The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Learning to Work

Report on the inquiry into vocational education in schools

**House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Education and Training**

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Canberra

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Foreword

The philosophy and purposes of education have always been the subject of debate, but at their heart they must involve assisting children to fully reach their potential and to prepare them for a full and productive role in society.

For some students the focus on an academically oriented general education has served this purpose well. However, for others, particularly amongst the 70 per cent of students who do not proceed to higher education, it has been wanting. This fact, associated with unrealistic pressures to pursue a university education, has meant that secondary schooling, particularly at the post-compulsory level, has been a frustrating and unrewarding experience for some young people. An expanded and improved provision of vocational education opportunities is not a panacea but for many it will help broaden the appeal and relevance of their post-compulsory school years.

While the attention paid to vocational education within the broader framework of school education and its role and status relative to general education have waxed and waned since the early 1960s, the renewed focus over the past decade has been very encouraging. The trebling of the number of students participating in just the past six years, combined with higher school retention rates and a gradual blurring of the distinctions between general and vocational eduction, has greatly improved the chance of school education meeting the needs of a larger number of young people.

However, to date this renewed focus has not been matched by adequate planning, coordination or resourcing. It has been too ad hoc and has relied too heavily on the commitment of a relatively small number of school leaders and teachers, supported at times by community and industry representatives. This is unsustainable. If the growth in vocational education in schools is to continue and its potential is to be realised, these issues must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

As a starting point, the status of vocational education in schools must be raised so that it is considered an integral part of the mainstream school curriculum rather than an added extra or a second rate option for less capable students. Further, it must be supported by adequate financial and human resources and practical support for the teachers and VET coordinators whose passion and dedication have driven its growth and success in recent years. This must be done in a way that still allows the creativity and flexibility for schools and employers to respond to the particular needs of local communities but at the same time moving towards a more nationally consistent approach.

It is essential that by the time they leave school all students have developed a body of employability skills and have an understanding of the work environment and of the various transition and career paths open to them.

It is to be hoped that the increased attention, inquiries and reports on vocational education in recent years will help sharpen the focus in a way which produces positive and effective policy outcomes.

I would like to thank the many individuals and organisations who made written submissions to this inquiry and who gave time and valuable insights at the various public hearings. Particular thanks to the committee secretariat who painstakingly researched and evaluated volumes of material in preparing the report and to my fellow committee members for their committed and diligent work.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the inspirational examples of vocational education and careers teachers and coordinators in many schools who have led the way in this vital area, particularly in those years before the benefits of vocational education were fully appreciated.

Mr Kerry Bartlett MP
Chair

Membership of the Committee

Chair	Mr Kerry Bartlett MP
Deputy Chair	Mr Rod Sawford MP

Members	Mr Anthony Albanese MP	Mrs Margaret May MP
	Mr Pat Farmer MP	Mr Chris Pearce MP
	Ms Teresa Gambaro MP	Ms Tanya Plibersek MP
	Mr Michael Johnson MP	Mr Sid Sidebottom MP

Committee Secretariat

Secretary	Mr Richard Selth
Inquiry Secretary	Ms Alison Childs (from 3/3/03)
	Mr James Rees (to 3/3/03)
Research and Administrative Officer	Mrs Gaye Milner

Terms of reference

On 18 July 2002 the Minister for Education, Science and Training, Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, asked the Committee 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.

Executive summary

Overview

In July 2002 the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, asked the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training to inquire into the place of vocational education in schools, its growth and development and its effectiveness in preparing students for post-school options. The inquiry was referred to the Committee as the growth of vocational education in schools has been one of the most significant and positive changes in secondary education in the last twenty years, and it has become increasingly apparent that this growth has exceeded the capacity of school systems to respond effectively.

A wide range of evidence was presented in the 116 written submissions received by the Committee, by the 455 witnesses who appeared at public hearings, and in the 130 exhibits and other research that is available on vocational education in schools. The Committee also visited schools in every state and territory. This evidence reinforces the view that continued and improved support for vocational education in schools is essential to achieving quality education for our students into the future.

Vocational education and learning addresses the understanding of the world of work, and requires knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes that are relevant to a range of work environments. Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VET in Schools) is a subset of vocational education that is provided as part of the National Training Framework and assessed as meeting national competency standards as part of industry developed Training Packages. Most of the evidence that the Committee received for this inquiry focussed on VET in Schools.

The impact of vocational education, and more specifically VET in Schools, has been considerable. There has been substantial growth in student numbers, in total

course enrolments, in the range of programs, annual curriculum hours, structured workplace learning and to a lesser extent School-based New Apprenticeships. In 2002, 44 per cent of all students enrolled in a senior secondary certificate were enrolled in VET in Schools; 95 per cent of all schools with senior secondary programs offered VET in Schools; more than 50 per cent of programs were in tourism and hospitality, business and clerical and computing; 112,403 students undertook structured workplace learning; and over 7,500 students commenced a School-based New Apprenticeship.

Many students are highly appreciative of the opportunities that VET provides. The growth that has occurred can be attributed to the increased retention rate of students to Year 12 since 1980, a focus on accommodating the needs of a wider range of students, a focus of the Australian community and hence students on skilling for the future, and the appeal of alternative learning methodologies to those of traditional theoretical subjects. The incorporation of vocational education has been recognised as integral to a student's education in most schools, yet the management of the change is clearly problematic.

The degree to which schools have incorporated the organisational and structural requirements for conducting VET in schools has been raised as a key to sustaining high quality VET in senior secondary school. Greater sustainability is dependant on greater mainstreaming of courses and parity of esteem for VET. Aspects of school operations and culture which need to be addressed in order to sustain VET include:

- operational features such as timetabling and the length of the school day, how VET is delivered including purchasing where necessary from other providers , and transport to facilitate mobility of students;

- perceived parity or lack thereof between general and vocational education;

- equal treatment of alternative pathways in career education and student counselling, with advocacy of a wide range of training and employment options, beyond the traditional tertiary courses and related jobs; and

- professional development for teachers, and the addressing of workload issues.

New national frameworks have been developed for vocational education, accompanied by action plans to assist with the transition from school to post-school options. However, although there has been considerable high level development of principles and guidelines for their implementation, most witnesses reported that there has been insufficient funding to support these objectives.

Additionally, the Committee notes that the purposes of vocational education and VET in meeting the diverse needs of students are not sufficiently clear, and

confusion arises when the terms vocational education and VET are used almost interchangeably by the community. Greater consistency in terminology would assist educators, industry and the community to discuss the benefits and outcomes of vocational education in schools and VET in Schools, as well as other post-school pathways.

The Committee believes that there needs to be greater promotion of the advantages of VET qualifications in the community relative to the absence of post-school qualifications and relative to university qualifications.

Diversity

There are significant differences between the states and territories in key features of vocational education including:

■ the nature of delivery: with some states and territories delivering a VET qualification or competencies as a separate 'stand alone' course, while others 'embed' the competencies within a general curriculum course;

■ Registered Training Organisation (RTO) status of schools and external RTO involvement: with some jurisdictions supporting all senior colleges to be RTOs, while others mainly have auspice arrangements with TAFE;

■ requirements for, and hours of, work placements: with some states and territories mandating structured work placements, and others only requiring work placements when the Training Package specifies it.

■ nominal hours for gaining competency: with significant variation across jurisdictions, which affects national reporting;

■ recognition of VET for tertiary entrance purposes: with some states requiring the completion of an additional exam by VET students, and in others the courses attracting a tertiary entrance score;

■ access to School-based New Apprenticeships: with Queensland accounting for more than 50 per cent of commencements and other states and territories very few;

■ access to non-National Training Framework vocational learning opportunities: with a reported decline in access to career education and other work experience programs.

These differences have been identified in some cases as a risk to the quality of VET in Schools. The variation affects students' access to opportunities such as work experience and structured work placements, the quality of delivery in relation to

the number of hours for consolidating skills in schools and in the workplace, the available support provided by the school, access to further pathways using paid employment as part of School-based New Apprenticeships, and recognition for university entrance.

Provision of vocational eduction

The number and type of VET programs offered by schools depends on a range of factors including:

- student demand;
- school location;
- the availability of human, physical and financial resources;
- external providers and access to suitable programs; and
- employers willing to offer opportunities for structured workplace learning and/or apprenticeships.

The Committee appreciates that this is a complex range of factors to consider and address. The Committee is concerned that for a number of schools with limited resources, this complexity will dissuade them from advancing vocational education quality and participation. The Committee is encouraged by recent actions of governments and education authorities to pursue a greater diversity in vocational education offerings. The importance of school systems in providing support, and industry being engaged and being aware of the positive outcomes, is crucial to successful implementation. A key feature of successful vocational education programs is access to structured workplace learning. The development of clusters of local community partnerships to coordinate work placements has been promoted as a successful model to expand across Australia.

Review of the distribution of students' qualifications, choices made by male and female students, and participation in specific fields of education indicate that the outputs across states and territories are highly diverse. Students' background characteristics and early schooling experiences influence choices that will affect their future careers. Providing earlier access to vocational education opportunities and more structured career education and advice would benefit many students, especially students with a disability, students at risk of leaving school early and Indigenous students.

The effects of location and cultural background highlight the challenges of providing access to vocational education in geographically remote communities.

Where there is essential support, positive outcomes are being realised, for example for Indigenous students participating in vocational education. The complexity of addressing background factors is recognised by the Committee. Involving the community in supporting all students, shaping students' choices, and supporting work placements is integral to the vocational education process.

Quality assurance

Addressing teacher development issues needs to be a priority to improve the effectiveness of vocational education and assist with culture change. Changes to pre-service education courses and providing additional funding for schools to facilitate industry placement and professional development for teachers are required.

The provision of assistance to schools to achieve Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) compliance, and streamlining joint administrative requirements are essential to reduce the overhead administrative costs associated with VET in Schools. Greater resourcing is needed to assist VET coordinators, especially in the set-up phase of programs and establishing RTO status.

An additional concern of the Committee is that much of the focus of VET in Schools has been on meeting quality assurance requirements of management and administrative processes rather than on quality improvement in teaching and learning. This must become the main focus in the next phase of development of vocational education in schools. It is important that the burden of administration is reduced to allow teachers and administrators to focus on pedagogy and outcomes, without compromising confidence in schools' compliance with AQTF standards.

Innovative models for structural solutions have been generated more through leadership and innovation at the school and local level rather than through system leadership. States with senior secondary colleges seem to have a number of well-established models for incorporating VET into school structures and cultures. The economies of scale offered through senior secondary colleges in close proximity to TAFE facilities lead to more cooperative structures and processes. It appears to the Committee that some high schools operating in clusters across school sectors and with TAFE are also effectively managing the complexities of structural and cultural change. The variety of approaches to managing and delivering VET would seem to indicate that there is no single successful model in schools. One of the challenges is to create greater national consistency without compromising local flexibility.

Resourcing

It is likely that without significant commitment and action by authorities to assist with resourcing, an increasing turnover of VET teachers and coordinators can be expected. Improvements in quality will therefore be more difficult to achieve. The Committee notes that the current funding situation urgently needs to be addressed as there is strong debate on the meaning of 'adequate' resourcing as defined in the National Goals for Schooling. The Committee believes that it is time to move from rhetoric to sustainable implementation.

It is clear from evidence given to the inquiry that VET is more expensive to set up, deliver and administer than the majority of general education programs. This should be recognised in funding. The significant growth in VET in Schools has resulted in declining per capita funding for students. Expectations that all costs can be absorbed into current budgets appear to be unrealistic given the smaller class sizes and greater administration and work placement requirements. Funding of both schools and TAFE remains tight, making it difficult to cope with the higher costs of providing VET in Schools. The funding issue is complicated by different arrangements and guidelines that apply to the two sectors. The Committee believes that efforts are required at all levels to streamline the administration of VET in Schools.

The current funding models can create barriers to cooperation and in some jurisdictions there are disincentives for schools who might otherwise seek to outsource their VET delivery to TAFE or other RTO providers. These issues need to be addressed.

Qualifications

The Committee supports the greater focus on, and development of, generic and employability skills as a substantial base for all students on which further industry, occupation or job-specific skills can be built. There is a case for the development of a national Certificate I in generic and employability skills to be available for all students. For those interested in particular industry skills the pathway would then lead to specific vocational education and training through National Training Packages. This needs to be supported by non-National Training Framework activity. There should be greater focus on and consideration of other vocational education areas to foster students' development, such as broader vocational learning, career education and enterprise education. Funding to enable resourcing of these through the schooling sectors also needs to be addressed.

Focussing on VET qualifications, the Committee notes that for levels above Certificate II, the teaching and resource expertise required is more specialised and carries additional costs. Successful programs at the Certificate III level are usually run in partnership with other providers. The Committee believes that the priority focus of VET in Schools should be up to and including Certificate II. Further qualification levels should be provided in conjunction with local industry, requiring them to demonstrate that there are skills needs and that they can support the work placement requirements and contribute to infrastructure costs.

Skill needs

The Committee notes that initiatives have been introduced by governments and industry to address current skill shortages and anticipate new employment markets. Although the accuracy of predictive labour market information is variable, strategies need to be developed to support students through the volatility of economic cycles and longer term change. As the prediction of national future skill shortages is problematic, addressing skill shortages at a regional or state level, supported by national skills initiatives, may be more effective than doing so on a national scale. The support of the community and industries represented by local employers is crucial. Industries with concerns about skill shortages and quality need to take the initiative, supported by education providers, to develop effective methods to improve the image of their industry with students to encourage VET in Schools participation.

Part of the challenge is to encourage students, parents, teachers and careers advisors to consider the full range of opportunities for young people in traditional and emerging industries, and to address the perception that traditional trades and industries do not offer good opportunities. This requires a concerted joint approach between school careers advisors, industry and government.

Emerging industries have urgent needs that are not well served by the current VET system with the long development time for the introduction of training packages. Greater links between industries and teachers are required to provide greater access to professional development opportunities. Developing centres of excellence that build links with industry, schools and the broader VET and university sector is a model that the Committee recommends. Yet for most emerging industries, the development of sound generic workplace and employability skills may be more useful than trying to predict specific skill needs.

Career education

The Committee finds the lack of appropriate standards for delivering career education disturbing. It is also concerned at the lack of appropriate data to inform policy, planning or performance measurement. Greater accountability and accurate collection and reporting of relevant data is essential, and a clear set of national standards for the delivery of career education in schools, and a national system of reporting are necessary.

The Committee believes that career education has to be a legitimate and significant part of the school curriculum, to be taught by experienced and appropriately qualified teachers. Whether it is taught as a separate subject or embedded in the curriculum, there should be a clearly defined part of the curriculum in Years 9-10, possibly with some introductory work in Year 8, devoted to career education.

Better pre-service careers training and continuing professional development are necessary for careers advisers, just as they are for all teachers. Education authorities, professional associations and higher education institutions should work together to coordinate the development and provision of appropriate activities.

There is considerable work under way in the wider field of vocational education, including career guidance, to enhance opportunities for Indigenous students and to encourage improved retention rates and successful post-school outcomes. However, the Committee also notes the problems associated with the short-term nature of some projects and the need for long-term strategies. There is also a need for Indigenous staff with career guidance training to participate in the delivery of programs for Indigenous students, and the Committee encourages education authorities to develop pathways for Indigenous careers educators.

Recent work on an Australian Blueprint for Career Development, and progress on the National Training Framework for Career Coordinators, is encouraging and should provide the basis for ensuring minimum common standards.

Access and outcomes

It is important to improve the access to and effectiveness of vocational education in schools for students with particular needs, with earlier and more individualised support. External providers have an important role to play in assisting schools to provide additional support in transition management, especially for those

students with disabilities, students at risk of leaving school early and Indigenous students.

Part-time work provides benefits to improving the transition from school to work, although there can be dangers of over-commitment. Early outcome data indicates that vocational education in schools assists in improving post-school outcomes. However, in general there is an urgent need for national longitudinal data on the outcomes of vocational education in schools.

Conclusion

This report includes recommendations mainly aimed at longer term strategies. In summary, there is a need to:

- urgently review and improve resourcing, operating infrastructure and processes, both within and across educational sectors;

- expand partnerships to include a broader base of stakeholders, improving links with industry to better target vocational education offerings;

- build stronger connections between career education, structured workplace learning, VET in Schools, vocational learning and enterprise education;

- review the requirements of Training Packages to specify work placement requirements;

- improve access to vocational education for students with specific needs, in particular before the post-compulsory level;

- provide training and development opportunities for teachers; and

- increase national consistency on a range of vocational education issues.

Many of these strategies require the successful implementation of cooperative arrangements, both within local communities and nationally. The priorities for the next period of vocational education in schools should be to ensure the sustainability of vocational education with a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning for all students. The facilitation of partnerships and better cross-sectoral arrangements are fundamental to this process.

List of recommendations

Recommendations are grouped thematically below. They are numbered according to their sequence in the report.

Purpose of vocational education in schools

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that MCEETYA, its associated education authorities and key community groups engage in further debate on the purposes of vocational education in schools, including VET in Schools programs, in order to clarify and articulate specific objectives, expected outcomes, target groups and priorities, with a view to better ensuring that policies and programs meet those purposes. (*Paragraph 2.46*)

Promotion of vocational education

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth, state and territory governments and industry jointly fund a promotion campaign to:

- raise the awareness of parents, students, educationalists and the community of the benefits of vocational education including:
  ⇒ VET as broadly available to all members of the community; and
  ⇒ VET in Schools and School-based New Apprenticeships;

- raise the status of VET and other non-tertiary pathways by:
  ⇒ increasing awareness of the range of rewarding career options available; and
  ⇒ promoting careers in areas of skill shortage, such as in established trades. (*Paragraph 2.54*)

National Consistency

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that as a high priority MCEETYA pursue greater national consistency in key aspects of vocational education affecting the recognition and value of VET in Schools, to ensure a more uniform approach to transition to further education, training and employment. This should include:

- the collection of meaningful and accurate data;

- the adoption of common terminology;

- the recognition of VET for tertiary entrance;

- the role of and requirements for structured workplace learning;

- issues regarding nominal hours and units of competency;

- approaches to stand alone courses versus embedding of VET components;

- teacher training;

- policies for the use of TAFE and private RTOs; and

- reporting of participation and outcomes. (*Paragraph 3.54*)

School-based New Apprenticeships

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities and industry bodies address the findings and implement the proposals of the ANTA National Evaluation of School-based New Apprenticeships in order to increase the participation of students and industry in SBNAs, particularly in areas of skill shortage such as the traditional trades. (*Paragraph 4.44)*

Resourcing

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that state and territory education authorities recognise in their staffing formulae the additional workload of teachers with significant VET responsibilities, and reduce the classroom teaching load to reflect the extra work, supervision and reporting requirements of teaching VET. (*Paragraph 5.37)*

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that as a priority more complete assessments be made of the costs of vocational education and specifically VET in Schools (using *The Cost of VET in Schools*, 2003 as a methodology) in comparison with:

- general education programs in schools; and

- the delivery of comparable certificate programs in TAFE;

and that if such calculations demonstrate higher costs of VET in Schools programs than general education programs, Commonwealth, state and territory governments share the responsibility for funding, with states and territories raising the recurrent per capita funding and the Commonwealth increasing the capital and support funding. (*Paragraph 6.22*)

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that MCEETYA pursue the resolution of funding responsibilities for vocational education between the Commonwealth, states and territories across the different education sectors. (*Paragraph 6.35*)

Recommendation 28

The Committee recommends that ANTA receive additional funding to facilitate the development of qualifications and industry links in new and emerging industries, and to better reflect the growing numbers of students undertaking VET in Schools courses. (*Paragraph 7.91*)

Teaching and professional development

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that educational authorities and industry representatives undertake further analysis of the relative costs and benefits of embedded and stand alone courses; and that authorities move towards a nationally consistent approach bearing in mind the suitability of particular subjects to either type of course. (*Paragraph 5.40*)

Recommendation 7, 27 and 31

The Committee recommends that the MCEETYA Taskforce on Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership (TQELT) pursue changes to teacher education programs to achieve a nationally consistent approach. This should include greater consideration of vocational education issues, including the need for:

■ potential VET teachers to meet the competencies required to Certificate IV in the new Training and Assessment Package, and more specialised training in VET-related subject areas; (*Recommendation 7, Paragraph 5.60)*

■ all pre-service teacher education to include some career education training; (*Recommendation 31, Paragraph 8.139)* and

■ technology based courses to have appropriate industry-standard facilities to train teachers. (*Recommendation 27, Paragraph 7.63*)

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that a consistent application of Recognition of Prior Learning be pursued nationally to ensure that current schools and teachers are not financially disadvantaged in meeting compliance requirements of the AQTF. (*Paragraph 5.60)*

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that a national industry placement program be developed to support teachers accessing industry experience. The involvement of industry in part should be pursued to sponsor such a program in conjunction with state and federal government funding. (*Paragraph 5.71)*

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that education authorities implement initiatives to attract suitable industry qualified personnel into VET teaching, including supported and accelerated education training, with assistance for HECS provided by the Commonwealth. (*Paragraph 5.71)*

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that appropriate national, state and territory associations be identified to support professional development and forums to encourage principals and school leadership teams to advance the VET agenda and more fully incorporate VET into the mainstream school curriculum. (*Paragraph 6.125)*

Australian Quality Training Framework

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the reporting requirements of RTOs, school VET coordinators and teachers be streamlined in order to reduce the administrative burden, but without compromising the integrity of such arrangements. (*Paragraph 5.81)*

Coordination and cooperation

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that efforts be made to improve cooperation between school and TAFE sectors where geography and course offerings make that viable, in areas such as co-location, human resources and administrative practices.

This should include a national review of charging practices by TAFE for government and non-government schools in order to:

- determine more equitable practices to better reflect their relative costs and resourcing; and

- ensure that funding restrictions and differential charging practices do not act as a barrier to government and non-government school students accessing otherwise appropriate VET courses through TAFE.

It should also include consideration of ways of addressing other potential barriers to the greater take-up of suitable courses offered by TAFE or other RTOs, including factors such as transport, timetabling, certainty of course continuity and duty of care issues. (*Paragraph 6.39*)

Recognition processes

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Education Minister coordinate education authorities and universities to accelerate work on nationally consistent approaches to developing tertiary recognition arrangements for VET in Schools courses. (*Paragraph 6.60*)

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and ANTA take action to provide greater recognition of TAFE qualifications for university entrance, so that this becomes a more viable pathway to higher education for those pursuing VET options at and after school. (*Paragraph 6.60*)

Workplace Learning

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the period of funding for providers of work placement coordination be extended to a triennium basis in order to provide greater certainty and continuity of programs. (*Paragraph 6.90*)

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that agencies at all levels of government be encouraged to participate in supporting work experience and structured work placements. (*Paragraph 6.93)*

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that an evaluation of the role of cluster workplace coordinators be undertaken for the purpose of:

- increasing their effectiveness in forming the critical links between schools and industry;

- establishing structures to improve cooperative approaches between education and employment services in the community;

- assisting them to meet the increasing demand for work placements while also addressing the areas of local skill shortages;

- ensuring that rural and remote area needs are being met; and

- determining what extra resources and training are needed to effectively carry out this role, with the Commonwealth providing those extra resources. (*Paragraph 6.103)*

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that relevant authorities address issues regarding work placements such as occupational health and safety, workers compensation, and clarifying the responsibilities of supervisors, which may be acting as barriers to more employers offering work placements. (*Paragraph 6.103)*

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that MCEETYA and ANTA develop a consistent national approach to structured workplace learning, with an agreed mandated minimum which meets the needs of industry and the requirements of the National Training Framework and Training Packages. (*Paragraph* 6.139)

Generic and employability skills

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that enterprise and employability skills be made a higher priority and developed through a range of strategies across the curriculum in addition to the VET in Schools pathway, to

maximise the effectiveness of vocational education in preparing students for post-school options. (*Paragraph 7.38)*

Recommendation 35

The Committee recommends that the *Principles and Guidelines for Improving Outcomes for Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools (2002-2004)* be revised for the next period to reflect the greater need for access to VET qualifications prior to senior secondary years. (*Paragraph 9.34)*

Recommendation 36

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities through ANTA fast track the development of a Certificate I in Generic Workskills for all students to complete by Year 10. (*Paragraph 9.34)*

Industry needs

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that the National Industry Skills Initiative be evaluated for the purpose of increasing its effectiveness and breadth in attracting young people into industries experiencing skill shortages, and that any funding necessary for an expanded role be jointly met by government and the relevant industry bodies. (*Paragraph 7.55)*

Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that DEST work with industry bodies to identify and project skill shortages, and that closer links be forged between business and industry and schools to address those shortages at a local, regional and national level.

- At the national level this needs to be addressed by industry representatives and training bodies in conjunction with educational authorities.

- At the local and regional levels, the links between industry and schools should be strengthened by enhanced cluster coordinator positions. (See Rec. 20) (*Paragraph 7.60)*

Careers Education

Recommendation 29

The Committee recommends that careers education be a mandatory part of the core curriculum for the compulsory years of secondary schooling. It should include a clearly defined and structured program, distinct from VET programs. (*Paragraph 8.57)*

Recommendation 30

The Committee recommends that all secondary schools have at least one full-time professional careers adviser, with appropriate specialist training, who can provide a dedicated career education service within the school and work with the VET coordinator. (*Paragraph 8.74)*

Recommendation 32

The Committee recommends that the professional development needs of careers educators be better met by:

- private and public tertiary institutions providing additional and more accessible post-graduate courses; and

- sufficient resourcing for teachers to access both formal courses and industry knowledge including:

  ⇒ state and territory support through salary continuity and release from teaching; and

  ⇒ Commonwealth support in meeting formal course costs. (*Paragraph 8.139)*

Recommendation 33

The Committee recommends that in order to ensure consistency, transparency and accountability in the delivery of career education, a clear set of national standards for the delivery of career education in schools, and a national system of reporting, be adopted by MCEETYA. (*Paragraph 8.152)*

Special Needs

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities investigate and develop strategies to support rural and remote communities' transport needs and, where necessary, provide increased travel and accommodation assistance to allow more isolated students to access VET courses. (*Paragraph 6.103)*

Recommendation 34

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities give further attention to providing VET programs, and effecting transitions to work and further training, for people with disabilities, by:

- providing necessary modifications to learning materials, programs and equipment;

- increased work placement mentoring and support; and

- improving links between workplace coordinators and disability employment services. (*Paragraph 9.23)*

Recommendation 37

The Committee recommends that there be an increased focus on earlier assistance to support students 'at risk' and Indigenous students by:

- strengthening literacy and numeracy skills;

- supporting the development of vocational skills and VET qualifications earlier than Year 10; and

- monitoring the progress of *Partners in a Learning Culture* projects and programs for the purpose of replicating and expanding those which effectively meet the training and transition needs of Indigenous students. (*Paragraph 9.40)*

Recommendation 38

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities fund additional support, mentoring and career guidance, ideally by Indigenous staff, for Indigenous students undertaking or considering undertaking VET in Schools or SBNAs, and that consideration be given to more effectively linking these courses to real post-school employment opportunities and career paths. (*Paragraph 9.40)*

Recommendation 39

The Committee recommends that there be an evaluation of funding for a wide range of specific ancillary vocational education and careers support programs, in order to:

- determine their effectiveness;

- improve coordination;

- ensure greater continuity of funding; and

- reduce community confusion by eliminating the frequent rebadging of similar programs. (*Paragraph 9.40)*

Outcomes

Recommendation 40

The Committee recommends that a full analysis be undertaken of the wide range of training pathway, career and transition services in order to:

- achieve better understanding and coordination of services, avoid duplication and remedy deficiencies;

- improve the links between SBNAs and New Apprenticeship Centres, making NACS more accessible for young people; and

- improve the information available to students on transition options and available assistance. (*Paragraph 9.53)*

Recommendation 41

The Committee recommends that research be conducted at a national level into immediate and longer term post-school outcomes of students to better evaluate the effectiveness of VET in assisting students into career pathways. (*Paragraph 9.88)*