



SUBMISSION FOR

The House of Representatives
Standing Committee on
Employment, Education and
Training

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INQUIRY INTO THE PERCEPTIONS AND STATUS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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PERCEPTIONS AND STATUS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

ABOUT REFRACTION MEDIA

Refraction Media is a content and communications company that specialises in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). We think STEM underpins future careers, a smart economy and a better world.

We raise awareness of STEM careers and pathways through digital media, career guides, teacher resources and by connecting science, education and industry.

Refraction Media was co-founded by Heather Catchpole and Karen Taylor-Brown in 2013 who shared the vision to inspire a smarter future.

Refraction Media has worked with over 200 partners who share their vision to inspire a smarter future,

including Google, the National Careers Institute, ANSTO, the Commonwealth Bank and most Australian universities.

Refraction Media has distributed over 2 million career magazines across Australia, New Zealand and the US.

Refraction Media is a winner of several Publish awards including Best Small Publisher and a two-time finalist for the Telstra Business Awards.

In 2016 the US edition of Careers with Code was included in Barack Obama's Computer Science for All initiative.

PERCEPTIONS AND STATUS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

CAREER PERCEPTIONS IN SCHOOLS

Many high school students and their parents hold outdated and stereotyped perceptions of vocational opportunities that don't reflect the reality of current and future opportunities.

There is a lack of future-focussed vision about the quality and opportunity of vocational jobs, including where they can lead, the levels of satisfaction and their status.

This impacts the education choices of students, particularly those who lack foundational skills or experience disadvantage, which can exclude them from these rapidly growing opportunities, often high-tech and in high demand.

STEM jobs are growing at 1.9% faster than other jobs. Of the total Australian workforce, 10% have VET STEM qualifications versus 6% with university STEM qualifications.

Many of the fastest-growing VET STEM jobs are not only in trades, but also in technology, cybersecurity, data analysis, renewable energy, sustainability and the built environment.

Just 27% of the STEM workforce is made up of women, and women make up 36% of enrolments in university STEM courses. This drops to 16% of enrolments in vocational STEM courses, according to 2022 figures. Yet 3.7 million Australians will need training in digital skills in just the next year, recent research from AlphaBeta has shown.

PERCEPTIONS AND STATUS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

CAREER PERCEPTIONS IN SCHOOLS

Refraction Media is a STEM-specialist communications company that produces the highly successful Careers with STEM resources for high school students.

The attitude amongst career educators in schools tends to lean toward STEM jobs being for the 'smart kids', however STEM jobs are growing in every category, especially in vocational careers.

And it's not just the high achieving or 'STEM-interested' students who will work in these occupations. STEM jobs are for everyone and permeate every industry.

Refraction Media has collaborated with more than 200 partners in VET education, university education, industry and government to

broaden perceptions of what STEM jobs are, who can do them and which employers and industries are seeking these skills.

Careers with STEM effectively engages with students from all backgrounds and interests by using imagery, simple and engaging story-telling and providing clear pathways to connect them to a career that suits their goals.

CAREERS WITH STEM CAREERS HUB

NATIONAL HUB FOR INFORMATION & INSPIRATION

By creating a platform that includes print magazines, interactive digital resources and in-person events, Careers with STEM challenges stereotypes, celebrates diversity and showcases varied career paths, including vocational education.

Careers with STEM aims to broaden the awareness of career options and influence subject selection, career pathways and choices of young Australians.

This is achieved by reaching not only students, but also their main influencers: parents, teachers and friends.

Commonwealth funding and support of these resources would improve career advice of VET pathways in schools.

CareerswithSTEM.com reaches 80,000 viewers per month and has more than 600 career profiles that are searchable by key categories:

- STEM foundation
- Interest area
- University
- VET
- Women
- Indigenous

We would welcome the opportunity to be a part of the committee on understanding and influencing students' VET career choices.

We can provide current insights on how to deliver career information in schools and strategic advice on communicating these career options to students, especially those from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds.

NATIONAL PLATFORM

LEVERAGE VET INFORMATION AND REACH A WIDE AUDIENCE OF STUDENTS.

Links of interest:

Careers with STEM [magazines](#)

VET [special edition](#)

[CareerswithSTEM.com](#)

[VET portal](#)

Careers with STEM [Job Kits](#)

Careers with STEM [Webinars](#)

