The start of this year gave us the first opportunity to track the destinations of the students who completed the first year of the VCAL statewide rollout in 2003. Together with the evidence of VCAL being a stimulus for improved school retention in the post-compulsory years of schooling, confirmation of the actual destinations of last year’s students was a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness of VCAL in fulfilling student pathways.

In February this year we surveyed all 222 VCAL 2003 providers to ascertain details on the destinations of VCAL 2003 students. Ninety-one per cent of these providers, which included government and catholic secondary schools, TAFE institutes and adult and community education organisations, responded to the survey.

The two key findings from the survey data are that 60 per cent of VCAL 2003 students enrolled in a variety of education and training programs to continue their studies in 2004 and that 30 per cent took up apprenticeships, traineeships and other employment opportunities.

Collectively, an impressive 90 per cent of the students made successful transitions from school education into their chosen pathway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education and Training pathways</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuing with VCAL in 2004</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled for VCE in 2004</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in a TAFE/ACE course in 2004</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in university/higher education course</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled at another school</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>2248</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apprenticeship, employment pathways</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secured an apprenticeship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secured a traineeship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secured other employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other pathways</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destination not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (includes parenthood, overseas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VCAL students find pathways
Welcome to the sixth edition of the VQA Update. This is a bumper-size edition because it's updating you on a diverse range of VQA's recent work, from the implementation of the VCAL to news of the second in the series of VQA Lectures.

The main feature is a report on the first year of VCAL's statewide implementation. The report shows what a superb job has been done by schools, TAFEs and ACE providers running VCAL in 2003 – the pathways achieved for the students speak for themselves. This outcome shows that there is room for two complementary senior secondary certificates in Victoria, each offering different pathways for students.

VCAL is the VQA's biggest project so far, involving 300 providers. In contrast, but no less important, we also run a range of small-scale scoping projects which aim to identify areas where the needs of learners might be better met by re-thinking qualifications policy or design. These scoping projects act as a test-bed and allow resources to be targeted on the projects that evaluation shows can be scaled up to make a real impact.

There's an example in this VQA Update of a scoping project developed with Koorie stakeholders to look at the qualifications needs of their communities. With the support of those stakeholders and the VQA Board, it is now being scaled up into two bigger projects, each of which will deal with a specific qualifications issue and will contribute to the work of the DE&T Koorie Education and Training Task Group.

So welcome again to the sixth VQA Update – and to its coverage of projects, both little and large. As always, we welcome your comments and feedback – there's a 'contact us' link on the VQA website that you can use for this.

Dr Dennis Gunning
Director, VQA

VCAL Achievement Awards 2003

The beginning of this year also gave us the opportunity to recognise the outstanding achievements of VCAL students, teachers, employers, trainers and community organisations who were involved in VCAL programs in 2003.

Over 140 nominations were received in the various award categories and specially appointed judging panels selected the award winners. The presentation ceremony for the awards was an impressive event held on 17 March at Queen's Hall, Parliament House, with over 250 attendees including students and their families, teachers, employers and community organisations.

The full listing of the award winners is posted on the VQA web site www.vqa.vic.gov.au/vqa/vcal/awards.asp. Extensive media coverage of the individual award winners was featured in metropolitan and regional newspapers and industry publications.

In her address at the event, Minister Lynne Kosky commented that, “VCAL is an important part of improving outcomes because it assists students on pathways that reliably connect them with school education and with employment, further education and training”. She also paid tribute to the teachers, principals, employers and community groups who played important roles as VCAL partners.

VCAL enrolments in 2004

Data from the VCAA indicates that, as at 3 May 2004, 7672 students are enrolled for VCAL in 2004 in over 300 centres – schools, TAFE institutes and adult and community education organisations.

The data shows a 37 per cent increase in VCAL providers, with a corresponding 50 per cent increase in overall VCAL enrolments. Clear trends are evident, with increased enrolments at both VCAL Intermediate and VCAL Senior levels.

VCAL enrolments by certificate level – 2003 and 2004

The geographical spread of enrolments shows a slight change, with metropolitan enrolments increasing from 55 per cent in 2003 to 58 per cent in 2004 and country enrolments decreasing from 45 per cent in 2003 to 42 per cent this year. However, when population figures are taken into account, country provision and participation in VCAL remains strong.

VCAL Pathways Development Pilot projects 2004

The VQA continues its approach to ongoing development of the VCAL to meet the pathway needs of students and learners. Fifteen
pilot projects have been funded in three categories of the VCAL Pathway Development Pilot Program 2004 as follows:

**Pathways to Apprenticeships:** to expand vocational pathways from secondary school education into apprenticeships, particularly those in industries that are experiencing skill shortages or where local employment opportunities exist.
- Benalla Secondary College – Apprenticeships for women in non-traditional trades in various industry areas
- Eumemmerring Secondary College – Service and Retail industries
- Mansfield Secondary College – Sport & Recreation, Agriculture, Hospitality and Horticulture industries
- Mill Park and Epping Secondary Colleges – Electrical industry
- Mt Erin Secondary College – Tourism and Hospitality Industry
- Roxburgh College – Information Technology, Hospitality and Automotive industries
- Holmesglen Institute of TAFE – Bricklaying industry
- Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE – Automotive industry
- University of Ballarat TAFE – Automotive industry
- RMIT University TAFE – Plumbing industry

**Pathways to Higher Education:** to expand pathways for VCAL students from secondary school education into courses at university and TAFE (Certificate IV and above).
- Debney Park Secondary College – in partnership with Victoria University
- RMIT University
- Gippsland Education Precinct and Monash University

**Pathways for Adults:** to expand vocational pathways for adults returning to study in an applied learning setting.
- Bellarine Secondary College
- Colac Adult and Community Education Inc.

The pilot projects in the Pathways to Apprenticeships and Adults returning to study categories have completed their planning stages and have enrolled VCAL students in these programs for 2004. The Pathways to Higher Education pilot projects will enrol VCAL students in the second half of this year.

**Contact for further information:** Annette Whiter 9637 3865

**VCAL implementation 2005**

Next year represents the third and final stage of the statewide rollout of the VCAL with the opportunity for additional schools and adult and community education providers to deliver VCAL.

The VQA has commenced an expression of interest process to select the additional providers for 2005. Notification of selected providers will be made before the end of Term 2 to allow the maximum time for the development of learning programs and for discussions with prospective VCAL students and teaching staff. The full range of VCAL implementation support will be offered to all new providers. This includes induction workshops, professional development, quality assurance for VCAL units, curriculum resources and assistance from regional consultants. The contact details for the VCAL regional consultants is available at www.vqa.vic.gov.au/vqa/vcal/providers/regional.asp

**Contact for further information:** Melissa Finlayson 9637 3967

**VCAL Professional Development & Learning Program 2004**

The first day of the VCAL Professional Development & Learning Program 2004 was successfully implemented through a series of 14 regional workshops during March.

The program is delivered by Language Australia/Centre for Adult Education and provides VCAL practitioners with information on the key features of VCAL and good practice on developing learning programs, partnerships with external providers and learning and teaching in an applied context.

Over 580 VCAL practitioners attended the workshops and provided positive feedback on the workshop content. The second day of the program will be held in Term 2 and will provide attendees with access to resources to support VCAL program development and assessment. Details of the second series of workshops are available at www.aris.com.au/vcalpdlp

**Contact for further information:** Andrea Bishop 9637 3874

**VCAL Employer Campaign**

A campaign to continue the promotion of key messages and information on VCAL to employers is scheduled to commence in May. The campaign will feature a series of business seminars in conjunction with employer and industry peak bodies, a new VCAL brochure and video for employers and promotional material in industry publications.

**Contact for further information:** Andrea Bishop 9637 3874

**Transfer of VCAL operations**

The decision of the Minister for Education and Training in 2001 to request the VQA to develop, evaluate and implement the VCAL means that, at the conclusion of these functions, discussions are needed to enable integration of VCAL into mainstream education and training operations.

To this end, negotiations are underway to transfer VCAL operations along with corresponding budget allocations and service accountabilities to the Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority (VCAA). This will enable the VCAA to administer both the VCE and VCAL as part of their senior secondary qualification curriculum and assessment responsibilities. A significant part of the transfer will be completed by end of this year. In line with the requirements of the VQA Act, accreditation of the VCAL and certification of VCAL studies will remain VQA responsibilities.

**Contact for further information:** Arden Joseph 9637 3868
2014 may seem to be a fair way into the future as far as our day-to-day lives are concerned, but not in terms of the development or redevelopment of qualifications. In introducing the first VQA lecture for 2004 at Zinc Studio, Federation Square, the Director of the VQA, Dr Dennis Gunning, remarked that a ten-year view of planning for qualifications development is not an unreasonable timeframe if the Western Australia experience is anything to go by, as a review of their Year 12 qualifications commenced in 1999 and is not scheduled for completion until 2009. “In order for qualifications to remain relevant to users they need to be reviewed regularly to ensure they are meeting the needs of a changing world,” Dr Gunning said. “Qualifications such as the VCE and VCAL offer a statement in knowledge and skills and act as a right of passage from the world of the school to the world beyond the school, and therefore need to be fit for the purpose. An event such as today’s allows us the opportunity to speculate on future needs and characteristics of qualifications.”

It was in this context that an audience of around 200 of the VQA’s stakeholders were treated to a presentation and panel discussion facilitated by Tony Mackay (Director of the Centre of Strategic Educational Thinking), featuring three recruiters of graduating Year 12 students – Judy Douglas, HR Advisor for Qenos Pty Ltd (a large manufacturing firm), Ian Marshman, Senior Vice-Principal at the University of Melbourne, and Bruce Mackenzie, Director of Holmesglen Institute of TAFE. Each were asked to look ten years ahead and consider, from a user’s point of view, what they would be looking for in terms of the skills and knowledge needed by young people in 2014, and the systemic changes that might be needed to support the development of the skills and knowledge.

Bruce Mackenzie, taking a TAFE perspective, put the view that the VCE had failed as a universal and generalist Year 12 qualification as evidenced by continuing poor retention rates, particularly in rural and regional Victoria, and what was needed was a range of pathways for young people with an enhanced role for TAFE. In support of this view, Bruce provided the example of Denmark that had established schools with a vocational focus, supported by school-based academic studies and vocational placement in industry. Bruce put the view that regional TAFEs in Victoria could be set up as vocational colleges or regional community colleges, along the lines of the Danish model. Bruce also put the view that the state education and training system could not support the funding levels required, and suggested that TAFE may be better served by direct federal funding like universities.

Ian Marshman, taking a higher education perspective, provided two scenarios – one based on evolution, the other based on revolution. In the evolution scenario, nothing much changes from what we have today. Selection to university continues to be based on achievement in the VCE and through VTAC processes, although significant improvements will be apparent in access and equity, and slight improvements to alternative pathways. In the revolution scenario, 2014 sees major changes from what we have today with universities competing globally for students; US-style admissions practices drawing on both aptitude and achievement; VTAC processes being replaced by direct entry to institutions; and associate degrees and other TAFE qualifications providing alternative pathways to higher education.

Under both scenarios, Ian sees a number of implications for Year 12 qualifications in 2014, as follows.

- The need to cater for increased diversity.
  It will be unacceptable if particular student groups are not well served by what is available. There will be an obligation to equip students for a broader range of university and career alternatives.

- The need to embed generic skills within core studies.
  University expectation will increasingly include capacities beyond subject knowledge. Students rather than teachers will need to be the focus of life-long learning processes.

- The need to prepare students for the region in which they live.
  In 2014, China, India and Southeast Asian countries will become significant political and economic forces. Australia will have an important role, being an English-speaking nation in an Asian region. Universities and schools have the responsibility to equip students for the rapidly-changing world in which they live. Asian languages and societies will be of heightened importance and we need to adapt and change the curriculum to make our citizens literate and good global citizens.

- The need to accommodate on-line delivery as a substitute for traditional approaches.
  At the university level, by 2014 some universities will have invented a sophisticated software application for studies such as Maths 101, and first year Biology. Any student around the world will be able to enrol in those subjects and get credit in their home institution. The same will apply possibly in a different way for Year 12 studies. Other
Judy Douglas from Qenos Pty Ltd (a manufacturing company with around 1000 employees), taking an employers’ perspective, provided an overview of Qenos and its recruitment practices across its business areas. Currently, employees continue to learn while they are at work. For example, with apprentices and trainees, Qenos expect to build on the practical skills already learnt and on improving knowledge. With recruits from the graduate program or Industry Based Learning (IBL), the emphasis is on putting theory into practice and developing practical knowledge and skills. In ten years time, Judy expects applications will be made online, and a video interview is likely to be the first interaction with the applicant, although some may have already undertaken project work with Qenos. In assessing applicants, Judy would be looking for evidence of a good broad education, and that applicants have demonstrated a range of generic skills, including personal and social competence. They will be expected to apply skills in increasingly sophisticated contexts. If a full-time employee, Judy expects they will only be with the firm for three to five years.

From Judy’s perspective, the purpose of the Year 12 qualification is to mark the completion of 13 years of education and is only one indicator used in employment selection processes. She seldom looks at specific subjects studied but for other skills and experience gained, for example from part-time work. To Judy, top marks don’t guarantee selection as an employee at Qenos, rather she looks for skills gained in completing certificates rather than the certificates themselves. The certificates are more useful as a means to further study in university and TAFE, providing the basis to build on skills and develop technical knowledge and skills.

Judy believes one certificate can meet the needs of all users. It needs to be able to demonstrate that students have developed a range of generic skills within a broad education. The certificate should leave students free to make a sound decision on whether to enter the workforce or go on to further study at an educational institution.

In opening discussion to panel members and the audience, Tony Mackay focused in on the revolution scenario as proposed by Ian and challenged the audience and panel members to describe the major changes needing to occur. Comments and discussion from the audience and panel members can be summarised as follows:

- The need for a national system for tertiary entrance that will allow for parity of esteem between Year 12 qualifications and allow for admission to universities around the world.
- There was a suggestion that a single Australia-wide senior secondary qualification should be our aim by 2014. However, this proposal was countered by a view that such a qualification would destroy the valuable diversity of the current state-run systems.
- The need for systemic change. The introduction of VCAL has provided some impetus for system change, but there is the need for more, along the lines of the Gippsland Education Precinct, which is providing a cross-sectoral approach; the CAE cross-generational approach, which provides multiple entry; and exit points for learning throughout life.
- The need for any Year 12 qualification to cater for cohorts of students currently disenfranchised by the education system, and the need for special admissions processes to further study, along the lines, for example, of the joined-up government approach in the Shepparton region.
- The need for any Year 12 qualification to be internationally benchmarked against global best practice standards.

In drawing the lecture to a close, the sentiment of the audience can be summarised as this: while the current system is not perfect and it is acknowledged that there is a need for better communication and interaction between the sectors, pockets of good practice do exist, which should be nurtured and be adopted elsewhere. In so doing we may be able to meet the challenges of 2014.

Contact for further information: David Symonds 9637 2991
The VQA Board is committed to improving education, training and employment pathways for Indigenous students. In October 2003, VQA Board member Paul Briggs convened a forum involving a range of key stakeholders to discuss ways in which to take this commitment forward.

This forum identified six areas offering a potential focus for the VQA. A contractor was engaged to conduct an extensive consultation process, exploring the merit of each theme and developing specific proposals where appropriate. As part of this effort, discussions were held with various Koorie organisations and government agencies. These consultations included Office of Tertiary and Training Education (OTTE), Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI), Koorie Business Network, Koorie Economic Employment Training Agency Inc. (KEETA), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), Department of Education Science and Training (DEST), the Department of Justice and the Department for Victorian Communities.

With this initial scoping now completed, the six themes to be pursued over the coming period are:

1. developing a catalogue of Indigenous studies, for both Koorie and non-Koorie students
2. improving pathways for Koorie students from VET training into sustainable employment, particularly in the private sector
3. targeting strategies to reduce early school leaving among Koorie students – including opportunities to build on the successful outcomes achieved through the VCAL
4. improving recognition, articulation and pathways planning for Indigenous students including better access to up-front Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) services
5. including Indigenous studies units into teacher training programs with the aim of increasing awareness of Koorie culture and learning needs
6. exploring opportunities for improving education, training and employment outcomes for Koorie offenders within correctional settings.

The specific proposals are now currently working their way through various consultative levels, including the VAEAI, the VQA Koorie forum and the DE&T Koorie Education and Training Cross Sector Taskforce. VAEAI especially is playing a critical role in the development of the six themes.

Specific work has commenced in relation to three of the six themes with direct relevance to the VQA’s responsibilities.

There has been universal endorsement of the need for the establishment of a catalogue of Indigenous studies units, qualifications and associated support materials (Theme 1). A tender brief is being developed, with further discussions with VAEAI, the VQA Koorie forum and the DE&T Taskforce regarding the project and associated protocols. In regard to pathways planning (Theme 4), an initial research project has been identified. The VQA is commissioning research to gather in-depth data about Koorie student's experiences of recognition and pathway planning services in VET as a prelude to the development of specific initiatives. In regard to Koorie offenders (Theme 6), discussions have already commenced with Corrections Victoria, seeking involvement in the Department of Justice Corrections Victoria Koorie Employment, Education and Training Strategy 2004-2007.

In regard to the remaining themes (2, 3 and 5), the consultations have advanced the thinking around a number of specific proposals and initiatives in these areas. This work will now be subject to formal reference to the DE&T Koorie Education and Training Cross Sector Taskforce.

While much has been achieved since that first meeting in October last year, the challenge ahead should not be underestimated. However, thanks to the goodwill and contribution of many, a very clear direction for future effort has been identified. The VQA looks forward to working with the Koorie community and government agencies in bringing these themes to fruition, and in helping to make a real difference to the pathway opportunities for Koorie people.

**Contact for further information:** Amanda Wells 9637 2125
Employers give credit to the matrix

The Credit Matrix Industry Forum has recently been established. It is an initiative designed to help ensure the work underway in the second phase of the credit matrix project will be well informed by an industry perspective.

The full details of the membership, the role and the outcomes of the discussions of the Industry Forum will be posted shortly on the VQA website www.vqa.vic.gov.au.

Comprising 13 representatives of small, medium and large enterprises, members of the forum met for the first time on 24 March 2004. Mr Denis Bingham, Manager Employee Development and Performance, Pacific National Pty Ltd, a forum member, provided the following overview:

“If the credit matrix is fully implemented, you would be able to look at a complete map of all post-compulsory qualifications – laid out and labelled using a common system of levels and points.” Members were provided with an overview of the work completed to date by the team of external consultants who have been contracted to develop a draft detailed model for the credit matrix.

The initial meeting of the forum discussed the likely areas in which the credit matrix would be of most benefit to industry, and the early work which has been undertaken on the model. While there was general agreement on the domains of learning identified, it was felt that levels and descriptors in the model need to be firmly focused on outcomes – what people know and can do. It was also thought that the model’s levels and descriptors had to take account of the national dimension in a context where interstate, if not international, mobility is increasing.

While the forum is only one of many sources of advice that the VQA will be drawing on over the next couple of months, it is immensely beneficial to help shape the credit matrix from its early stages, and give a solid indication of the ways in which it may be of potential real benefit to industry and individuals in the workforce in the longer term.

Contact for further information: Madeleine Jenkins 9637 3136
The VQA Board welcomed four new members at its April meeting. These are Mr Paul Herrick, Professor Barbara van Ernst, Ms Anna Vlass and Ms Linda Heron.

Mr Paul Herrick

Mr Paul Herrick has been appointed to the VQA because of his knowledge and experience in post-compulsory education and management, particularly in non-government schools. Mr Herrick is a former secondary school principal and is now responsible for school leadership and accountability in the Catholic Education Office. He has been recently appointed as Director on the Education Board of Saint Columba’s College Essendon. He also serves as a council member of the Champagnat Education Council.

Professor Barbara van Ernst

Professor Barbara van Ernst, AM has been appointed to the VQA because of her knowledge and experience in higher education and management. Professor van Ernst is head of the Lilydale campus of Swinburne University of Technology and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Learning and Teaching of the University. She has more than 25 years experience in higher education, was founder and inaugural president of the Association of Music Education Lecturers and Head of the School of Visual and Performing and Media Arts at Deakin University.

Ms Anna Vlass

Ms Anna Vlass has been appointed to the VQA because of her knowledge and experience in post-compulsory education, particularly senior secondary school curriculum. Ms Vlass is the Assistant Principal at Box Hill Senior Secondary College and has more than 25 years experience in education. She is currently a member of the Committee of Management of the Gateway Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN), a member of the Victorian Qualifications Authority Credit Matrix Stakeholder Reference Group and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) Development Group.

Ms Linda Heron

Ms Linda Heron has been appointed to the VQA because of her knowledge and experience of industry training and qualifications needs, particularly in the retail sector. Ms Linda Heron is the General Manager, Learning & Development at the Coles Myer Institute and leads the team responsible for the learning needs of 165,000 Coles Myer employees. Her considerable experience in the retail industry spans over 25 years; she is currently a member on the Australian Centre for Retail Studies Advisory Board, and a Director of the National WRAPS Industry Training Council. She also serves as a committee member on the VECCI Education and Training Industry Policy Taskforce, and the VLESC State Training Agency Standing Committee.

About the VQA

The Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA) is the peak accreditation, certification and quality assurance body for post compulsory education.

VQA aims to:

- safeguard the standard of Victorian qualifications
- ensure that qualifications work for Victoria’s economic future
- provide qualifications options that help Victorians achieve their career and personal ambitions.

VQA’s office is situated in the precinct of state government offices near Melbourne’s Treasury Gardens.

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