Mr Andrew Laming MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
email: ee-reps@aph.gov.au

31 July 2017

Dear Mr Laming

Please find attached Deakin University's submission to the Inquiry into school to work transition.

Deakin University believes this Inquiry, in examining how students are supported from school to work, is addressing a particularly important issue for Australia's immediate and near future: for employment, for education and for the economy more broadly.

Deakin University's headquarters are in Geelong in regional Victoria, and we are committed to providing higher education in south west rural Victoria alongside our strong presence in Melbourne's fast growing eastern corridor. This wide geographical reach means that the University is accessible to students from a range of schooling experiences and outcomes and is able to offer strong pathways and partnerships that support continuing post-compulsory education, return to study options and higher education. In addition, the University's pastoral framework and services to students for academic success underpin successful school to work transitions. Adding to this reach is Deakin's successful development of the Deakin Learning Centres and the Cloud Campus that provide our students with access from anywhere. The combination of these factors means that Deakin is well placed to advise the Government on new models for regional education and transition from school to work.

Deakin's work in the Graduate Employment initiative, its strong work integrated learning programs and transparently articulated outcomes for its students is evidence of the importance that the University places on successful transition from education to work.

I commend this submission to the Inquiry and the advice and recommendations contained within our responses to the Terms of Reference.

Yours sincerely

Professor Jane den Hollander AO
Vice-Chancellor

Deakin University

Submission

Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training

Inquiry into school to work transition

28 July 2017

This submission to the Standing Committee on Education and Employment Inquiry into school to work transition presents an account of how Deakin University supports students through the period of school to work transition. There are three main ways in which Deakin University provides students with this support:

1. Pathways to learning:

Deakin University enables committed and capable learners to engage in higher education through a range of pathways. School to work transition is not always linear. For example many school leavers will undertake work directly from school while they study a vocational or higher education program. Students often defer studies for some time before taking up post-compulsory schooling and many intermit for periods of time during their studies. Successful transition to work may involve pathways through vocational education into higher education.

Deakin offers a range of programs and resources for students to transition effectively from school or vocational education into tertiary study, and from tertiary study to employment.

2. Designing courses to meet the needs of future employment

Through Deakin's *LIVE the Future Agenda: 2020* the University is rigorous in ensuring that courses are designed to build the knowledge and capabilities that specific fields of employment require. Implementation of the 2020 Agenda has resulted in the enhancement of all courses to ensure the Course Learning Outcomes are aligned with the Deakin Graduate Learning Outcomes (DGLOs) along with professional accreditation requirements and the Australian Quality Framework.

The DGLOs are designed to provide evidence of eight capabilities for employment:

1. Discipline specific knowledge and capabilities: that are appropriate to the level of study that are related to a discipline or profession.
2. Communication: using oral, written and interpersonal communication to inform, motivate and effect change.
3. Digital literacy: using technologies to find, use and disseminate information.
4. Critical thinking: evaluation of information using critical and analytical thinking and judgement.

5. Problem solving: creating solutions to authentic (real world and ill-defined) problems.
6. Self-management: working and learning independently and taking responsibility for personal actions.
7. Teamwork: working and learning with others from different disciplines and backgrounds.
8. Global citizenship: engaging ethically and productively in the professional context and with diverse communities and cultures in the global context.

The DGLOs are designed to ensure Deakin University graduates have both the knowledge and the capabilities for successful employment.

Accreditation of courses through the University Academic Board requires thorough mapping of course content and DGLOs. Outcomes are specified at course level, mapped to course components and assessed. In professionally accredited courses, such as Initial Teacher Education, Psychology and Nursing, the discipline specific learning outcomes are mapped to the national discipline standards and courses are also approved by the accrediting professional bodies. University accreditation provides assurance that graduates have professional recognition and a coherent set of skills for employment and professional recognition.

Moreover, Deakin's commitment to employability is also supported through a program of work integrated learning and internships.

3. Transparent assessment

Deakin ensures that assessment and certification of students' learning is transparent. This enables prospective employers to clearly see what students have learned and the extent to which this matches the specific knowledge and capacities required for specific positions.

The application of the Higher Education Standards Framework and TEQSA's regulatory role in course accreditation have resulted in Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) becoming more visible and articulated and linked to employability.

Deakin seeks to ensure that graduating students themselves are able to articulate their learning and capabilities for employment. For example, the new Deakin Hallmarks initiative provides students with a digital resource to curate work and provide evidence of their achievement of capabilities for employment. Work integrated assessments enable them to collate evidence of capabilities that are important to their discipline. Hallmarks are developed in consultation with industry partners and are designed to provide a record of aspects of professional learning that are not easily captured in academic grades. They are designed to capture elements of the DGLOs and will be recorded on a student's statement of academic achievement at graduation (AHEGS statement). Students will be able to share evidence of their Hallmarks using social media platforms.

These three points constitute a systematic approach that provides multiple pathways, opportunities for the acquisition of necessary knowledge and capacities and transparently articulated outcomes, to ensure successful transitions to employment.

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1 Measurements of gain in school and how this contributes to supporting students to prepare for post-school education and training.

Data regarding measurements of gain in school and how this contributes to supporting students to prepare for post-school education and training is strong. Teese (2013), Lamb and Huo (2017), and Lamb et al (2011) have clearly articulated the importance of schooling experience and outcomes as driving positive and successful engagement in further education and employment. The losses to the Australian social and economic fabric are significant and long term as Lamb and Hou have demonstrated. Less than successful schooling experiences, coupled with a lack of readiness for work and challenging life circumstances create increasing complexity. While student circumstances are not easily overcome, systemic approaches to including young people in education lead to successful outcomes.

The experience of engaged secondary school education as preparation for university study is clear. However the correlation between measures of schooling outcomes, such as ATAR, and success in post-school education and training is soft at best. Evidence consistently shows that success at school is most strongly influenced by family background and context, social class, quality teaching and then a range of other factors. Success in post school education is more strongly influenced by student interest and choice and significantly by the work the vocational or higher education provider can deliver to enhance the student experience, graduate employability and career knowledge, and the capability of the graduate.

Deakin University has a number of programs that enable and prepare students with education and work-ready skills. These are developed in response to the Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLOs) for all courses, as well as through purposeful work integrated learning and professional practice opportunities co-ordinated through Deakin's Office of Graduate Employment.

In post-school education and training, students need to be equipped to be self-regulated learners, problem solvers and have the capacities to engage with digital technologies within their learning. When learning at university, students are often required to set their own timetables, think critically and resolve problems and engage and learn through online modules. Within their university learning, students are monitored far less in comparison to their secondary school learning.

Deakin courses include Unit Learning Outcomes (ULOs) and Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLOs) to support and develop the transition from school to work. Students are expected to engage with digital technologies within their learning, and problem solving and critical thinking are essential elements of all courses. Through university education, there is further scope for students to develop greater capacities for self-regulation within their learning, in terms of skill sets such as organisation and the ability to meet deadlines.

Critically, learning and assessment should be authentic, build on the current knowledge of students, i.e. be learner centred, relevant and connected to post-tertiary outcomes, and should not be viewed as separate components. Deakin University consistently strives for assessment to be applicable and connected to students' future learning practice. Carr and Claxton (2002) divide the assessment of learning dispositions into three groups: direct observation of learners 'at work' and on task; the information derived via interview/s or questionnaire/s with teachers, parents/guardians or peers and assessment based on self-report or self-assessment by learners. At Deakin University, we utilise a range of learning assessment tasks to achieve these aims, including professional ePortfolios. For example in teacher education, students are required to learn in a range of contexts: on campus, in

the cloud and in the profession; thus enabling them to further develop their employability and professional readiness. Students are consistently required to make connections between what they have learned and are learning from theory and practical experience. Their professional preparation provides them with the authentic challenges they will need when employed.

A challenge for schools and school systems more generally is in designing learning environments that link assessment to learning outcomes and future employment opportunities. This is especially challenging if schools must take account of individual needs, capabilities and interests of all students, when indeed some of these elements are unclear for each student. Paramount in this endeavour will be the development of 'learning dispositions' with an emphasis on resilience, playfulness (imagination, mindfulness, experimentation) and reciprocity (the capacity to interact and work with others) (see Carr and Claxton, 2002; Allal, 2002). At Deakin, the DGLOs provide a framework for learning and assessment to develop student dispositions and capacities by building on core skill sets including: Discipline knowledge and capabilities; Communication; Digital literacy; Critical thinking; Problem solving; Teamwork; and Global citizenship.

Deakin Hallmarks have been developed to assist university students to collate evidence and articulate for themselves their achievements. The Hallmarks are developed in consultation with relevant Industry partners and help students to identify and articulate their professional capabilities for employability. For example, in Education courses, stakeholders including Deakin's Alliance Schools and school Site Directors have assisted in refining the scope of activities required, the type of situations that are applicable, suitable assessment criteria and the evidence necessary on submission. Other stakeholders including the Victorian Institute of Teaching and Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership are also involved in conceptualising Hallmarks.

It is essential that more attributes are easily able to be recognised in admissions to post-school education. Courses that have successful experience in valuing diverse educational outcomes and personal attributes, such as creative arts and education, are able to select on the basis of capability to undertake the program of study and indeed be arguably more successful in transitioning to work on graduation.

Deakin University Advice to Committee:

- ***Strong investment be provided to support more flexible entry criteria, beyond ATAR only, as evidence of higher education readiness.***
- ***That secondary schools adopt Learning Outcomes as a more rich and authentic representation of student learning achievement.***
- ***That all learning organisations be assisted to develop transparent and clearly articulated outcomes for learning that are focused on successful transitions into employment.***

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

Deakin University acknowledges that not all students are suitably prepared for all post-school education opportunities and disciplines and that school to work transition is complex. There is no one size fits all response. The detailed Zacharias (2017) report on the Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program (HEPPP) was clear that each education institution must identify, drive, implement and monitor the initiatives that enable student access and success in post-compulsory education. Deakin's commitment to the HEPPP is, by demand, complex, responsive and pro-active all at once. Deakin University seeks to attract, enable and serve students who aspire to further education, and to provide a range of discipline and career interests and works to underwrite their financial circumstances for success.

Deakin University offers a range of programs that provide pathways to degree programs. The partnership with Deakin College, coupled with critical sub-bachelor programs, the Associate Degree of Arts and the Associate Degree of Education, are degrees that make use of an embedded preparatory education knowledge and experience, coupled with degree level studies. The Associate Degree model provides an excellent and successful exemplar of school to higher education transition, as it simultaneously provides high-level support around communication, digital literacy, critical thinking and teamwork, whilst students engage with units from their target degree. This model enables relevance: the student can apply what they are learning immediately and they are getting a taste of the disciplinary knowledge of the area they are interested in. The pedagogy embraced in this program is explicit and open – everything is formative and students are introduced to the context of the university as insiders. Students who enter the University through this program include school leavers who, for a range of reasons, did not get an ATAR that enables direct entry into their degree of choice, or school-leavers who are uncertain or anxious about this transition. It also includes mature-aged students who may not have completed secondary school, for whom there has been more than a decade since engaging in formal study, or who, similarly to the school-leavers, are uncertain or anxious about this transition. Programs such as the Associate Degree provide students with career and employment options, primarily because they provide students with confidence and transferable skills. Some students choose to graduate with an Associate Degree, however, the majority transition into a Bachelor Degree, such as a Bachelor of Education.

Some examples of Deakin's work to better inform and support students in relation to post-school education and training include:

- Each year, Deakin's School of Engineering brings approximately 6,000 high school students, many from low socio-economic status, from regional schools and with a focus on girls, through the Centre for Advanced Design and Engineering Training (CADET). The School supports active VET pathways with the development of bi-directional pathways and multi entry/exit point models with both the Gordon Institute and Box Hill TAFE. The concept is to provide a solid value proposition to a broad range of students, ensuring that they can maximize their ability and ensure appropriate levels of qualifications are obtained and allow access into the work force.
- Diminishing barriers to engagement or inclusion for students experiencing a disability. Deakin University maintains a Disability Resource Centre (DRC) for students to access an individual Learning Access Plan. In 2016 participation of students with a disability was 7.3 per cent (3,450 students). These are students who identified on enrolment data as having a disability. In 2016 nearly 2,000 of these students registered with the DRC for support. The Learning Access Plan enables students across a broad spectrum of disabilities to receive individualised attention to their learning and access a greater range of individualised study support. The Learning Access Plan is given to each teacher engaged with the student, whilst

protecting the student's privacy and further enables greater support for students. Deakin University's view is that inclusion should be the expectation and the practice, rather than an intermittent or sporadic occurrence. Education for inclusion means that all individuals are equipped to contribute and prepare for post-tertiary outcomes.
In terms of programs and pathways for students with a recognised disability regarding post school education and training, Deakin hosts the National Disability Coordination Program (NDCO) for the North Western metropolitan region of Melbourne. This is a Commonwealth funded national program, with 31 NDCOs across Australia.

- Deakin University partners with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) program to provide specialised mentoring and peer engagement with young Indigenous school students to enable and encourage their participation in and completion of secondary schooling. Further, AIME works with school graduates as they make their way to post-compulsory schooling and work to further underpin their opportunities for success.

The difference between metropolitan, regional and rural secondary completion is particularly difficult to address in the context of poor digital connectivity. In situations where the University has attempted to work with school communities to enable access to curriculum and support tools for teachers and appropriate bandwidth for students, little has been accomplished through departmental channels as there is scant acknowledgement of the impact of this problem on student outcomes.

For example, the University has championed the Geelong Secondary School and Community Digital Learning Hub project. This project joins Geelong's regional secondary schools (Catholic, independent and government) with the University, The Gordon Institute of TAFE and the Geelong Regional Library Corporation to share infrastructure and resources to expand digital access to schools and the community. This project has not, to date, been supported by the Victorian Department of Education and Training despite the fact it leverages the University's high-speed broadband platform and would enable much of the educational innovation occurring in higher education to be adopted by local schools to better prepare students for the jobs of the future and keep them at school longer. Most importantly, a future-proofed Internet of Things (IoT) enabled network environment will dramatically improve the future education prospects of over 40,000 local high school students and increase their employability in a digital economy.

Deakin University Advice to Committee

- ***For Australia to remain internationally competitive it should be recognised that the best possible IoT-enabled IT infrastructure and bandwidth should to be provided throughout the Australian school system, particularly in schools with low completion rates.***
- ***Support will be required for the development and delivery of digital curricula in schools including professional development for teachers in order to prepare students for higher education and the jobs of the future.***

3 Other related matters

Although this inquiry is into school to work transition, Deakin University is also concerned with **increasing segregation in schools.** Research suggests that Australia's schooling system is producing structural inequalities that are compounding disadvantage and reducing the ability for equity groups to access higher education. This change is creating further barriers to students seeking entry to an increasingly stratified and tiered university sector (see, Perry and Southwell, 2014).

The recent report *Uneven Playing Field: The state of Australian Schools* emphasises that a consequence of a less equitable and more segregated schooling system is that '*…a hierarchy of advantage and disadvantage has developed amongst schools and is hardening. Increasing numbers*

of students are shifting to schools that are higher up on the socio-educational advantage (SEA) scale (e.g. 1.4 Effective Full Time (EFT) students per year (Low ICSEA) vs. 11.0 EFT students per year (High ICSEA)' (p. 7). Given that the impacts of this are yet to be felt by the higher education sector in terms of low rates of participation by traditionally marginalised groups, Deakin University's current pathways may go somewhere to addressing these negative trends. The aforementioned Associate Degrees, alongside Deakin's commitment to rural and regional communities, the learning centres connected with TAFE to deliver multiple learning experiences 'in situ' in place and the technology such as cloud learning provides a diverse range of opportunities for all equity groups to engage with further learning.

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