

Vocational education and learning in context

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WHAT IS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND LEARNING?

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Vocational education and learning (VEL) is general learning that addresses broad understanding of the world of work and develops in young people a range of knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes relevant to a wide range of work environments.

In 2004, the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) endorsed the New Framework for Vocational Education in Schools.

This comprises the following six elements:

- *Vocational education and training;*
- *Enterprise and Vocational Learning;*
- *Student Support Services;*
- *Community and Business Partnerships;*
- *Effective Institutional and Funding Arrangements; and*
- *Monitoring and Evaluation.*

The breadth of the framework underpins the significance of vocational education in assisting young people in their transition to post-school options and pathways. It builds on strategic partnerships between schools, businesses, government and the wider community and provides for coordination of directions, strategies and actions to achieve agreed goals.

Vocational learning is appropriate for all years of schooling. The outcomes and standards of the Tasmanian Curriculum support all aspects of vocational education and learning and are designed to enable students to adapt to changes that will be a constant feature of their lives.

A whole-of-school approach to planning for vocational education and learning within the Tasmanian Curriculum is recommended, as it is more likely to lead to strategic and coordinated planning. This is necessary to ensure coherence and continuity in curriculum design, effective organisation of community-based learning, selection of suitable teaching resources, and the provision of a framework within which to make decisions about appropriate learning, teaching and assessing for students at different stages of development.

VEL resources and support

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/vet/students/vocation>

Department of Education staff have responsibility for the following functions:

- VET in Schools;
- vocational education and learning;
- area taskforce;
- pathway planning; and
- work experience and vocational placements.

They provide teachers with:

- professional learning;
- information about new resources;
- updates on materials contained or reviewed in this kit; and
- information on national, statewide and local developments in vocational education and learning.

Information and resources are provided in a number of ways:

- online;
- newsletter;
- personal contact; and
- professional learning activities.

WHAT IS CAREER EDUCATION?

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The term 'career' has increasingly expanded beyond the notion of occupation or job, to include all aspects and roles of an individual's life. "Corresponding with changes in thinking about career have been changes in thinking about career development. While the concept of career development is not new, recognition that it is a lifelong process involving the whole of life, and not just occupation, occurred more recently".¹

Career development is thus a lifelong process, is unique for each individual and subject to a range of influences, such as family, society, school, social policy and the labour market.

Career education is a fundamental and increasingly relevant component of a student's learning. The Australian Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) defines career education as:

“The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned program of learning experiences that will assist students to make informed decisions about their study and/or work options and enable effective participation in working life.”

Career education encompasses:

- learning about the world of work, its changing nature, the general expectations of employers, and the demands of the workplace;
- developing self-awareness in relation to interests, abilities, competencies and values;
- developing awareness and understanding of occupational information and career pathways;
- developing skills in decision-making which can be applied to career choices; and
- acquiring the skills necessary to implement the career decisions made.

(MCEETYA Career Education Taskforce, 1998)

¹Page 3, *Career More Than Just a Job*, Mary McMahon and Peter Tatham

Tasmania: A State of Learning

Tasmania: A State of Learning, the Tasmanian Government strategy for post-Year 10 education and training, recognises that young people who continue in education and training beyond Year 10 broaden their horizons and improve their life chances.

Tasmania: A State of Learning aims to:

- improve young Tasmanians' participation in education and training beyond compulsory schooling;
- build a skilled workforce with the capacity to support Tasmanian business and industry in a growing economy;
- enable second chance learning opportunities for people of all ages; and
- create communities that value life-long learning.

Further details on and background to the development of this strategy are on the Tasmanian Department of Education website at:

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/about/visions/stateoflearning>

Guaranteeing Futures

Guaranteeing Futures, one of the four elements of *Tasmania: A State of Learning*, includes the provision for pathway planning and transition support for all students.

Guaranteeing Futures is a strategic approach to meeting the needs of young Tasmanians in transition from compulsory education to independent young adulthood.

The *Youth Participation in Education & Training (Guaranteeing Futures) Act* of 2005 underpins pathway planning and transition support. The Act requires young Tasmanians who have completed Year 10 or have turned 16 to participate in education and training for:

- a further two years, or
- until they have gained a Certificate III vocational qualification, or
- until they have turned 17.

Young people who continue in education and training broaden their horizons and improve their life chances.

Guaranteeing Futures teams in the North, South and North West support the initiatives and also support schools and colleges to achieve the following outcomes:

- individual pathway planning and transition support for young Tasmanians;
- multiple and flexible learning opportunities and pathways that cater for the needs of young Tasmanians and their communities;
- coordinated provision of education, training, employment and related services for young Tasmanians;
- partnerships between young Tasmanians and their parents; education, training and other youth service providers; government; business and industry; and the community;
- increased retention, participation and attainment by young Tasmanians in education and training;
- improved personal, social and economic outcomes for young Tasmanians; and
- a skills base that matches labour market requirements in Tasmania's growing economy.

Each Guaranteeing Futures team is comprised of a manager; vocational education and learning (VEL) development officers, pathway planning officers and youth learning officers.

Further information about Guaranteeing Futures initiatives is on the Department of Education web site at

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/about/visions/stateoflearning/strategy/booklet/guaranteeingfutures>

Guaranteeing Futures Manager contacts:

South: 03 6233 8932

North: 03 6336 2792

North West: 03 6434 7276

PATHWAY PLANNING AND TRANSITION SUPPORT

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Pathway planning is about helping young people to plan for their future. It assists young people to identify strengths, interests, goals and aspirations, and will support them in making informed and realistic choices about future education, training and work pathways.

From 2007, all students in Years 8-10 will participate in pathway planning with the support of Pathway Planning Officers in their schools. When developing their pathway plan, young people will be encouraged to carefully consider who they are, where they are going and how they might get there.

Young people will acquire the essential knowledge, skills and attributes to enable them to realise their full potential and to participate in and contribute to society.

Pathways signify the journeys made by young people from compulsory education through to independent young adulthood. They can include senior secondary education; vocational education and training delivered through a school, college, TAFE or private provider; an apprenticeship or traineeship; higher education; community education; informal learning; recreation and travel; workplace experience; casual, part-time or full-time employment; and various combinations of the above.

Schools will be assisted in pathway planning through the provision of professional support from Vocational Education and Learning Development Officers. Students will be assisted to develop pathway plans through the support and mentoring of a Pathway Planning Officer and students who face more challenges in making a successful transition may receive specialised support from Youth Learning Officers.

Resources that aid pathway planning and transition support in Years 8-10 are available in your school in the form of folders that contain information on curriculum and learning resources, pathway experiences, futures folios, pathway plans, and additional resources that are either linked to or reproduced for your use.

The full set of resources are available on the Department of Education web site at:

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/about/visions/stateoflearning/initiatives/pathway>

Further Information

If you'd like more information on vocational education and learning, here are some useful references:

Career More than Just a Job, Mary McMahon & Peter Tatham, DEST.

Managing Life, Learning and Work in the 21st Century, Mary McMahon, Wendy Patton, Peter Tatham, Miles Morgan Australia Pty Ltd.

http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/F49CA79F-86CD-40AB-9BBC-5CB2C81898B7/4224/life_learning_and_work.pdf

Australian Blueprint for Career Development

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development is a national framework for facilitating the development of career services and products. It specifies the competencies needed for all Australians to build their careers and is designed to foster intentional career development for people at all stages of their career planning, to manage lifelong learning and to develop competencies in career management.

The framework aims to serve schools, tertiary institutions, employment agencies, career practitioners and workplaces.

The framework is being trialed in 2006-07 in schools and workplaces in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

The full document can be downloaded at:

www.milesmorgan.com.au

Careers Education Quality Framework 1999

The Careers Education Quality Framework is a guide for teachers, careers specialists, school leaders and school communities. It contains practical tools for developing and assessing careers education, and for developing action plans for improvement. The Careers Education Quality Framework contains elements that are involved in a quality careers education program and gives schools and their communities an opportunity to plan ways of bringing about ongoing improvement in careers education.

The full document can be downloaded at:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/career_development/publications_resources/profiles/careers_education_quality_framework.htm

Professional Development Resource (ReCap)

The Resource for Career Practitioners (ReCap) is a national career resource that supports the role of career practitioners through a consolidated set of materials that can be used and organised in a flexible way.

It includes theoretical and practical components and contains information on national careers and transition policies and relevant national and international reports. It includes policy and information documents that will inform practice, as well as a guide to assist careers practitioners assess local careers programmes.

A range of student activity sheets and a loose-leaf ring binder format enable practitioners to add their own materials.

The full resource can be viewed on the DEST website at:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/career_development/publications_resources/recap_resource_for_career_practitioners/default.htm

The changing world of work

The world of work has changed fundamentally in the past 20 years and is set to change even more radically. In the past, it was usual for people to have only one job, and even one employer, for life. Today, most of us can expect to have a range of different jobs in our lifetimes. This may mean having several jobs at one time and/or combining paid with unpaid or voluntary employment. Paid employment may be in the form of short-term contracts, casual work, portfolio careers (a combined life and career package) or job-sharing. It is also likely that our careers will feature periods of underemployment and unemployment.

The changing nature of work therefore will provide many opportunities for those who are prepared for them. This will mean being able to identify opportunities, solve problems, take initiative, persevere, be flexible and work in teams. In other words, a set of employability skills will be crucial for moving through the changing environment of a career in the future.

Employment in Tasmania

Trends 2002-2006

At the time of writing, employment in Tasmania has eased after a period of strong growth (see Figure 1 below). Nonetheless, employment rates in Tasmania remain below the national average (see Figure 2 right).

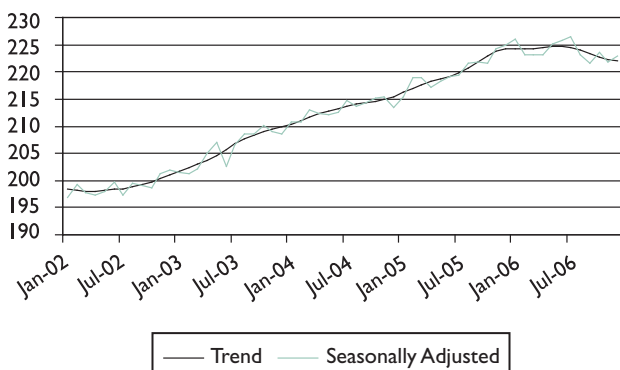


Figure 1 Employment in Tasmania 2002-2006

Source: Compiled from statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6202.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets, Table 9.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data indicates that the trend estimate of the total number of employed people in Tasmania in December 2006 was 222,100, compared to 224,200 in December 2005 – a decrease of 0.9%. The increase in the national employment figure over the same period was 2.8%.

The trend level of unemployment (see Figure 2) in Tasmania is estimated by the ABS for December 2006 at 14,600, compared to 15,900 in December 2005. The trend estimate of the unemployment rate for December 2006 was 6.2%, a decrease from the December 2005 figure of 6.6%. The Australian trend estimate of the unemployment rate was 4.6% in December 2006, compared to 5.2% in December 2005.

In summary, the employment situation, while having eased in the later part of 2006, still remains good compared to recent times, but unemployment in this State nonetheless remains higher than in Australia as a whole.

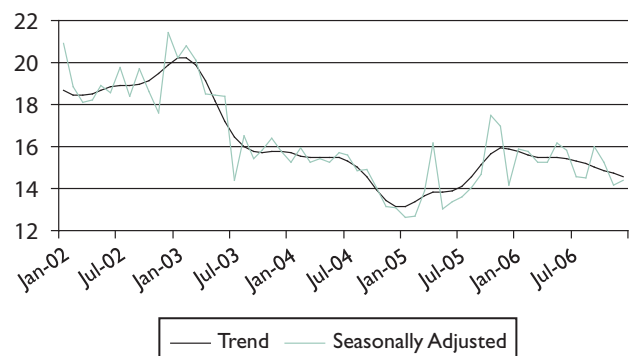


Figure 2 Unemployment in Tasmania 2002-2006

Source: Compiled from statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6202.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets, Table 9.

Additional information and relevant statistics can be obtained from the following websites:

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Australia's principal provider of vocational education and training (VET) research and statistics. Website content is the property of NCVER.
www.ncver.edu.au/

The Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia's official statistical organisation
www.abs.gov.au/

Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance
www.treasury.tas.gov.au/domino/df/df.nsf

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS – WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR

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In 2002, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)² released a paper linking trends in business with skills needed by employees.

“Enterprises continue to focus on adaptation, cost reduction, increased productivity and new markets and/or new products and services. In this environment there is an increasing requirement for employees to be able to support increased competitiveness, innovation, flexibility and client focus.

“Enterprises are increasingly seeking a more highly skilled workforce where the generic and transferable skills are broadly distributed across the organisation.

“There has been broad agreement that all young people need a set of personal attributes and skills that will prepare them for both employment and further learning. It is also recognised that the ongoing employability of individuals is dependent on their having a set of relevant skills, as well as a capacity to learn new things”.

The Employability Skills Framework was developed by ACCI and the Business Council of Australia to describe those personal attributes and skills.

The framework specifies 13 personal attributes that contribute to overall employability:

- loyalty
- commitment
- honesty and integrity
- enthusiasm
- reliability
- personal presentation
- common sense
- positive self-esteem
- sense of humour
- balanced attitude to work and home life
- ability to deal with pressure
- motivation
- adaptability

²The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) is the peak council of Australian business associations, with a network of more than 350,000 businesses represented through Chambers of Commerce in each state and territory and a nationwide network of industry associations.

The Framework further identifies eight key skills employers have identified as necessary for employees:

- **communication skills** – that contribute to productive and harmonious relations between employees and customers;
- **team work skills** – that contribute to productive working relationships and outcomes;
- **problem-solving skills** – that contribute to productive outcomes;
- **initiative and enterprise skills** – that contribute to innovative outcomes;
- **planning and organising skills** – that contribute to long-term and short-term strategic planning;
- **self-management skills** – that contribute to employee satisfaction and growth;
- **learning skills** – that contribute to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes;
- **technology skills** – that contribute to effective execution of tasks.³

In 2003, ACCI surveyed more than 400 employers on the subject of their expectations of young people’s employability skills, and the role of work experience while still at school in developing those skills.

A key finding was that 86% of the employers surveyed believed that employability skills rated at least as high as technical competence for new entrants to the workplace. Employers also believed that workplace experience while still at school would help young people to obtain those skills.⁴

³ Employability skills – an employer perspective: getting what employers want out of the too hard basket, ACCI Review, No. 88, June 2002.

⁴ Giving Australian youth relevant skills – meeting employers’ expectations, ACCI Review No. 104, October 2003, and ACCI media release, 14 October, 2003.

In Tasmania, the development of pathway planning resources has resulted in a set of transition skills which have been derived from the Employability Skills Framework described above.

They are:

- Learning – the extent to which the person is willing to learn, retain information and apply their understanding;
- Communicating – the extent to which the person is able to communicate effectively with others, including skills of numeracy, speaking and listening, reading and writing;
- Teamwork – the extent to which the person is able to work cooperatively with others;
- Problem Solving – the extent to which the person can be creative, find innovative solutions and develop real and practical solutions;
- Self Management – the person's ability to set and meet personal goals, evaluate their performance and take responsibility;
- Being Ethical – the extent to which the person shows fairness and respect for others, accepts alternative views and makes ethical choices;
- Planning and Organising – how well the person manages tasks, meets deadlines and schedules work requirements;
- Technology – the capacity the person demonstrates for using technology to complete tasks effectively and efficiently;
- Global Thinking – the extent to which the person can apply a global perspective or context to the work being undertaken; and
- Initiative & Enterprise – the extent to which a person shows initiative, can think independently and take personal action.

Rubrics and a series of learning challenges are available in the resource, *My Plan for My Future – Future Planning for Year 10 Students*, enabling teachers to support the development of the skills, concepts and understandings necessary for students to effectively plan their pathway beyond year 10.

CONSIDERING THE DIVERSE NEEDS WITHIN YOUR CLASS

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A crucial foundation for building a world-class education system is the provision of supportive school communities. Such communities emerge from the interaction of a shared set of beliefs, attitudes and actions. Through the *Tasmania Together and Learning Together* processes, Tasmanians have identified a clear future direction. One of the central intentions of *Learning Together* is to ensure that all students are provided with 'a fair go' and that all education environments are safe, supportive and inclusive.

The *Supportive School Communities Policy (SSC) Framework* assists educators committed to this fundamental value to build supportive, inclusive and equitable environments for all students by providing a coherent framework within which to view and then plan for improvements in their entire school culture. It helps educators to see the interconnections and interrelatedness of the various policies, strategies, services, curriculum initiatives and other educational opportunities. It is essentially about building school capacity and the educational opportunities for all students through collaboration with their wider school community.

A copy of the SSC Policy framework can be downloaded at: <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/educators/support/supportiveschoolcommunities/framework>

All students should have equitable access to the benefits of education, irrespective of their sex, culture, linguistic background, race, location, socio-economic background or disability.

Research shows that despite improvements in recent years there are still considerable differences in educational and training outcomes for some groups of students. The groups identified as experiencing particular educational disadvantage are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;
- students with disabilities;
- students from culturally and linguistically diverse background (those who speak a language other than English at home, migrants and refugees);

- students with backgrounds of poverty and low social status;
- students who are disadvantaged through isolation;
- students who are at risk of leaving school early;
- girls and women; and
- people in prisons and detention centres.

A range of resources that support SSC can be found at:

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/educators/support/supportiveschoolcommunities/resources>

Resources include:

MindMatters (a Mental Health Promotion Resource for Secondary Schools)

<http://online.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters>

The Bullying No Way website

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/>

Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds enter Tasmanian schools and colleges at any age and at any level of education. They are assisted to learn English as a second or additional language (ESL) through programs that facilitate their participation in mainstream education.

Tasmania has experienced a substantial increase in the number of migrant and refugee people settling in the State during the past few years. There has also been a major shift in the composition of refugee arrivals towards African and Middle Eastern communities in which there has been major social deprivation. As a result, there is an increasing need for principals, teachers and other school personnel to address issues relating to beginning literacy, torture/trauma experience and cultural diversity.

Consideration needs to be given to identifying and accessing worthwhile and satisfying futures, particularly employment opportunities, for migrant and refugee students. Also, high schools, colleges and vocational education and training providers need to have resources to identify issues faced by adolescent and young adult refugee students and be able to provide proactive, preventative and protective programs.

In response to the emerging needs of new community members, the ESL Program has published the *Health and Wellbeing Services Guide for Refugee Students*, which aims to provide current information about government and community support services for refugee students and their families. This publication is available on the ESL Program website:

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/educators/support/esl>

Aboriginal students

Aboriginal students achieve best in a climate that welcomes and values them, and which expects and supports them to achieve outcomes equal to their non-Aboriginal peers. Three key principles which underline the education of Aboriginal students are that:

1. Schools acknowledge the capacity of all young Aboriginal people to learn;
2. Schools acknowledge the role of Aboriginal parents as the first educators of their children; and
3. Schools acknowledge the close relationship between low levels of Aboriginal educational outcomes and poverty, health and housing.

(National statement of principles and standards for more culturally inclusive schooling in the 21st century, MCEETYA, 2000)

As is the case for all children, the teaching and learning relationships established between the teacher and the student are of vital importance. The transition from primary school to secondary school is often a difficult time for many Aboriginal students. This may be due to a number of causes, including students having insufficient development of core competencies in literacy and numeracy or having had to move from their local community to attend secondary school.

It has been found that if Aboriginal students make a successful transition from primary to secondary school, they are more likely to make successful transitions from school to work or training ((MCEETYA 2001d). The relationships developed between students in Year 7 and their teachers are therefore extremely important.

The Aboriginal Education Unit within the Department of Education runs many programs to assist schools and teachers to:

- increase their awareness and understanding of past and contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal culture;
- involve Aboriginal people at all levels of their work;
- investigate pedagogies that assist the learning of Aboriginal students;
- develop units of work that include Aboriginal perspectives;
- link into appropriate specialist support for Aboriginal students;
- access many resources (including books, DVDs, videos, kits, etc) on Aboriginal issues.

http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/educators/support/aboriginal_education

Students with a disability

The placement of students with disabilities in regular schools is the preferred educational option in Tasmania.

The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* both legislate to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against people with disabilities and to ensure that students with disabilities have the same rights to equality in education and training as the rest of the community.

At the same time, *Disability Standards for Education* came into effect in August 2005. The standards have been developed to clarify and make more explicit the obligations of education and training service providers under the disability discrimination legislation and to provide additional explanatory information. The Disability Standards for Education and guidance notes are available at:

http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/standards.html

Cluster support teams support educational provision for students with disabilities and learning difficulties. These teams work collaboratively with schools and provide a range of specialist services, including support teachers, guidance, speech and language pathology, and social work. Support for students with sensory impairments is provided through the Inclusive Learning Support Service. Students with more severe disabilities may also receive individual support, coordinated at the school cluster level and within individual colleges. Additional support may also be available, including provision of minor works and assistive technology. From early high school, the focus of planning moves to transition, which involves bringing together a range of services to address current and future individual student needs.

A range of support materials for classroom teachers can be found at:

http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/educators/support_disabilities

Girls and young women

While women's participation and success in VET is increasing, there is still a strong need to encourage their broader participation in VET courses at all levels. Women are still enrolling in courses and taking up traineeships in predominantly female industries and occupations, such as management and commerce, hospitality, food and personal services, aged care and children's services, teacher aides, nursing, and call centres. Also, women's success in obtaining employment after training is lower than it is for men.

Developing links to critical pathways such as VET in schools and the provision of good career information specifically to girls are critical to support broader participation.

Australian and Tasmanian Government strategies and frameworks have relevance to vocational education and learning and career education. Key ones include:

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century (1999)

These national goals provide a basis for investment in schooling, enabling all young people to engage effectively with an increasingly complex world.

Clause 1.5 of the goals states that when students leave school they should:

"Have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning."

The full document can be downloaded at:

<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/nationalgoals/natgoals.htm>

New Framework for Vocational Education in Schools (2000) Policy Directions and Implementation

This framework responds to references to vocational education and training (VET) in the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century (1999).

The framework has six key elements. Policy direction and implementation details can be viewed on the Department of Education, Science and Training website:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/policy_initiatives_reviews/key_issues/vocational_education_in_schools/

This is a Joint Declaration by Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for Education, Training, Employment, Youth and Community Services.

Local Community Partnerships

Australian Government Local Community Partnerships (LCPs) incorporate not-for-profit, community-based and locally operated organisations that are contracted by the Department of Education, Science and Training to provide a strategic approach to the implementation of the following three LCP career and transition programmes:

- Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) Programme;
- Career and Transition Support (CTS) Programme; and
- Adopt a School Programme (ASP).

LCPs facilitate the delivery of the three LCP career and transition programmes to all schools across Government, Catholic and other non-Government schooling sectors, for the benefit of all young people (13-19 years) within their contracted LCP Service Region(s).

LCPs partner with industry and employer groups, schools, professional career advisers, community organisations, parents, young people, youth service providers and other government and community organisations to assist all young people aged 13-19 years to gain the skills, experience and professional guidance to help them achieve a successful transition through school, and from school to further education, training and employment.

Tasmania: A State of Learning (2003)

This is a long-term, strategic framework, containing initiatives to help realise a vision for post-Year 10 education and training. Overall, the strategy aims to:

- improve young people's participation in education and training beyond compulsory schooling;
- enable second chance learning opportunities for people of all ages;
- build a skilled workforce with the capacity to support business and industry in a growing economy; and
- create communities that value lifelong learning.

Guaranteeing Futures, one of the four elements of the strategy, is a strategic approach to meeting the needs of young Tasmanians in transition from compulsory education to independent young adulthood and builds on current programs for young Tasmanians and a number of key Government initiatives.

These initiatives include the youth learning officer network, pathway planning for Years 8-10, vocational education and learning development officers, and area taskforces. Further details on the initiatives are provided in other sections of this kit.

The full *Tasmania: A State of Learning* document can be downloaded at:

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/about/visions/stateoflearning/strategy>

Engaging Our School Communities

In May 2006, the Minister for Education, Hon. David Bartlett MHA, announced the Engaging Our School Communities Taskforce to identify strategies to improve parent and community involvement in Tasmanian government schools.

The key focus for the taskforce is:

- increasing opportunities for school engagement with parents and carers;
- recognising and expanding the real-life student learning opportunities that are achievable through school engagement with the community;

- supporting school leaders in developing positive relationships with school communities;
- improving the effectiveness of community involvement in school governance arrangements; and
- increasing community access to school facilities.

Taskforce recommendations are in the process of being implemented. They can be viewed in the full report at:

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents>

Equal Partners: The Tasmanian Plan of Action for People with a Disability Accessing Vocational Education and Training

Equal Partners Stage One was developed during 2000 to help all Tasmanians have an equal chance of accessing the State's training system. It was developed in response to *Bridging Pathways – The National Strategy for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in vocational education and training*. Equal Partners Stage Two was developed in 2003 to respond to changed priorities from the mid term review of *Bridging Pathways*.

The full document can be downloaded at:

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/vet/providers/equityandyouth/services/policy/equalpartners>

oana mallacka

oana mallacka is the 2002-05 Tasmanian Plan of Action to increase Aboriginal people's access to vocational education and training.

It was developed in 2002 to help all Tasmanian Aboriginal people access the State's training system and in response to *Partners in a Learning Culture*, the national blueprint for Indigenous vocational education and training (VET).

oana mallacka was reviewed in 2005 in line with the new directions from *Partners in a Learning Culture*.

For more information see:

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/vet/providers/equityandyouth/services/policy/oanamallacka>