



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Training  
and Workforce Development



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# STATE GOVERNMENT **RESPONSE**

*Mobilising WA's Future: Young people in VET*

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June 2023



# STATE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

## *Mobilising WA's Future: Young people in VET*

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The State Training Board (the Board) has released the *Mobilising WA's Future: Young People in VET report* (the Report). The Report stems from consultations with young people aged 18-24 about their participation in vocational education and training (VET). VET plays a critical role for both young people and the future strength of Western Australia's (WA) economy, society and culture. The *WA At Risk Youth Strategy 2022-27* also recognises the particular importance of access to training for youth at risk.

Western Australia has a high quality VET system that offers world class training opportunities and high levels of student satisfaction. To build on this world class system, the State Government has delivered on election commitments to support young people's access to career advice and exposure to VET, targeting many of the issues raised in the Report.

The advice of the Board in promoting youth engagement with VET provides important guidance based on young people's perspectives. This document provides further information about existing and future State Government actions in response to the Report's findings and recommendations.

### **Background**

The State Training Board is Western Australia's peak industry training advisory body and provides independent advice to the Minister for Training; Water; Youth on VET matters in WA.

The Board established a youth engagement project which conducted a series of roundtable discussions with 78 young people aged 18-24 about their participation in VET. Feedback from these discussions across a range of industries informed the Report.

The State Government response to the Report has been developed by the Department of Training and Workforce Development, Department of Education, School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Catholic Education WA and the Association of Independent Schools of WA.

# STATE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

## Mobilising WA's Future: Young people in VET

The State Government is committed to ensuring all students in Western Australia receive a high quality education which provides them with a pathway to a successful future. The State Government has implemented a range of initiatives that enhance access to career education and VET pathways for secondary students.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development will collaborate with the Department of Education, the School Curriculum Standards Authority, Catholic Education WA, Association of Independent Schools of WA and WA TAFE colleges to progress actions addressing the Report's recommendations. Some recommendations may also require collaboration with other agencies and industry stakeholders.

### 1. ENGAGEMENT AND EXPOSURE TO VET

#### Findings

- 1.1 To enable young people to make informed decisions about their post-school study and career options, they need to be actively engaged in career education through impartial, tailored advice and direct exposure to VET.
- 1.2 Parents and career practitioners have a fundamental influence on young people's decision-making about their future education, training and employment. It is important that these cohorts are the focus of targeted programs to ensure they are well-informed on what VET is, how to navigate the VET system, and the training pathways and career opportunities that VET provides.

Recommendation	State Government response
<b>1.1 Build on the wide range of local programs already in place to establish a clear career development policy framework that ensures all schools prioritise career education and development within their school curriculum.</b>	<p><b>Supported and partially addressed</b> by election commitments, including the 'career learning toolkit', launched by the WA Government in 2023, which promote career development for students in schools, including career learning lessons, work readiness activities, and pathway planning.</p> <p>In 2022, career practitioners were appointed to 70 public schools. These teachers were funded to complete a Graduate Certificate in Career Development, enabling increased access to specialised career support in schools.</p> <p>Department of Education to explore development of a policy framework prioritising career education and development in curriculum, in consultation with the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council.</p>

## 1. ENGAGEMENT AND EXPOSURE TO VET (Continued)

Recommendation	State Government response
<p><b>1.2 Investigate opportunities to increase young people's exposure to and awareness of VET throughout their time at high school, starting from Year 7. This should include career development support tailored to students' individual needs.</b></p>	<p><b>Supported and addressed</b> through the following initiatives.</p> <p>The Career Taster Program, launched by the WA Government in 2022, provides opportunities for school students across all sectors to engage with the world of work, learn about different industries and career pathways and the skills required for them through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» industry-led experiences and activities; and</li><li>» early career discovery training that assists students to make informed decisions on subject selections and post-school options.</li></ul> <p>WA Jobs and Skills Centres provide career development and study option support to students.</p> <p>The WA Government has increased the number of funded places for VET Delivered to Secondary Schools programs to reach an additional 4,000 places by 2024. From 2023, industry supported VET in schools places will offer two qualifications per eligible student. Eligibility has also been expanded to include Certificate II qualifications for Year 10 students.</p> <p>The Department of Education's career learning lesson resources are mapped to the Australian Blueprint for Career Development for Year 7 and above.</p>
<p><b>1.3 Ensure that career development programs and advice also focus on raising awareness of VET and VET pathways among parents.</b></p>	<p><b>Supported and addressed</b> through the implementation of the Department of Education's 'Career Conversations' events across all regions, targeted at boosting parents' and carers' engagement with career information.</p> <p>The Career Taster Program's online portal launched in 2022 also contains a range of resources including support materials for parents.</p>
<p><b>1.4 Facilitate opportunities for training providers and employers to build relationships with schools and better engage with young people and their career practitioners to improve exposure to VET pathways and career options.</b></p>	<p><b>Supported and partially addressed</b> through the implementation of the Career Taster Program (CTP). The active participation of employers and industry bodies is a central part of the success of the CTP. Through the CTP, the Department of Training and Workforce Development is engaging and working with employers, businesses and industry bodies to assist them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» engage with local students to showcase their industry, associated occupations and the career pathways available in their region (including VET to university); and</li><li>» build industry awareness of the CTP including ways to participate, provide career development activities, and expand the career exploration experiences available to students.</li></ul> <p>The CTP online portal connects schools with engaging industry 'taster' experiences through a searchable database.</p> <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development will explore opportunities to expand industry participation in the CTP to build relationships with schools, TAFE colleges, students and career practitioners.</p>

## 2. CHANGING THE PERCEPTION OF VET

### Findings

- 2.1 VET is frequently seen as an inferior learning pathway, particularly among parents and teachers, and this is one of the major barriers to young people choosing a VET qualification.
- 2.2 Parents have the greatest influence on their child's education and career choices. Their lack of understanding of the VET sector and poor perception of VET impact the expectations they hold for their children's post-school study and career options.
- 2.3 Young people rely on social media for news and information. An effective and highly targeted social media presence is vital to improve awareness of VET opportunities in the community.
- 2.4 Despite recent campaigns and considerable government effort at all levels, there is still more work needed to reduce the stigma in our community associated with choosing VET over university.

Recommendation	State Government response
<b>2.1 The education sector should support and enable schools to prioritise a pathway-neutral approach to career advice that is aimed at opening doors to the world of work. This will ensure young people are exposed to all post-school study options that will help them get to where they want to go, not just university.</b>	<p><b>Supported and addressed</b> by the Career Taster Program which provides exposure to career taster experiences and opportunities to learn about different pathways and post-school options including VET and university courses.</p> <p>Dedicated career practitioners in public schools support the provision of tailored career advice.</p>
<b>2.2 Government and industry work collaboratively to identify and promote the VET sector and VET champions from a wide range of industry sectors to highlight where VET can take you, including pathways to further study at university.</b>	<p><b>Supported and addressed</b> through ongoing VET sector communications campaigns and VET champions initiatives to promote the sector to youth aged 15-24, including youth at risk.</p> <p>The WA Training Awards are a WA Government initiative that promote the VET sector as a pathway to a great career by recognising excellence. There are 13 award categories, including categories for individuals and the School-Based Apprentice of the Year Award. Winners have the opportunity to be ambassadors for the VET sector, and individual award winners automatically progress to the Australian Training Awards.</p> <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development will explore opportunities to enhance communications campaigns promoting the VET sector to young people, in consultation with the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council.</p>

### 3. VET DELIVERY AND SUPPORT

#### Findings

- 3.1 The quality of training delivery, as well as support to navigate the complexities of the VET system, have a major impact on young people's VET experience.
- 3.2 Young people need greater support to help them secure the work placements that are required as part of their training.
- 3.3 Lecturer currency, access to sufficient resources and tools, and training in the most up-to-date technologies were key factors in ensuring a positive VET experience for young people.
- 3.4 Many young people do not feel that their achievements in VET are adequately recognised by their schools, training providers and communities.

#### Recommendation

#### State Government response

**3.1 Investigate opportunities to improve assistance for young people to cut through the complexity of the VET system with clear, accessible information on training and career pathways within industry.**

**Supported and partially addressed** by the Jobs and Skills WA website and services provided by the state-wide network of Jobs and Skills Centres (JSC). JSCs provide professional and practical advice on career development, training and employment pathways. In 2023 the JSC network expanded to include 19 JSCs offering free, local advisory and support services across metropolitan Perth and regional Western Australia.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development will investigate opportunities to support students to more easily navigate the training system, in consultation with the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council.

**3.2 Investigate opportunities to increase the participation of students and employers in work-based learning programs (such as pre-apprenticeships) and improving support to secure work placements.**

**Supported and addressed** through work-based Job Ready learning programs. The recent expansion of the JSC network ensures these services are widely available to connect students with appropriate training programs that meet their needs and goals.

Financial support is available to eligible students who require additional support to participate in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

An additional 4,000 industry-supported VET Delivered to Secondary Students places will be available by 2024, substantially increasing pre-apprenticeship participation.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development will consult with industry and other stakeholders on opportunities to increase participation of employers in pre-apprenticeship and other work integrated learning programs.

### 3. VET DELIVERY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

#### Recommendation

#### State Government response

**3.3 Investigate and deploy measures to enhance consistency of training and better incentivise training quality across all providers, including ways to recognise high quality lecturers.**

**Supported.** The Training Accreditation Council (TAC), the State's VET regulator, maintains a proactive approach to building training providers' skills and knowledge by providing professional development workshops, fact sheets, podcasts and a newsletter. TAC will continue its program of professional development and information for RTOs.

Additional funding is available for WA TAFE colleges to support industry placements for TAFE lecturers' professional development, and strengthening industry partnerships with schools and TAFE.

The WA Government supports recognition of high quality VET lecturers through its dedicated WA Training Awards, which includes a category winner for WA Trainer of the Year. Winners automatically progress to the Australian Training Awards equivalent category.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development will continue to engage nationally on VET quality reforms, including exploring opportunities through the National Skills Agreement with the Commonwealth Government anticipated to commence in 2024.

**3.4 Develop systems and incentives that better recognise high achieving VET students both at school and within the VET system itself.**

**Supported and addressed** by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority's (SCSA) recognition of high achieving VET students.

SCSA recognises high achieving VET students through several awards including:

- » the Beazley Medal: VET awarded to a Year 12 student with the most outstanding overall performance in a Certificate II or higher and their other WACE achievements;
- » VET Certificates of Excellence may be awarded to Year 12 students who complete a Certificate II or higher in one of nine industry areas; and
- » A VET Exhibition may be awarded to a Year 12 student with the most outstanding performance in a Certificate II or higher.

The WA Training Awards include a WA School-based Apprentice of the Year award. Winners have the opportunity to be ambassadors for the VET sector, and individual award winners automatically progress to the Australian Training Awards.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development will consult with school sectors to explore further opportunities to recognise high achieving VET students.