VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING/VOCATIONAL LEARNING IN SCHOOLS FORUMS: SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

Years 9 to 12 Project

Department of Education

Contents

Cathcart & Storey

Acronyms and terms

ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
LLENs	Local Learning and Employment Networks
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TASC	The Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification
TCE	Tasmanian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training [1]- enables students to acquire workplace skills through nationally recognised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course. A VET qualification is issued by an RTO. The achievement of a VET qualification signifies that a student has demonstrated competency against the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace. VET includes training package and accreditation course, and Australian School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships.
VL	Vocational Learning - For school students, vocational learning helps secondary students explore the world of work, identify career options and pathways, and build career development skills. Vocational learning is delivered within the broader curriculum. It supports students to gain career development skills and provides opportunities for students to 'taste' the world of work through one-off events, initiatives such as enterprise learning, or spending time in a real or simulated workplace[2]. In Tasmania, Vocational Education and Learning is made up of the following components: (i) career education; (ii) work related curriculum; and (iii) Vocational Education and Training (VET)

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[1] Education Council. (2014). *Preparing Secondary Students for Work: A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students*. Melbourne, VIC: Education Services Australia. Retrieved 8 September 2016, from
http://www.scseec.edu.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/Reports%20and%20publications/
Publications/Preparing%20Secondary%20Students%20for%20Work.pdf
[2] *ibid*

Executive Summary

In 2016, the Tasmanian Government commissioned an independent review of the provision of Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania (the Review), which focused on opportunities to improve attendance, retention and attainment. In relation to Vocational Education & Training (VET) and Vocational Learning (VL), the Review recommended to:

- Initiate regular long-term strategies to change public perceptions about the value of school education and VET in Schools (Recommendation 4).
- Improve the status of Vocational Educational Learning and Vocational Education and Training in schools through community involvement in the development of a future vision and associated implementation strategy (Recommendation 6).

In response to the Review a working group called the VL and VET Subgroup was established with responsibility for:

- Developing a state-wide vision for VET
- Provide an opportunity to discuss the work going on through the Working Group to build an inclusive Years 9 to 12 Curriculum that incorporates and reflects VET
- Consider work being undertaken through the national VET strategy.

VET/VL Forums

Eight VET/VL forums were conducted across the state during late October and early November 2018. The forums were an opportunity for key stakeholders, to share current strengths and areas for improvement for VET for school students and youth in Tasmania, and, contribute to a community-inspired state-wide vision for VET in Tasmanian schools.

Invited stakeholders included: Principals, VET teachers, University of Tasmania, TasTAFE, Aboriginal Education Officers, National Disability Coordination Officers, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), Employers, Key Industry Representatives and Community Organisations. Approximately 120 stakeholders participated in the forums. Stakeholders were also invited to make online submissions in response to a summary of key forum themes (this report), and to review the draft vision (to be circulated on completion).

In each of the forums there was support and agreement with the opportunities highlighted by Gonski for review of secondary education. These were presented during the forums and are described below[3]:

- **more flexible/customised curricula** sensitive to student growth and preferences

- **increased use of alternative pedagogies** including apprenticeship/internship/work experience models, as well as inquiry-based, cross-subject learning

- ways for senior secondary education to **incorporate and prioritise the general capabilities** identified in the Australian Curriculum

- the provision of **informed and consistent careers advice** *(vocational learning Ed.)* to students determining their next move into the workforce

- **a stronger engagement with industry**, within and beyond VET (e.g. system similar to Germany and Denmark that rely on shared responsibility between schools and employers.)

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[3] Gonski et al, Through Growth to Achievement: Report to the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools, March 2018

This report summarises and reflects on the key themes arising from the forums, which are outlined under the following headline areas.

Headline	Key Themes
Student Engagement	Students are better equipped to make decisions around their future education and pathways when they are engaged in learning. However, there are often many complex barriers associated with student engagement in school. These barriers include the individual's personal health and wellbeing, their wider family and community lived experience, and their school experience (engagement with peers, teachers and to the curriculum).
School, Industry & Community Collaboration	There was broad consensus that schools, community, industry and government have an opportunity to further collaborate to enhance student engagement and outcomes that go beyond just attainment, retention and achievement metrics. There are pockets of excellence where school, industry and community have collaborated well. These positive experiences can be shared, celebrated, and nurtured around our state.
	Early exposure to local industries and potential career pathways is important for building student awareness and understanding of local employment opportunities. This relies on close working relationships between schools, industry and the community.
	Work-based learning offers an authentic, safe, practical and individualised learning experience for students, however it was widely acknowledged that it must be well managed in order to be successful.
	While some Trade Training Centres are recognised as best practice, some Trade Training Centres are under-utilised. There is opportunity to further connect them with local industry and the broader community. Accessing VET trainers can also be challenging particularly in regional locations.
Skills, Recognition & Qualifications	Streamlining and coordinating the recognition of skills and qualifications is critical for inspiring and empowering students, in building their own pathways towards confidence, resilience and a career. Improved awareness and recognition that VET units count towards attainment of a Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE), (and VET contributing to tertiary pathways) was highlighted as important to support student engagement, encourage diverse learning, and to improve the status of VET.
	There is a disconnect between the level of general core skills and capabilities expected by industry, and those delivered through curriculum and some VET qualifications. Students need a base level of general transferable skills and capabilities, in order to successfully engage with a work-based environment and to flourish in the changing world.
Pathways	Supporting students to explore and pursue a diversity of pathways is critical to student engagement and achievement, and to meeting wider community and industry goals. Personalised, customised, and localised pathways are likely to best meet student, community and industry needs and have the best chances of engaging students. Schools require support from partner organisations to provide place-based responses to local student, industry and community circumstances.
	The Education Act changes to be introduced in 2020 require all students to be engaged in education and training until they complete Year 12 or are 18 years of age or complete a Certificate III, and this was widely perceived as a challenge (and opportunity) for student engagement, in schools and in industry.
	In addition to building upon current pathways and enhancing the measurement of student outcomes, there are opportunities to introduce new models of learning pathways that could better meet student, school and industry needs.

This report summarises the key findings from these forums, and draws out the key themes, concerns, and aspirations for VET and VL from the diverse range of stakeholders who participated. These findings will inform the overarching vision for VET and VL in Tasmania and contribute to the wider Years 9 to 12 project.

Based on these findings, a short list of high level 'actionable items' have been identified to inform and guide the next steps of the project, and future direction.

#	Actionable Item
1.	Develop a clear set of policy guidelines re qualification levels for VET in schools, when is it appropriate for students to begin their VET experience and to which level(s).
2.	Support localised practice, whether this is regional or metropolitan, so that VET/VL offerings reflect local strengths and optimise opportunities for students; develop arrangements for the sharing of facilities across systems and schools.
3.	Support the promotion and expansion of Work-based learning opportunities, for students to develop their General Capabilities in an industry context and as a key way to shorten the transition time from education to employment.
4.	Strengthen the options and pathways available to students pursuing VET qualifications by investigating: • how VET qualifications might contribute to a student's TCE participation points • whether the TCE everyday adult standards could be embedded (or deemed equivalent) in a Certificate program • the feasibility of VET qualifications contributing to a student's ATAR.
5.	Resource and promote the greater uptake of Australian School-based Apprenticeships and work to streamline the process for obtaining an Australian School-based Apprenticeship.
6.	Develop a mechanism for greater information flow between industry sectors and schools, informing industry of potential employees and informing young people of apprenticeship opportunities.
7.	Explore the need for local geographical Education to Employment working groups that include 'anchor organisations' e.g. schools, RTOs, local government, regional development bodies, local businesses and industries, citizen interest groups, health services, philanthropy and others.
8.	Undertake a public awareness campaign that promotes the benefits and opportunities available to young people who undertake VET/VL courses.

1. Background

The Years 9 to 12 Review

As part of a commitment to improving attainment and retention rates, in 2016 the Tasmanian Government commissioned an independent review of the provision of Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania (the Review), which was undertaken by The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

The Review focused on:

- current curriculum provision, attainment data, and pathway information for students in Years 9-12 in all Tasmanian schools, including vocational education and training;
- proposed future direction on Years 9-12 curriculum vision (including vocational education and training) and design, that aligns with the Tasmanian Curriculum Framework and national direction; and
- the characteristics of the current workforce, including qualifications and specialisations (where available) particularly in Years 11 and 12. [4]

The Review Report highlighted that one of the critical elements to increasing retention and attainment rates in Tasmania is providing a curriculum through Years 9 to 12 that creates clear pathways for the range of study and employment options. The Report also recommended to:

- improve the status of Vocational Educational Learning (VL) and Vocational Education Training (VET) in schools through community involvement in the development of a future vision and associated implementation strategy (Recommendation 6); and
- initiate regular long-term strategies to change public perceptions about the value of school education and VET in Schools (Recommendation 4).

In February 2018, a workshop was held to discuss a way forward to implement the recommendations of the Years 9-12 Review Report. This included stakeholder representatives from the Department of Education, TASC, Catholic Education Tasmania, Independent Schools Tasmania, Skills Tasmania, TasTAFE, University of Tasmania as well as principals and teachers from Department of Education and Catholic Education Tasmania.

The Advisory Committee recommended establishing a Working Group called the VL and VET Subgroup, to be responsible for developing a state-wide vision for VET. This would incorporate ongoing work through the Working Group, in building an inclusive Years 9 to 12 Curriculum that incorporates and reflects VET, as well as considers work being undertaken through the national VET strategy.

In parallel to the work to develop a VET/VL vision, the Years 9 to 12 Project is supporting the development of the Years 9 to 12 Curriculum, and the development of an Accreditation framework and certification project (led by TASC).

VET/VL Forums

A primary focus of the VET/VL subgroup was to organise a state-wide forum for key stakeholders, to workshop a community-inspired state-wide vision for VET/VL in Tasmania, as well as share current strengths and areas for improvement for VET and VL for school students and youth in Tasmania. Cathcart & Storey, an independent consulting firm were engaged by the Department of Education to facilitate the forums and summarise key themes (this report).

Eight VET forums across Tasmania during late October to early November 2018. Stakeholders invited to participate included: local employers (from small, medium and large enterprises), principals and teachers from schools across all sectors, Registered Training Organisations, Tasmanian Traineeships and Apprenticeships

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[4] https://documentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/Final%20Report%20Years%209-12%20Tasmania.pdf

Committee, Apprenticeship Network Providers, Skills Tasmania, and key peak industry representatives and other interested stakeholders.

The following regional forums were conducted around Tasmania:

- 22 October 2018– Hobart (north)

- 23 October 2018 – Hobart (south)

- 24 October 2018 – Hobart (east)

- 29 October 2018 – St Helens

- 30 October 2018 – Launceston

- 31 October 2018 – Devonport

- 1 November 2018 – Burnie

- 2 November 2018 – Strahan.

Across these eight regional forums, in total there were approximately 120 attendees. At the forums, stakeholders were also invited to make online submissions in response to this summary report, and to a subsequent draft of the VET vision (anticipated late 2018). Consultations with students were also conducted with the Department to directly reflect student experience and perspective.

The forums were structured around six propositions, or discussion topics:

1. **Careers advice** – how do we inform, engage, inspire and provide career development opportunities
2. **Qualifications and pathways** – how do we recognise achievement, can we further tailor packages of learning to encourage career exploration and development
3. **Skills & Capabilities** – core skills and general capabilities are critical employability and life skills. How can these be explicitly developed and recognised in education and training
4. **Work-based learning** – including work exposure, internship and apprenticeship models build knowledge of the world of work, and encourage learning and engagement in pathways
5. **School & Industry Collaborations** – how can school and industry further collaborate to improve student, industry and community outcomes
6. **Systems and Models** – what can we learn and consider for adaptation in Tasmania from elsewhere.

This report summarises the key findings from these forums, and draws out the key themes, concerns, and aspirations for VET and VL from the diverse range of stakeholders who participated. The stakeholder engagement and outputs from the forums will inform the overarching vision for VET and VL in Tasmania and contribute to the wider Years 9 to 12 Project.

2. Key Findings

This section summarises the key themes from the VET/VL forums, under four overarching sections:

1. Student Engagement
2. School, Industry and Community Collaboration
3. Skills, Recognition & Qualifications
4. Pathways.

In all forums there was a widespread focus on how schools can collaborate with their local industries, communities and education and training providers, to provide engaging experiences for students that can better prepare them for a future of lifelong learning, and for their educational pathways – including VET, University, and/or industry-based training. This discussion led to what skills and capabilities students need to acquire while at school in order to be life and 'work-ready', and what type of vocational learning and career information, exposure, and planning support can assist students, with student disengagement being a specific focus of discussion.

Student Engagement

Students are better equipped to make decisions around their future education and pathways, if they are engaged in learning. However, there are often many complex barriers to student engagement in schools. These barriers include the individual's personal health and wellbeing, their wider family and community lived experience, and their school experience (engagement with peers, teachers, curriculum)

- Across Tasmania, students are incredibly diverse in their attitudes towards education, learning and school, and therefore have diverse needs in regard to planning their future education pathways. There are many external factors – social, health, community and personal barriers that prevent students engaging with school, learning and pursuing careers of interest. Many of these barriers reflect a student's immediate experiences and relationships and are influenced by family attitudes towards education and employment. A significant concern raised for disengaged students was mental health (including depression and anxiety) and general health and wellbeing, which is often due to factors outside of the school environment. Other barriers identified as contributing to school disengagement include inter-generational unemployment, lack of transport, limited access to work experience, and perceptions around future life and employment opportunities. There are also other personal factors, such as maturity, social pressures, and limited decision-making experience. This highlights that a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate and approaches that reflect personalised learning and engagement be prioritised. Wrap-around supports from inter-agency and community collaborations were highlighted as important for supporting students to be in a position to engage in learning and education, not just in schools but also for their transition into the working world and participation in society more broadly.

- For some students, the existing pedagogy and adherence to delivery of the Australian Curriculum is not providing an engaging and effective school learning environment. VET is viewed by some as an alternative pathway (see further detail below). There was discussion at most forums about the adherence to traditional subjects (e.g. Maths, English) and the limited applicability and relevance of this pedagogy for many students. This suggests alternative approaches be considered that reflect inquiry and project-based learning.

- Stakeholders reflected there is a conflicting purpose for VET in schools, because it is perceived by some to be "the answer" or a ''catch-all'' for disengaged students. Stakeholders at the forums agreed that this was a perverse and incorrect perception, and VET was rather an approach to education and skill acquisition that may form part of a student's pathway to further training and education and/or career progression. There is scope to further develop pathways in school that lead towards VET. For some students this has proved to be an effective student engagement and pathway strategy.

- It was highlighted that for some students the world of work is daunting and a perception that it is difficult to gain employment. While the world of work is changing (and youth unemployment an issue), there was a counter view presented by industry highlighting the 'war on talent' and challenging of finding the right people to join industry and start careers. This range of views suggests there is opportunity to further promote to students the range of opportunities available (in traditional careers as well as in new/emerging industries), and for schools to engage with industry to support effective work and industry exposure. This opportunity exists for all students, including students with disability.

School, Industry & Community Collaboration

There was broad consensus that schools, training providers, community, industry and government can further collaborate to enhance student outcomes that extend further than attainment, retention and achievement metrics. There are pockets of excellence where industry and schools have collaborated within their local/regional community with considerable success. There is opportunity for these to be shared, celebrated, and nurtured around our state, and where appropriate replicated and tailored for wider adoption.

- Stakeholders from a broad range of industry organisations, schools, and community organisations agreed that the future model for developing career pathways for students in Tasmania requires a focus on collaboration and communication, and successful school and industry leadership. Improved communication and collaboration could provide better access to quality work-based learning opportunities, career and pathway exposure, to better meet the interests and needs of students. Schools and employers are often constrained by limited resources and capacity, however by leveraging existing relationships and successful local models that already exist in Tasmania, there is scope for improved outcomes.

- To generate lasting buy in, industry needs to be presented with a clear value proposition that reflects a range of industry/employer strategies to engage with young people and schools, and the opportunity to contribute to work exploration and the student career exploration process that will attract young people. In addition, there is a role for industry to participate in ongoing review and development of training and education to support alignment of outcomes and 'fit for purpose' qualifications. There was a strong willingness to develop this collaboration from stakeholders at the forums.

- Some communities around Tasmania are driving local programs aimed at engaging students in a range of alternative learning and support environments, for those that have disengaged from classroom learning and/or who respond to and engage with these alternative approaches. For example, in St Helens a community mentoring program, based on volunteers in local community networks has been established. Mentoring either from the community, industry, or 'near-peers' was highlighted in a number of forums as an important and effective tool in building student engagement, as it can provide an opportunity for students to reflect and explore their own personal learning pathway, as well as their future career development.

- Other local exemplars of strong student engagement through VET have been largely industry-led, and reliant on key people (individuals) passionate about driving positive change. The challenge at a system-level is how to encourage schools and other stakeholders to pursue these local growth opportunities, how to nurture and share these successes, and failures, and leverage them into other regional contexts, and broadly how to ensure these successes are sustainable.

Early exposure to local industries and potential career pathways is important for building student awareness and understanding of local employment opportunities and wider career options. This relies on close working relationships between schools, industry and the community

- There was broad consensus that career education and/or work experience should ideally start as early as possible and be embedded into learning programs throughout schools (i.e. early years, primary and secondary schooling). Many representatives shared successful local examples of how industry and schools are collaborating to provide immersive and eye-opening experiences for students, which are localised and community-driven. There was strong consensus that families, carers and direct peers have a significant influence over students' educational attitudes and career pathways. Communicating with these key influencers and involving them in the process with students is therefore critical, so they can be well-placed to support students in making these choices.

- Some regional and remote schools described a challenge to provide students with access to relevant industry information and expose students to a wider range of careers, due to limited jobs or industries in their local area. There are some service providers that act as a conduit for industry, schools and community organisations to come together to develop opportunities for student career exploration however this has grown organically across different areas in Tasmania.

- The concept of local education and industry hubs were discussed to support improved communication, collaboration and links at a regional/ local community level. A similar model exists in Victoria (Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs).

- A central portal for industry, community partners and employers that is currently in development, would provide value as a single source of truth, and liaison point for industries and schools to communicate and collaborate, and leverage existing practice. There is scope for formalising these resources, to support school-industry-community collaboration.

Work-based learning offers an authentic, safe, practical and individualised learning experience for students, however it was widely acknowledged that it must be well managed in order to be successful

- Work-based learning provides valuable insight into workplace expectations for students and building an understanding of the working world by contextualising learning. It builds on general skills and capabilities and can increase student resilience, through enhancing their ability to engage in different learning environments, which students then bring back to school. However, it can often be a challenge for schools to coordinate work-based learning into existing timetable and curriculum requirements. Many students also need personalised support in order to build the confidence needed to get a successful outcome from these experiences. International experiences (e.g. Ontario, Canada) highlight opportunities for successful integration of work-based learning as part of senior secondary schooling.

- Industry benefit through work-based learning opportunities, and it is an important component of their recruitment pipeline and can better ensure that students enter the workforce with an understanding of their expectations. Prior work experience was often regarded by industry representatives as one of the biggest indicators of successful transition into work.

- Schools have varying experiences in balancing work-based learning with traditional curriculum, and larger schools and colleges noted difficulties in incorporating work-based learning into timetabling systems and managing curriculum requirements. Some schools also noted cultural challenges as a barrier for giving students broader exposure to VET or work-based learning opportunities, with VET perceived of lesser value than other academic education by some students, families and community. School leadership at the local level therefore is an important factor in developing and sustaining these programs and overcoming these challenges, as part of a broader repositioning of the value of education and VET, and the opportunity for a range of pathways to incorporate a range of education and training (including VET).

- There are further opportunities to strengthen the links between literacy and numeracy and other core skills such as problem solving and entrepreneurship through work-based learning opportunities. This can enhance the perceived relevancy of these skills for students, encouraging them to remain engaged throughout their studies.

- Stakeholders suggested further work is required to define these core skills and general capabilities, generate clarity as to expectations of achievement of these skills and capabilities, incorporate them into learning and training, and recognise them accordingly (e.g. badges or micro-credentialing, see further below)

While some Trade Training Centres are recognised as best practice, some Trade Training Centres are under-utilised. There is opportunity to further connect them with local industry and the broader community. Accessing VET trainers can also be challenging particularly in regional locations

- The utilisation and engagement of Trade Training Centres (TTCs) with schools varies widely across Tasmania. In order to rebuild some of those under-utilised TTCs, there were suggestions to involve local groups such as Neighbourhood Houses within the TTC network or engage with local industry and community leaders. It was also suggested that TTCs should become accountable and have their own additional training budgets, so they can do more in the local community in relation to local workforce development needs.

- Opportunities exist for schools to work with community and industry partners to engage training providers to enhance the quality, relevancy, and scope of course offerings through TTCs. This could assist in overcoming challenges of scale and accessibility of VET trainers, currently being experienced in some regions.

Skills, Recognition & Qualifications

Streamlining the recognition of skills and qualifications is critical for inspiring and empowering students, in building their own pathways towards a career

- Many stakeholders across the forums perceived that VET courses did not contribute to attainment of the TCE, and that VET courses should contribute to TCE attainment. Further work is required to promote and clarify that VET courses do contribute to attainment of the TCE. Each VET unit achieved count towards points for attainment of the TCE[5].

- Many stakeholders also perceived that VET courses should contribute to attainment of an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank), as occurs in other Australian jurisdictions[6]. In addition to review of current status, further work is required to promote and clarify the status of VET in this regard as currently many VET Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses allow you to transition to university.

- Clarification of the status of VET in terms of TCE attainment and tertiary entrance would support students to follow a VET pathway and be appropriately recognised for their skills acquired without limiting their potential of pursuing tertiary education. This has the potential to contribute to improving the community perception of the value of VET (and education more broadly).

- There was some concern that current TCE qualifications don't capture the achievements of some students in areas outside classroom learning (e.g. skills and capabilities demonstrated through volunteer or carer activities), however there is ongoing work around this as part of a revised

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[5] P.6 2019 Student Guide for Years 11 and 12, Department of Education. June 2018.
https://documentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/Year-1112-Course-Guide_2019_WEB.pdf

[6] Ibid **Australian Tertiary Admission Ranking (ATAR) / university entrance.** The ATAR is used by Australian universities to allocate places to students. Your ATAR is calculated by TASC from your results in Level 3 and 4 (pre-tertiary) subjects. In Tasmania, it is the responsibility of the University of Tasmania to determine what subjects can be counted towards your ATAR. To be eligible for an ATAR the University of Tasmania has determined that students must also achieve a TCE. Entry requirements to university vary by course and by university.

Accreditation Framework. A coordinated and aligned qualification and assessment framework between VET, TCE and ATAR was regarded as critical for providing fluid transition points for students.

- There was broad consensus that incremental recognition is valuable for empowering and inspiring students, and models such as badging or micro-credentialing can provide emphasis on the acquisition of general skills and capabilities. However, these types of qualifications cannot be done without sufficient levels of quality assurance, and alignment with industry. This is reliant on building and maintaining strong industry collaboration, and alignment across training and education provision.

  There is a perception (particularly by some in industry) that VET in schools (including school-based apprenticeship) is not delivering levels of skill acquisition and learning equivalent to VET in other settings (e.g. delivery by TasTAFE and/or via apprenticeship). This perception needs to be addressed to better understand these concerns and to develop approaches to address identified issues of perception/ acceptability of VET in schools and school-based apprenticeships (where these issues exists).

There is a disconnect between the level of general core skills and capabilities expected by industry, and those delivered through curriculum and some VET qualifications. Students need a base level of general transferable skills and capabilities, in order to successfully engage with a work-based environment and to succeed in life in our rapidly changing world

- While there were many positive examples of student engagement and attainment through VET, there are also examples raised where training was inconsistently delivered and administered, with limited coordinated quality assurance or leadership. Industry representatives voiced their concerns that some VET graduates are not meeting industry needs in relation to standard literacy and numeracy skills, as well as ICT and other work-readiness skills.

- The skills and capabilities that students need for the 21st century need to be transferable, in order to deal with the changing and variable nature of work. This includes the threat of losing traditional lower-level jobs through automation and advancing technology, but also refers to the economic and seasonal fluctuations of local industries. Stakeholders suggested there is a requirement to clarify and define core skills and general capabilities for Tasmania, how these are to be developed and delivered, and how these are reflected in learning and achievement.

- Literacy and numeracy learning delivered in real-life contexts through VET can be powerful. There is opportunity for literacy and numeracy learning and progress to be supported and recognised as part of general skill development in all education and training settings.

- While it was discussed that there is scope for general core skills and capabilities to be further built into curriculum, teachers and schools are already under pressure to deliver high levels of content, particularly around literacy and numeracy. While many teachers noted that there is a desire and willingness to build on project-based and inquiry-based learning, there is limited capacity for some teachers to design, plan and deliver additional programs within their current timetable.

Pathways

Supporting students to explore and pursue a diversity of pathways is critical to student engagement and achievement, and to meeting wider community and industry goals. Schools require support from partner organisation to provide place-based responses to local student, industry and community circumstances.

- There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to preparing students for their career pathways. It is critical for education and career pathways to be personalised, customised, and localised, for it to best meet student needs and have the best chance of engaging students. Smaller schools and colleges are often able to provide this personalised support as they have the advantage of more flexibility with smaller student numbers, however this is often much more difficult in larger schools and colleges.

- In choosing and formulating student pathways, access to quality, timely and relevant career and industry information is critical. There was a recurrent theme in the forums that the widely perceived definition of 'success' needs to broaden away from aspiring to a University pathway, to acknowledge that pursuing careers of interest may involve multiple pathways across multiple points in time. By providing a diverse range of options and experiences, students are more likely to find areas of interest that support engagement and learning.

The Education Act changes to be introduced in 2020 require all students to be engaged in education and training until they complete Year 12 or are 18 years of age, and this was widely perceived as a challenge (and opportunity) for student engagement, in schools and in industry

- There was widespread discussion over the implications of the change in legislation and related targets for school retention, TCE or Certificate III completion, and what this will mean for student pathways and engagement. A challenge will be to balance the focus on attainment with the provision of a broad and holistic education experience for students with a range of pathway options made available for them to consider.

- There was broader concern amongst stakeholders around how schools can harness student engagement through to Year 12. Some industry representatives indicated that there are young people suitable for starting in the workforce in Year 10 (e.g. via an apprenticeship), as they acquire the skills they need through their experience and training on the job. Some industry stakeholders indicated a strong preference for apprenticeships commencing at an earlier age. Restricting or limiting the ability for students to follow this traditional pathway of leaving in Year 10 could be denying these students of their desire to leave school, increasing the risk of disengagement in their final years of schooling, and motivation to engage in the workforce at this later stage.

- Stakeholders highlighted the importance of supporting and ensuring 'return to school' pathways for students who leave school before turning 18 years or completion of Year 12 or completion of a Certificate III (e.g. to commence an apprenticeship and do not complete the apprenticeship)

- Further work is required to communicate to all stakeholders the implications of the legislative change to pathways of education and training (including for apprenticeships), and to support schools to respond to this challenge/opportunity.

In addition to building upon current pathways such as school-based apprenticeships and improving the measurement of student outcomes, there are opportunities to introduce new models of learning pathways that could better meet student, school and industry needs

- There is scope to further develop pathways in school that lead towards VET, such as introductory-type classes, which involve more vocational learning experiences and opportunities. Some schools are already doing this through Years 9 and 10, to expose students to possible VET pathways.

- There were a range of views on the appropriateness and applicability of school-based apprenticeships, and whether these were currently meeting student, industry and school requirements and desired outcomes. Some industry representatives suggested the delivery format (part time work/ part time study on a weekly timetable) required adjustment to better meet employer and industry requirements, and to better support student learning and skill development. There is opportunity for this pathway (and other pathways) to be further developed and refined with schools and industry to tailor delivery and confirm requirements and expectations to better align outcomes. This tailoring may occur state-wide, either by industry, or to meet local context.

- There was interest in packages of learning and similar approaches to further develop learning pathways. The example of Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSMs) from Ontario, Canada, allows students to focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests while meeting the requirements of the Ontario

Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) was positively received and generated discussion on Tasmania's industry sectors and related opportunities.

- When discussed in some forums, there was interest in the professional pathway example from Switzerland. This model provides for professional training as a third concept between vocational training and pre-tertiary studies. For example, a professional pathway could provide a range of pathways supporting students to pursue business and entrepreneurship.

- To support a wider understanding of the range of successful career pathways, stakeholders highlighted the importance of data to reflect attainment and outcomes. The student tracking project will be valuable to better reflect and understand the outcomes of various pathways and to triangulate student, school and industry/ workforce outcome measures (e.g. TCE, ATAR, completion of apprenticeship and VET qualifications). Improved measurement was perceived to be important in communicating and supporting the legislative change associated with the Education Act.

3. Actionable items

Based on these findings, a short list of high level 'actionable items' have been identified to inform and guide the next steps of the project, and future direction.

#	Actionable Item
1.	Develop a clear set of policy guidelines re qualification levels for VET in schools, when is it appropriate for students to begin their VET experience and to which level(s).
2.	Support localised practice, whether this is regional or metropolitan, so that VET/VL offerings reflect local strengths and optimise opportunities for students; develop arrangements for the sharing of facilities across systems and schools.
3.	Support the promotion and expansion of Work-based learning opportunities, for students to develop their General Capabilities in an industry context and as a key way to shorten the transition time from education to employment.
4.	Strengthen the options and pathways available to students pursuing VET qualifications by investigating: • how VET qualifications might contribute to a student's TCE participation points • whether the TCE everyday adult standards could be embedded (or deemed equivalent) in a Certificate program • the feasibility of VET qualifications contributing to a student's ATAR.
5.	Resource and promote the greater uptake of Australian School-based Apprenticeships and work to streamline the process for obtaining an Australian School-based Apprenticeship.
6.	Develop a mechanism for greater information flow between industry sectors and schools, informing industry of potential employees and informing young people of apprenticeship opportunities.
7.	Explore the need for local geographical Education to Employment working groups that include 'anchor organisations' e.g. schools, RTOs, local government, regional development bodies, local businesses and industries, citizen interest groups, health services, philanthropy and others.
8.	Undertake a public awareness campaign that promotes the benefits and opportunities available to young people who undertake VET/VL courses.

4. Next steps

From this report, a draft vision will be developed for VET/VL to 2030 as per the recommendation from the Review of Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania (ACER).

The development of associated strategy and planning for implementation may include:

1. following further consultation, a policy document that operationalises the VET/VL vison across the three education sectors
2. resources for schools, including a good practice guide that will underpin the implementation of the VET/VL vision and policy
3. a communications strategy for all stakeholders, including industry, schools and RTOs, that will support the implementation of the VET/VL vision and policy.

Cathcart & Storey

Social Policy Consulting

Cathcart & Storey is a boutique social policy consulting firm based in Hobart. We provide consulting and support services across the policy cycle for health, education and human service sectors. Services include policy review and formulation, stakeholder consultation and engagement, implementation planning and support, and program evaluation and review.

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