

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

**Organisation:** Catholic Education Commission NSW

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# Submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry into Vocational Education and Training in NSW

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission is made on behalf of the 138 NSW Catholic secondary schools which in 2014 enrolled 40,626 students in Stage 6 HSC courses. Of these students 30.76% were enrolled in one or more Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses. In the same year, 894 students enrolled in NSW Catholic schools were undertaking a school-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship.

Informed by this extensive engagement with school-based VET, the Catholic Education Commission NSW (CECNSW) identifies in this submission a range of school-based VET policy and implementation issues. These issues should be addressed in the interests of further advancing VET participation and outcomes for stage 5 and 6 students attending NSW schools.

With respect to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference this submission aims to address:

- The continuing impact of the raising of the NSW "School Leaving Age" in 2009, as a factor influencing student choice and entry to VET courses.
- The potential for leveraging VET participation by encouraging a public policy debate on the role of the two NSW School Credentials, being the ROSA and HSC, in respect of the credentialing of school-based VET courses, as a strategy for addressing barriers to participation in VET by school students enrolled across Stages 5 and 6.
- The potential for better linking the VET accreditation, compliance and credentialing roles of both BOSTES and ASQA for the purposes of achieving both cost effective Regulation and minimising compliance burden on schools, as a means of addressing structural and cost constraints on VET delivery and participation.
- The necessity of reviewing both the cost structures inherent in the delivery of school-based VET and the response of the NSW Skills Board to these costs, as a strategy for achieving affordable and accessible Vocational Education and Training in NSW.
- The need to revitalise career and pathways education in NSW schools, as a further strategy to influence school students to choose to participate in VET courses both at school and after they leave school.

To address these issues this submission sets out nine recommendations for the consideration of the review. These Recommendations are found at Section 8 of this submission "Recommendations".

# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Catholic Education in NSW has a history of strong participation in contemporary Vocational Education and Training (VET). The following background information provides context to this submission:

- i. The Catholic sector operates 138 secondary schools in NSW providing education to Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12) students. In 2014 there were 40,626 students enrolled in Stage 6, of which 12,496 students were enrolled in one or more VET courses conducted by a Catholic Schools Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or an external RTO, such as TAFE NSW (Source: BOSTES Data Warehouse).
- ii. The Catholic sector operates nine Registered Training Organisations which service the eleven Dioceses and the 44 Independent Catholic schools. These RTOs provide training to both Diocesan and Independent Catholic schools. The Lismore Diocesan RTO provides training to Armidale Diocesan schools and the Bathurst Diocesan RTO provides training to the one Independent Catholic School in the Wilcannia/Forbes Diocese.
- iii. The Catholic sector currently has 1,299 trainers across the eleven Dioceses. These individuals have been trained by either, or both, public sector and private sector RTOs through a program coordinated by all three school sectors.
- iv. In 2014, VET enrolments in the Catholic sector RTOs totalled 12,496 students enrolled in one or more VET courses, as tracked by data sets maintained by the NSW BOSTES. This represents 30.76% of HSC enrolments in Catholic schools, down from 31.78% in 2013. Total VET course enrolments have remained steady with a slight increase to 18,447 students. (Source: BOSTES Data Warehouse)
- v. Students in Stage 5 (Years 9 + 10) can normally undertake early commencement in VET. In 2014, 247 Catholic school students participated in Stage 5 VET in six areas: Agrifoods, Construction, Information Technology, Manufacturing, Business Services and Retail Services.
- vi. There are 36 specialist Catholic sector Trade Training Centres/ Trade Skills Centres which provide opportunities for students to be engaged in a broader range of trades by networking 82 Catholic schools. These Trade Training Centres have worked collaboratively with schools offering Stage 5 VET to ensure a seamless pathway for students as they move to Stage 6. Dioceses have developed strategies to maximise the benefits of commencing training in Stage 5.
- vii. In 2014, the number of Catholic sector students participating in School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATS) had grown to 894 students. This number comprised 377 School-based Apprenticeships (SBA) and 517 School-based Traineeships (SBT).
- viii. There has been an increased participation by Catholic sector students in SBATs in key skills shortage areas, such as:
  - o Automotive SBATS (63);
  - o Building and Construction (163);
  - o Manufacturing (30); and
  - o Electrotechnology (66).

## 2. IMPACT OF THE RAISED SCHOOL LEAVING AGE

2.1 In New South Wales, compulsory school attendance was set at 15 years of age in 1943. In May 2009 the NSW Government passed legislation to link the school leaving age to the completion of Year 10 followed by a participation requirement to age 17 in either school, training, employment or combinations of each.

2.2 When this change was introduced it was envisaged that students would have access to a wide choice of senior school subjects and flexible timetables. Targeted careers advice was to be made available to help students choose an appropriate career path. Schools were to implement strategies and programs to support that group of students who in the past would have left school when they turned 15, often during Year 10. In this context the 2012 NSW Auditor-General's Report, *Impact of the Raised School Leaving Age (2012)*, found the following:

*The Department and schools have had mixed success in providing appropriate courses that are relevant, meaningful and useful to the needs of 15 to 17 year olds.*

*On the positive side, there has been an increase in new courses available at schools expanding the choice beyond traditional HSC subjects with some very innovative programs developed at the local level.*

*The availability of these options varies between schools depending on the number of students interested in a subject or course and the school's ability to deliver it.*

2.3 Through the NSW Externally Delivered HSC Vocational Education and Training (TVET) funding program, targeted funding has been made available to non-government schools to support access to VET courses. That is, the Department of Education, applying the advice of NSW Skills Board, provides additional specific funding to assist Diocesan and Congregational schools to purchase externally-delivered Stage 5 VET courses, (refer below at section 6.3 for further advice on the TVET program). This funding package was financed through the Australian Government's Youth Attainment and Transition (YAT) National Partnership from 2009 to 2014.

2.4 The presence in classrooms of increased numbers of students who would formerly have left school at age 15 has led to an increased demand for Vocational Education and Training, including engagement in training through an external provider (TVET) or participation in School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships. In particular the following Industry Curriculum Framework Courses have experienced growth: Construction, Hospitality, Entertainment Industry, and Metal and Engineering. New curriculum areas such as Automotive, Electrotechnology, Hairdressing, and Sports Coaching have been introduced as schools adapt to meet the changing needs of the full cohort of Stage 5 and 6 students.

2.5 The expansion of Trade Training Centres coupled with the change in the school leaving, training and work participation age to 17 has meant that the Catholic sector has experienced growth in SBAT enrolments. In September 2014, data maintained by State Training Services indicated that students attending Catholic schools represented approximately 41% of school-based apprentices and approximately 15% of school-based trainees in NSW.

2.6 The Catholic sector has identified the development of school-based Trade Training Centres as a key strategy for diversifying the range of school settings to better accommodate the needs of those Stage 6 students who are now continuing their school education beyond Year 10 in order to meet their Education Act section 21B participation obligation. This Catholic sector advocacy for Trade Training Centres is based on its implementation experience across the 33 Catholic sector Trade Training Centre sites created since 2008.

**Recommendation 1:**

**The NSW Skills Board should address the need for the further provision of school-based Trade Training Centres in the context of the post year 10 participation requirements set out in section 21B of the *NSW Education Act 1990*.**

### 3. PLACE OF VET IN STAGE 5 AND EVOLVING ROLE OF THE BOSTES ROSA CREDENTIAL FOR EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS

3.1 In relation to students studying VET courses in Stage 5 the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) has identified specific preferred outcomes for all VET students in addition to those competencies directly required of the particular VET qualification for which each VET student is studying.

3.2 That is, BOSTES Stage 5 VET courses provide opportunities for all VET students to:

- *develop a range of technical, practical, personal and organisational skills;*
- *acquire underpinning knowledge and skills that relate to work, employment and further training in the broad range of post-school environments;*
- *develop employability skills that can be used in different contexts;*
- *receive nationally recognised VET qualifications;*
- *undertake a course based on applied learning pedagogy that accommodates a variety of learning styles; and*
- *allow students to make informed career choices and improve transition pathways.*

*(Guidelines for Access to Vocational Education and Training (VET) Courses by Students in Years 9 and 10, BOSTES, 2011)*

3.3 BOSTES further states that:

*VET courses contribute to the broader education of students. They have the capacity to engage and challenge students to maximise their individual talents and capabilities for further education and training and lifelong learning.*

*(Guidelines for Access to Vocational Education and Training (VET) Courses by Students in Years 9 and 10, BOSTES, 2011)*

3.4 Access to VET courses by students in Years 9 and 10 has been a valuable strategy for those Catholic schools which have sought to improve student engagement, retention and participation in education and training. Since 2008, with the introduction of Stage 5 VET inclusive of new HSC VET Framework Courses, Catholic school apparent retention rates to year 12 have risen from 79.9% to 83%, an increase of 3.1%.

3.5 Students in Years 9 and 10 may access VET courses through two curriculum pathways:

- Stage 5 Board Endorsed VET courses; or
- Early commencement of Stage 6 VET courses.

3.6 Stage 5 Board Endorsed VET courses were first introduced in 2008 with 19 Catholic school students enrolled in a Certificate I in AgriFood (Pathways). Participation rates have grown since then and in 2014 Stage 5 students enrolled in NSW Catholic schools accessed six different Certificate I qualifications with 243 students enrolled.



3.7 The above figures are not, however, a full reflection of the current scope of Stage 5 VET participation in NSW Catholic schools as the above cited figures do not include those students in Year 9 who have not been entered on the eBOS course records system.

3.8 Students enrolled in Catholic schools have the opportunity to access Stage 6 VET courses through an early commencement pathway. Early commencement has a number of advantages for students, including the opportunity to :

- complete 2 Units of their HSC at the end of the Preliminary Year;
- sit the optional VET HSC examination at the end of the Preliminary Year;
- undertake a specialisation study by completing a number of Stage 6 VET courses thereby enabling students to obtain a full qualification rather than just a Statement of Attainment; and
- commence a SBAT in Year 10.

3.9 In 2013, there were 2,373 Years 9–10 students across NSW enrolled in early commencement Stage 6 courses across twenty industry areas. Based on VET participation data provided by BOSTES, it can be estimated that approximately 25% of these 2013 students attended Catholic schools.

3.10 Catholic schools across the state have taken advantage of the VET in Stage 5 early commencement option resulting in the increasing participation of Stage 5 students in VET. In 2014, 600 students enrolled in NSW Catholic schools commenced a VET course in Stage 5.

3.11 Early commencement of VET requires careful planning to ensure post Stage 5 pathways for students. This is particularly the case for schools that do not offer a Stage 6 program. These K-10 or 7-10 schools are generally located in rural NSW and each of these schools works to establish post year 10 pathways for their students. The realisation of these pathways often requires close cooperation with neighbouring Government 7-12 High Schools and TAFE Colleges.

**Recommendation 2:**

**BOSTES should develop its Record Of School Achievement (ROSA) credential in a manner which promotes and facilitates the development of VETiS in Stage 5.**

## 4. ROLE OF VET IN THE HSC STRUCTURE

- 4.1 In *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads (2007)* which is a strategic directions document for NSW Catholic schools, the Bishops of NSW and the ACT acknowledge that 'changing circumstances have radically affected the composition and role of the Catholic school in recent years, Catholic sector Educational leaders are urged to ensure that Catholic schools develop young men and women of faith and character. VET supports this aim by providing opportunities for the social and moral development of students. It also prepares students for full and active participation as citizens and participating members of the church and society.
- 4.2 Exploration of this issue requires an understanding of the current place of VET in the HSC structure.
- 4.3 In *Shaping their Future: Recommendations for reform of the Higher School Certificate (1997)*, Professor Barry McGaw made a number of recommendations in relation to vocational education. There was recognition that vocational education is appropriate for all students and should be accessible to all, including students intending to move into higher education. Importantly for VET, Professor McGaw advised that there should be a single end of Year 12 credential that would recognise both VET and non-VET courses, (see *Shaping their Future (1997)* Recommendations 13 and 14). Furthermore, Professor McGaw advised that VET should be developed in consultation with both the industry and training sectors. In addition he specifically recommended that VET should include work placement so that student competencies can be developed and assessed in the workplace.
- 4.4 It has been twenty years since the NSW Government commissioned Professor Barry McGaw to review the Higher School Certificate. In that period of time, the vocational educational and training landscape has changed dramatically with the development of national training packages, creation of Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) as the national VET regulator, and most recently the introduction of the NSW Smart and Skilled policy together with the establishment of the NSW Skills Board.
- 4.5 Given the passage of time since the McGaw Review it would be appropriate for BOSTES to conduct a review of vocational education and training as part of the Higher School Certificate. This proposed BOSTES review could address a range of issues including: the nature and purpose of work placement; the cost of providing work placement opportunities; and the roles which both BOSTES and ASQA play in both VET credentialing and quality assurance. The Catholic sector is of the view that ASQA should discharge its school related functions through BOSTES wherever this is consistent with the statutory duties of ASQA.
- 4.6 Students choose to undertake a VET course at school for a wide variety of reasons, including:
- to develop industry-specific skills and achieve nationally-recognised qualifications that give them a head start with work or further post-school study;
  - to develop general employability skills, knowledge and experiences that are transferable to post school life;
  - to undertake courses based on an applied learning pedagogy which appeals to students with a preference for 'hands-on' learning;
  - to undertake an HSC pattern of studies that balances the theoretical with practical and packages complementary learning experience such as a Certificate III in Health with the study of the BOSTES Biology course or a Certificate III in Fitness with the study of the BOSTES

PDHPE course;

- e. to gain practical, hands on experience in the workplace and learn from employers who are committed to mentoring young people; and
- f. to experience an industry area while at school and make better informed career decisions.

4.7 While endorsing the above cited achievements of VET in Schools, National research such as *Entry to Vocations: strengthening VET in schools (2013)* published by the OECD, demonstrates that it is difficult for VET in Schools (VETiS) to achieve an equal status in Australian schools to that of those courses which have traditionally supported pathways to University entrance. A common perception amongst students, parents, industry and schools is that VET is an “add on” to traditional matriculation courses. This perception is reinforced by the current Category B status of VET as part of the HSC. To address this perception the provision of career guidance to allow students to explore the multiple career pathways available to them, together with the direct and indirect pathways through and between tertiary education providers, is essential. In this context CECNSW has consistently advocated for better Government support for careers and pathways education in schools consistent with the above cited NSW Auditor General’s review of the outcomes of the raising the school leaving age in NSW.

4.8 Vocational Education and Training delivered to secondary students is not always recognised by RTOs post school. Some students are reassessed for competencies for which they have already been deemed competent. Having identified this issue, it is acknowledged that the introduction by the Australian Government of the VET Unique Student Identifier is improving the ability of students to access credit transfer and overcome these issues. That is, the future success of VET in schools requires effective “Credit Transfer” processes to be adopted across the whole VET sector. The realisation of effective credit transfer policy across both the school and VET sectors will require active cooperation and policy coordination by BOSTES and ASQA as the responsible Statutory Authorities for compliance in respect of school-based VET.

4.9 As evidenced by course offerings, Universities are increasingly identifying the value of VET in developing student capabilities. A number of Universities such as the University of Sydney, Charles Sturt University and the Australian Catholic University have implemented programs that allow students to achieve dual qualifications inclusive of both their University qualification and a related and complementary VET qualification.

4.10 For Catholic schools, VET is not just about facilitating the transition from school to employment. VET is also about the personal development of students and the promotion of diverse life pathways. Industry VET policy does not however always acknowledge the broader purposes for participation in school-based VET. The broader school based purposes of VET include fostering of the intellectual, social and moral development of students. Also school based VET has a unique role in providing flexible options which assist in preparing students for further study by motivating students to complete secondary education.

4.11 VET is not just an addition to the educational programs of Catholic schools; rather, it supports the global aims of Catholic schooling K-12 by enabling secondary schooling which is holistic and engaging for the full cohort of students.

**Recommendation 3:**

**ASQA should refer its functions related to the delivery of VET through the HSC to BOSTES, wherever possible when this is consistent with the maintenance of industry recognition of school-based VET credentials.**

**Recommendation 4:**

**BOSTES should conduct a review of the place of VET in the structure of the HSC.**

**Recommendation 5:**

**Careers and Pathways Education should be prioritised for Government support consistent with the 2012 advice arising from the NSW Auditor-General's review of the outcomes of the raising of the school leaving age in NSW.**

**Recommendation 6:**

**BOSTES and ASQA should prioritise the further development of processes for the promotion of Credit Transfer arrangements across the whole of the VET sector.**

## 5. CHALLENGE POSED BY INDUSTRY TO VET DELIVERED TO SECONDARY STUDENTS

- 5.1 As already discussed the Catholic sector acknowledges the importance of involving industry in all stages of the design and delivery of school-based VET. Whilst acknowledging and supporting this industry role, the growing influence of industry peak bodies, (i.e. industry/employer representative groups, Industry skills councils, employer associations) on the content and provision of Vocational Education and Training (VET) has, however, caused concern amongst Catholic educators. The balance of influence has been shifting from the needs of students (employees and potential employees), to the exclusive needs of industry, as represented by industry peak bodies. The strength of the influence of these peak bodies varies across industries but is most obvious in industries involving traditional trades and traditional youth employment pathways. While many peak industry bodies work with BOSTES and the school sectors for the development of appropriate pathways for students, it is also important that the views of those employers who are not represented by Peak bodies but who are prepared to invest time and energy into Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) are equally acknowledged in the development of VET curriculum.
- 5.2 The views of peak bodies are often the views of the larger employers who sometimes overlook the fact that applied education is as much about the personal development of individuals as it is about economic outcomes or addressing immediate skills shortages. The peak bodies with the greatest influence can be overly driven by an exclusively commercial paradigm as opposed to the learning and pastoral paradigms operating in schools. The Catholic sector is of the view that effective VET programs must address both the commercial imperatives of industry and the learning and pastoral imperatives of Catholic schools and their students.
- 5.3 The overall effect of an unbalanced influence by industry places pressure on the broader educational purposes of school-based VET. In the view of the Catholic sector, this conflict has the potential to limit the outcomes for VETiS students as future employees.
- 5.4 The NSW Catholic Sector continues to be a strong advocate for holistic schooling. Schools are not primarily the servants of industry but of students and their communities. Having said this, the Catholic sector believes that VETiS continues to support the core purposes of Catholic schooling as expounded in *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads (2007)*, as cited earlier in this submission, VETiS achieves student outcomes that extend beyond schooling. School-delivered VET, however, is not simply directed to providing pre-prepared employees for industry. Where students choose an employment pathway, schools should provide pathway support without compromising the paradigm of a holistic education for life inclusive of, but not limited to, work.

5.5 In order to achieve a holistic approach to the development of school-based VET courses the divergent requirements of the two regulators of school-based VET, being BOSTES and ASQA, will need to be more effectively harmonised. That is to say, the industry imperatives and the educational imperatives for dual accredited school-based VET courses are currently not easily reconciled in the drafting and implementation of curriculum documents because of the different requirements of the two regulators.

**Recommendation 7:**

**BOSTES and ASQA need to address both the commercial imperatives of industry and the learning imperatives of school education in all processes for the further development and recognition of school-based VET programs.**

## 6. FUNDING AND RESOURCING VET

6.1 In many schools, Vocational Education and Training (VET) has been viewed as an additional or alternative stream, rather than as an integral element of an inclusive senior school curriculum. With the growth of Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) over the past 20 years to a point where around 34% of students in NSW Catholic schools are enrolled in VET courses, this concept that VET is additional rather than integral to core learning is no longer sustainable.

6.2 Key research, including the Australian Government publication *Costs and Benefits of Vocational Education and Training* (2008), has shown the provision of VETiS courses is more costly than traditional schooling. This can be attributed to the following factors:

- cost of initial training teacher training;
- cost of maintaining the industry currency of teacher training;
- the need to provide specialist rooms;
- the continuing evolution of technology and equipment;
- cost of materials involved in the practical components of delivery;
- cost of administering the provision of work placement opportunities;
- fees charged by external VET Providers (e.g. TAFE NSW); and
- smaller class sizes in most VET programs, given that practical applied learning is required.

6.3 Historically CECNSW has received targeted funding for VET from two State Government sources:

**a. Vet in Schools Funding (VETiS) - approximately \$1.6m per annum**

- i. The NSW Department of Education (NSW DoE) has, since the Howard Australian Government, funded an annual VETiS program. In 2015, the Catholic sector received a VETiS grant of \$1.6 million. Historically VETiS funds have been sourced from the Commonwealth Government. These funds are provided to support the expansion and teaching of vocational courses in schools, including the expansion of School-based Apprenticeships. In this context VETiS funds are used to: fund the training of school-based VET teachers in schools; assisting them to maintain and upgrade their VET teaching qualifications; and industry accreditation.
- ii. VETiS funding is allocated to 10 of the 11 Catholic dioceses in NSW. For funding purposes, non-systemic Catholic school Stage 6 students are included in diocesan student totals. Dioceses, as RTOs, are required to service the needs of both systemic and Congregational Catholic schools.
- iii. These targeted grant funds are a 'contribution' towards the cost of VETiS, they are provided in acknowledgement that VETiS programs cost more than non-VET programs.
- iv. VET courses by their nature are often heavy users of resources and consumables. Costs are shared with parents in the form of subject related costs, a practice which is acknowledged may prevent some students from accessing VETiS programs. It is also acknowledged that this practice may unintentionally promote the view that VET courses are inferior to the mainstream curriculum by giving the impression that VET is a substitute for and not part of the common curriculum for NSW Catholic schools. Given these observations, CECNSW is of the view that the existing funding arrangements for VET in schools requires review and enhancement. This advocated review and enhancement of VET funding for schools should be addressed by the NSW Skills Board.

- v. Catholic school authorities have adopted a range of strategies to address VET in schools funding challenges, these include:
  - offering school fee relief to parents of students who incur additional TVET charges;
  - reducing the staffing allocation to schools with TVET students and converting this saving to additional funding to support the additional costs of VET delivery; and
  - limiting the amount school Principals can charge in addition to normal school fees for students undertaking a TVET course.

***b. External Provision of HSC VET (TVET) - approximately \$2.5m***

- i. NSW DoE has, since the Greiner Government's Excellence and Equity reforms, provided funding that can be used to pay for TAFE-delivered TVET courses and related disability support as well as the cost of other externally delivered VET courses provided by non-TAFE Registered Training Organisations. In 2015 the Catholic sector received a TVET grant of \$2.5m.
- ii. TVET funding (approximately \$2.5m) meets about 70% of the costs incurred by NSW Catholic schools for the external provision of TVET through TAFE and other non-school RTOs. In addition to cost constraints, the take-up of externally-delivered TVET courses is dependent on the vocational interests of each student and the capacity of their school to source a suitable VET course from an external provider.
- iii. Recent changes to the pricing model for TAFE delivered VET (TVET) reflects on the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART) pricing advice for VET qualifications applying the current Smart and Skilled policy. This model uses the Smart and Skilled costing model that was introduced by NSW in 2015. The benchmark price of TVET courses for students commencing in 2016 will consequently comprise a number of components:
  - A Base qualification price being the Smart and Skilled prices for a full or part qualification;
  - A Location loading per student (10% for regional locations, 20% for remote locations);
  - Additional services charge being \$80 per student for each unit of HSC credit; and
  - Incidental expenses which must be advertised and agreed prior to course commencement.
- iv. For many students, TVET is their introduction into vocational education and training. The inclusion of a location loading will directly impact on students in regional and remote locations and increase the cost of training provided by TAFE. Schools in regional and remote areas and those schools in low socio-economic status (SES) communities experience strong demand for VET either delivered by a school or by external Registered Training Organisations including TAFE through TVET courses. While schools endeavour to provide a comprehensive curriculum to meet the needs of all students, they may experience difficulties in maintaining VET courses with smaller cohorts and in accessing external providers delivering courses within travelling distance from the school. CECNSW understands that the Government is carefully assessing any likely impact of the location loading on access to TVET by rural students.

**Recommendation 9:**

**The NSW Skills Board should review the funding needs of school-based VET provision across the three school sectors.**



## 7. SMART AND SKILLED IMPACT ON SCHOOL-BASED APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

7.1 The Catholic sector supports the Smart and Skilled policy for School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATS) but Smart and Skilled has had some unintended consequences for the implementation of School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT)s which need to be addressed. These unintended impacts include:

- i. The initial capping of RTO places for SBATs that successfully gained funding to deliver SBATs under Smart and Skilled with the result that a number of RTOs indicated at the end of 2014 that they did not have sufficient funds to train SBATs and as a result would not accept new enrolments for 2015. Whilst this was rectified and the caps were removed by State Training Services a number of potential SBATs did not proceed in 2015. The Catholic sector is concerned to ensure that this experience is not repeated for 2016.
- ii. Cost recovery practices for both the Certificate II in Retail Services and the Certificate III in Retail Operations which together provide the largest proportion of School-based Trainees (SBTs). In this context McDonalds Australia which is the largest employer of SBTs, and also acts as an Enterprise RTO that provides course delivery, was required to invoice the school sectors for SBT charges. This has placed additional burden on the Catholic sector and the number of SBTs with McDonalds dramatically reduced in 2015. By contrast RTOs that were not funded under Smart and Skilled continued to engage SBT and have not been required to invoice the school sectors. These RTOs have experienced an increase in SBTs.

7.2 Given the above cited anomalies with the implementation of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in the context of the Smart and Skilled policy, CECNSW recommends that the NSW Skills Board should review its administrative and funding arrangements for SBATs with the aim of facilitating increased student participation across all NSW schools.

### **Recommendation 8:**

**The Catholic sector recommends that the NSW Skills Board should review its administrative and funding arrangements for SBATs with the aim of facilitating increased student participation across Years 9 to 12 inclusive for all NSW Schools.**

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

As observed in the Executive Summary, with respect to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference this submission has addressed:

- The continuing impact of the raising of the NSW "School Leaving Age" in 2009, as a factor influencing student choice and entry to VET courses.
- The potential for leveraging VET participation by encouraging a public policy debate on the role of the two NSW School Credentials, being the ROSA and HSC, in respect of the credentialing of school-based VET courses, as a strategy for addressing barriers to participation in VET by school students enrolled across Stages 5 and 6.
- The potential for better linking the VET accreditation, compliance and credentialing roles of both BOSTES and ASQA for the purposes of achieving both cost effective Regulation and minimising compliance burden on schools, as a means of addressing structural and cost constraints on VET delivery and participation.
- The necessity of reviewing both the cost structures inherent in the delivery of school-based VET and the response of the NSW Skills Board to these costs, as a strategy for achieving affordable and accessible Vocational Education and Training in NSW.
- The need to revitalise career and pathways education in NSW schools, as a further strategy to influence school students to choose to participate in VET courses both at school and after they leave school.

Arising from the issues raised in this submission are nine recommendations to guide the development of policy and procedures for the further development and growth of school based VET across Years 9 to 12 in NSW schools:

1. The NSW Skills Board should address the need for the further provision of school-based Trade Training Centres in the context of the post year 10 participation requirements set out in section 21B of the NSW Education Act 1990.
2. BOSTES should develop its Record Of School Achievement (ROSA) credential in a manner which promotes and facilitates the development of VETiS in Stage 5.
3. ASQA should refer its functions related to the delivery of VET through the HSC to BOSTES, wherever possible when this is consistent with the maintenance of industry recognition of school-based VET credentials.
4. BOSTES should conduct a review of the place of VET in the structure of the HSC.
5. Careers and Pathways Education should be prioritised for Government support consistent with the 2012 advice arising from the NSW Auditor-General's review of the outcomes of the raising of the school leaving age in NSW.

6. BOSTES and ASQA should prioritise the further development of processes for the promotion of Credit Transfer arrangements across the whole of the VET sector.
7. BOSTES and ASQA need to address both the commercial imperatives of industry and the learning imperatives of school education in all processes for the further development and recognition of school-based VET programs.
8. The NSW Skills Board should review the funding needs of school-based VET provision across the three school sectors.
9. The Catholic sector recommends that the NSW Skills Board should review its administrative and funding arrangements for SBATs with the aim of facilitating increased student participation across Years 9 to 12 inclusive for all NSW Schools.