

VICTORIAN APPLIED LEARNING ASSOCIATION

VALA's response to *Stronger futures for all young Victorians: Discussion paper on the youth transitions system*

As part of its advocacy responsibility to members, VALA is keen to provide a response to this discussion paper regarding the Victorian Youth Transitions system. We have every reason to think that all input received by Skills Victoria through this process will be considered. VALA is proud to present the following feedback.

In the Transitions Discussion Paper, responses are invited to a series of questions. Each of these questions are addressed in turn, below.

Discussion Paper Question	VALA's response	Data to support claims	Qualitative examples to support claims
A: Strengthening literacy and numeracy in the post-compulsory years			
1. What form should the proposed literacy and numeracy standards take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Competency-based ○ Integrated into formal learning programs and not be an add on. ○ Mapped to VCAL and VCE Literacy/English and Numeracy/Maths subjects/requirements ○ Not be used for exclusion purposes but to inform and as a basis for offering support and opportunities for development ○ Diagnostic assessment of LLN ○ Relevant to the trade/program (contextually relevant) ○ Need to take account of the range of literacies and numeracies that students require for different pathways and interests and to effectively participate in society ○ Need to take account of the literacies and numeracies required to take advantage of new and emerging technologies ○ Need to be developed mindful of existing tools and measures, eg. ALLS, PISA, ACSF ○ Take account of the complexities of literacy and numeracy, not only covering mechanics but understanding of structures, critical application of skills, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students are assessed using NAPLAN in year 9. So there is info about who needs assistance and who doesn't. There is no point in assessing again at the end of year 10 (in preparation for Years 11 and 12) if no support is to be offered. Unless there has been an intervention program (in or out of class), it is not likely the student's skills will have improved. ○ So much money is spent on testing and not so much doing something to improve results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WELL program (DEST) ○ CAVVS ○ VCAL ○ Harvester College, ○ ACSF

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<p>2. In what other ways can the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills be strengthened in the post-compulsory years?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intensive study preparation program focussing on lit/num skills which develops understanding of the contextualised use of language and maths, addresses mechanics and the critical application of skills in meaningful contexts ○ Recognised workplace standards driven by industry to inform delivery ○ Better vocationally-relevant lit/num woven into secondary programs ○ Support and professional learning opportunities for all subject teachers to develop skills and knowledge to assist students to develop subject/area specific literacy and numeracy skills ○ More lit/num development in secondary programs ○ Support and professional learning opportunities for English teachers to develop skills and understanding of teaching literacy and for maths teachers to develop skills and understanding of teaching numeracy (ie. English teachers are not necessarily literacy teachers and maths teachers are hardly ever numeracy teachers) ○ Provision of resources to support and model teaching of literacy and numeracy both in English and maths and across the curriculum (including VET) – use of meaningful contexts which address the mechanics and the critical application of skills ○ Provision of resources that engage learners. Eg. – see eg in last column 	<p>The literature suggests a strong link between competent teachers and student outcomes (Hattie, 2003) and that, of factors that can be influenced by education policy, teachers and teaching are the most important for student learning (OECD, 2005).</p> <p>Hattie, J. (2003) <i>Teachers make a difference. What is the research evidence?</i> www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/docs/pdf/qt_hattie.pdf (accessed April 2010)</p> <p>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2005). <i>Teachers Matter: Attracting ,Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers</i>. Paris</p>	<p>Uni of Nottingham</p> <p>Electrical industry</p> <p>VCAL</p> <p>Many teachers report that young people are unwilling to write because they see no reason to and, as we know from research, literacy skills do not develop unless they are practices and, if not practiced, will deteriorate.</p> <p>Teachers also report that young students love to see and read what other young people have done and this motivates them to create something better than they have read or seen, or at least attempt to.</p> <p>Providing a vehicle for young people to read the writing of others would provide them with reading material and a motivation to write – ‘We can do better than them’ approach. Given the age of the cohort, a web based tool to enable sharing of written texts would be appropriate. Such a website would need to be designed to suit young people with – the</p>

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			look, navigation, accessibility. Online collaborations could also be undertaken. To 'kick-start' the website it would be necessary to work with at least two groups of students at different education providers.
B: Support for making informed education and training choices			
<p>3. Will a career plan strengthen young people's engagement with education and their capacity to make informed study and career choices both during schooling and in subsequent education, training and employment settings?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Possibly, but care needs to be taken about who helps to construct this plan – ie. Who will prepare this? Do they know the breadth of options (particularly in VET – and the different pathways to achieve career goals)? ○ The system and plan recognise the diversity of opportunity for complex career progression and sideways movement. Needs to take into account that it is expected that those in skill today will change careers a number of times during their working life. Any career planning needs to be flexible to support the development of employability skills that will support both sideways movement and career progression. ○ Also needs to take into account that young people change their minds (interests change and develop, life experiences, both community and work, will have an impact. They are exploring directions and interests and shouldn't be 'trapped' into having to move in one direction only ○ A career (or life) plan needs to be a 'living' document that can be revisited and developed over time ○ Needs to be recognised that some young people come from families with intergenerational unemployment. They don't necessarily have models of employed people around them. This may also be true of those who come from refugee backgrounds ○ A career (life/futures) plan also needs to have short term goals that students can see development towards ○ Better option is to support preparation of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) with students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MIPS (in schools) have good results in the middle years of secondary schooling, but tend to have limited scope ○ ILPs

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4. What other actions should be taken to ensure that sound career development services are available to all young Victorians?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Better career teaching through schools and VET ○ Closer relationships between VET and schools sectors ○ Improved status of VET pathways ○ Funded VET tasters in school programs ○ Improved understanding by careers teachers of vocational and industry pathways – to be developed by closer contact with industry and business, perhaps through teacher placements in industry and increased exposure to current work environments ○ Shouldn't be left to the careers teacher alone. The link between school work and the real world should be made by all teachers. I.e. A whole school approach. This may be as simple as, for example, the science teacher making the link from the work being undertaken in the science lab to how the science involved is used in the 'real' world. ○ Utilisation of 'outside' expertise, particularly where teachers have limited experience of current workplaces outside of the school context 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ VETiS, expos ○ TECs, ATCs ○ ○ Western Australia
5. How can business/industry be more involved in assisting students' career choices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cadetship programs ○ Schools required to hold teacher/business/industry forums ○ Expanded role for ISCs ○ Internship programs ○ Work experience tasters ○ Partnerships with schools/providers to provide firsthand knowledge and information that school teachers may not have 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Existing/previous cadetship examples ○ AQTF ○ ISCs, MyCAP
C: Arrangements that support and encourage young people to complete qualifications			
6. What would further strengthen the delivery partnerships between government and non-government schools and between schools and VET providers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved status of VET ○ Support for integrated delivery models (currently no overlap within VETiS model) ○ Cluster school options are working for regions ○ Funding for VETiS and school programs altered to require collaboration ○ Streamlined, effective tracking of students across sectors 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TECs, ATCs ○ LLENs, TTCs

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7. What additional actions should Government take to support young people to complete initial qualifications in the VET sector?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enrol apprentices in complete qualifications from outset ○ Funded support structures vital – transition, youth support – especially crossing VET and schools ○ Support to integrate literacy and numeracy skills development with vocational and employability skills ○ Increased RPL in schools sector ○ Support for teachers to used mixed mode delivery as appropriate for client group ○ Support for teachers to develop skills in working with disengaged learners and those with other than academic learning styles ○ Adequately funded alternative education settings eg. Community VCAL providers, ACE providers ○ More vocational work placement / experience in school programs ○ VET short courses 	○	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Western Australian model ○ Completions Officer project (Sunshine campus)
8. Would greater levels of institutional specialisation in curriculum and qualification delivery result in improved quality of provision, and support increased student attainment of Year 12 or an equivalent vocational qualification?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, and to some extent this would be welcome within regions. – but not to the extent where defacto streaming occurs ○ Yes as would enable resources to be used more effectively ○ Would need to take into account student access to subjects/study areas – this may include other than face-to-face delivery and mixed mode delivery ○ Better option is to improve the applied teaching and learning methodology and VET profiles within existing school structures 	○	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TECs, ATCs ○ VCAL <p>Andrew Douche eg of supporting students in other than his school</p>

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9. How should schools, VET providers and system authorities use the new transparency and accountability arrangements in Victorian schools and the Victorian Student Number to improve the completion rate of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding follows the student ○ Support funding in VET equivalent to schools support funding 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DEECD funding in secondary schools
10. What other strategies could be introduced to lift qualification completion rates for young people in the schools and VET sectors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raise the status of VET pathways in schools ○ Weave more applied teaching and learning options into mainstream secondary school programs ○ Raise the status of VCAL ○ Improved study support for students ○ Core and clustered skills developed in VET ○ Can enrol students in entire qualification from outset 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ VETiS, VCAL ○ VCAL ○ CAVVS ○ Skills sets / credit matrix ○ Western Australian model
11. How can businesses and industry be involved in increasing completion rates – especially for apprenticeships?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increasing the shared responsibilities for apprentice completion, between business & VET ○ More field officer support for apprentices (and employers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NCVET data 	

D: Systems that assist students to move effectively between courses, institutions and sectors			
<p>12. How can student transition to the VET sector, higher education and full-time employment be improved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funded transition support through VET and schools ○ Increased profile of VET pathways in schools ○ Schools required to meet with industry/business/VET ○ ISC role increased to cover secondary system ○ Funded VET taster programs offered in school ○ Reviews (such as Bradley) include VET ○ Improved induction and orientation programs ○ Improved LLN diagnostics and subsequent support ○ Improving all teacher's ability to develop literacy and numeracy skills specific for their area of expertise/subject ○ Improved selection processes at tertiary level – wouldn't it be better to support students adequately in whatever course they choose to do? What would you do with those who didn't pass or seem appropriate for the course? Counselling is an option but not likely to happen ○ Better induction to core study skills ○ Improved disability support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University of Ulster ○ ○ AQTF ○ ISCs, MyCAP ○ Western Australian model ○ ○ University of Ulster ○ Harvester Technical College ○ University of Nottingham ○ DEECD school system
<p>13. What other steps are required to assist schools' connection to the world of work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As above ○ Increasing teacher's understanding of the world of work (other than educational work settings) ○ Utilising resources outside of the school and partnering with industry and businesses 		
<p>14. What other initiatives would improve school to tertiary education articulation and support young people to take advantage of the expansion of these sectors?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased overlap, with VET and HE programs delivered into schools (orientation, teacher exchange, buddy systems) ○ See 12 ○ Improved pathways between VCAL Senior and HE ○ Less emphasis on ENTER score and increased emphasis on interview, folio, aptitude assessment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Primary-secondary overlap

E: Articulation within the VET sector and from VET to higher education			
<p>15. Should efforts to improve VET to higher education articulation and credit arrangements focus on particular occupational pathways and skill priority areas, for example in engineering and nursing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funded transition support through VET and schools ○ Increased profile of VET pathways in schools ○ Schools required to meet with industry/business/VET ○ ISC role increased to cover secondary system ○ Funded VET taster programs offered in school ○ Reviews (such as Bradley) include VET ○ Improved induction and orientation programs ○ Improved LLN diagnostics and subsequent support ○ Improved selection processes at tertiary level ○ Better induction to core study skills ○ Improved disability support ○ Initially the focus should be in areas where there is an obvious occupational pathway. However, support for students to succeed in courses that require academic skills need to be offered. Eg. Induction course/unit to enable development of skills required in more academic courses. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University of Ulster ○ ○ AQTF ○ ISCs, MyCAP ○ Western Australian model ○ ○ University of Ulster ○ Harvester Technical College ○ University of Nottingham ○ DEECD school system
<p>16. How can governments ensure that reforms to the VET and higher education sector address both skill needs and student demand for particular qualifications?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As above ○ Difficult but important to keep in mind that it is important to keep young people engaged in education. Providing them with opportunities to undertake study in areas of interest is one way of doing this. While this may not directly lead to addressing skill shortage areas, it will keep the young person engaged and increase their generic skill levels and, with maturity, may lead them to undertaking qualifications that do enable them to gain employment. This may mean undertaking qualifications at the same level. 		
<p>17. How can governments improve provision and articulation arrangements to better support young people, especially in regional and rural areas, to access tertiary qualifications without needing to re-locate?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased overlap, with VET and HE programs delivered into schools (orientation, teacher exchange, buddy systems) ○ Support articulation pathways from VCAL ○ Incorporate VCAL into National Curriculum – perhaps another strand of the National Curriculum which provides the same outcomes and levels of engagement that VCAL does. ○ Increased use of mixed mode and flexible delivery which reduces the need for travel. Lecturers would need to be provided with professional learning opportunities to facilitate educationally sound learning opportunities for the students ○ Local mentors/tutors working with, preferably, small groups of students and/or providing online or phone support ○ See 12 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Primary-secondary overlap

<p>18. What other actions should be contemplated by institutions and government?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funded transition support through VET and schools ○ Increased profile of VET pathways in schools ○ Schools required to meet with industry/business/VET ○ ISC role increased to cover secondary system ○ Funded VET taster programs offered in school ○ Reviews (such as Bradley) include VET ○ Improved induction and orientation programs ○ Improved LLN diagnostics and subsequent support ○ Improved selection processes at tertiary level ○ Better induction to core study skills ○ Improved disability support ○ Support for students moving from VET to HE to succeed in courses that require academic skills need to be provided. Eg. Induction course/unit to enable development of skills required in more academic courses. ○ Improved RPL and credit transfer in HE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University of Ulster ○ ○ AQTF ○ ISCs, MyCAP ○ Western Australian model ○ ○ University of Ulster ○ Harvester Technical College ○ University of Nottingham ○ DEECD school system
<p>F: Opportunities for young people to re-engage with education and training</p>			
<p>19. How can Youth Connections be implemented in Victoria to most effectively re-engage young people with education and training?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Broaden the model into a hub-and-spokes coordinating role, rather than the specific-program funding that can be limited to a narrow client band ○ Youth Connections can expand beyond the deficiency (re-engagement) model, to avert disengagement ○ Avoid Youth Connections client identification with deficiency status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ○
<p>20. What services should Youth Connection service providers use to establish effective referral and working arrangements?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As above 		

<p>21. Should LLENs be provided some flexibility to facilitate and broker service provision to young people 20 and over, in line with the flexibility in Youth Connections service provision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, but not limited to LLENs. Could be LCPs if this is a national roll-out, and/or providers ○ Should not be confined to a deficiency model, and should respect the growing maturity of the individual ○ In many areas local solutions exist that are working well. These should be supported ○ Local differences need to be taken into account in terms of local needs and contexts and existing services and solutions 		
<p>22. Is the range of qualifications on offer to re-engage young people adequate? (Existing qualifications include VCAL, adult VCE, the General Certificate of Adult Education and the Diploma of Further Education.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To a large extent, yes; Victoria presents a strong range of these qualifications. BUT IT IS EASIER AND MORE SUCCESSFUL IF THE STUDENT DOES NOT DISENGAGE IN THE FIRST PLACE ○ VCAL needs to be expanded into the National Curriculum – perhaps another strand of the National Curriculum which provides the same outcomes and levels of engagement that VCAL does. ○ Perhaps a study skills pre-entry program that offers continued support through the ensuing qualification? ○ Delivery of skills sets rather than full qualifications may be more successful – or at least another option – as they provide small manageable ‘grabs’ that can provide more immediate success ○ In general the range of qualifications is adequate but there needs to be some flexibility in funding models to cater for young people who drop in and out of education for some time before becoming re-engaged. Current funding models don’t seem to support this. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ VCAL

Additional comments

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<p>Increased communication, coordination and partnerships across sectors eg. Education and youth services, local council services</p>	<p>Particularly important to those who are most disadvantaged and disengaged Some young people have contact with a range of professionals but the services are not always coordinated or designed to support each other</p>		

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Important to keep young people engaged and they shouldn't be financially penalised for completing two certificates at the same level			
The paper doesn't seem to take account of the range of issues young people at risk may face.	Greater flexibility required in enabling the most disengaged to drop in and out as a precursor to re-engagement Schools may not be the most appropriate education providers for some young people. This needs to be recognised and other providers (ACE, TAFE, alternative school settings) adequately funded to enable them to provide appropriate education and support		
Challenges	There are a number of examples of good practice and models of engagement and re-engagement that are working well. The challenge is to identify the essential components and turn them into 'policy' that will see implementation across the state.		

VALA details

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