

**INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND
TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW
(BOSTES)

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BOARD OF STUDIES, TEACHING AND
EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS NSW (BOSTES)

**Submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry into vocational
education and training in New South Wales**

29 July 2015

Terms of reference

1. That General Purpose Standing Committee No 6 inquire into and report on vocational education and training in New South Wales, and in particular:
 - (a) the factors influencing student choice about entering the vocational education and training system including:
 - (i) motivation to study
 - (ii) choice of course, course location and method of study
 - (iii) barriers to participation, including students in the non-government education and home schooling sectors
 - (b) the role played by public and private vocational education providers and industry in:
 - (i) educational linkages with secondary and higher education
 - (ii) the development of skills in the New South Wales economy
 - (iii) the development of opportunities for unemployed people, particularly migrants and persons in the mature workers' category, to improve themselves and increase their life, education and employment prospects,
 - (iv) the delivery of services and programs particularly to regional, rural and remote communities
 - (c) factors affecting the cost of delivery of affordable and accessible vocational education and training, including the influence of the co-contribution funding model on student behaviour and completion rates
 - (d) the effects of a competitive training market on student access to education, training, skills and pathways to employment, including opportunities and pathways to further education and employment for the most vulnerable in our community including those suffering a disability or severe disadvantage
 - (e) the level of industry participation in the vocational education and training sector, including the provision of sustainable employment opportunities for graduates, including Competency Based Training and the application of training packages to workforce requirements, and
 - (f) the Smart and Skilled reforms, including:
 - (i) alternatives to the Smart and Skilled contestable training market and other funding policies
 - (ii) the effects of the Smart and Skilled roll out on school based apprenticeships
 - (g) any other related matter.
2. That the committee report by Tuesday 17 November 2015.

1. Background

For many years, secondary schools across Australia have included vocational education and training (VET) as an option and pathway for students in their senior years of schooling. Australian and State/Territory governments are committed to the ongoing development and implementation of programs and initiatives to improve the transition of all young people through, and from, school and post-school settings.

Key stakeholders in education in NSW recognise that VET courses help students prepare for further education, training, employment and lifelong learning and are a strong catalyst for student retention and engagement in learning. For young people themselves, access to VET while at school keeps their options open while also strengthening their pathways into the range of post-school opportunities.

For Years 9–12 school students in NSW, VET is 'dual accredited'. Students receive recognition towards their Record of School Achievement (RoSA) or Higher School Certificate (HSC), as well as towards a nationally recognised AQF VET qualification (Certificate or Statement of Attainment).

Ensuring the quality and industry recognition of the outcomes of VET studied as part of the RoSA and HSC has been at the heart of arrangements developed in NSW by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) in close collaboration with the school systems and TAFE NSW.

BOSTES has extensive consultative processes including industry and employer representation to ensure that NSW VET curriculum accords with industry training needs and is appropriate for school-aged students.

The quality of VET studied as part of the RoSA and HSC is also underpinned by the delivery arrangements used in NSW where Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) have direct responsibility for the quality of delivery and assessment. There is virtually no use of partnership (or 'auspicing') arrangements in NSW for VET delivered to secondary students.

The term 'VET in Schools' was first introduced over a decade ago to identify the ways in which schools were engaging students in vocational pathways while they were enrolled at school. In the intervening period there has been a significant expansion in the ways that young people in their senior secondary years connect with the VET sector. Consequently the term VET in schools/VETiS has acquired a range of uses and expectations and has been mistakenly used by a range of groups as an entity in itself.

The term does not adequately represent the relationship between VET and senior secondary education nor does it appropriately represent the recognition arrangements between VET and senior secondary certificates of education (such as the HSC).

VET delivered to secondary students is the same VET delivered to non-secondary students. No distinction is required and any attempts to do so lead to ambiguities about the outcomes and create transitory issues for secondary students entering the workforce and/or further education.

BOSTES is committed to providing secondary students with a senior secondary certificate of education that has long-term integrity and credibility and that reflects achievement in a range of studies. Nationally recognised VET is included in the range of studies that can contribute to the completion requirements of the HSC. Students who complete BOSTES VET courses leave school with work-related experience and skills that support a successful transition to further study and work.

BOSTES recognises VET towards the HSC on the basis that the quality of VET is regulated by the VET system through the functions of the Australian Skills Quality Authority and the VET Quality Framework. BOSTES accepts that the quality of VET as regulated by the VET sector must be sufficient for the recognition of VET in the HSC.

Education sectors across Australia accept that VET undertaken as part of a secondary education program must comply with national standards and as such the necessary measures are taken to ensure it is delivered, assessed and certified under the same set of conditions as VET undertaken by non-secondary students. BOSTES has well-developed arrangements in place for the recognition of VET in the HSC that are in accordance with VET sector requirements. These arrangements support diversity of studies and provide students with clear and explicit pathways to further learning and employment.

BOSTES is committed to working in close collaboration with key stakeholders and organisations in both the VET and schooling sectors with a direct responsibility and interest in the quality of VET programs.

Released by the Education Council in December 2014, *Preparing Secondary Students for Work* sets out a framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students. It supports the importance of vocational learning for all secondary students, clearly presenting VET as a valid and viable option and provides a solid foundation to facilitate shared understanding and a vision which all stakeholders can support.

2. VET curriculum

In addition to the VET sector quality assurance arrangements that apply to all VET recognised in the RoSA and HSC, the quality of NSW VET curriculum is underpinned by packaging appropriate AQF VET qualifications (qualifications) and units of competency for study, and mandatory work placement requirements.

Nearly all VET recognised in the RoSA and HSC is through formal credit arrangements (VET courses) providing access to qualifications across a range of industry areas. In 2015 there are:

- Board Developed Industry Curriculum Framework VET courses (Frameworks) across 13 industry areas for Stage 6 (HSC)
- Board Endorsed VET courses (VET BECs) in a wide range of industry areas not covered by Frameworks
 - (approx) 124 Stage 6 VET BECs
 - 13 Stage 5 (Years 9–10) VET BECs.

Frameworks may include specialisation study courses allowing more HSC recognition for study at the same AQF VET qualification level as the 'standard' course and/or extension courses allowing more HSC recognition of study at higher AQF VET qualification levels than the 'standard' course.

Students undertaking VET courses as part of the HSC generally have the opportunity to achieve a Certificate II or Certificate III qualification. A small number of students undertake courses providing a pathway to a Certificate I or Certificate IV qualification. (Pathways to Diploma or higher-level qualifications are not provided through the RoSA or HSC unless through HSC credit transfer processes – see below.)

Each unit of competency in a VET course is given a credit rating called 'indicative hours' which is reflective of the relative level of complexity and volume of learning in the unit of competency. Consistent with all HSC courses, 60 indicative hours in a VET course is equal to 1 HSC unit. For students undertaking an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) eligible pathway, up to 6 HSC units (of the required 22 for the award of the HSC) can be from VET courses.

Details for all VET courses in the NSW curriculum are available in syllabus and course description documents on the Vocational Education page of the BOSTES website at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed.

A provision also exists for unspecified recognition through HSC credit transfer arrangements. Students who have completed AQF VET qualifications through an RTO in the last five years may gain up to 10 HSC units by applying for credit transfer.

VET courses are competency-based. BOSTES and the VET Quality Framework require that a competency-based approach to assessment is used.

3. VET courses and the ATAR

In addition to the competency-based assessment, an HSC examination is available in each Framework. Students who have completed the 'standard' course from VET Frameworks (usually 240-hour course) are eligible to sit the associated HSC VET examination. This examination mark can contribute to the calculation of their ATAR.

NSW universities use the marks achieved by a student in their 10 best HSC units from Board Developed courses (including 2 HSC units from English) to calculate an ATAR.

NSW universities have however, currently designated VET Framework courses and examinations as 'Category B'. For the purposes of the ATAR no more than two units can be included from Category B courses.

The HSC VET examination is independent of competency-based assessment undertaken during their accredited VET course and has no impact on student eligibility for qualifications.

Board Endorsed VET courses do not contribute to the ATAR.

4. VET delivery in the NSW school sector

VET courses contributing to the RoSA and/or HSC can only be delivered by RTOs that meet national standards and have the relevant qualification and units of competency on their scope of registration.

In NSW, secondary schools/colleges are designated delivery sites of school system RTOs. This includes the four NSW Public Schools RTOs, nine Catholic Dioceses RTOs and the Association of Independent Schools NSW RTO. There are a few individual schools/colleges with their own RTO status – generally specialised trade or vocational colleges.

The majority of NSW VET curriculum for secondary students is delivered in the Government school sector. Delivery is mostly through school-based RTOs which have direct responsibility and accountability for compliance with the VET Quality Framework. About one third is delivered by TAFE NSW, with a small amount delivered by private RTOs.

5. Workplace learning options and recognition in the RoSA and HSC

Mandatory work placement requirements are a significant feature of the NSW model of VET for school students. They underpin the quality and industry recognition of the outcomes of HSC VET courses. Work placement involves educational and industrial sectors entering into partnerships, delivering benefits for the student, local business/ host employer and industry.

Courses within VET Frameworks have mandatory work placement requirements. When allocating work placement hours advice is sought from industry to ensure it is appropriate. Variations exist based on industry requirements and expectations, as well as consideration of the qualification outcome of the course. Typically as a starting point, a minimum of 70 hours of work placement would be allocated to a 240-hour course and 35 hours of work placement would be allocated to a 120-hour course.

Under certain conditions, students can use their part-time work to fulfil mandatory HSC work placement requirements.

For school-based apprenticeship/traineeship (SBA/T), work placement requirements are met through the on-the-job component of the apprenticeship/traineeship – a minimum 100 days of paid employment, or as specified by the relevant Vocational Training Order.

SBA/Ts may also elect to complete *Industry-based Learning* – a Board Endorsed course providing up to four additional HSC units for evidence of learning from their employment in the workplace. (This course has generic course outcomes based around employability skills and is not an accredited VET course.)

6. Vocational learning — Career education and pathway planning

In addition to accredited VET courses, NSW also has 'work related' curriculum available to students as electives in Years 7–10 and/or Years 11–12:

- Work Education (Years 7–10) provides students with the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of the world of work, the diverse sectors within the community, and the roles of education, employment and training systems
- Work Studies (Years 11–12) aims to enable students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding and confidence to experience a successful transition from school to work and further education and training.

7. The effects of the Smart and Skilled roll-out on school-based apprenticeships and traineeships

In NSW students can only undertake a school-based apprenticeship/traineeship (SBA/T) as part of their HSC pattern of study, and the formal training component (VET course) must contribute unit credit towards the HSC. Appropriate qualifications and units of competency for SBA/Ts are identified by industry representatives and made available through HSC VET courses.

Any VET delivered to secondary students continues under existing arrangements and is not part of Smart and Skilled. VET qualifications obtained by a student as part of their secondary education does not affect their eligibility for training under Smart and Skilled as it is not considered to be a post-school qualification.

The NSW Skills List identifies the qualifications eligible for a government subsidy under Smart and Skilled. This list is developed by NSW State Training Services through industry and community consultation and labour market research. It includes a range of qualifications to support the diverse skills needs of NSW employers.

Some HSC VET courses are only for students undertaking SBA/Ts. Contracts for SBTs are (generally) not available unless the qualification appears on the NSW Skills List. Since the introduction of this list, a small proportion of courses specifically developed/endorsed for SBTs are no longer available as HSC VET courses as the qualification pathway provided by the course is not listed.

8. VET delivered to secondary students contributing to senior secondary certificate of education: 2007–2014 NSW participation and attainment data

Currently, one third of Year 11 and 12 students in NSW complete a VET course as part of their HSC.

Around 80% of students undertaking HSC VET are enrolled in courses from the 13 Frameworks. The industry areas covered by Frameworks are automotive, business services, construction, electrotechnology, entertainment industry, financial services, hospitality, human services, information and digital technologies, metal and engineering, primary industries, retail services and tourism, travel and events.

Table 1 Number of NSW secondary students enrolled in VET qualifications by schooling sector

Sector	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Government	51 781	53 137	53 458	57 173	60 234	61 766	61 614	60 923
Catholic	11 989	12 258	12 880	13 724	15 449	16 104	16 577	16 364
Independent	4784	4780	4885	4402	4514	4294	3769	3714
ATCs	908	1167	110	0	0	0	0	0
TAFE NSW	861	955	1601	1816	1715	1475	1326	1922
Total	70 323	72 297	72 934	77 115	81 912	83 639	83 286	82 923

Table 2 Number of full VET qualifications attained by NSW secondary students by schooling sector

Sector	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Government	12 539	12 997	12 976	13 073	12 975	10 599	10 311	10 087
Catholic	4022	4321	4214	4094	4479	3298	3205	3971
Independent	1714	1709	1511	1279	1242	979	891	999
ATCs	190	169	7	0	0	0	0	0
TAFE NSW	116	123	286	241	343	297	120	106
Total	18 581	19 319	18 994	18 687	19 039	15 173	14 527	15 163

Table 3 Number of VET Statement of Attainment attained by NSW secondary students by schooling sector

Sector	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Government	29 442	31 437	29 784	34 360	35 304	41 041	41 411	40 661
Catholic	6226	6633	6899	7699	9046	11 059	11 313	10 975
Independent	2463	2474	2750	2699	2795	2960	2634	2425
ATCs	596	868	37	0	0	0	0	0
TAFE NSW	529	643	1044	923	864	719	842	1418
Total	39 256	42 055	40 514	45 681	48 009	55 779	56 200	55 479

Table 4 Number of enrolments in VET qualifications by NSW secondary students by Training Package industry area – Top 20 (2014)

Training Package Industry Area	2014	
	Government school students	All students
Tourism, Hospitality and Events	16 610	22 699
Construction and Plumbing	8286	11 067
Business Services	3488	5753
Retail Services	4823	5390
Metal and Engineering	3997	4485
Community Services and Health	3542	4459
Sport, Fitness and Recreation	3263	4410
Information and Communications Technology	2682	3784
Primary Industries	2971	3470
Entertainment / Live Performance and Entertainment	2139	3070
Personal Services (Beauty and Hairdressing)	2350	3065
Automotive	2444	2653
Animal Care	1245	1640
Electrotechnology	902	1441
Visual Arts, Craft and Design	383	729
Financial Services	356	612
Furniture Making / Furnishing	401	549
Screen and Media	356	484
Aviation	243	226
Music	–	213
Transport and Distribution	253	–
Other/Unknown	432	2724
Total	60 923	82 923

Source: AVETMISS data