

Inquiry into School to Work Transition



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

Submission

31st August 2017

Submitted by: Karen Taylor-Brown, Co-founder and Publisher, Refraction Media

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

The point of reference that I believe Refraction Media can make a unique contribution to this committee is:

1. *Opportunities to better inform and support students in relation to post-school education and training, including the use of employment outcomes of students who undertake school-based vocational education or post-school tertiary pathways;*

Refraction Media is the publisher of Careers with STEM, a print and digital platform that seeks to inspire more students in years 8-12 to pursue careers with a STEM foundation (www.CareerswithSTEM.com). STEM skills underpin 75% of the fastest growing jobs yet only 16% of Australians graduate from university with a STEM degree and only 28% of people working in STEM careers are women.

Refraction Media produces the quarterly magazines Careers with Science, Careers with Code, Careers with Engineering and Careers with Maths.

The magazines challenge established stereotypes around what STEM careers look like and who can do them. They feature a minimum of 50% women in STEM, as well as exciting STEM trail-blazers from regional Australia, from a variety of cultures and with varying ability.

The central narrative of each of the print and digital magazines is **STEM plus 'X'**, where 'X' is your passion, your creativity or your broader contribution to the world. Think engineering + sustainability. Science + business. Or coding + music.

This is not to prepare students for a 'STEM' career per say, because over time, STEM skills will underpin every career. The publications provide students, teachers and parents with inspiring real-life stories of successful Australian graduates who have combined their STEM degrees with an 'X' while noting their education pathways.

For example combining STEM with business skills, like Stuart Elliot, young entrepreneur and founder of technology innovator Planet Innovation Group, who took his mechanical engineering skills into business, or Captain Mona Shindy, engineer and Tesltra businesswoman of the year, who combined her engineering know how with a Master of Commerce.

Whether it's innovation: like Amantha Imber, co-creator of the BRW most innovative companies list, or or Google Maps founder Lars Rasmussen, or science, like Associate Professor Kedzierska, who is developing a one-shot flu vaccine for life; Refraction's career guides delivers the stories that take STEM graduates further.

It's difficult to know what the jobs of the future are going to be. In the last five years there's been a 3840% growth in Big Data Architect as a career. This job didn't exist 5 years ago. There was no such thing as 'Social Media Manager, and now it's one of the top ten jobs advertised on LinkedIn.

The goal of these guides is to show students, teachers and parents that no matter what career they dream of, STEM education, when combined with passion and creativity, will put them in good stead for success in the future high-tech economy, while helping Australia reach its innovation goals.

The website has an interactive degree directory that includes over 900 STEM + X degrees.

Careers with STEM is designed to inform and support students who are considering their career options and shows 100s of career pathways.

Summary

Refraction Media is a passionate supporter of STEM at all levels – from kindergarten to the boardrooms of Australia. We're an innovative start-up and a 'profit for purpose' company. We're agile, creative and we have a vision ***to inspire a smarter future***. We'd delighted to contribute to the *Inquiry into school to work transition*.