15) Strategy 2, Action 2.6 states that "the Institute of TAFE Tasmania and other smaller RTOs [should be encouraged] to provide appropriate/designated identifiable spaces for Aboriginal people". Other recommended actions include providing information to RTOs about how to meet the Access and Equity Standard, as well as information to auditors on how to support a rigorous state auditing process in relation to this standard.

"Oana mallacka" also contains Strategy 4 to "focus on participation and outcomes for Indigenous students in VET in Schools programs" by:

Action 4.1 — Including Aboriginal issues on the agenda of the VET in Schools Framework Policy Committee.

Action 4.2 — Actioning initiatives in relation to increasing Aboriginal students' access to VET in Schools Framework Policy Committee.

Objective 3 (pp. 21-22) relates to "achieving increased, culturally appropriate, and flexibly delivered training, including use of IT, for Indigenous people "by establishing training centres, supporting provision of formal and informal Aboriginal training, identifying sources of funding for delivery of IT, supporting its delivery in culturally appropriate ways..."

One example of the ways these recommendations might be achieved is occurring in one rural area in South Australia where work has begun on a steering committee involving members of the local Aboriginal community, and an Area Consultative Committee and there is a move towards linking a grant for employment of young Aboriginal students with VET in Schools.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal community is particularly concerned that VET in Schools programs target Year 11 and 12 students, while many Aboriginal students have already left school by this stage. Access to Year 11 and 12 is particularly difficult for Aboriginal students in rural and remote communities in Tasmania (p. 17). It is the view of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that VET opportunities should be available for Aboriginal students at a younger age. A Queensland principal, interviewed for the AEU project, who works with Indigenous community schools, held a similar view.

Tattum (1999 p. 16) quotes Tony Dreise, the former national executive officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Training Advisory Council, as stating that Indigenous youth could benefit from VET in Schools in Years 9 and 10:

Indigenous youth are voting with their feet, early and in high numbers, with 70 per cent leaving before Year 12. It is still early days for VET in School for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and we don't have strong statistical evidence, but anecdotes from schools in the Northern Territory indicate that VET improves retention rates and employment prospects for indigenous youth. Forty-eight per cent of the indigenous population is under the age of 19 and over 40 per cent is under 15. We cannot persist with current educational outcomes and extremely high levels of unemployment.

One possible cause of students leaving school prior to the completion of Year 12, is their ability in some areas to access the Community Development and Employment Program (CDEP), which Langton (2002) cites as "the principal poverty trap for Aboriginal individuals, families and communities" (p. 11).

Students as young as fifteen are able to earn an insubstantial wage for what substantially amounts to working for the dole (Seafood Training SA 2000; Long et al, 1998). ATSIPTAC and Boughton (cited in Long, et al. 1998) argue strongly for the creation of school based apprenticeships and traineeships, and for research into ways of linking education and training programs with CDEP schemes. Langton argues that the "CDEP scheme requires radical transformation into a genuine labour market strategy that brings Aboriginal people into the workforce in sufficient numbers to enable them to escape the poverty trap" (p. 15).

An example of a successful VET program with strong links to industry in South Australia involving students in the compulsory years is the Indulkana Anangu School Radio Program which began in 1999 with Year 10-12 students. 5UV Radio Adelaide provided training and assessment on site in the far north west of South Australia to students who undertook modules from Certificate II in Community Radio, while also gaining credit toward SACE.

The program was extended in 2000 to include students in Years 8-10. Further pathways were offered through Bachelor College in Alice Springs. The courses are being aligned with the new Film, Radio, TV and Multimedia Training Package.

The interest generated by this project among students who were not regular

attendees resulted in improved attendance rates in both the junior and senior schools. Most students were able to achieve positive outcomes in this program, not only those who were academically successful. (Bennett and Edwards 2002 p. 20)

An Anangu Education Worker at the school was first trained and then, to integrate the program better into the community, members of the Anangu community are being trained through 5NPY media.

There are currently no AQF VET courses available in NSW specifically for Indigenous students in the compulsory years. Other programs which are vocational in nature, but fall rather into the category of career and vocational learning are in place, including the Aboriginal Career Aspiration Program and Learning Works. The former is a Commonwealth funded program for Years 6-8, based on a Board of Studies program developed for Years 7-10. Funding extends only to the program being run in ten of the NSW 40 Districts.

The latter is aimed at 14-19 year olds and is a Vocational Education and Enterprise Education program, funded by DEST (\$750,000) under the Vocational and Education Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme (VEGAS). There are 24 projects in NSW, which vary from eight students at Ivanhoe Central School whose project entails refurbishment of the local swimming pool, to a group of 180 students with an IT project on the Central Coast. Funding is for 12 months, but may be extended for three years. The department is encouraging long term programs rather than band-aid solutions, but for the approval to continue, the DEST requires their outcomes, which are stringent key performance indicators, to be achieved. The programs are not overly prescriptive, with the program managers, NSWDET's Aboriginal Programs Unit, wanting strategies for ways to achieve the outcomes to come from the communities themselves.

One of its aims is to foster "enrolling in and completing TAFE programs and modules (between the ages of 15-19 years)". This is among the core performance indicators determined by the Commonwealth as the basis for funding agreements with the states and territories. They also include outcomes relating to attendance, retention rates, traineeships etc. (NSW DET 2002 p. 3). These indicators are particularly optimistic and some concern has been expressed in the states and territories about the reality of being able to achieve them in the short term in return for continued funding.

The NSW Board of Studies does not recognise VET subjects as satisfying the requirements for the award of the School Certificate (Year 10 credential) and has been supported in this policy by most stakeholders.

There is one exception relating to students "at risk" but this is confined to Country Area Program (CAP) schools, and inclusion is thus based on isolation rather than any other criteria for "at risk". In addition VET in the compulsory years is approved in Juvenile Justice Centres (JJC). The only Aboriginal students who might be doing VET in the compulsory years would be those attending a CAP school or a JJC. These courses are

generally approved, after being submitted to the Department of Education and Training and then to the Board of Studies for endorsement, for a whole class or a small cohort of students and usually involve TAFE courses. There has been much debate in NSW about the use of VET as a retention strategy for Aboriginal students and whether these programs should be identified as specifically for Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and education workers in South Australia suggested that VET programs need to be designed to provide skills and knowledge that is geographically specific and relevant to areas in which the course is being undertaken in the first instance, and should incorporate a more general VET focus. Further, they stated that VET programs should be relevant, and should match employment in the local area. New enterprises and initiatives that are suitable for the area should be also be explored. They expressed the concern that programs are not being designed to produce meaningful life skills that give them real opportunities to become gainfully employed.

The issue of provision of VET for compulsory-aged students (and, in particular, for Indigenous students) poses some difficult questions for policy makers and practitioners. On the one hand, while VET in Schools programs target Year 11 and 12 students, many Aboriginal students will miss out on the opportunities provided since they have already left school by this stage. Furthermore, currently existing VET programs for compulsory-aged Indigenous students appear to improve both school retention rates and employment outcomes for these students. On the other hand, education and training providers and industry generally oppose the extension of VET to the compulsory years of schooling believing it locks students into a particular pathway at an inappropriately early age and exacerbates the split between general and vocational education, with those pursuing the latter seen as pursuing a “second-class” pathway.

A range of views was provided to the AEU researchers, among which was the view that what might be needed is a change in pedagogy in the compulsory years rather than the expansion of VET. Data collected by the NCVET (2002a p. 6) provides some support for this position, as it indicates that completion of Year 12 by Indigenous students *prior to* undertaking VET is associated with higher levels of success in VET subjects. The NCVET concludes that “it would ... appear that improving the success rate for Indigenous students in VET would depend, at least partially, upon a corresponding improvement in Year 12 retention rates”.

Several Indigenous teachers expressed concern about an overemphasis on VET in Schools for Indigenous students. One stated “it is already far too easy for Aboriginal students who could do university entrance subjects to take the VET pathway”. Another stated that VET was seen as the “pathway for Indigenous behaviour problems”.

However, another Indigenous teacher said that he supported making VET available for some students in Years 9 and 10. He stated “it is a question of properly valuing VET in the school curriculum and matching students to appropriate courses”.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and education workers from South Australia stated that a possible solution might be the development of an integrated academic/VET where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are encouraged to continue academic studies alongside the VET course as a component of the courses. Through this process, students should be given support with academic studies (perhaps at a reduced load) and achievements in VET course components would count towards an overall combined SACE/VET qualification. They suggested that teachers and educators should be mandated to challenge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students academically and exhaust academic options before they are ushered into VET courses.

They felt that it was important to value academic achievement and qualifications as VET courses do not always deliver skills that lead to jobs. They additionally outlined that serious consideration should be given to a pre-VET induction course designed to inform participants about a range of issues like: first impressions, personal grooming and presentation for a job interview, industrial rights and entitlements, work ethic, attention to detail in presentation of assignments. Such a course should incorporate both successful and unsuccessful VET participants/graduates who can give their own personal experiences (as peers) to new course participants.

Does the provision of VET to Indigenous students in the compulsory years open or close off opportunities for these students? The answer is not straightforward. It is clear that in a number of individual cases where this has occurred, it has opened up opportunities for students that would not have otherwise been available. On the other hand, its long-term effect might be the opposite, channelling Indigenous students into a “second class” vocational stream and absolving teachers and schools from the responsibility of engaging these students in education in the ways that other students are being engaged. Furthermore, its effect could be different in different settings, opening up opportunities in some places but closing them off in others.

On the evidence considered for this AEU research project, it appears that a strong case exists for the extension of VET to the compulsory years of schooling for some Indigenous students in some localities.

Draft policy proposals

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decision-making structures should be created within the new bodies proposed in earlier recommendations.

The Commonwealth, States and Territories should work together to ensure that all teachers to be employed in the public education system must have completed a comprehensive sequence of Indigenous Studies in their undergraduate courses as a precondition to their employment. Such studies should include studies of Indigenous histories, languages and cultures,

Indigenous teaching and learning processes and practices.

A mapping exercise should be conducted to determine the disparities between the employment, training and career pathway options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers (AIEWs) across each State and Territory. This mapping should inform the development of a set of competency standards for AIEWs.

An urgent investigation should be conducted into the number and levels of post-compulsory school aged Indigenous children accessing the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). VET in Schools, or other appropriate programs, must be urgently put in to place to prevent this from occurring.

5.12 Issues of Access and Equity

Access to VET by students has not been equally distributed throughout the student population. However, as Butler and Ferrier (1999) point out, equity issues in VET encompass much more than levels of access and participation by so-called disadvantaged groups, though there has been an unfortunate tendency to restrict equity discussion to these matters. In Butler and Ferrier's view equity discussions are mainly reactive and piecemeal and largely take for granted existing social structures, institutional frameworks and cultural assumptions.

Moving beyond this level of critique to make equity a core issue in VET by examining the complex relationships between cultural assumptions, institutional arrangements, and individual/group outcomes is a task still largely ignored.

This is not to say that increasing the participation and improving the outcomes of disadvantaged groups is not an important task. Several states have sought to ensure that there are specific elaborations of the AQTF Access and Equity Standard for specific groups. Examples include Queensland's *Fair Go in Training for People with a Disability* and Tasmania's *oona mallacka* strategy for Indigenous students.

5.12.1 Provision for "At Risk" Students

Based on empirical research, Fullarton (2001 p. 55) reports that for students in the lowest achievement quartiles ("those most at risk of ending up in economically precarious positions") participation in VET does appear to be providing improved pathways to employment and, to a lesser extent, further training.

Malley et al. (2002a p. 25) note, however, that massive enrolment growth in VET in Schools has not coincided with any significant increase in overall Year 10-12 retention rates. They surmise that VET “enrolment growth came from ‘continuers’ who switched preferences from general education subjects to vocational ones” rather than from any decrease in the numbers of early school leavers. Interviews with school teachers undertaken as part of the AEU project tended to confirm this conclusion.

It appears therefore that some common assumptions about the role of the provision of VET in Schools in increasing retention rates and meeting the needs of alienated students need to be examined. Collins, Kenway and McLeod (2000a p. 134) note:

VET in Schools has been promoted as a means of ensuring that “students at risk” receive the sorts of education that will connect them to improved post-school opportunities in either work or education and training. However, the work of Angwin et al. (1998) raises questions about the extent to which VET in Schools is serving the needs of students most at risk of not completing school. They imply that for the most disadvantaged students, VET is too demanding and comes too late. They observe that the problems such students have with school arise much earlier and require earlier attention.

Malley et al. (2002a p. 24) suggest that the nature of the VET currently being offered (i.e. based on a higher level, industry-specific, post school training model) may need to change if early school leavers are to be attracted to VET in Schools as an option.

This suggests that exploration of the role of non-industry specific work readiness/work education courses is warranted. Some these types of courses have been developed and implemented in various states. Some do not deliver VET competencies/certificates while others do. These courses may also be offered during the compulsory years of schooling. Examples include:

- In NSW a new course for Years 9 and 10, Work Education, has been added to the curriculum. While it does contain some generic work competencies taken from National Training Packages, these are not assessed according to AQTF standards, which means that among other things, teachers do not need VET qualifications. At a further stage in their school, TAFE or work life these students can have these competencies recognised through RPL.
- The new Certificate I in Workplace Skills in Tasmania is based on the Queensland Certificate I in Work Readiness. It is designed for senior secondary students undecided about the specific industry they wish to move into, provides a framework of general work related competencies which might then lead on to further more industry specific studies, and contains mandatory structured workplace learning.
- In one large South Australia high school, all Year 10 students from 2003 will do

the Employment Skills Program. This course is not nationally accredited and was initially for students "at risk" or students with disabilities, however, in an attempt to improve the school's attendance rates and the relevance of the curriculum, trialling the program for all Year 10 will form part of a broader approach to deal more adequately with the period between the middle years and the senior years.

Spark (1999 p. 26) reports that while some teachers did have a belief that VET would offer "students who were failing or at the bottom of their class ... a pathway of their own to success", other teachers saw VET as for "all students":

We need to move into a way of thinking that has "VET for all" rather than "VET for marginalised groups" That type of thinking is beginning to evolve in a number of schools that are down the path in a range of issues in terms of sustainability.

A Western Australian VET co-ordinator interviewed for this AEU project worried that his colleagues saw "VET as a dumping ground" and that this meant it was "not seen as valuable". Fullarton (2001 p. 3) puts the position as follows:

If VET in Schools programs are seen as a way of managing a more diverse student body, rather than as a means of improving student outcomes then there is potential for such programs to be viewed and treated as second-class ... Some evidence suggests that the majority of schools do offer vocational programs for the former reasons, as a way of providing a relevant and viable pathway for students who might otherwise leave school early or may not continue into tertiary education.

However, two points need to be made in relation to this observation. First, the locus of this problem is not necessarily at the school level. Government policies themselves often portray VET as a key element in strategies to increase retention rates and address the needs of "at risk" students.¹⁰ Second, achieving a balance between enhancing the status of vocational courses by offering high-status, rigorous VET and meeting the needs at risk students is not easy (and schools are expected to achieve *both* goals). While, on the one hand, the status of VET can be undermined by a view that VET courses are for less able students, it is the case — as suggested by the research of Malley et al. (2002a) — that high status VET courses can be as exclusionary of the needs of these students as traditional academic subjects have been.

From talking to teachers in a range of different settings, it does appear that despite the difficulties schools are having a great deal of success with some "at risk" students. At one Victorian high school in a depressed socio-economic area, students and teachers have embraced VET.

¹⁰ See, for example, Jarred (2002).

The school has a substantial number of Aboriginal students. It has recently applied for funding as a skill centre and works closely with employers and Industry Training Accreditation Boards (ITABs) for the provision of support. This support has enabled the school to offer a range of courses the students might not otherwise have access to.

Because of the socio-economic background of the students, the biggest issue has been how to ensure that all students have equitable access to VET courses. Students are taught their VET courses at the school. There are two main reasons for this. First, it is cheaper and no costs need to be passed on to students. Second, in the past when students went to TAFE the drop-out rate was high. Since the decision to offer the courses at school, the drop-out rate has improved markedly. Teachers believe the supportive environment the students experience at school has a positive influence on the chances of the students staying on.

With funds raised, the costs of student VET choices are subsidised by the school. When equipment is needed to complete a course, such as knives for hospitality, the school endeavours to provide it. Close to half the students are enrolled in a VET course that counts towards the VCE and ENTER.

Success for "at risk" students is not necessarily apparent from retention and completion rates. In fact, in the Victorian school mentioned above, the aim often is to lead students into jobs, whether they actually complete Year 12 or not. In fact, finding a job is one of the criteria for success the school uses. This school is also part of the trial of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning. Of particular concern has been the fact that many students find Certificate II level courses tough going and too difficult. For some students doing VCAL has been the means to getting a job rather than the VCAL certificate itself. If students find a job and leave, the school is adamant that this does not mean that VCAL has been unsuccessful. For others the certificate is a pathway to further training.

In one South Australian rural area, the majority of VET students are in Year 11. While many go on to complete SACE, large numbers leave in Year 11 to go into the paid workforce or to TAFE. As with the Victorian school, this district believes there are other ways to measure good outcomes of VET in Schools

Schools in this rural area of South Australia comment that VET has changed the behaviour of otherwise difficult students and can break the cycle of the "treadmill of negativity". The combination of school and VET can provide for these students with high support needs.

But, as has been mentioned elsewhere in this report, VET is not the panacea for all ills. In the ACT it was found that:

Schools saw the access to more flexible learning environments as having a low impact for [at risk students]. Interviews with VETIS teachers confirmed this view, and identifies the need to better incorporate selection of VETIS course with other pastoral care activities to ensure maximum advantages for at risk students ... teachers felt that often at risk students may have skill gaps which could prevent them from VETIS completion. (ACT 2002 p. 88)

The fact that the inclusion of VET in the senior years has not significantly affected retention rates, and that many students are still dropping out of school, with little hope of finding a job, has prompted debate about how best to meet their needs. There has been some discussion in most states and territories about the inclusion of AQF accredited, industry specific, RTO assessed VET courses in Years 9-10. (This issue is considered in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students above.)

In one South Australian school students can complete units towards Certificate I in IT in Year 8 and Certificate II in Retail in year 9. In another, students can gain Music Industry Certificate II skills in Years 9 and 10. Although this is a contentious issue in South Australia, it is relatively common for students to gain some competencies in Years 8, 9 and 10 and get a Certificate II in Year 11.

In NSW such courses are only available to students in Country Area Program (CAP) schools and Juvenile Justice Centres, while in Tasmania where there is a draft recommendation that "VET programs should normally be delivered to students after they complete Year 10, there is also a draft recommendation to further investigate the "apparent demand [reported in 1998 by TAFE Tasmania] as a "significant demand" for Year 10 students to participate in recognised VET programs delivered by TAFE Tasmania" as a complement to their Year 10 studies (OPCET undated pp. 15-16).

In the ACT there are some high school students in Years 8, 9 and 10 doing VET subjects, for which they gain a statement of attainment in the relevant training package. These courses can also be recorded on the student's School Certificate.

In the ACT, one of the "key issues for resolution: 2001-2004" that came out of the 2001 *Evaluation of Vocational Education and Training in ACT Schools* (ACT Education and Community Services 2002 p. 13) concerned the provision of early intervention (Years 8-10) in relation to the participation of "at risk" groups, as well as "embedding the role of pastoral care/careers advice in addressing the needs of at risk students".

5.12.2 Gender Issues

Butler and Ferrier (1999 p. 4) observe that:

Research activity concerning women and VET ... is not accorded the same significance as so-called "mainstream" research in VET.

While it can be argued that equity-related research has resulted in positive

impact on localised pedagogical and practice issues for women, there is little evidence of significant policy or structural systemic outcomes ... Most often this research ... is ... more reactive than proactive, is piecemeal ... tends to consider women as "other", while normalising the experiences of men, and lacks a perspective of "advantage" as opposed to "disadvantage".

VET has, of course, traditionally been associated with a "masculinised culture, reflecting the association of VET with trade-related courses for predominantly male-dominated trades" (Butler and Ferrier 1999 p. 2). Recent years have seen a significant increase in female participation in VET courses, although enrolments continue to reflect the gender divisions still found with the Australian workforce.

VET in Schools appears to be an equally appealing option for male and female students. However, "there are long-term and entrenched gender stereotyped patterns of participation" (VETiSD 2001 p. 6). Based on New South Wales research (VETiSD 2001), some features of these gender participation patterns are:

- Females predominate in areas such as business services, hospitality, retail and tourism.
- Males predominate in areas such as construction, information technology, metals and engineering, and primary industry.
- While "a small proportion of males readily move into traditional female dominated areas ... female students are relatively more reluctant to move into male dominated industry areas".
- Gender participation patterns in VET in Schools reflect gender participation patterns in VET delivered in other settings (e.g. in TAFE) and in the labour market.
- Gender participation patterns for students in VET in Schools in the areas of hospitality, tourism, construction, metals and engineering, electronics, furnishings and IT reflect the gender breakdown of VET teaching staff.
- Gender segmentation is also a feature of non-VET high school curriculum participation.

Collins, Kenway and McLeod (2000b p. 38) caution that "it is not sufficient to simply observe that there are differences between girls and boys ... such descriptions do not amount to explanations". They argue that "a full understanding of gender justice in education requires a consideration of both the influences on and the consequences of school retention, participation, performance and outcomes". In regard to outcomes, Collins, Kenway and McLeod (2000a p. 131) note, "if we look at patterns of participation in all of the tertiary sector and the labour market, then in terms of post-school rewards in general, females are worse off than males".

Collins and her colleagues (2000b pp. 45-47) make particular note of labour market outcomes associated with choices made by male and female students in high school. These choices (in relation to both VET and non-VET subjects) are associated with far greater incidence of full-time employment by age 24 for males than for females. These gender differences in full-time labour market participation significantly widen for at risk

students.

Collins, Kenway and McLeod (2000a pp. 132-133) point out:

At the surface level, we are apparently dealing with issues of choice, attitudes and values. At a deeper level, there appear to be gender codes associated with the curriculum, work and lifestyle which guide these choices, attitudes and values ... It is not simply a matter of changing boys' or indeed girls' choices. A major research question here is "how can the identification of certain types of knowledge with specific genders be challenged to the advantage of both genders?"

One example of the complex interplay of gender, subject choice, subject content and post-school outcomes is the tendency of boys to make more "utilitarian" subject choices than do girls (Collins, Kenway, and McLeod 2000a pp132-133). This has a "pay off" for boys in terms of enhanced labour market opportunities but at a cost of lost opportunities to develop their social and cultural capital (opportunities that society rightfully expects schools to provide). Girls' subject choices, on the other hand, tend to develop these social and cultural skills but to articulate less well with labour market opportunities. Neither pathway fully meets the needs of society.

Similarly, Boulden (2000 p. 12) describes how work-related programs in schools reflect unexamined, deeply gendered assumptions that disadvantage both girls and boys. She argues that school work-education programs reinforce a view that the only "real work" is "paid work" and:

... have not enabled students to investigate the ways in which both paid and unpaid work is patterned along the lines of gender, class, ethnicity, disability and geographical location. As a result, students have not been well prepared to understand and negotiate the structural impediments to "free choice", not to develop the attitudes, skills and behaviours they will need to manage in a world where change impacts on personal relationships and arrangements, as well as the nature and organisation of paid employment.

This analysis provides a rationale based in gender equity for the project described by Benson (1992) and Malley et al. (2002a) of *integrating* vocational and general studies, secondary and post-compulsory education and education and work. However, as noted elsewhere in this AEU report, this is a task which has to date been fraught with considerable conceptual and practical difficulties. Nevertheless, the alternative is to continue to accept inequitable patterns of retention, participation, performance and outcomes. As Connole (quoted in Butler and Ferrier 1999 p. 5) argues, it is not good enough to make "arrangements for young men and then mak[e] unsatisfactory running repairs to the system to accommodate women and other equity groups".

5.12.3 Students with Disabilities

Statistics cited by ANTA (2000 p. 5) in its *Bridging Pathways* strategy for increasing opportunities in VET for people with disabilities include:

- While 80 per cent of the general population are participating in the workforce only 53 per cent of people with a disability are.
- The proportion of the Australian working age population with a disability who currently participate in VET is estimated at less than 2.5 per cent, yet the proportion of all working age Australians who currently participate in VET was 11 per cent in 1998 and is expected to rise to 12 per cent by 2005.
- The proportion of the Australian working age population who have a disability is currently 16.7 per cent, yet the proportion of the VET population who has a disability is currently 3.6 per cent.

In relation to schooling, Harrison and Barnett (2001 p. 1) note the “low levels of participation in structured workplace learning ... evident among students with disabilities” and “the high rates of early school leaving” by these students.

The ANTA national strategy has been signed on to by all states and territories and some states have developed supporting documents. The Queensland Department of Employment and Training, for example, recently launched a guide for trainers to enable them to meet their AQTF obligations in relation to people with disabilities (DET 2002). ECEF (undated) is currently overseeing three “lighthouse” projects (in South Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales) to develop models of increased participation by secondary students with disabilities in SWL.

Problems facing schools in the provision of VET to students with disabilities include:

- Students with disabilities are more likely to leave school prior to Years 11-12.
- There has traditionally been poor communication and co-ordination between the schooling sector and disability agencies.
- Harrison and Barnett (2001 p. 5) note that in addition to schools, RTOs and employers, in the case of students with disabilities doing SWL or school-based apprenticeships/traineeships, “a fourth partner is required — one with a specialised understanding of the needs of people with a disability. CEPT [Community Employment Placement and Training] or open employment placement agencies are ideally placed to become this fourth partner, but ... CEPT agencies have traditionally received funding from the Commonwealth ... and are not supported to become involved within schools as this is seen as a state responsibility” (Harrison and Barnett 2001 p. 5).
- Employers need more encouragement and support to provide work placements for students with disabilities than for non-disabled students.
- Suitable work placements for students with certain categories of disability are difficult to find.
- Many schools do not have the human resources to provide the additional levels of adequate supervision in the workplace that are required for students with disabilities.
- Definitions of “disability” used by schooling systems are generally much narrower than the Commonwealth definition (as expressed, for example, in the Disability

Discrimination Act) and are not necessarily the same from state to state. This creates problems in terms of communication and data collection.

In one NSW school, some special education students are enrolled in industry specific VET courses, but the aim is usually to give a more specific introduction to the world of work in general rather than to provide a pathway to further training or employment in that industry. In other words the value to the students is more experiential than educational, although some do gain certificates of attainment. A special school in South Australia has twenty students enrolled in VET courses. Both of these programs require, and have developed, strong networks of employers willing to take these students for workplace training. The South Australian school has also developed close links with the TAFE college and a local wreckers yard.

Another South Australian school has been offering the Employment Skills Program to students "at risk" and students with disabilities. This course is not a nationally recognised VET course.

A VET Consultant in NSW commented on some of the difficulties. She said that in Schools for Specific Purposes and Juvenile Justice Centres teachers are often primary trained and special education teachers, who do not have the prerequisite skills to become trained VET teachers. At one ED/BD unit that caters to students with multiple disabilities, however, teachers are now being trained in hospitality and construction. What is perhaps needed in these instances is for specifically trained VET teachers to be brought in for this purpose, and to teach in the presence of the students' own teacher. This would, of course, require specific funding.

Queensland teachers interviewed for the AEU project described three types of vocational education courses provided to students with disabilities. Some schools offered non-VET work education subjects. The attraction of these was that they were far easier to organise and provide than VET courses. However, teachers were critical of these programs. Besides failing to provide accredited qualifications and links to employment, these programs were not seen to provide students with the same amount of satisfaction and self-respect as VET courses. The second type of course was a generic VET course such as "work readiness", "work education" and "workplace practices", which deliver level 1 or level 2 AQF certificates. Most teachers saw these courses as providing useful and marketable skills to students, particularly if they were provided prior to or alongside of industry-specific VET. However, other teachers expressed concerns about these courses. "I have a concern" said one high school VET co-ordinator, "about the over-representation of students with special needs in the groups undertaking these courses". Another teacher expressed the view that generic VET certificates are "pointless".

The third type of VET offered to students with disabilities was industry-specific VET, including school-based apprenticeships/traineeships. One special needs teacher interviewed for the AEU project argued strongly for benefits of traineeships for students with disabilities: "it enhances their chances of meaningful employment ... [and] allows them to move away from expectations of a lifestyle based upon the disability pension". The problem with industry-specific VET is that, particularly for students with certain

types and levels of disability (e.g. intellectual impairment, autism spectrum disorder), it is difficult to arrange, and it is difficult to provide the appropriate level of support and supervision. As the special needs teacher pointed out:

Students [with disabilities] who are placed in ... [school-based] traineeship programs require frequent monitoring — duty of care — to continue to achieve in traineeships. Tasks for teachers ... include: ensuring punctual student work arrival time, organisation of the student, the employer and the tasks, workplace survival with CTEP support, [securing] Commonwealth funds to modify the workplace, appropriate use of adaptive technology.

This teacher went on to state that he felt it was “almost impossible for one high school to go it alone” in providing the level of support for these students. He argued for an “aggregated” model of VET provision in which students with disabilities from various schools are placed in suitable programs “conducted by a TAFE/RTO but managed by a high school”.

The ACT Board of the Vocational Education and Training Authority has developed a strategy for increasing opportunities for people with disabilities in VET (ACT BVETA 2000). It found that a number of barriers exist, which ...

... inhibit or prevent many people with disabilities sharing in the benefits of vocational education. Barriers include:

- *fragmented careers and transition from school advice services;*
- *lack of flexibility and reasonable adjustment in some instances;*
- *negative attitudes and assumptions about the capabilities of people with disabilities; and*
- *fragmented information services and difficulty accessing information.*

Among a wide range of strategies the ACT BVETA developed are to:

- *develop links between schools, disability support agencies, training providers, people with disabilities, their parents and carers, to provide information about pathways to VET;*
- *equip staff of RTOs to address equity issues including inclusive delivery and assessment based on training packages;*
- *ensure that there is a range of training available to people with disabilities including pre-vocational training, to improve access to life long learning;*
- *ensure providers of training services are aware of available public funding and purchasing arrangements.*

5.12.4 Rural and Remote Students

Numerous inquiries have been held into rural and remote education and the

disadvantage suffered by these students is reasonably well understood, although not well addressed.

In relation to VETIS, the AEU research undertaken for this project in all states and territories tends to support most of the findings of an NCVET (2001) study of VET in fourteen small rural schools (mostly in Victoria), which identified the important facilitators for the development of VET in these schools. These included commitment from the whole community and strong school, employer and community leadership. It also identified the paucity of resources as the main barrier to this development.¹¹

However the AEU research found additional specific issues that attach to the delivery of VET courses in rural and remote areas.

- Finding work placements for students — This is a particularly pressing difficulty in states where work placements are mandatory.
- Providing professional development for VET teachers — This includes the gaining relevant industry experience and maintaining currency of industry competencies. Because of the travel time required, participation in these activities can require huge resources or massive amounts of teacher goodwill.
- Finding AQTF accredited casual relief teachers.
- Recruiting and training new permanent VET teachers so that their accreditation complies with the AQTF Standards — The teacher turnover rate is far higher in rural and remote schools than it is metropolitan schools and schools in regional centres. One South Australian rural area has 150 VET teachers with workplace assessor training, in order to meet future contingencies. It costs \$1,000 to train each teacher, but they are likely to move on in two or three years, leaving the original school that funded the training without an accredited teacher.
- Networking — Teachers are often unable, because of distance, to attend network meetings, which, for example in NSW, can be considered part of the requirement to maintain industry currency.
- Supervision of students on work placements — Large distances often need to be travelled, for example, to students on remote properties.
- Validation of competency assessments through workshopping with VET teachers in other schools — Because of the difficulties faced in this respect, one small rural central school in NSW was judged in its audit as only "working towards" this particular AQTF standard.
- Provision of VET for small numbers of students.

TAFE colleges often do not have a presence in rural areas. As Colin Boylan has pointed out (Boylan 2002 p. 34) VET in Schools can fill this gap, but the educational disadvantages suffered by rural and remote students are multiplied when it comes to VET by the very factors mentioned earlier in this section. Boylan points to examples in Western Australia, Tasmania and NSW where local communities work with schools to provide access to VET for rural students. Boylan also identifies the usefulness of

¹¹ The facilitators and barriers are listed on pp.6-7 NCVET 2001.

telematics and videoconferencing that are already being used (Boylan 2002 p. 35). Issues however in relation to rural VET in Schools include teachers' workloads, staffing, and technology provision. Boylan says:

Understanding these principles then places a challenge for education authorities to acknowledge the financial costs of operating a remote rural school are different and will be higher than operating similar schools in provincial rural and urban places. Accessing telecommunications, gaining school resources, providing opportunities for excursions and workplace experiences are just some of the differential costs associated with providing quality education in rural places. (p. 35)

Facing these challenges has been difficult. A district VET Co-ordinator reported to the AEU research that in rural areas of South Australia, the sort of VET that is accessible depends on the industry presence, and there are huge disparities. Jobs must be available in the area before the course is offered.

They have found that funding is a real issue because if only one or two students in a small school want to do a course, it is near impossible to accommodate them. In some areas, the TAFE Institutes have been indispensable in ensuring students get into courses. In all states and territories it was found that the problems facing students and teachers were compounded by distance and isolation.

VET in Schools as a Rural Retention Strategy in Tasmania

An interesting approach in which VET in Schools is being used to encourage rural students to stay on at school is occurring in Tasmania.

Tasmania has explored the use of VET to encourage higher participation by rural students and has embarked on a Rural Retention Program. The Tasmanian government has used VET as a means to open district high schools to Years 11 and 12, and to make provision for students to continue their education while remaining at home.

Kilpatrick et al. (2000 p. 3) noted with respect to Tasmania:

One motivator was the consistent and worrying pattern of students who left home, moved into the regional centre and subsequently “dropped out” of senior secondary college within the first three months, to return home to almost certain unemployment or under employment. Up to 50 per cent of students returned to their home town in two of the study sites [northern Tasmania] before completing Year 11.

The difficulties for the students and their families relate to relocation of 15 and 16-year-old students to a new school in a large town. The Year 11 and 12 students who did enrol in VET programs at the schools tended to have poor literacy, numeracy, social and communication skills, suggesting that had they

enrolled in senior secondary college they would have been at risk of dropping out.

A Tasmanian VET Development Officer provided the following information about how the Rural Retention Program operates, during an interview for the AEU project:

The program has been implemented slowly over the past six years and consolidated over the past two years. There are three regional officers with the role of supervising and co-ordinating VET in Schools in rural districts and currently 22 of the 30 district high schools have implemented a Year 11 and 12 program.

There is some on-line delivery of VET and schools receive a .2 staffing allocation if they are actually delivering the program. As Harvey et al. (2001 p. 5) note:

The critical issue in the development of a VET delivery system for school students in rural and remote areas is how to economically deliver quality industry based training to small groups or individuals.

Students doing on-line VET are enrolled at their own school as FTE and the school is staffed as such, so there are teachers available to assist them. There is some talk about a fee-for-service for these programs and a draft document about this is being produced. On-line teaching is not included in the teachers' award and thus is considered as normal teaching.

Notwithstanding the moves to introduce Years 11 and 12 into district high schools, many of the young students (continuers) are still encouraged to go away to college. At many of the district high schools, a large number of the senior students are in fact re-entry adults. At one school, where the program only began two years ago, there are now 75 senior students, most of whom are people from the community. At another there are 50 people spanning three generations. The department speaks of the role of these programs play in rural "community renewal" (Harvey et al. 2001 p. 7).

Much of Tasmania's \$350,000 share of federal funds for skills centres has been devoted to rural schools. The funds have been used, for example, to provide community continuing education and training centres, the impetus for which in some areas has come from the community. It might be used for buildings, or for IT equipment, and some of the centres need expanding, but its aim is to provide access to IT equipment, particularly for off-the-job training. At the moment there are 19 skills centres attached to the 22 district high schools that offer Years 11 and 12.

Part of the federal restrictions on use of these funds for skills centres means that they have to be available for use by the community and local industry/employers and must be run separately from the running of the school, so they are run by the school with a VET

management committee. skills centre money is for resources. It cannot be used for teaching costs. There is discussion of applying a fee-for-service basis for use of these centres.

One skills centre set up in the Tasmanian south, established and managed by a committee of representatives from the Department of Education, TAFE, Skillshare, Adult Education, and the four local schools, is an attempt to address a retention rate (to senior school or TAFE) of less than 50 per cent and a youth unemployment rate of around 40 per cent, 40 per cent of whom are long-term unemployed. The same district began a Year 11 course in 1998 in the TAFE college, which is adjacent to what is now the skills centre. Inadequate participation had acted as a break on enhanced TAFE provision.

Now the TAFE and other education groups work together to address these problems. The centre plays a particular role in training students with a range of disabilities, through partnerships with youth services, employment services, education authorities, the Department of Education's Aboriginal Education Unit and adult literacy programs. (Harvey et al. 2001 pp. 11-13)

Some ECEF money is available but the amounts are small and the demands made on schools and communities are large. In areas where schools can be several hundred kilometres apart, federal requirements about partnerships between them are difficult to fulfil.

District schools' share of ANTA funds is used in these rural areas mainly for professional development with much of it going on travel costs.

5.12.5 *NESB and Cultural Issues*

The lack of recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity in the content and delivery of training is reported as a barrier in learning environments in a paper produced by the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training (NSW BVET date unclear p. 4).

For example, one school in NSW pointed out to an AEU researcher the difficulty of altering tasks in courses based on NTP requirements to take account of linguistic and cultural differences.

Some schools in NSW with large NESB enrolments have made the decision that the only VET they provide is delivered at the school so that linguistic and cultural differences are addressed. Other reasons relate to the cultural barriers to sending students off the school site for program delivery. Such schools are using every means available to them to ensure that quality VET programs can be delivered by the school.

Some issues have also arisen in NSW in relation to the mandatory work placements. In some schools, families of Islamic female students will not allow them to attend workplaces unsupervised. On occasions, schools have been able to discuss the issues with the families and successfully resolve these matters, but in others they have not. If the students don't do the work placements, they may gain the VET credential, but may not receive the HSC.

Draft policy proposals

In developing a coherent policy that clarifies and prioritises the objectives and expectations for school-based VET, the complex relationships between cultural assumptions, institutional arrangements and outcomes for individuals and groups must be examined and addressed.

The Commonwealth and States and Territories should ensure that culturally appropriate services, programs and support structures meet the needs of disadvantaged students and local communities. Such a program would best be part of an Education Equity Program (EEP) linked to a Disadvantaged Regional Areas Program (DRAP) which would provide resources for a whole of government approach combining industry policy, labour market programs, job creation, job placement, education and training and community welfare support and services.

Funding models in the states and territories must recognise that some schools and TAFE institutes face higher costs than others because of their location and/or student profile.

The Commonwealth should contribute additional funds on a dollar for dollar basis to the states and territories to assist schools with VET programs specifically targeted to disadvantaged students.

Access to VET (including to school-based apprenticeships/ traineeships) should be funded and made available to students of compulsory school age where there are sound reasons for doing so.

5.13 Interface between Schools and Other VET Providers

5.13.1 TAFE

There is an urgent need to improve co-operation between public providers of VET. This is more than a matter of differing agendas and poor communication. Indeed, there is evidence of hostile relationships between school and TAFE providers.

This is exacerbated in states where responsibilities for TAFE and schools sit in different ministries and departments and by policies such as competitive tendering which encourage institutions that should be natural partners to behave as competitors in

a training “market”.

Some schools have to some extent become possessive of their links with local industry, usually because they have put a lot of work into these relationships. Some schools see themselves as being in competition with local TAFE colleges, often because of funding, resource and staffing issues, and this operates to the detriment of collaborative and co-operative working relations between schools and TAFEs and is therefore not always in the best interests of the students. These manifestations of tensions are understandable given the political (particularly funding and rhetorical) context in which VET in Schools is operating.

The principal of a large South Australian high school with a long involvement in VET believes that the "recent separation of schools and TAFE into different departments (in South Australia) is recognition of the cultural divide in how schools and TAFE operate and how their executives operate". He continued that it is a "recognition that the attempt to bring them together hasn't worked". He also noted "the different expectations on kids and teachers of the three systems – school, TAFE, workplace". This, of course, does not mean that no new attempts should be made to find a way to make it work.

In Victoria, it was stated that, despite wide-spread use of TAFE to provide or auspice VET in Schools, TAFE institutes were not able to use profile funding to deliver VET in Schools.

When TAFE institutes charge for the delivery of VET in Schools on a cost recovery (or for profit) basis, often their charges are at the higher end of the market due to their higher overheads than private RTOs. This causes resentment in schools and discourages the use of TAFE as a partner. A teacher union officer stated that there were examples of good school-TAFE partnerships but these existed “in spite of rather than because of” government policy and funding guidelines. Some TAFE institutes are genuinely interested in partnerships with schools and charge “reduced” rates. Rather than being seen as educationally desirable and beneficial to students, this is likely to be construed as inappropriate (or unethical) in the context of a competitive training market.

There are, nevertheless, some fine examples of partnerships between schools and TAFE. A Tasmanian district high school has TAFE representation on the management committee of its skills centre, which was jointly established. This collaboration has allowed the school to provide Office Administration (Harvey et al. 2001 p. 9).

Some attempts to establish productive partnerships with TAFE and to lure better TAFE provision into a rural area are difficult because of the small numbers of students involved, thus the provision of on-line learning. In NSW, the only on-line learning in schools is delivered through TAFE, by TAFE teachers. The example in NSW is "Bytes," a pilot program offered to female school students through the New England Institute of TAFE. Students gain Certificate II in IT, which counts towards the UAI. A mentor is provided by the school, which monitors on-line delivery and supervises workplace learning projects.

There are also a number of courses in Tasmania being jointly run by senior colleges and TAFE, for example Hairdressing and Laboratory Operations.

Other examples of productive co-operative arrangements in NSW between TAFE and schools are discussed by Vinson (2002 pp. 75-77). One of these is based on a Memorandum of Cooperation between the TAFE institute and the schools district office and involves a full understanding from both TAFE and schools of the rearrangements that are necessary to accommodate co-operative delivery.

In NSW, each TAFE institute has a TVET manager among whose roles is the co-ordination of co-operative relationships between TAFE and schools in the delivery of VET in Schools. With the VET co-ordinators attached to each of the forty school districts, the TVET managers are in a good position to continue work on the development of productive partnerships where the best use is made of already existing public facilities and teaching resources.

These examples, however, tend to be the exceptions rather than the rule. In Western Australia, a school principal said that there was a lot of talk about partnerships with TAFE, but that he would not characterise the relationship that his school had with the local TAFE (which auspiced VET provision in his school) as a “partnership”. He felt governments had confused the notion of a “partnership” (which was at base co-operative) with the reality of a contract for the delivery of services (which was at base two parties acting in their own enlightened commercial self-interests). “Too much of our VET funding goes to auspicing.”

This also appears to be the case in other states. Most of what are referred to as partnerships between TAFEs and schools in Victoria and South Australia are little more than auspicing arrangements, with the school doing most, if not all, the delivering and assessing of VET courses. In South Australia, auspicing arrangements are accompanied by a memorandum of agreement between the school and the TAFE.

In Queensland, TAFE institutes are not supposed to use profile funding to provide VET to school students (although it does occur in some cases). This is based on the government’s view that schools accessing profile-funded VET through local TAFE institutes would constitute “double-dipping”, that is, that it would be inappropriate for a school that had already itself been funded to provide VET to have access to resources provided to deliver VET in a TAFE institute. The outcome is that schools are discouraged from using TAFE as a VET provider as TAFE will only provide the courses on a user pays basis usually at market rates. A Queensland VET teacher interviewed for the AEU project commented:

The idea that schools shouldn’t be able to get a second bite at VET resourcing is fine in principle. I understand that the government is considering proposals to facilitate resourcing “following the student” for joint school/TAFE programs.

The problem is that these policies are based on an assumption that schools are sufficiently funded to provide VET programs — and that isn't the case.

One school in South Australia said that their relationship with TAFE had been up and down over the past few years. In particular, this related to what the school saw as constant changes in attitude to the school during that time, concerning the memorandum of agreement and auspicing arrangements, and this had meant that the relationship was tense.

The same school reported that TAFE had had a view that the school teachers were not the appropriate people to deliver the courses, yet a number of the school teachers involved actually taught part-time at TAFE. This school called this the "ownership of skills myth". This school is one of the few in South Australia to become an RTO, but delivers some courses under the auspices of TAFE.

Teachers at another South Australian school noted that while there was "antagonism between schools and TAFE about money, resources and jobs, this happens between TAFE colleges as well" and is more a function of the competitive model imposed particularly on TAFE than any deeper antipathy. They suggested it was time for schools to "get back to working co-operatively with TAFE" by, for example, "taking students to the local TAFE and showing them what it's like".

Attempts have been made to smooth the relationship. In one region of South Australia, a school teacher of construction was employed to co-ordinate and improve communication between schools and TAFE. The TAFE institute paid his salary and the project worked well. The co-ordinator worked in a TAFE college but the funding was withdrawn.

In the ACT, there is a TAFE presence on every accreditation panel, a consequence of which is that there is some communication and collaboration at that level. However, teachers believe there is room for far greater communication to occur and it is probable that more productive communication would be possible away from the context of accreditation.

Teachers at one ACT college described the relationship with TAFE thus: "CIT is an RTO in competition with the school as an RTO". They said that if, say, three students wanted to do a course through TAFE, the school would not be able to run the course for the remaining students because of the small numbers and this would disadvantage the other students. Class sizes are also a factor.

TAFE maximum class size is 15, and they can run a course with a relatively small group of students [it was suggested as low as four or five]. In schools, they must have at least 15 students to run the course, so they jealously guard their student numbers.

In Queensland and Western Australia, school teachers of VET commented on TAFE institutes refusing to recognise VET qualifications obtained by students through

schools. In one case this had driven the school to consider applying for RTO status to deliver at the Certificate III level to provide a pathway to further training for their Certificate II students. This was also apparent in NSW, Tasmania, ACT and South Australia. One school in South Australia reported to the AEU project that students enrolling in Certificate IV in TAFE after completing Certificate III at school were told to come back with proof of their teacher's qualifications before they could enrol.

In Tasmania, one TAFE teacher commented that the failure of TAFE teachers to recognise school assessed competencies happened more in the past. He said "the credit system is now being upheld and questioning of quality is now not as bad as it was".

However, it is still being widely reported in NSW that TAFE is insisting students with school-based qualifications undergo RPL before beginning higher certificate level courses. One TAFE TVET co-ordinator sees the failure of TAFE teachers to acknowledge the quality of qualifications gained in schools as "a real problem". The trust between the sectors is not good, nor is the trust in the audit processes that provide registration, or compliance of schools delivering courses under the auspices of TAFE.

One reason offered by school teachers in a number of states and territories for TAFE not accepting Certificates delivered by schools is that TAFE colleges organise their certificate courses with a different choice of units from those chosen by schools. This, they say, has the result that students have not done the units on which further and higher certificate level courses at the TAFE college rely. This situation does not encourage a great deal of confidence in the national recognition and accreditation system on which the whole national training agenda rests. In an attempt to deal with this and others issues surrounding the relationship between TAFE and schools, the ACT Department of Education and Community Services evaluation of VET in Schools (ACT 2002 p. 16) suggested the establishment of a joint Canberra Institute of TAFE/college liaison committee to (among other things) "explore and define articulation issues and co-ordination protocols".

In relation to TAFE colleges not accepting the quality of school students' competencies, one Tasmanian school suggested "it might be helpful to involve TAFE teachers in the school's assessment validation processes".

In both NSW and the ACT it was pointed out that the reluctance on the part of TAFE to recognise certificates gained in schools was because schools devote a much shorter time to delivering certificate courses than do TAFEs. TAFE colleges make decisions based on educational grounds that particular units will take a certain number of hours, while schools are bound by a range of other factors including fitting in with school timetables and system reporting requirements. It should be noted that the hours schools devote to delivering VET courses do meet the requirements of the NTPs. One school in Tasmania pointed out that their relationship with TAFE was rocky, not because of the fee involved, but because of "what the kids are required to do, for example, the hours involved are far greater than if the school delivers the course".

Discussion with TAFE representatives for the AEU project uncovered a range of concerns about VET in Schools. A crucial issue related to job losses. A TAFE teacher in Queensland stated:

I cannot understand why one section of a union is taking work away from another section of the same union. On the last day of 2001 eight teachers from technology at Mt. Gravatt [TAFE campus] finished their careers. These teachers were basically told that there would be no work for them in the future. If VET competencies were taught by us, then maybe those teachers could have been still employed.

TAFE teachers in Tasmania also stressed during the AEU research that their jobs were at stake. In relation to apprenticeships, the traditional domain of TAFE colleges, if students were completing to Certificate II in trade related courses in school then TAFE had lost two-thirds of the courses they had always delivered in the past. The extent to which this is in fact the case is a moot point, but this is a serious perception among TAFE teachers.

TAFE teachers in Tasmania were also concerned about the qualifications of school teachers to deliver Certificates III and IV, especially in relation to industry experience. They also described some of the facilities in schools as "mickey mouse" and criticised the duplication of publicly funded facilities. They also commented that while there was the offer of government funding for establishing more pathways and collaboration, the school sector was resistant to this. One working example given of the sort of pathways recommended was the delivery of hairdressing, where a school teaches the theory and TAFE delivers the practical competencies.

In NSW there are some innovative approaches to the issue of avoiding the duplication in provision of public industry standard facilities. In one regional district, a flexible learning centre is being built on the TAFE site with funds jointly provided by the NSW DET, the local high school and TAFE.

The facilities will be used by students from the TAFE and the high school. A number of facilities are being built in high schools in rural areas where there is no TAFE provision, using funding through the NSW DET minor works budget.

In South Australia, TAFE teachers spoke about three factors in particular:

- The quality of the school students' competencies — When this issue was teased out it transpired that the TAFE college that was complaining about the quality was in fact the same college that was responsible for quality assurance at the schools in question, by virtue of its auspicing arrangements. On further discussion it appeared that the TAFE teachers had no confidence in the AQTF standards on which the audits are based.
- OH&S concerns — In particular, this related to construction courses. TAFE Teachers believed that safety standards were not being adhered to in relation to class sizes, facilities and the teaching of OH&S units.

- Teacher qualifications — It was not thought that the qualifications and industry experience of school VET teachers were up to scratch. Again, what seems to be at issue is that the AQTF standard is low, although it should be conceded that there are indeed TAFE teachers whose qualification standard is lower than that of school VET teachers and who have no teacher qualifications.

In NSW similar issues have been raised by TAFE teachers in their concern about the quality of VET in Schools. TAFE teachers in NSW see the larger class sizes in schools as undermining their working conditions.

TAFE class sizes were achieved because of OH&S reasons, yet TAFE teachers' campaigns to maintain these class sizes are threatened by the larger class sizes in schools. A VET in Schools class sizes survey conducted by the NSW Teachers Federation found that there was great variation in the extent to which individual schools were willing to make decisions about limiting VET class sizes. In Tasmania, most teachers reported that a VET class under 20 usually was not given approval by the school to begin. Indeed, VET class sizes of up to 30 were reported. As has been noted elsewhere in this paper, a solution to this is not easy. Lowering the class sizes for VET in Schools will require, in some states at least, changes to the school staffing formula. Until this is achieved, lowering class sizes for VET will affect the ability of schools to offer a broad curriculum. Moves toward greater inclusion of level III units in VET in Schools courses are likely to increase the tensions between TAFE and schools.

TAFE teachers in South Australia reported during the AEU research that what was needed was greater consultation with teachers about what should occur. For example they called for a working party to deal with the issues and to arrive at ways to achieve a better relationship between TAFE colleges and schools, particularly in relation to quality assurance. It should be noted that both school teachers and TAFE teachers acknowledged that quality is variable within each sector as much as between the sectors, and that quality assurance processes are not, nor should they be, inspections of teachers' teaching ability.

There is little doubt that, in the words of a NSW teacher, "some subjects lend themselves to school and some to TAFE". One of the matters that should be discussed between TAFE and schools is the development of "some common understandings about what should be offered and where. These talks must involve teachers and lecturers in the workplace who have the practical experience and expertise" (Farmer and Karpinski 2002b p. 9).

However, in South Australia, the recent division of School Education and Training into two separate departments strikes a note of concern among many. One South Australian principal thought it was a recognition that the attempt to co-ordinate VET in Schools with TAFE had been a failure. Others see it as the beginning of defining roles more specifically. For example, one school which has just undergone an audit to extend its scope to a level III Certificate (the result of the audit is unknown at the time of writing)

believed that "the split in the department could lead to TAFE claiming the area back". (This refers not to the industry area but to Certificate III as opposed to I and II.) In fact, at the audit a question was asked about the role of TAFE and schools in relation to teacher qualifications and accreditation and facilities.

Unlike South Australia, some states and territories have expressed confidence in recent moves to merge departments of education and training into one. On the other hand a recently released chapter of the *Inquiry into the Provision of Public Education in NSW* on "Connecting Schools and TAFE" (Vinson 2002 p. 64) is ...

... not convinced that the integration of the Schools Division and NSW TAFE in a single administrative Department has delivered the advantages that were confidently predicted by the Director-General of Education in 1998.

The Inquiry goes on to recommend (2002 p. 65):

That after a further period of two years, the Minister of Education review whether the integration of the Schools Division and TAFE NSW into a single administrative Department has been successful and whether such an arrangement should continue into the future. The review should take account of whether the intended synergies have been obtained, whether the education of school students and the training of TAFE students has been materially advanced by the merger, and its capacity for integrated policy development, staffing and resource management.

Some NSW schools have attempted to use the provisions of the latest award, where for the first time provision is made for TAFE teachers to teach in schools and school teachers in TAFE. In relation to the former arrangement, making use of the expertise of a TAFE teachers appears to make more practical and financial sense, than training school teachers. However, while the NSW DET provides an orientation program for TAFE teachers teaching in schools, the specific and different cultures of the two sectors and the difference in their conditions and the way they are paid act as more of a barrier than any other factor.

At one NSW school where TAFE teachers are currently employed part-time, difficulties have arisen over pastoral care roles, playground duty, attendance at parent/teacher nights etc. The principal reported to the AEU project that the school was unlikely to try this again. A NSW TAFE TVET (VET in Schools) Co-ordinator believes that a portion of the fault lies with the failure of the DET to consult more widely about their orientation program. In another district, TAFE teachers employed to teach in schools have resigned, citing the different cultures as too difficult to manage. In this same district, some schools have arranged for school teachers to take students to the local TAFE college where they teach them in the TAFE's facilities.

From the point of view of improving the relationship between schools and TAFE and making sensible use of already existing expertise, not to mention ensuring TAFE teachers' jobs are not lost, this is indeed a disappointing outcome.

There are clearly places where the initial tensions between the TAFE and schools sectors have abated and co-operative, productive and innovative programs are now operating, and this is being fostered through a range of mechanisms, such as joint professional development days. Yet there still exist profound tensions in some places which are counterproductive to achieving quality in programs being offered.

Alleviating these tensions will take time. Defence of territory is a powerful barrier to achieving outcomes that meet the needs of teachers in each sector as well as the students.

VET teachers in schools and TAFE must work together to ensure the quality of provision which has traditionally been provided in the public sector. In the words of Bradbury et al. (2000 p. 6):

The primary challenge is that of merging two entrenched cultures and the consequent development of a new culture which has as a foundation parity of esteem.

One of the suggestions offered by Bradbury et al. (2000 p. 7) to achieve "an effective relationship between schools and TAFE would be a reciprocal mentoring relationship" which might "allow them to benefit mutually, and hence deliver an enhanced product for the students in their care". They note that "this in fact appears to be the type of relationship that has been developed in the places where the VET for senior secondary students programs are most effective".

5.13.2 Private RTOs

The extent of schools' use of private providers varies from state to state. In most states/territories there is no restriction on schools using private providers. The one confining factor is cost, which must be borne by the school or the students. In some instances, schools endeavour to subsidise such costs in the interests of equity, but in others the students are expected to pay. For example in some schools in Victoria the costs for enrolling in the Cisco course are passed on to the students.

The AEU research found that some schools had no philosophical problem with using private providers when they could have used a TAFE college. In those schools the fight for public education did not seem to extend to public training in the form of TAFE colleges.

In South Australia, regional networks are provided with state funding for a range of activities including to "encourage co-operation between schools, TAFE institutes and private providers" (South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment 2002 p. 12).

There have been a number of examples of schools, or groups of schools, including

government schools, establishing private providers for VET in Schools. In South Australia, for example, a group of schools set up a private provider using ANTA funds, while in NSW a group of government and private schools established a community provider to deliver courses across the schools. The latter was classified by the DET as a private provider and was subject to the restrictions discussed below.

In NSW there are tight restrictions on the use of private providers. Schools must complete appropriate paper work that explains their use of these providers. They must show that the school itself is unable to deliver the course. This may be because they have no trained teacher or they lack appropriate facilities and resources. They must also provide proof that the local TAFE college cannot provide the course.

This may be for the same reasons, but may also include the fact that the TAFE college cannot deliver the course at an appropriate time. The TAFE college must sign a form acknowledging that the school approached it and it was unable to deliver the course. The definition of a private provider is any provider other than a public school or TAFE, thus including community providers.

The one exception to this provision in NSW is in relation to school-based trainees. Because of user choice regulations, when a student is a trainee, the student and employer have the unfettered right to choose the training provider.

Draft policy proposals

Plans for the development of school-industry links and the use of appropriately qualified industry and VET staff in VET in Schools programs should be built upon the goal of developing a co-operative model of the provision of programs with other public schools and TAFE institutes.

Schools and clusters of schools should be encouraged to establish links and strategic alliances/partnerships with local industry organisations, community and TAFE as a means of strengthening school-industry-community links.

Arrangements should be put in place to facilitate the use of appropriately trained teachers across the schools and TAFE sectors, with attention being paid to the culture, working conditions, expectations and needs of each sector.

State and territory education and training authorities should encourage the establishment of consultative education groups at the local level, with representatives of both TAFE and schools, to determine where and how best to deliver the range of VET in Schools courses. These consultative groups should involve classroom teachers and senior managers and have an overall planning role.

The structures and resourcing of the vocational education system should reflect the role of TAFE as a vital public asset that is the predominant provider of VET. State and territory education departments should ensure that public schools do not use private providers unless there is no public provision available.

Steps should be taken to ensure that the VET system is, in fact as well as in theory, a system of nationally recognised qualifications and accreditation. This may mean altering the way National Training Packages are constructed and/or establishing representative bodies, at the level of clusters of schools and TAFE colleges, to co-ordinate accreditation arrangements between schools and TAFE.

5.14 Employer Involvement

Employers tend to have specific expectations in relation to VET in Schools and the range of purposes, complexity of policy and variety of programs that typify VET in Schools can lead to distrust by employers of school programs (refer, for example, to the discussion above about employer concerns about embedded models of VET delivery in schools).

Furthermore, Spark (1999 p. 54) found that “lack of understanding by enterprises of the training reform agenda, training packages or competency standards” was an area identified by teachers as one of the “barriers to continued VET provision at their own schools”. Some employers apparently have difficulty distinguishing between work experience and structured work placements. To deal with this, the NSW Board of Studies VET Advisory Committee prepared, with the aid of industry bodies, leaflets to go out to host employers explaining the difference. In Tasmania, the department has decided to change the term to vocational placements to avoid this confusion. The SDA (2002 p. 5) claims that some retail employers use structured work placements as “little more than a source of cheap labour”.

There are also some systemic disincentives to employers and students. For example, until now students who obtained a VET qualification while at school have been ineligible when they enter the workforce to attract a training subsidy for an employer. Employers therefore have given preference in employment to school leavers without a VET qualification. Students may exit school with a VET qualification which may not be sufficient to gain them employment and be locked out of further training opportunities because the opportunity for them to enter a subsidised training arrangement with an employer has been removed. The employer incentive policy has recently been amended to address this barrier to employment.

Commitment by employers can make or break a VET program, but employer

involvement in VET in Schools is variable. Some schools have developed excellent partnerships with local employers. However, in some areas employers are reluctant to become involved and the burden of enticing employers to become involved in VET in Schools, and sustaining that involvement, can present a significant task for a school, particularly a smaller school. This is a task that could be undertaken by school systems and training councils at the state level and by district or school cluster based VET co-ordination at the local level.

Teachers in Tasmania thought that a more co-ordinated and centralised approach to employers would also have the effect of ensuring employers were not overburdened by being approached by a number of schools. There was the view that in this respect, schools and systems needed to work smarter and relieve the pressure on employers whose contribution is essential.

This is already occurring in some states, and in some districts in others. The extent to which the organisation of these partnerships is formal varies. In South Australia, there are twenty regional partnerships in each district, such as Southern Futures.

These partnerships are state funded and involve more than just Structured Workplace Learning, but include learning about work, community involvement, career education and "enterprise" skills.

Funding for the development of these relationships is variable. In the Mitsubishi example below, participating schools each contribute 0.1 of staffing to operate the scheme, and this comes from the schools general funding or staffing allocation.

In Tasmania, one district high school's establishment of strong links with local employers, as well as with bigger state employers in the forestry and the meat processing industries, has been assisted by funding through ANTA's "Framing the Future" project. However, this funding is not on-going and is submission based, adding to teachers' work. This school is doing further work to attract additional funding to develop similar partnerships with the Agriculture ITAB. Other senior colleges in Tasmania rely heavily on ITABs who have a lot of influence in relation to finding work placements. In NSW a number of partnerships are in place, with various funding arrangements, for example the Business Enterprise Network (BEN), the Liverpool Workplace Learning Program, which is a member of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and the Fairfield Workplace Learning Partnership which receives both federal and state funds.

Some interesting models of partnership arrangements exist and are working well, for example, with Mitsubishi in Adelaide. The following quote (Blight 2002 p. 5) is interesting, not just because it illustrates what the program is about, but also because of the rhetoric about the value of these partnerships to industry. It appears that the intrinsic value of training future workforces is not enough to persuade employers to participate.

Manufacturing Learning Centres (MLCs) grew from a project that commenced in 1991 between Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd and six local schools aimed at raising the manufacturing industry profile. Today over 200 students per year learn on-the-job, developing industry-specific competencies in eight certificate career streams and generic work skills of communication, teamwork and problem solving. Young people are contributing to the output of the host organisation known as "manufacturing learning centres".

Some fifty networked enterprises, education and community organisations form the ever-growing "collaborative learning clusters". Mitsubishi Motors Australia suppliers and other manufacturing companies embrace the partnership within their human resources strategies.

What begins as an education-industry relationship results in growth of industry-to-industry partnerships. Leaders working from different companies towards a common goal for youth, find opportunities to work together to add value to other aspects of their own company operations.

But to what extent is the success of these partnerships shared and replicated? Two points need to be made:

1. Concern has been expressed (particularly, the AEU research found in South Australia) about the fact that links between some schools and large industries are exclusive and lock out students from other schools (even those in the local area) from participating in programs. Therefore students' opportunities are limited by what school they attend. This is an equity issue which sits uncomfortably with the concept of public education being available to all, and is a symptom of the competitive environment that public schools now find themselves in even in relation to other public schools.
2. The Mitsubishi program centres on a large industry, car manufacturing. This tends to be the case with other similar programs elsewhere, particularly in relation to school-based apprenticeships/traineeships. Where there is no large industry — for example, in Tasmania but also in many regions of other states and territories — schools and co-ordinators are attempting to develop other models that offer real opportunities.

Employers have recently been debating the extent to which what they really desire are technical skills or "employability" skills. What the latter means is somewhat unclear but employers are increasingly saying that this is what they want. (For discussion of employability skills see above at section 5.8.3.)

Draft policy proposals

Funding for the development and continuation of the relationships between

schools and employers must be ongoing.

State and territory governments should develop and fund methods of educating employers about the importance and nature of work placements, their role in ensuring successful training of VET in school students, and the expectations they can reasonably have about the students. Peak industry groups, such as The Business Council of Australia, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Australian Industry Group must be persuaded to take greater responsibility for the provision and quality of work placement. They and local Chambers of Commerce should be engaged to reach small businesses.

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should ensure that where large industry is involved in VET in Schools it is on the basis that all students have a right of access to the programs.

Where particular schools and teachers have developed good relationships with local businesses, funding should be made available to the school or district to develop those relationships, expand them and extend them to a wider group of schools and employers.

5.15 Student Work Placements

The research literature generally supports the view that integrating structured workplace learning (SWL) into VET programs in schools is desirable (e.g. Harris et al. 1998; Hawke 1995; Sweet 1995). Spark (1999 p. 55) stated that in her research “all schools involved in work placements cited them as a great strength of their program”. However, Spark’s research also showed that “there are numerous issues surrounding work placements for senior secondary schools” (p. 9).

SWL does not form part of the agreed MCEETYA definition of VET in Schools and the degree to which states/territories see this as an important part of VET varies.

From 1997-2000, for example, Western Australian schools were required to have an SWL (on-the-job) component in their VET programs. While the Western Australian Department of Education now adopts the MCEETYA definition of VET, there continues to be a strong emphasis on SWL in Western Australian schools. In Queensland, on the other hand, structured work placements are not generally incorporated into VET courses.

The quality of student work placements appears to vary along a continuum from experiences not too different to “work experience” programs — where little structured learning or assessment takes place and having in some cases little direct connection to the VET course being undertaken — to structured experiences of work including specific on-the-job training and assessment which is fully integrated into the VET

course. Of the 60 per cent of VET students reported to be engaged in work placements, not all were engaged in structured workplace learning.

The SDA (2002 p. 5) asserts that due to timetabling pressures schools often encourage students to undertake work placements at night, on weekends, or during school holidays and identifies a potential problem with such work placements: "In industries such as retail there is little opportunity for ... structured learning if the student is rostered to work during peak trading periods".

A deputy principal in a Queensland rural school identified student work placement as "a worrying equity issue" for rural schools. He stated "while it may be desirable to offer appropriate work placement ... many schools outside metropolitan and provincial Queensland will find this impossible ... what do students do when they are doing four to six subjects in differing VET areas?" Peter Noonan, former acting CEO of ANTA stated in 1998 that there would not be enough work placements to sustain the expansion of workplace learning for all (cited in Spark 1999 p. 21).

This is certainly an issue that has been debated in NSW. The Board of Studies conducted a review of the availability of work placements. This review found that there are indeed problems, which are identified in particular geographic areas and in particular industries, IT being the most severe of the latter. With work placements being mandatory in Industry Curriculum Frameworks, this is clearly an equity issue. To overcome some of the difficulties a percentage of the work placement that can be done in a simulated workplace environment is specified in some of the frameworks.

Without the workplace component, students will gain their VET certificate if SWL is not mandated in the National Training Package, but the VET course will not contribute to their HSC. If they do not have extra subjects in Year 12, then this would mean that they would not qualify for the HSC.

In the ACT, where work placements are only mandatory if this is requirement is contained in the NTP, some schools reported that they only send their best students on work placements in order to protect the good reputation the school has with employers.

Spark (1999 p. 9) reported that "finding and organising work placements" was time consuming and that schools "repeatedly" mentioned that they had difficulties in finding suitable employers. In some instances, the AEU research found that schools jealously guarded their relationships with employers in relation to work placements because of the amount of effort and time that had gone into finding and organising them.

Cumming and Carbines (1997 p. 19) note significant issues for schools in terms of their organisation and timetabling. Of specific concern was the missing by students on structured work placements of non-vocational classes and the need for schools to provide "catch up" arrangements. One Western Australian VET co-ordinator interviewed for the AEU project described how his school had "solved" this problem by scheduling

all SWL “off the grid” (i.e. having a separate program and timetable for SWL students). This also presents problems, however, as students doing SWL were segregated from the rest of the senior school. A NSW school, after years of trial and error, now has block placements where all VET students in the school go out to work placements at the same time. The blocks appear on the school calendar so that teachers of other subjects can plan for when VET students will be absent from class. This does however pose some problems for host employers in terms of what is the most suitable time for them.

A recent study in the ACT (ACT 2002 p. 84) found that

Synchronizing the timing of work placements with the requirement to assess students on competencies raised concerns. Synchronizing semester dates, BSSS deadlines and work placement assessments was not always easy or indeed possible.

In Tasmania teachers felt that the associated documentation ...

... is unrealistic. All phone calls to the workplace must be documented, visits to the workplace logged in the co-ordinator's (teacher's) diary and the Vocational Placement Assessment Record. We conduct inductions with the employers and usually visit the workplace twice during a two week block.

These teachers, however, believed that their visits to the workplace were important for both the students and the host employers, even though the visits were often of necessity short. If the students do not go out on co-ordinated blocks, teachers teach the rest of the students during the day and visit worksites during the afternoon or at weekends.

Cumming and Carbines (1997 pp. 16-17) identified the role of a workplace co-ordinator as a key enabling factor in the success of structured workplace learning but noted that “establishing a position of full-time co-ordinator and providing the administrative support required to implement these programs were major cost items”.

While the participation figures for students in Australia engaged in structured workplace learning (SWL) have increased, the Commonwealth funding directed to SWL has fallen from \$12.5m in 1998-99 to \$10.9m in 2001-02.

The Commonwealth provision to the ASTF/ECEF specifically for SWL increased from \$10m in 1997-98 to \$10.9m in 2001-02. However, in 1998-99 the ASTF contributed a further \$2.5m to SWL co-ordination from its core funding, while in 2001-02 there was no contribution from this source (now the ECEF). Total amounts of ASTF/ECEF funding devoted to SWL each year from 1996-97 are contained in the following table.

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
C'wth Prov (\$m)	7.5	10	10	10	10	10.9
ASTF/ECEF Funding (\$m)	10.8	11.5	12.5	10.5	10.3	10.9

Analysis of this table demonstrates the withdrawal of the ECEF from the funding of SWL co-ordination. The ECEF itself notes that: “Essentially, 2002 is viewed as a transitional year while the ECEF Board reviews its strategic plan and explores the most appropriate business model for the future in line with its broader mandate” (ECEF 2002a).

Given the difficulties experienced by schools, teachers and systems in relation to the co-ordination of SWL as was identified by the research conducted by the AEU, the future role of the ECEF should be reviewed, not merely by the ECEF Board itself, but by MCEETYA in broad consultation with schools whose students are engaged in SWL. In some states, such as NSW, state governments have contributed considerable funding to facilitate work placement co-ordination and strategies to draw employers into the training network. Commonwealth funding for the co-ordination of SWL must not be withdrawn.

Draft policy proposals

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should support the expansion of structured work placements as a part of VET in Schools. Co-ordination of these should be centrally funded with dedicated co-ordinators with experience (wherever possible) in industry, training and schools.

Specific Commonwealth funding for industry links in relation to the organisation of work placements should continue. This funding should be ongoing.

The role of the ECEF should be reviewed by MCEETYA after substantial consultation with schools and teachers currently engaged in VET programs with SWL components.

The ECEF Review should include consideration of the structure and composition of the ECEF Board and the appointment of educationalists including an AEU representative to the Board.

State and territory governments should ensure, through appropriate arrangements, that the burden of organisation and supervision of Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) that currently falls to teachers is appropriately regulated and rewarded or compensated.

State and territory governments should establish arrangements to ensure that extra staffing is available to allow for students absent on work placements to catch up work missed.

The issue of VET teachers being on-call as emergency contacts for work placements out of school hours (including during school vacations) should be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

5.16 School-based Apprenticeships/Traineeships (SBAs)

SBA participation rates vary markedly across states and territories and there has been much debate about the reasons for this. A Victorian Education Department review project in 2001 found that reasons for the low participation rate in Victoria include the fact that "schools do not actively offer or facilitate this pathway as their fundamental structure and [the school's] orientation is academic" (DEET 2001 p. 2).

Teachers interviewed for the AEU project said that school-based apprenticeship/traineeship arrangements require a lot from students in terms of organisation, commitment and determination to complete the three requirements: paid work and on-the-job training, off-the-job training, and completion of the rest of their VCE courses. While the Victorian DEET report (p. 6) suggests that school-based apprenticeships/traineeships are a viable pathway for students at risk of not completing Years 11 & 12, teachers in most states believe that the disparate and demanding nature of the requirements often put meeting those requirements beyond the reach of those very students.

Student motivation, readiness and commitment are real issues. Some teachers in NSW believe that the requirement there (which is not the case in all states/territories) that students complete all the course requirements by the end of Year 12 (with a little bit of latitude to complete after the HSC) is unrealistic and that a number of trainees will not see it through. Indeed the completion rates nationally are only around 50 per cent. There is also a view that the program caters to a niche market and that the numbers will never be large.

Another key issue is organisational. Schools must often reorganise timetables and other structures and offer support programs to accommodate a very small number of students participating in school-based apprenticeships/traineeships and this is often hard to justify.

While funding is provided to schools to support school-based apprenticeships/traineeships¹², the problems schools have identified are not so easily addressed by funding unless that funding is directed towards the necessary staffing

¹² Government subsidies vary between around \$500 to \$850 from state to state.

both for school re-organisation purposes, preparation of training plans, and student guidance and support. Government subsidies are provided on a per student basis so a school needs to have a "critical mass" of participants in school-based apprenticeships/traineeships before the funding can be put to effective use. In the ACT, teachers' perceptions are that funding available to New Apprenticeship Centres (NACs) for signing up trainees is out of proportion to that available to schools whose monitoring and recording role is on-going.

While the Victorian report notes the barriers that the inflexibility of schools (and industry) throw up, it also notes that "overall it is the lack of strategy and support to schools that underlies Victoria's low participation rates," (p. 7) and calls for "dedicated funding to schools".

In much the same way as the DEET report (p. 10) calls for a redefinition of "completions" that encompasses a broader range of useful outcomes, so the AEU project found that VET in Schools teachers in most states believe that the definition of a successful outcome of VET in Schools is too narrow and should include students who leave school before completion to take up, for example, a job offer.

The speed with which states and territories have dealt with the industrial barriers to part-time school-based traineeships varies. In Queensland these issues were finalised early while in Victoria they were not. It appears that these differences have had quite an effect on the participation rate in each state/territory.

Another factor affecting participation rates is the extent to which other VET in Schools subjects include a period of structured workplace learning.

In Queensland, where the take-up of these traineeships has been by far the greatest, there is no requirement for structured workplace learning in other VET courses, while in NSW, completion of VET courses as part of an Industry Curriculum Framework for the Higher School Certificate has a mandatory work placement component, so there is an alternative VET pathway that incorporates structured workplace learning to the more complex SBA. This is also the case in Tasmania, where SBAs did not occur until very recently, and are only now being offered as a pilot in a limited number of industry areas and in extremely small numbers.

Equally important in terms of participation is the commitment of local industry. A large proportion of SBAs work in big industry, for example the Toyota T3 Project in NSW. Tasmania, for example, has no big industry to speak of and there is a view there that this helps explain their low participation rates. However, a Queensland VET co-ordinator in an area with a high number of SBAs stated that "most" of these were placed with small employers.

Another issue impacting on participation rates is the flexibility with which education

authorities in each state/territory allow students to begin studies for their final credential at Year 10. Where this occurs, it is possible for a school-based trainee to begin either the traineeship or final credential early rather than add a year on to the end of Year 12 to meet the requirements.

The conflict between the requirements of SBAs and the need for a tertiary entrance score or good final credential for TAFE entry is compounded by the time an SBA takes students away from other subjects. The extent to which this is an issue depends very much on individual students' aims and expectations for the future.

Other disincentives include the fact that many students can earn more money in part time jobs than they can earn in SBAs.

Many teachers reported that a real problem for students who gain a Certificate I or II while at school has been that Federal government incentive payments to employers did not extend to the case of a person with previous qualifications. This means that these students have often been denied the opportunity to become a trainee once they leave school. The recent change in Federal policy should alleviate this particular problem.

The opportunity for the employment component of the school-based apprenticeship/traineeship is virtually non-existent in many rural and remote areas. Special programs need to be established with the employment component provided by government.

While an ACT government report found that some employers have questioned the quality of training provided for trainees by school teachers with little industry experience — an untested view, as the report notes (ACT 2002 p. 48) — in Queensland an evaluation of the program has concluded, among other outcomes:

- *Cancellation rates for SBNA participants appear to be considerably lower than for mainstream apprentices and trainees (1999 rate of around 28 per cent compared with up to 50 per cent for mainstream).*
- *SBNAs have had a positive influence on retention rates within schools (12 per cent of SBNA participants indicated the SBNA was a significant factor in retention).*
- *SBNAs have appealed strongly to many employers with 88 per cent recommending the program to others. (South Australian Department of Education Training and Employment 2002 p. 23; see also Andrews et al. 2000 and Grace 2002)*

The MCEETYA target of 20,000 part time school-based trainees by 2004 is not only unlikely to be met, but is unlikely even to be approached. The appropriateness of this target should be reviewed, given that its attainment will likely divert funds from other areas of education and training budgets.

Draft policy proposals

The school-based apprenticeship/traineeship program should be reviewed with

particular attention to the following issues:

- *adequacy of funding;*
- *organisational implications for schools and education systems;*
- *inconsistencies in approaches and take-up amongst states and territories;*
- *employer support;*
- *relationship with other VET provision in schools;*
- *industrial arrangements and training agreements;*
- *access and equity issues;*
- *staff and local training and development.*

State, Territory and local governments should engage further in school-based apprenticeships/traineeships by providing the opportunity for students to train in the public sector and/or publicly funded projects, particularly in rural areas.

5.17 Student Protection and Duty of Care Issues

As the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA 2002 p. 6) points out:

All students undergoing a part-time new apprenticeship while at school are covered by a signed training agreement but that is not the case for VET in school students on the unpaid pathway.

As noted above (see section on student work placements), the availability, use and quality of work placements for students varies. Some work placements are an integrated, compulsory dimension of VET courses in schools while other work placements are optional extras.

Where schools have difficulties finding places for students and teachers are expected to oversee work placements with little or no support (e.g. time, compensation for expenses, provision of travel), the chances that there will be inadequate supervision and learning at the work site increase dramatically.

Where this is the case, work placements can become “indistinguishable from normal work ... exercises in providing cheap and exploited labour” (SDA 2002 p. 8). Unions have expressed concerns that in some cases VET students are displacing existing workers.

Schools have a role to play in ensuring that employers provide work placements that deliver meaningful and appropriate workplace learning.

Three ways of enhancing the ability of schools to do this would be to provide resources to schools to support workplace learning, including full-time work placement coordinators with appropriate industry experience, to establish and resource mechanisms at the systems level to encourage and monitor appropriate behaviour by employers in

the use and treatment of students in structured work placements, and to review models of student work placement to define and identify best practice.

In the course of interviews for the AEU project, a VET co-ordinator in Western Australia admitted to being “worried” about duty of care and workplace health and safety issues in relation to structured workplace learning for students. Another stated that “you just can’t visit all the work sites before students are placed on site”.

Teachers are being required to complete risk assessments of workplaces where students are engaged in work placements, a role they are not trained for nor given time to perform. There are serious legal implications involved in risk assessments, not to mention workload issues. However, it appears that in many schools, such risk assessments are being left to the host employers. One Victorian school says they have no time allocated to do this and so rely on the employer with respect to these aspects of students' work placements.

In a number of states and territories, teachers have been required to be on call as an emergency contact for students on work placements out-of-school hours (and for their host employers). These hours are not confined to a few hours at the end of the school day. In some states VET teachers are on-call at night, at the week-end and during school vacations. In the ACT as a general rule, work placements are not organised out-of-school hours; however, in South Australia and Tasmania teachers reported giving students and host employers their home and mobile phone numbers, and being on call at any time. In one school, arrangements had to be made for another teacher to take over this role, because the VET teacher had arranged to go away during the school holidays. These teachers said they agreed to this “because it is my duty-of-care. Someone has to be responsible for them”.

Legal advice was obtained by the NSW Teachers Federation to the effect that teachers' normal duty-of-care does not extend to these lengths but that by agreeing to place one's name and contact details on emergency cards, teachers were by their own agency extending their duty-of-care. Teachers were advised not to take on this role. However, it remains the case that teachers in NSW and in other states and territories are doing so.

Draft policy proposals

In order to ensure that employers provide work placements that deliver meaningful and appropriate work place learning and are not exploitative, systems should:

- *provide resources to schools to support workplace learning including full-time work placement co-ordinators preferably with appropriate industry experience;*
- *establish and resource mechanisms at the systems level to encourage and monitor appropriate behaviour by employers in the use and*

- treatment of students in structured work placements;*
- *review models of student work placement to define and identify best practice.*

Funding for the training of teachers in workplace health and safety and in the nature of their responsibilities in relation to student work placements must be included as a part of the funding for VET in Schools.

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7. Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACCI	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AEU	Australian Education Union
AEW	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker
AIEW	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Worker
AIG	Australian Industry Group
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ARC	Accreditation and Registration Council (ACT)
ARF	Australian Recognition Framework (<i>replaced by AQTF</i>)
ASCH	Annual Student Contact Hours
ASTF	Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (<i>replaced by ECEF</i>)
ATSIPTAC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council
AVETRA	Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association
AWA	Australian Workplace Agreement
BCA	Business Council of Australia
BEN	Business Enterprise Network
BOS	Board of Studies (NSW)
BSSS	Board of Senior Secondary Studies (ACT)
BSSSS	Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (Qld)
BVET	Board of Vocational Education and Training (NSW & ACT)

CAC	Curriculum Advisory Committee (Qld)
CAP	Country Area Program (NSW)
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPT	Community Employment Placement and Training
CGC	Commonwealth Grants Commission
CIT	Canberra Institute of TAFE
DECS	Department of Education and Community Services (ACT)
DEET	Department of Education, Employment and Training (Vic)
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training (<i>Commonwealth</i>)
DET	Department of Employment and Training (Qld)
DET	Department of Education and Training (NSW)
DRAP	Disadvantaged Regional Areas Program
ECEF	Enterprise and Career Education Foundation
ED/BD	Emotional Disabilities/Behaviour Disorders
EEP	Education Equity Program
ENTER	Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank
EVE	Enterprise and Vocational Education
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GTC	Group Training Company
GTO	Group Training Organisation
HEBTP	Hobart Education Business Training Partnership
HECS	Higher Education Contributions Scheme
HSC	Higher School Certificate

ICF	Industry Curriculum Framework (NSW)
IT	Information Technology
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Body
JJC	Juvenile Justice Centre (NSW)
LLENS	Local Learning and Education Networks (<i>Victoria</i>)
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MINCO	ANTA Ministerial Council
MLC	Manufacturing Learning Centre
NAC	New Apprenticeship Centre
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NEILNS	National Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NSWTF	New South Wales Teachers Federation
NTCE	Northern Territory Certificate of Education
NTETA	Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority
NTF	National Training Framework
NTP	National Training Package
NTQC	National Training Quality Council
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OP	Overall Position (<i>tertiary entrance rank - Queensland</i>)
OPCET	Office of Post-Compulsory Education and Training (Tas)
OTAE	Office of Training and Adult Education (ACT)
OTTE	Office of Training and Tertiary Education (Vic)

PAS	Publicly Assessed Subject (SA)
PES	Publicly Examined Subject (SA)
QSA	Queensland Studies Authority
QTU	Queensland Teachers Union
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SAC	Subject Advisory Committee (<i>Queensland</i>)
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SAS	School Assessed Subject (<i>South Australia</i>)
SAS	Study Area Specification (<i>Queensland</i>)
SAT	School-based Apprenticeship/Traineeship
SBA	School-based Apprenticeships/Traineeship
SBNA	School-based New Apprenticeship
SDA	Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association
SIPS	Schools in Industry Placement Scheme
SOSE	Studies of Society and the Environment
SSABSA	Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia
SWL	Structured Workplace Learning
TAC	Training Accreditation Council (<i>Western Australia</i>)
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TAReC	Tasmanian Accreditation and Recognition Committee
TASSAB	Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board
TASTA	Tasmanian State Training Authority
TCE	Tasmanian Certificate of Education

TER	Tertiary Entrance Rank
TTAC	Tasmanian Training Agreements Committee
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TAFE-school) <i>(NSW)</i>
UAI	University Admission Index
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VEGAS	Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETAB	Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board <i>(NSW)</i>
VETIS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools
VETiSD	Vocational Education in Schools Directorate, NSW DET
VTAC	Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre
WACE	Western Australian Certificate of Education

8. Appendix

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training

Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools

Terms of Reference

The House Committee on Education and Training is to inquire into the place of vocational education in schools, its growth and development and its effectiveness in preparing students for post-school options, with particular reference to:

- the range, structure, resourcing and delivery of vocational education programs in schools, including teacher training and the impact of vocational education on other programs;
- the differences between school-based and other vocational education programs and the resulting qualifications, and the pattern of industry acceptance of school-based programs;
- vocational education in new and emerging industries; and
- the accessibility and effectiveness of vocational education for indigenous students.