

Stronger Futures for All Victorians Discussion Paper Responses

Theme1

Questions

What form should the proposed literacy and numeracy standards take?

A National benchmark for literacy and numeracy standards. The standards should have an assessment process that is available to ALL providers who are engaging young people in education and training programs.

In what other ways can the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills be strengthened in the post-compulsory years?

We should be asking, 'why are there students who have not acquired the benchmark for literacy and numeracy standards by the post compulsory years'? Once identified in the NAPLAN early intervention strategies need to be implemented immediately. The intervention needs to be sustained and meet the needs of the young person's circumstances and abilities.

Secondary Schools could adopt the holistic approach taken by primary schools and embed literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum. This could be more effectively and efficiently achieved through literacy and numeracy becoming a core subject in teacher training, rather than an elective subject.

Sharing data such as NAPLAN results with all schools and the TAFE and ACE sector, (currently Senior Secondary Schools and the TAFE and ACE sector do not have access) would be ensure that young people who have ongoing literacy and or numeracy issues are more easily identified

A collaborative approach through the Regional Networks to find collective solutions and strategies such as sharing resources, Regional Network funding for literacy coaches, a cluster approach to provision of subjects and programs.

Theme 2

Questions

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?

A career plan will only do all the above if 'career development' as a subject is given a place of significance in the curriculum and time tabling at the secondary level. Embedding the notion of career development into the curriculum from the primary school level through engaging community and industry in school based activities.

Another important consideration in students developing a successful career plan is by developing parents understanding of education and pathway options and by encouraging their involvement in the career planning process.

In addition, careers teaching qualifications should be acknowledged, valued and encouraged. Careers teaching should not be an 'add on' to a teachers load. We need dynamic and informed teachers and programs.

What other actions should be taken to ensure that sound career development services are available to all young Victorians?

Education providers engaging in partnerships with a range of community and industry stakeholders, including local service agencies, LLENs and Youth Connections providers.

How can business/industry be more involved in assisting students' career choices?

Making what employers need and expect in their workplace more explicit is important to consider when providing career advice to young people. Industry could work with schools and education and training providers to ensure that careers advice is about the job, not just the course!

Theme 3

Questions

What would further strengthen the delivery partnerships between government and non-government schools and between schools and VET providers?

Fluid and seamless networks of schools that have a broad range of provision within and between each other and across the community and industry sectors

What additional actions should Government take to support young people to complete initial qualifications in the VET sector?

Funding issues need to be addressed to ensure that funding for all young people engaged in education and/or training to year 12 or its equivalent is accessible to all providers from all sectors.

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?

Changing the paradigm – training is different to teaching! Teachers need to be given professional development support and opportunities to understand the principles of applied learning and competency based training and assessment so they can deliver programs/ lessons that are truly 'competency based and effectively assess students progress towards competency and attainment.

Similarly applied learning pedagogies and adult learning principles need to be embedded in teacher training

What other strategies could be introduced to lift qualification completion rates for young people in the schools and VET sectors?

Ensuring unnecessary and prohibitive costs for VET courses are not passed onto young people and their families.

How can businesses and industry be involved in increasing completion rates – especially for apprenticeships?

Provide a range of supports such as workplace mentoring, regular and meaningful contact with the apprentice centres - for the apprentice and employer. Completion incentives for the apprentice not just the employer, apprentice centre or group training company.

Theme 4

Questions

How can student transition to the VET sector, higher education and full-time employment be improved?

Implementing broader eligibility criteria for young people to be accepted into university, not just relying on ATAR score

What other steps are required to assist schools' connection to the world of work?

Developing a strong understanding of and connection to the VET sector and industry, VET Tasters that are more than just a day or week at TAFE – they need preparatory lead in activities, real industry involvement and follow up tasks to consolidate the learning experiences, to understand the job, not just the course.. Professional development for teachers that connects them to the 'real' work place

What other initiatives would improve school to tertiary education articulation and support young people to take advantage of the expansion of these sectors?

Resolving funding issues that inhibit the development of innovative programs such as a combination of attending part time school and TAFE part time, providing real and rewarding options for some young people who find it difficult to remain engaged in mainstream school.

Theme 5

Questions

How can Youth Connections be implemented in Victoria to most effectively re-engage young people with education and training?

Efficient and collaborative referral processes to address barriers to engagement. Develop partnerships that foster collaborative approach to identifying barriers and gaps in provision. Ensure there is greater clarity around the role of Youth Connections and their capacity to work with schools, education providers and local services.

What services should Youth Connection service providers use to establish effective referral and working arrangements?

Internal and external case management services that appropriately meet the specific needs of individual young people

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?

'Some flexibility' is a vague term, without clear parameters. Optional or discretionary flexibility could work well. However to alter the LLEN contract to expand their cohort (yet again) would require increased funding, further organizational restructuring and governance amendments.

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.)

There needs to be some care taken in describing qualifications or curriculum as 'reengagement' models. VCAL in particular is better described as an 'engagement' model and it is often diminished and undervalued because many see it as a reengagement model. In acknowledging that there will always be some young people who cannot, for a range of reasons attend mainstream school then perhaps it is time to develop a curriculum or curriculum resources specifically designed to maximize opportunities for successful reengagement.