

# 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 (not just mainstream government schools), 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 should be implemented and monitored.

Expand Reading Recovery and follow up at 3/4 level with intensive 1 on 1

### 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?**

YP are often too young to make informed career decisions. These young people will have several careers and need to develop a diverse skills and knowledge base. Broad employability skills rather than specific skills

A career plan will only do all this if 'career development' is embedded within the curriculum throughout a YP education, starting at the primary level. During the later years of education (year 8-12) more consideration should be given to the students individual aspirations. LLEN's have brokered very successful partnerships in the past, introducing numerous students, from different schools to specific industry (eg. the VEET and Careers in Manufacturing, etc. instigated by OELLEN). Local Len's are well positioned to broker meaningful partnerships through engaging community and industry in school based activities.

Work experience across a range of industry enables YP to make better choices Further to this career plans should follow a student when they transfer to other education settings to ensure valuable information regarding student interests and aspirations is passed on. This way the career plan can be built on.

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

Both parents and students need to be well informed on current funding arrangements so students do not cut of their opportunities when they turn 20.

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

Industries need to welcome YP looking for work experience and provide meaningful programs (eg ARB)

LLENs are well positioned to play an integral part in facilitating connections between schools and industry. Careers in Manufacturing, VEET and the Allied Health project are good examples of successful partnerships that enable students to make a more informed career choice. The new LLEN contract provides additional funds for future partnership brokerage.

### **Theme 3**

#### **Questions**

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

RTO's should be included in VCAL Secondary networks, compulsory attendance. 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?**

Clarification of funding issues, eg. VETiS: Under current arrangements schools receive band funding for VETiS, this funding is forwarded to the RTO who delivers the training. In principle schools are to pass on proportional payment from the student SRP, however schools are very resistant to do so. Many VETiS courses are delivered over a period of 2 years in order to make the delivery of a VETiS financially viable. (VETiS is not funded under Skills Victoria) This mode of delivery (half a day a week for 40 weeks) is not conducive to keep student engaged in the course as it does not give students a sense of achievement in a timely manner.

#### **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?**

An increased understanding of competency based training and assessment will equip teachers with a larger variety of teaching/training techniques  
Principles of applied learning and competency based training and assessment need to be embedded in teacher training as well as applied learning principles so teachers can deliver programs/ lessons that are competency based and effectively assess students progress towards competency.  
VCAL programs in schools need to be acknowledged as meeting legitimate learning styles, not just dealing with different (difficult) students.

#### **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?**

The new VSN is simply a tracking device, it will have no impact on completion. Currently the only incentive for students to complete is to pay or withdraw Centrelink payments

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

Completion incentives for the apprentice - not just the employer, apprentice centre or RTO. Strengthen communication/ workplace mentoring with both employers, parents and students. Ensure employers are committed to apprenticeship completion, not just the incentives. Incentives should be provided to employers every year, not just in the first year. Employers who have a low success rate in apprenticeship completion should be looked into before they can take on new apprentices.

### **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 ENTER score.  
Development of meaningful Career Plans which map pathways into the VET sector/higher education. More flexibility for students over the age of 20, under current skills Victoria funding students will only be funded when they up-skill.  
Remove Cert I and II from this exclusion

### **Theme 5**

#### **Questions**

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

Clarification of the role of Youth Connections to all stake holders as well as YC provider.  
Processes to ensure that placement of YP in alternative setting is in the interest of the YP in terms of suitability of the program, including geographical location.  
Develop partnerships with education and welfare providers that foster a holistic approach to identifying barriers and gaps in provision.  
Awareness at 'higher levels' that most YC providers are also RTO's which could cause a conflict of interest within the provider. Youth Connections should be provided by an independent body.

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

Strong relations with all education and welfare providers in the catchment area.  
Employment of a Careers Coach in order to provide meaning full career advice.

#### **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?**

The LLENs would be well positioned to facilitate and broker service provision to YP over 20. Some flexibility' is a vague term, and does not allow development of meaning full partnerships specifically designed for this older cohort. Incorporating the over 20's in the LLEN contract would require increased funding, further organizational restructuring and governance amendments as well as alteration of the LLEN contract

**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.)**

In general the range of qualifications is adequate as they provide a lot of flexibility in terms of content and delivery. Providers who design and implement programs with a strong student focus and input (especially the VCAL and CGEA) have proven to be valuable avenues for re-engagement. However there will always be a proportion of students who are not suited to mainstream education, whether they do not learn academically or have other issues that create a barrier for their engagement with education. It might be valuable to develop further curriculum within the schools to cater for these students.

Funding requirements surrounding at-risk students is another issue that needs to be addressed. Under the current Skills Victoria contract there are no payments for students who do not attend for a period of time and they need to be exited from the program. Often, when a student is not able to attend their classes for a period of time, they will stay connected to our program through the student support services, relationships with tutors or attendance at our Youth Enterprise Shed out of school hours. Therefore they maintain a positive, supportive relationship with the education provider. Currently when a student is ready to re-engage they will need to re-enroll and with ever growing demand on these programs the student is most likely to be placed on a waiting list, therefore not providing a seamless connection with education. More credit needs to be given to the (currently not measured) personal and emotional growth alternative education is facilitating for our YP. This could be by ways of developing assessment tools (based for example on the 40 Developmental Assets as identified by the Search Institute in Seattle) that 'measure' this growth.

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