The Review of Pathways Articulation
through the post-compulsory years of school to further education, training and labour market participation

Margaret Gardner
August 2002
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A review requested by the Queensland Minister for Employment and Training and the Queensland Minister for Education

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The recommendations and supporting discussion in this report are for consideration by government. At the time of release they do not constitute government policy.

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Professor Margaret Gardner
Chair
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Education looms large in the life of our young people and of our society. It can awaken individuals to new possibilities. It shapes their skills and capacities, their ability to continue to learn and adapt. Education can be the foundation of a dynamic and innovative economy. It is vital to a civilised and cultured society.

We demand much of our educational systems. For the future we are demanding more. We aspire to education and training that prepare the overwhelming majority of our young people with the attributes to contribute actively to an internationalised, rapidly changing economy. Moreover, we expect that they will have the education and training to create the knowledge and outcomes on which our future will be based.

These expectations underpin the aspiration encapsulated in *Queensland the Smart State: Education and Training Reforms for the Future* that young people will be engaged in some form of learning. From this learning it is expected young people will gain the capabilities and attributes signalled by the equivalent of 12 years of schooling.

With Year 12 or equivalent, young people are prepared to undertake further education or training or to participate in the types of employment opportunities that increasingly characterise our ‘knowledge’ economy. Meeting this policy aspiration means understanding the types of education and training that will be needed for this age group for the future. It also means taking responsibility for ensuring that as a society we are able to provide that education and training.

This Review will contribute to the reforms necessary to meet these policy objectives by ensuring that there is a range of educational and training opportunities to provide for the capabilities being sought. It is vital that young people are able to access the skills and capacities that come from education and training through schools, vocational education, universities and work experience.

The recommendations are directed to achieving the overriding objective of increasing the successful participation of young people to Year 12 or its equivalent and beyond to further education and training. Underpinning the recommendations is the assumption that to achieve this aim requires redrawing the relationships between the major education and training sectors — ensuring their collaborative engagement in this project. Such collaboration will provide more seamless transitions for young people and make the journeys to the educational goal of a Senior Certificate possible for more young people. In doing so, we make sure that regardless of early life circumstances young people have a greater chance of future well-being.
The Review’s recommendations make these general assumptions:

♦ In order to maximise the likelihood of the majority of 15 to 24 year olds reaching Year 12 or equivalent a diverse and flexible range of educational and training opportunities must be available.

♦ This diversity and flexibility must recognise the differences in the experiences and expectations of young people and provide for a variety of educational and training experiences and contexts.

♦ The education and training provided must respond to the possibilities for local or regional collaboration and innovation in order to minimise the disadvantages of limited populations, geographical isolation and socio-economic disadvantage.

♦ The provision of a range of educational and training opportunities must recognise the importance of specialisation for students and educational and training providers. Neither vocational education nor schooling should be urged along a path that blurs essential distinctions in purpose and culture. There should be an expectation that individual schools or vocational education providers have the possibility of specialisation of offering and mission.

♦ With a flexible and diverse range of educational and training opportunities, the certification that signals completion of Year 12 or its equivalent should provide for the recognition of essential skills and attributes as well as achievements in the range of subjects, courses or work placements undertaken.

♦ While affirming the importance of diversity and specialisation of mission, barriers to students attempting to move between types of education and training should be minimised.

♦ Minimisation of barriers includes facilitating the ability of students to combine vocational education and generalist education where possible; providing clearer and more transparent identification of requirements for entry to various forms of post-school qualifications and movement from one to another; and ensuring a better regime for recognition of outcomes from each form of education and training by providers.

♦ Finally, support for better outcomes from a more flexible and diverse set of education and training options depends upon assisting young people to make informed choices with a clear understanding of the consequences, and supporting students at risk with greater levels of mentoring and guidance.

1.1.1 Establishment of the Review

A Cabinet decision of 3 September 2001 commissioned this external review and determined that the Department of Employment and Training and Education Queensland work collaboratively to support the Chair of the Review. The Minister for Education, the Honourable Anna Bligh, and the Minister for Employment and Training, the Honourable Matt Foley, agreed on the terms of reference in December 2001. These terms of reference focus on the articulation between sectors as a way of improving pathways, rather than on the many other areas of educational and social policy.
1.1.2 Terms of Reference:

The Review examines:

- the current patterns of pathways and destinations of young people within and between the sectors of schools, TAFE, other registered training organisations (RTOs), universities and work
- the current data and systems available to provide information about students’ achievements, pathways and destinations
- the current links between settings and studies offered by the range of providers and the core business of each sector
- current assessment processes; mechanisms for recording students’ experiences and credentials; parity between courses of study; and inter-sectoral recognition and portability of qualifications and experiences
- current funding arrangements and patterns and sources of funding
- the provision of information, advice and support to young people and their families regarding pathways and destinations
- current best practice nationally and internationally
- action arising out of Footprints to the Future, the report from the Prime Minister’s Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce, including the work of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).

The Review provides recommendations to government on:

- the range of studies, modes of program delivery, settings and services that need to be available to young people to support their participation in the post-compulsory years of school and in further education, training and the labour market, with particular reference to those young people who do not complete Year 12 or its equivalent
- the desired linkages and relationships between sectors and between providers, their respective roles and responsibilities, and options for delivering any necessary reforms
- options for the development of a way of recording the educational and training outcomes achieved by students undertaking such work in different sectors and over time to enhance portability of qualifications and skills
- ways to provide robust information about young people’s achievements, pathways and destinations
- mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and providing advice to government on cross-sector articulation, pathways and destinations including youth participation in such mechanisms
- possible reform to administrative structures, functions and processes at the post-compulsory level including consideration of the Victorian model of post-compulsory education
- options for ensuring that students and families are provided with user-friendly and timely information and advice regarding pathways and destinations, including options for young people disconnected or at risk of being disconnected from such pathways
- options for any additional supports needed to assist students and young people to navigate the education, training and labour market system
♦ funding mechanisms that can provide greater efficiencies, flexibility and quality in the delivery of programs and services
♦ methods of facilitating school-based apprenticeships and traineeships
♦ proposals for national reform of the training system to facilitate the other recommendations of this Review.

1.1.3 Steering Committee

A Steering Committee of senior executives from the Departments of the Premier and Cabinet, Treasury, Education Queensland and the Department of Employment and Training provided advice and support to the Chair of the Review. Membership of the Steering Committee comprised:

Professor Margaret Gardner (Chair)  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), The University of Queensland

Mr Darren Byers  
Principal Treasury Analyst, Queensland Treasury

Mr Kevan Goodworth  
Assistant Director-General, Education Services, Education Queensland

Ms Zea Johnston  
A/General Manager, Strategic Directions, Department of Employment and Training

Mr Chris Robinson  
Deputy Director-General, Department of Employment and Training

Mr Brad Swan  
A/Assistant Director-General, Strategic and Executive Services, Education Queensland

Mr Doug Watson  
Director, Social Policy, Policy Division, Department of the Premier and Cabinet

1.1.4 Reference Group

In addition, a Reference Group representing significant stakeholder groups from the education, training and related sectors contributed during consultations and negotiations on key issues. Membership of the Reference Group comprised:

Mrs Lorrie Maher  
Association of Independent Schools of Queensland

Ms Jill Lange-Mohr  
Australian Council for Private Education and Training

Mr Brett Lee  
Australian Industry Group

Ms Jane Pavlovic  
Commerce Queensland

Mr Ken Rogers  
Education Queensland

Mr Paul Dickie  
The Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of Queensland

Ms Patricia Waldby  
Independent Parents' Federation Council of Queensland

Mr Jack Beach  
Isolated Children's Parents' Association

Dr John Dungan  
Office of Higher Education (External Portfolio Relations)
1.1.5 Secretariat

A Secretariat comprising staff from Education Queensland, the Department of Employment and Training and the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority coordinated the consultations and supported the Chair of the Review in preparing this final report.

1.1.6 Consultation process

The consultation process for this Review overlapped with consultation processes underway in the Senior Certificate project conducted in Education Queensland (June 2001 – June 2002). In addition, the release of the Government’s Green Paper *Queensland the Smart State: Education and Training Reforms for the Future* in March 2002 brought with it a wide range of consultations as well as written submissions on the reforms for senior schooling. Both of these projects conducted public meetings across the state.

The Review has wide terms of reference in relation to the senior years of schooling, further education and training. In part these intersect with the areas being considered in relation to the Senior Certificate by John Pitman. They also relate to some of the areas under consideration in the Green Paper.

It was decided to limit the consultations for this Review to the reference group and written submissions. Direct discussions with groups representing the various education and training sectors and youth were also held. This reflected the concentration of this Review on cross-sectoral relationships.

The consultation process included formal and informal meetings with representatives from key stakeholders and interested organisations (see Appendix A).

In addition, written submissions in response to a scoping paper were received from interested parties through peak bodies (see Appendix B).
Chapter 2 Executive summary and recommendations

2.1 Executive summary

For the future, young people need the knowledge and skills to participate actively in a rapidly changing economy. This means young people must build the skills and capacities to meet the demands of rapid change, greater internationalisation and globalisation of markets, and increasing focus on the ‘information’ or ‘knowledge’ economy. As a community we must recognise a responsibility to provide opportunities for young people to achieve these ends.

The Review was asked to examine the journeys and transitions for young people to the senior years of schooling, further education and training and work so that the way could be made smoother and more flexible for them to build the skills and capacities they need to participate in the labour market and the community.

The focus of the Review is on recommendations that would improve cross-sectoral linkages and collaboration, since from these will come smoother and more flexible transitions and a better educational experience for young people.

The Review found that in the past few decades diversity and choice in education for young people have increased markedly. There is much greater subject diversity and choice available in the senior years of schooling, particularly since the introduction of vocational education. Vocational education has diversified and new apprenticeships and traineeships have become available to a wider group, adding to new workplace-focused training. Higher education has expanded its reach.

With increased diversity has come more choice and each sector has responded to this. The negative consequences of choices are much less than previously — although this is not the perception of many of those faced with increasing diversity. Choice of subject in school matters less to entry to higher education. Points of entry to higher education are more numerous and less rigidly dependent on initial tertiary entrance score. Opportunities to undertake vocational education and new apprenticeships and traineeships are open to a wider group of people and not constrained by age limits as they once were. There are many more portals and paths through which different types of education may be accessed.

Despite increasing choice and multiple pathways, young people are not always aware of the possibilities. Moreover such diversity, when combined with a rapidly changing economy and labour market, makes the need for effective guidance much greater.

These have been important changes, but they bring with them three issues:

- With greater choice and accessibility of education in the senior years of school and beyond, the negative consequences of leaving school early and not undertaking further study have become more marked and require greater attention.
- Access to the diversity of educational training experiences for all young people irrespective of circumstance becomes significant, and so attention needs to turn to the flexibility of modes and pace of delivery in order to allow more people to gain from the diversity of options available.
- Greater choice within sectors brings complexity; access to information and guidance becomes more important; and transparency and clarity of arrangements for transition between sectors need to be greater.
Too many young people leave school early and do not find full-time work or undertake further study to increase their chances of employment. In 2000, 16,400 young people in Queensland left school before Year 12 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6227.0, 2001) and in 2001, 29 per cent of them were unemployed and 76 per cent were not in further education or employment. Retention and outcomes from Year 12 tend to be worse in a number of rural areas, with retention rates below 50 per cent in some cases. In Queensland, compared to Australia, a higher proportion of 15 to 24 year olds without a post-school qualification are neither working nor studying (Norton, 2002).

There is reason to be concerned that there are young people staying to Year 12 at school who may not be gaining outcomes that will prepare them for effective entry to work or further study. In 2001, 9.5 per cent of those who completed Year 12 had neither an Overall Position (OP) nor a Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificate. Participation in vocational education is overwhelmingly concentrated at Certificate II and Certificate III levels. To build a more highly skilled workforce will need greater numbers engaged in training above Certificate III level.

There are barriers to collaboration between schools and vocational education providers in the provision of vocational education to school students, and therefore it is difficult to ensure more effective provision of quality vocational education to students in the senior years of schooling.

There are barriers to effective transition from school based vocational education and training to vocational education with full recognition of the work undertaken in schools. There is a lack of transparency and clarity in arrangements for articulation and credit transfer from vocational education and training to higher education; and no clear understandings of how incomplete university qualifications will be recognised in vocational education and training. Differences in the approaches of the three education sectors make transition between them — with effective recognition of the prior knowledge and skills gained — complex, opaque and inconsistent. All these barriers make transitions for young people more difficult and time consuming.

Navigating our complex system is difficult. It requires high quality, accessible information and informed guidance systems. It is important also that young people develop the skills to plan for their careers and to know where and how to access assistance over their lifetime as their circumstances and context change. All of these objectives are compromised by the consequences of treating guidance as an ancillary service confined by organisational and sector boundaries rather than as integral to building effective educational and training experiences and employment outcomes.

The recommendations for change are focused primarily, although not exclusively, on cross-sectoral solutions. This in part recognises that the problems being addressed require more effective collaboration between sectors.

Underpinning the recommendations are two assumptions that seek to build or use cross-sectoral links to solve issues of transition:
The key to effective collaboration and the development of networks between sectors is recognition of the different missions and specialisations within each educational sector and in community organisations. Strong networks are built where each organisation brings its strength to the table and collaborates in the development of joint solutions. When sectors are encouraged to blur their missions, the incentive for collaboration and cooperation decreases.

The most effective networks will be built at the local level. They are able to follow in detail the issues affecting young people. They can see the operation of transition or cooperation between sectors in their area. They are more able to craft solutions that will meet and use local circumstance effectively. Local networks must be empowered, however, by being given clear roles and central support for those roles.

Based on these assumptions, the recommendations focus on the following areas:

- the need for greater flexibility in provision within schools and between schools and other providers to address retention and outcomes to Year 12 including:
  - targeted attention to areas of low retention, and partnerships to support transference of good practice in these areas between schools
  - particular changes allowing students at risk to engage through more part-time provision or across community and schooling or vocational education sectors
  - greater concentration on ensuring that students complete Year 12 or its equivalent successfully, particularly through greater focus on completion of vocational education qualifications
- the need for a mechanism to maintain a central record of a student’s achievement across schools and vocational education and training in the first instance (and universities where it is relevant) to allow a student to identify outcomes that can be used for entry to further education or employment¹
- the need for a new model for determining the provision of vocational education and training for young people in senior years of school, to encourage more equitable and effective quality access
- the need for attention at state level to cross-sectoral qualification linkages through building minimum understandings about recognition and credit transfer at the field of study level
- the need to address more directly access to accurate and informed advice about options and to provide students with the means to do so; and the need for greater levels of mentoring and other support for young people ‘at risk’
- support for development and maintenance of local networks — not only to be a focus for collaboration but also to develop innovative cross-sectoral solutions.

¹ This recommendation is a necessary support for the implementation of changes to the Senior Certificate: A New Deal proposed in Pitman and Herschell (2002).
2.2 Recommendations

2.2.1 Patterns of education — journeys and consequences

(1) That there be support from all sectors of schooling and vocational education and training for increased flexibility and diversity in the provision of education and training targeted at young people in the 15 to 24 year age group in order to meet the needs of this increasingly diverse group of students.

(2) That there be recognition of the need for schools, in particular, to develop more flexible types of provision and settings for students of 15 years and beyond. This could be achieved across the schooling systems in the state, either through explicit development of senior colleges in some locations or greater flexibility in provision within a school for students in the senior years. Flexibility within a school could include greater flexibility in timetabling, in pace or in the modes through which curriculum is delivered.

(3) That in order to ensure more effective outreach and inclusion of those students in the 15 to 24 year age group who are at risk of not continuing to participate in education or training, there be support for greater experimentation with other types of education provision or settings inside schools or vocational education and training providers and/or in the community, that might more readily accommodate more intermittent or part-time modes of education.

(4) That there be strong support and funding for delivery of curricula that concentrates on work readiness or work education skills to be offered in schools or through vocational education and training providers. This curricula should be seen as a foundation for further vocational education.

(5) That the method of offering vocational education and training in Queensland schools be re-examined, with particular attention to the quality of the vocational education provided where it is embedded in subjects, in comparison to other vocational education and training. In particular there should be a stronger focus on provision of work placement for students in such programs.

(6) That in order to recognise the changes in the school curriculum including the greater diversity of subjects undertaken in the senior years, and in particular university subjects and completed vocational education and training certificates, the tertiary entrance system be the subject of a future investigation.

(7) That in the design and delivery of vocational education and training in schools, greater emphasis be placed on encouraging students to complete a certificate.

(8) That a mechanism be developed, involving a unique student identifier, that allows a central record of a student’s achievements to be maintained. The unique student identifier will need to be used in schools and vocational education and training providers (both public and private) for students between the ages of 15 and 19. Data on an individual student will need to be able to be maintained for a long period in order to provide a mechanism for accumulating and testifying to a student’s achievements.
(9) That in providing for more flexible and diverse provision for young people, it be recognised that changes to provision within sectors will not be the full answer; as important for transition is greater collaboration between the sectors. This collaboration is best built by mutual recognition of the distinctive missions and approaches of each sector.

### 2.2.2 Access and local flexibility

(10) That for remote areas, there be specific attention to enhancing particular subject areas important for students aiming to complete Year 12, through on-line provision of content and interactive sessions with experienced staff.

(11) That there be specific provision to encourage collaboration between schools, vocational education and training and higher education in developing e-learning or on-line education projects that will assist students in remote areas to build transitions to further education.

(12) That in recognition of the difficulty of providing vocational education and training for students in remote areas, consideration be given to funding teams of vocational education experts for particular regions to provide expertise in running pre-vocational and vocational education and training programs for students in schools in these areas. These teams would provide expertise in developing vocational education programs and involvement through team-based assessment of competencies.

(13) That consideration be given to an ‘away from base’ support for financially disadvantaged students who need to remain away from home for limited periods to complete vocational education and training or related concentrated educational experience.

(14) That those regions and areas with low levels of retention to Year 12 be the subject of targeted programs to develop new local approaches to provision of education for the senior years (including the initiatives mentioned above).

(15) That in those areas with low retention rates, there be a targeted initiative with local communities to address work education and readiness with Indigenous students, focusing on enhancing literacy and numeracy.

(16) That there be a pilot project to investigate partnering non-state and state schools with Indigenous students in strategies to improve retention rates.

(17) That in the development of local models for improving collaboration between sectors, there be provision for ‘transition’ brokers in regions with large Indigenous populations to work with local Indigenous students and communities to facilitate transition to work or further education.

(18) That there be support for local innovation in providing greater diversity in modes of provision in education and training for 15 to 24 year olds.
(19) That local or regional networks be developed to encourage cross-sectoral, industry and community involvement in improving outcomes for 15 to 24 year olds. These networks could assist in identifying areas for innovation and for greater cooperation or cross-sectoral planning and provision. They should be broadly based and include a variety of representatives from groups such as schools, vocational education and training providers, employers, local government, universities and the community.

2.2.3 Connecting the sectors

(20) That to improve entry possibilities, performance-level assessments be implemented for diploma-level programs in vocational education and training.

(21) That to improve the transparency of credit transfer arrangements between vocational education and training providers and universities, representatives of both sectors meet in field of study groups to develop guidelines about minimum levels of credit to be provided to students; the oversight and development of this process to be facilitated by a committee constituted to represent the sectors but with an independent chair.

(22) That the above field of study groups also consider the guidelines for credit from complete and incomplete university programs to vocational education programs.

(23) That there be a new model for determining the provision of vocational education and training for 15 to 17 year olds across the school and vocational education and training sectors, beginning with the state school and TAFE systems.

   a. That through discussion and representation from the local networks (referred to in recommendation 19 above) a desired profile in a region (or cluster) for delivery of vocational education and training for 15 to 17 year olds, including those in the senior years, be identified.

   b. That this profile for regions for the provision of vocational education and training for those students who have not yet gained Year 12 or equivalent be determined to allow these young people to access vocational education in a school or TAFE or in both settings.

   c. That the desired or planned profile for a region or cluster be examined in terms of actual enrolments and funding, adjusted over time to reflect any major changes.

(24) That there be cross-sectoral forward planning at state level in relation to the provision of expensive infrastructure for schools, TAFE and for universities (where this relates to capital development pool funds).

2.2.4 Guidance in a complex field

(25) That a careers curriculum be implemented in secondary school, to provide students with the skills to improve their ability to gather information and make informed choices about future directions; and that within this curriculum there be provision for development of a student career plan or portfolio.
(26) That there be a central independent authority to act as a broker bringing information together on further education and training options and as a focus for networking and information sharing for careers advisers.

(27) That within the counselling and guidance services provided, there be a focus on youth ‘at risk’ that ensures a higher level of individual support and mentoring in selecting options for final years of school or further education and training.
Chapter 3 Patterns of education and training

3.1 Introduction

There has been significant change in schooling and further education and training in the past two decades. Higher proportions of young people remain at school until Year 12. Vocational education and training plays a more important part in the education of young people, in part because of the developments in this area within secondary schooling and also because of the broader reach of new apprenticeships and traineeships. University enrolments have increased significantly, and with this a higher proportion of young people have had access to a university education.

These changes have taken Queensland some distance down the educational path to which it is committed. However while a number of gains and major changes have been made, the next steps to ensure that the majority of young people gain the knowledge and skills to be part of increasingly complex national and international economies may be harder to accomplish.

The patterns of education and training identified in this and the following chapter attempt to show the areas needing attention. They also highlight the options currently available, and among the paths available to young people those well-travelled and those not.

This chapter examines:

♦ patterns of participation by young people in education, training and employment
♦ the transitions to senior schooling and on to further education and employment
♦ the barriers and other issues that arise in transition to senior schooling and from schooling to vocational education and training or higher education or employment.

3.2 From 15 to 24 years

In 2000 in Queensland there were 517,407 people between the ages of 15 and 24, some 14.5 per cent of the total Queensland population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 3311.3, 2000a). Approximately 50 per cent of those young people were engaged in education. Close to 27 per cent were attending school and 23.8 per cent were at tertiary institutions, including universities, technical and further education institutes and other education institutions (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6272.0, 1999b) (see Figure 1). This is a higher proportion of young people in the final years of schooling and further education than a decade ago.
Almost half (49.5 per cent) of those in education were also employed, the majority in part-time employment. Over the past decade in Australia, the proportion of full-time students working part-time has increased from around a third to around 42 per cent and the overwhelming majority of this group are under 25 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book, 2002b). In Queensland in 2001 over 40 per cent of full-time students between the ages of 15 and 19 were in part-time employment and almost 77 per cent of part-time students in this age group were also in full-time employment (unpublished Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6227.0, 2001a).

Seventy-four per cent of 15 to 24 year olds in Queensland were in the labour force (see Figure 1). Of the total population of 15–24 year olds, 11 per cent were unemployed. This represents an unemployment rate for this group of 14 per cent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6201.3, 1999a). At over 17 per cent, the unemployment rate of 15 to 19 year olds was higher than that for 20 to 24 year olds, reflecting the worse employment outcomes for those who do not have Year 12 or post-school qualifications.

Figure 1 Participation in education and employment, 15 to 24 year olds, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>510 900</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LABOUR MARKET STATUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN THE LABOUR FORCE</td>
<td>370 600 (74.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYED</td>
<td>317 100 (63.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEMPLOYED</td>
<td>53 500 (10.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE</td>
<td>140 300 (27.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTENDING EDUCATION</td>
<td>251 700 (50.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>132 800 (26.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERTIARY</td>
<td>118 800 (23.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>34 200 (6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITIES</td>
<td>74 200 (14.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>10 400 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT</td>
<td>86 500 (17.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT IN EDUCATION</td>
<td>248 400 (49.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Totals do not add to population number due to ABS survey scope differences.
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6272.0, 1999b; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6201.3, 1999
The brief picture outlined above shows a relatively high proportion of young people engaged in education or employment, and the extent to which a significant number are engaged in both. The group of concern is those engaged in neither education nor employment.

As Figure 2 demonstrates, the outcomes for early school leavers are considerably worse than for those who complete Year 12. While Queensland’s apparent retention rate to Year 12 has improved (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4221.0, 2000b) there is still a sizeable group of early school leavers. In 2000 the total number of Queensland school leavers was 58 100. Twenty-eight per cent, or 16 400, of these were early school leavers.

Around 76 per cent of the early school leaver group were not in education or training and about 29 per cent were unemployed. The major outcomes for those with and without Year 12 are illustrated below (Figure 2).

![Figure 2 Status of year 2000 school leavers in May 2001](image)

Figure 2 illustrates the immediate effects of early school leaving, the differences being the small number accessing education or training and the high proportion unemployed. Both immediate outcomes are consistent with the results that are associated with early school leaving over a longer period.

Longitudinal research indicates that those who do not complete school and do not undertake further study are more likely to face unemployment than others (Lamb, Dwyer and Wyn, 2000). Moreover those who do not complete school and do not gain full-time employment or undertake further study soon after leaving school face poor long-term outcomes, including greater likelihood of unemployment or insecure employment over a longer period (Lamb and McKenzie, 2001).
This is not to suggest that those who complete Year 12 are in some way immune to poor employment outcomes, since the research indicates that poor transition to full-time work or study on leaving school is likely to produce insecure employment for all such young people. However it is important to highlight the particular vulnerability of those who do not complete school and do not undertake further education or training.

In summary:

- Over 50 per cent of 15–24 year olds in Queensland are engaged in education, over 62 per cent are employed and around 11 per cent are unemployed.
- Over half of those in education are in school, and the rest are in tertiary institutions such as universities and technical and further education institutes.
- Between 50 000 and 60 000 young people leave school each year and 28 per cent of these leave without completing Year 12.
- About 29 per cent of the early school leavers are unemployed and around 76 per cent are not in further education and training.

The picture outlined above indicates the need to improve the proportion of young people who gain Year 12 or its equivalent. However it is also important to place the outcomes for young people in Queensland in a national and international context to gauge the appropriate commitment necessary to produce better outcomes.

As indicated above, Queensland has made dramatic strides in increasing the number of young people in education and training. Not only is apparent retention to Year 12 higher than a decade ago and close to the Australian average, but also participation in higher education has increased dramatically from a participation rate of 2.9 to 3.9 in 2000 — equivalent to the Australian average participation rate (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2002a). As Table 1 indicates, Queensland has a slightly lower proportion of people in TAFE and other institutions than the Australian average, with greater representation than Victoria and less than New South Wales.

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1 The apparent retention rate for Queensland is equivalent to the Australian average. If differing lengths of schooling and other factors not controlled for in national statistics are taken into account, Queensland retention is below the Australian average.

2 The data cited cover all domestic higher education students 15 years and over (although about 75 per cent of such students are between 15 and 24 years). The participation rate is per 100 of population.
Table 1 Percentage of persons enrolled by type of educational institution attended, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of educational institution attended</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Queensland</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6227.0, 2001a

These outcomes in participation in education and training represent significant improvement in the past decade. The legacy of past levels of participation in education and training remain however, and are seen in the lower proportion of Queenslanders aged 15 to 64 who have an advanced diploma or diploma (5.9 per cent) or a bachelor’s degree qualification (10.7 per cent) compared with the rest of Australia (6.7 and 12.5 per cent respectively) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6227.0, 2001a). The outcomes vary by age group. The proportion of persons in Queensland aged 15—24 with a post-school qualification exceeds the Australian average; lower levels of educational attainment are associated with those 25 years to 54 years old (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6227.0, 2001a).

While overall Queensland’s performance compared with the Australian average has improved, there are some groups where this is not true. There is a higher proportion of 15 to 24 year olds without a post-school qualification who are neither working nor studying, and the difference is most marked for females. About 16 per cent of 20 to 24 year old females in Queensland are in this situation, compared with about 11 per cent in the rest of Australia (Norton, 2002).

Making international comparisons is complex, given differences between systems and in data collection. However Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) comparisons suggest that Australia has a higher proportion of its population than many other OECD countries with university level qualifications (18 per cent) and a higher proportion who have not completed secondary education (43 per cent) (O’Reilly, 2002). Countries such as the USA, Germany and Canada have from 13 to 21 per cent of their population who have not completed secondary schooling. In general, national and international data suggest that the areas for attention are those young people who do not complete school, and how to ensure that they gain access to appropriate further education and training.
In summary:

- In Queensland, apparent retention to Year 12 and the proportion of people aged 15 to 24 with post-school qualifications have improved.
- Notwithstanding comparisons within Australia, in general — a higher proportion of the Australian population has not completed secondary school than in many other nations such as Germany, the USA and Canada.
- There is a higher proportion of 15 to 24 year olds in Queensland than in the rest of Australia without a post-school qualification who are neither working nor studying.

3.3 Transitions

The major issues raised above were how to improve the outcomes for those who leave school early, and how to ensure that a higher proportion of young people gain the equivalent of Year 12 and are engaged in further study or work. These outcomes are vital to allowing people in Queensland to participate fully and actively in an increasingly globalised and knowledge-focused society.

The key to understanding both the reasons for the patterns described above and the possible options available to young people is understanding the transition points in their negotiation of school, further education and training, and work.

Students move across the various stages of compulsory schooling and into post-secondary education in a series of transitions that are not necessarily a set of linear steps from school to work. The initial transition from school to further education, training or employment is becoming more complex and multi-dimensional (Wyn, 2000). Schooling and training systems are accommodating the increasing demands of people to re-enter training or move between schooling, vocational education, work and higher education in various non-linear pathways.

Often further education and training are undertaken on a part-time or full-time basis in conjunction with work. In Australia in 2000 approximately 42 per cent of school students and 45 per cent of full-time higher education students also worked part-time and 43 per cent of TAFE students worked full-time (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book, 2002b). Various factors ranging from the practical applicability of vocational education and training qualifications to the introduction of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) in 1989 have been suggested as possible triggers for the trend for students to engage in concurrent study and work. Combining education and work might ease the transitions for young people. Questions remain, nevertheless, about whether the changes that have contributed to multiple and non-linear paths for young people are sufficient or sufficiently accessible.
3.3.1 Transition to Year 12

There are two significant questions to be addressed about retention of students to Year 12.

♦ What are we seeking to achieve by increasing the proportion of students who remain at school?
♦ If our objective is clear, what will make it possible?

The answer to the first question is that preparation for the workforce in this century requires a high level of skills and competencies, particularly those that will contribute to an increasingly services-oriented knowledge or information economy. The outcomes from education need to prepare people with the skills and flexibility to undertake further education and training to meet new demands over their lifetime. These outcomes are not linked necessarily to a specified number of years at school but reflect the complexity of knowledge, skills and attributes that are needed to provide a foundation for effective participation in the economy. It is important therefore that what is offered to students enables them to achieve these outcomes. This will mean ensuring a foundation for young people to engage in lifelong learning.

One way of attaining the objective outlined above has been to broaden the school curriculum, specifically into vocational education and training. By providing a broader set of educational curricula, it is expected that the diversity in student learning styles and interests will be given better effect and that a larger number of students will remain in school. A number of changes to school curricula in the past few years have attempted to satisfy this need for school to provide for a broader range of pathways and outcomes for those who remain to Year 12.

Curriculum diversity and vocational education in schools

Changes in senior schooling over the past decade have produced increased diversity in the subjects available to students in school. Queensland provides a very broad array of choices to Year 11 and 12 students including up to 60 Board subjects[^3][^4], approximately 20 Study Area Specifications (SAS)[^5], and a range of vocational certificate programs. This choice has allowed senior students to undertake subjects that might be considered 'academic' in their orientation, and as well as, or instead of these, to undertake vocationally oriented subjects.

[^3]: The term 'Category A subjects' has replaced that of Board subjects and the term 'Category B subjects' has replaced that of Board-registered subjects (the individual strands of Study Area Specifications) as from 1 July 2002.
[^4]: A Board subject was a subject for which the course of study is based on a syllabus that has been approved and issued by the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, a work program is subject to the accreditation procedures of the Board, and assessment of student achievement is subject to the full moderation procedures of the Board.
[^5]: Study Area Specifications (SASs) were framework courses that provided details of courses of study in Board-registered subjects. SASs had substantial components of vocational education or practical elements.
The growth of vocational education in senior schooling has been a major change and one that appears to have helped to increase the retention of students to Year 12. All state high schools with Years 11 and 12 students and most non-government schools with Years 11 and 12 students are registered training organisations (RTOs) for the delivery of at least some vocational education and training predominantly up to and including Certificate Level II.

Queensland student involvement in vocational education and training has been substantial and Queensland has a high share of the total enrolments in vocational education in schools in Australia (see Table 2). In 2001, 60.8 per cent of students in Years 11 and 12 in state schools were enrolled in vocational education and training programs. As Table 2 also indicates a high proportion of secondary schools in Queensland offer vocational education programs, and this is true across state, Catholic and independent systems (see Appendix C).

Table 2  Number of student enrolments and number of schools with vocational education and training programs, 1997 and 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>No. of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>42 222</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>10 151</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>31 182</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST</td>
<td>94 066</td>
<td>1 441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: In NSW (unlike Qld) school vocational education and training programs are in some cases delivered through TAFE. Students in TAFE - delivered courses are drawn from all school sectors. The TAFE - delivered total in NSW in 2001 includes 12 833 government students, 1 473 Catholic sector students and 814 independent sector students. This is because a number of students complete Year 12 in TAFE rather than in schools.

Source: as reported by the MCEETYA (2002) Transition from Schools Taskforce, unpublished data supplied by the Queensland Studies Authority.

During consultations for this Review various groups, including young people, indicated that part of the attraction of vocational education programs was not just the content but also the way this education was presented. In particular, the benefits related to a feeling of greater independence, greater coherence and being treated in a more respected and ‘adult’ way.

In addition to the choices available within schools, students are able to access courses from other providers, such as a TAFE institute or a university or the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB), or enter into school-based apprenticeship or traineeship arrangements to access nationally recognised training in association with paid work.

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*Some schools offer Certificate III and Certificate IV.*
Queensland offers ‘the majority of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in Australia’ (Robinson and Misko, 2001, p. 5) — over 50 per cent of the total. Table 3 demonstrates the rapid growth in the numbers of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland, the most spectacular growth being in trainee numbers.

Table 3 School-based apprenticeships and traineeships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>97–98</th>
<th>98–99</th>
<th>99–00</th>
<th>00–01</th>
<th>01–02 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainees</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>1 197</td>
<td>2 066</td>
<td>3 014</td>
<td>3 693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>1 317</td>
<td>2 253</td>
<td>3 364</td>
<td>4 307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers up to May 02
Source: Department of Employment and Training, DELTA Database (2002)

While based in schools, this training is usually delivered by a TAFE or private RTO. Unlike some of the other vocational education offered in schools, these programs involve mandatory periods of on-the-job training. Students engaged in school-based apprenticeships or traineeships generally drop one subject; however, it should be noted that in 2001, approximately 30 per cent of these school-based apprentices or trainees were OP eligible, achieving in five Board subjects.

The final area of vocational education in schools is ‘stand-alone’ vocational education and training. Some schools undertake stand-alone (non-embedded) vocational education and training, which allows them to deliver vocational education and training qualifications not currently on offer through Board subjects, for example Certificate II in Automotive (Mechanical – Vehicle Servicing AUR21799) where there is no Board subject. These certificates can be offered by the school as the RTO or in partnership with a TAFE or private provider. The advantage of stand-alone vocational education and training is that schools have the flexibility to offer whatever vocational education and training certificates or modules suit the student or local community needs. Many teachers and students also appreciate dealing with one type of assessment only, that is, competency-based assessment. A perceived disadvantage is that students are not awarded a level of achievement on exiting Year 12 as they are with embedded vocational education and training. The issue of selection ranks and their calculation is taken up in section 3.3.2.

Also popular are the Work Education Certificates developed by the three schooling sectors in response to the need to address students’ employability and work-readiness skills. These certificates provide a useful foundation for further education, including industry-specific vocational education. They provide, where necessary, essential literacy and numeracy skills, as well as a range of skills that are important if students are to proceed effectively to employment or in to develop specific skills. While

Courses in work education include competencies related to personal care planning, job acquisition, nurturing self-esteem and self-image, occupational health and safety, enterprise training and industrial relations.

7 A number of schools are accessing one of the Queensland - developed nationally accredited Work Education Certificates in Year 10.
access to vocational education and training in schools has grown substantially, there are students who need further preparation in foundation skills in order to take advantage of new opportunities. These certificates perform part of that function. The Youth Access Program in vocational education and training has a similar curriculum and role for students who have not completed Year 12.

In consultations a number of people expressed concern about students who might wish to participate in some form of vocational education at school but were unable to do so due to a shortage of places in the programs offered or a lack of preparation, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

It is important that this work education curriculum be developed further and made available through schools and other providers to further enhance the options for young people and to ensure that a foundation is provided for further education and work. Such curricula are separate and in addition to the incorporation of general employability skills in the curriculum (as suggested by Pitman and Herschell, 2002). While developing employability skills generally over time and through other subjects is important, for some students there will be a demand and a need for specific and further attention to work education. Any curricula for this purpose should be constructed, as are the Work Education Certificates at present, to lead to a clear qualification outcome.

**Issues for vocational education and training diversity**

Broader choice is important in encouraging students to remain at school to Year 12. Choice must be balanced however with concern about the outcomes for students. Offering vocational education and training in schools has been an important initiative in terms of retaining a greater proportion of students to Year 12. There are particular issues in terms of articulation from school vocational education to the vocational education and training sector.

Principally, the issues arise from concerns from employers and others about the quality of vocational education offered in schools. Vocational education and training, unlike education in schools, operates in a more clearly national context. There are Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Standards for being an RTO. There are National Training Packages that set vocational education curricula. Finally vocational education and training carries with it, through national standards, expectations about on-the-job training and work placement.

As indicated above, a large number of schools are RTOs so that they can offer vocational education subjects. In order to comply with the new AQTF standards, schools face new demands that they must meet to continue to provide what is, from their perspective, only one part of their full subject offering. The requirements for accredited vocational education and training teachers, particularly the industry currency requirements, can be difficult for schools to resource.
Also, AQTF standards in relation to assessment of vocational education subjects place emphasis on work experience and a range of workplace performance. Structured workplace learning is recommended but not mandated for most of the Board subjects with embedded vocational education and training in schools. Employers and industry personnel have perceived the limited nature of student work placements linked to embedded vocational education and training as diminishing the rigour of these courses.

The balance between providing a subject with vocational education competencies embedded to allow the subject to count towards tertiary entrance, on the one hand, and providing vocational education with the range of experiences necessary to maintain its integrity, on the other, needs to be re-evaluated in Queensland. Both NSW and Victoria, in different ways, provide for a greater emphasis on work placement and experience than the current model in Queensland.

These issues raise questions about the way the current model of embedded vocational education and training in schools may need to be modified in order to allow the flexibility to meet national standards and ensure quality outcomes for students. The level of demand placed on schools in order to comply with national standards also raises questions to be discussed in Chapter 5 about the extent to which schools should be engaged in vocational education without being able to cooperate more effectively with vocational education and training providers.

More generally, Smith et al. (1999) question whether the great diversity in the curriculum is serving some students well in terms of outcomes:

> The systematic provision of choice can easily become incoherence at the school level for certain groups of students, notably those whose courses add neither skill nor knowledge at appropriate levels (Smith et al., p. 8).

They note that over the years 1992 to 1998 some 47,000 unique patterns of Board subject combinations were taken by students and in 1999, 39 per cent of students took a unique combination of subjects (Smith et al., 1999, p. 6). The effect of this in terms of pathways from schooling is taken up below.

**Transition decisions to Year 12**

Generally speaking the transition from Year 10 into Year 11 within a secondary school is relatively smooth. Clearly not every subject, SAS or vocational education and training program is available at every school since availability depends on location, school size, access to physical resources and level of student interest in the subject areas. The major decision for Year 10 students moving to Year 11 studies relates to subject selection, and one part of this selection that affects future pathways is the effect of this choice on their eligibility for tertiary entrance after completion of Year 12.

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8 In only two of the Board - embedded courses, Early Childhood Practices and Furnishing, industry placement is mandated and therefore undertaken in line with the Training and Employment Act (2000a).
Subject selection at this point will affect the student’s eligibility for an OP\(^9\) and for many this OP forms the basis for transition from school to further education, and particularly to university study. To achieve an OP a student must include at least three Board subjects for all four semesters of senior schooling.

Year 11 can be a critical year for many students, particularly those who are dissatisfied with their achievements in their program of study. These students often make changes to their program so that they can achieve a satisfactory outcome in a Senior Certificate, since greater emphasis is placed on Year 12 results. Some students drop their sixth and least successful Board subject in Year 12 to focus on their ‘best five’\(^{10}\) subjects, thus relieving some of this pressure to achieve. Some students leave school at this point. In fact data for 2000 to 2001 indicate that 11.5 per cent of students (close to 5000) left school between March 2000 and December 2001 for a variety of reasons, one being ‘pressure to achieve’ (Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (QBSSSS), 2002)\(^{11}\).

If students leave school at this point, there are other avenues through which they may complete Year 12. Centres for Continuing Secondary Education (CCSE) provide alternative opportunities for senior secondary subjects and final external examinations. There is anecdotal evidence that financial considerations and travel commitments to procure access to these alternative educational settings may be a barrier for some students.

Students may also enrol at a small number of vocational education and training institutes (such as Moreton Institute of TAFE) to complete Year 12. They can also enrol in vocational education programs at a TAFE or private provider to gain qualifications equivalent to Year 12. It is not clear how important these avenues are to students who choose to leave school before Year 12.

Australian research (cited in Smith et al., 1999) indicates that many students (over 40 per cent) leave because they have or are seeking a job. Over a third cite school-related reasons for leaving, such as lack of motivation, interest or achievement. It is not clear to what extent other educational settings such as those mentioned above meet the difficulties cited by these students.

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\(^{9}\) An OP indicates a student’s rank order position based on overall achievement in Board subjects. To be eligible for an OP a student must sit for the Queensland Core Skills Test and have studied a minimum of 20 semesters of Board subjects, including at least three of these subjects for all four semesters (TEPA, 2002, p. 2).

\(^{10}\) Students who are not eligible for an OP can still gain a place in some tertiary courses on the basis of their achievements in their best five subjects reported on the Senior Certificate (provided that they have studied any prerequisite Board subjects and achieved the level specified).

\(^{11}\) The former QBSSSS is as from 1 July 2002 part of the Queensland Studies Authority.
The group of students who leave at Year 11, some 5000 in 2000, make up a portion of early school leavers who should be targeted for greater intervention and research. It is likely that these students might benefit not so much from greater choice in subject areas as from greater flexibility in provision of schooling. Opportunities to continue part time, for example, might be important in retaining such students.

It is clear from the discussion of schooling that there is considerable diversity in subject offering. However the lesson from the explosion in vocational education and training in senior schools is not just in the provision of new content areas with an explicit link to work. The different educational approach taken in vocational education and training subjects was important to the interest and motivation of students.

Investigating the way the vocational education curriculum is organised and presented in schools to translate some of this approach to the general curriculum may contribute to ideas for flexibility. One aspect that some students highlighted was being in a separate group with a teacher coordinator, and another was the more independent and flexible form in which this learning was presented. In order to improve retention generally, more attention needs to be paid to flexibility in the way senior schooling is offered. Greater flexibility in pace and modes of offering is necessary to encourage students to complete to Year 12.

These changes are important for the general student population in the final years of schooling and would ease the transition to higher education that is discussed in a later section. However those students who leave school early are likely to need the possibility of other settings beyond even these broad changes. To retain students who are seen to be at risk or to encourage them to return to school will need settings that provide for more part-time study and an easier combination of work and study than is currently the case. There should be experimentation to provide such settings in schools.
In summary:

- Queensland provides a very broad array of subject choices for students in Years 11 and 12.
- There is substantial and growing provision of vocational education and training in schools, including both Board and other subjects, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships and other vocational education programs. In 2001, 60.8 per cent of students in Years 11 and 12 in state schools were enrolled in vocational education subjects.
- Vocational education and training in schools provides a valuable set of experiences for students, including specific vocational skills, work readiness skills, work experience in many cases and an ‘adult’ and independent learning environment.
- One initiative across the three schooling sectors, Work Education Certificates, provide a valuable addition to the more specific vocational education and training programs and subjects.
- In order to facilitate sustained and successful provision of vocational education and training through schools, the demands on schools that flow from national standards and from employer expectations must be addressed.
- Among the most important issues is the role of workplace learning and placement in the vocational education experience in schools. Queensland currently does not have the same emphasis on workplace experience in its vocational education and training subjects as some other states, and yet this experience is seen as crucial to the integrity of vocational learning by employers and vocational education and training providers.
- From 2000 to 2001, around 5000 students left school at Year 11 (forming part of the early school leaver group of some 16 400). This set of students might benefit from more targeted research and intervention, such as providing more flexible settings in which to complete Year 12.
Recommendations

(1) That there be support from all sectors of schooling and vocational education and training for increased flexibility and diversity in the provision of education and training targeted at young people in the 15 to 24 year age group in order to meet the needs of this increasingly diverse group of students.

(2) That there be recognition of the need for schools, in particular, to develop more flexible types of provision and settings for students of 15 years and beyond. This could be achieved across the schooling systems in the state, either through explicit development of senior colleges in some locations or greater flexibility in provision within a school for students in the senior years. Flexibility within a school could include greater flexibility in timetabling, in pace or in the modes through which curriculum is delivered.

(3) That in order to ensure more effective outreach and inclusion of those students in the 15 to 24 year age group who are at risk of not continuing to participate in education or training, there be support for greater experimentation with other types of education provision or settings inside schools or vocational education and training providers and/or in the community, that might more readily accommodate more intermittent or part-time modes of education.

(4) That there be strong support and funding for delivery of curricula that concentrates on work readiness or work education skills to be offered in schools or through vocational education and training providers. This curricula should be seen as a foundation for further vocational education.

(5) That the method of offering vocational education and training in Queensland schools be re-examined, with particular attention to the quality of the vocational education provided where it is embedded in subjects, in comparison to other vocational education and training. In particular there should be a stronger focus on provision of work placement for students in such programs.

3.3.2 Year 12 (or its equivalent)

For those students who remain until Year 12, the key transition point relates to their outcomes from those final years. If students complete school at Year 12 they may move to employment or to further education or to a combination of both. Indeed as section 3.2 demonstrated, the majority of those who move to further education also work either part-time or full-time.
If students wish to enter tertiary study direct from school in fields of study or institutions where there is significant competition for entry, they need a tertiary entrance rank in relation to the total school leaver population. A rank is provided on the basis of a student’s best 20 semester units of Board and Board-registered subjects and vocational education and training units of competencies recorded on the Senior Certificate and, if available, the results of the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) test.

Comparisons of students in terms of their overall achievement in senior studies or field positioning are calculated for OP-eligible students only (TEPA, 2002). As consultations confirmed, a very high degree of attention in schools and in the community generally is focused on the attainment of an OP. Yet as Table 4 demonstrates, despite the increasing numbers of students proceeding to further education, the proportion of students choosing to be OP-eligible has been decreasing slightly every year since 1997 (TEPA, 2002). This appears to be related to the increasing availability of vocational education and training in senior school and an increase in the pathways to further education available without the requirement of an OP for entry.

### Table 4 Trends in OP eligibility and Queensland Core Skills test participation between 1996 and 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>OP-eligible</th>
<th>OP-eligible (% of Year 12)</th>
<th>OP-ineligible</th>
<th>OP-ineligible (% of Year 12)</th>
<th>OP-ineligible &amp; sit QCS</th>
<th>OP-ineligible &amp; sit QCS (% of OP-ineligible)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>24 893</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>7 870</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3 588</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>25 958</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>7 860</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3 552</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>26 736</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>8 658</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3 642</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>27 750</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>9 282</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3 653</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>27 812</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>10 436</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3 274</td>
<td>31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>27 302</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11 138</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3 218</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All figures include visa students. The Year 2000 figure for OP-ineligible students who sat the QCS test is based on an estimate of the number of OP-ineligible visa students who sat the QCS Test.


As indicated above, the OP is used (along with other elements such as the QCS) to rank students in order to determine entry to highly competitive fields of study. However, being without an OP does not mean that a student does not have access to a ranking system to assist with entry into further education.

---

* The Queensland Core Skills (QCS) test is a statewide test based on the Queensland senior curriculum and is available to all Year 12 students, regardless of subjects taken.
* Field positions (FPs) indicate a student’s rank order position based on overall achievements in Board subjects in up to five fields (areas of study which emphasise particular knowledge and skills). FPAs are calculated only for OP-eligible students.
* Under current eligibility for an OP, students must sit for the QCS test. In 2001, some 275 students who were previously OP-eligible did not sit for the QCS test and consequently became OP-ineligible. According to research it was not clear why these students chose to do so (TEPA, 2002).
In Queensland currently, there is both the OP system and the Tertiary Entrance Statement (TES) for Year 12 students. The TES\(^5\) was developed, in part, for students who may have been doing vocational education subjects at school and wanted to move onto a diploma program at TAFE. Another system for ranking students was developed for these students and exists in a schedule called S1090 (TEPA, 2002). This is used for entry to some vocational education and training programs and undergraduate programs with a rank of 75 (depending on the year of entry).

Although entry to a tertiary institution is possible via a range of options that are discussed below, the decision to undertake an OP-ineligible senior schooling program makes it difficult to achieve the high ranks necessary for entry to very competitive tertiary courses. Students who complete fewer than 20 semester units of competencies are not eligible for a selection rank based on the S1080 – S1084 QTAC schedules (QTAC, 2002a). If students are deemed OP-ineligible their other alternative is to gain a QTAC rank though sitting a Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT). In 2000–2001, 1 403 people applied to the Queensland Tertiary Admission Centre (QTAC) for tertiary admission by undertaking a STAT (QTAC, 2002d).

At the completion of Year 12 students are provided with information about their achievements. The Student Education Profile (SEP) issued on completion of Year 12 provides students’ achievements on leaving school (refer to Figure 3 below) (TEPA, 2002, p. 2).

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\(^5\) The Tertiary Entrance Statement reports an Overall Position (OP) and Field Positions (FPs) both of which may be used to rank students for entrance to tertiary-level courses at universities and TAFE institutes.
Table 5 identifies students who completed Year 12 in 2001, the majority completed with an OP. This includes students taking Board subjects with embedded vocational education and training (of which there are seven), as these vocational education offerings are given an achievement level and moderated. This is not currently available for all vocational education offerings. In particular, apprenticeships and traineeships and SASs with embedded vocational education and training do not contribute to an OP. This is unlike NSW and Victoria, where vocational subjects similar to the 13 vocational SASs contribute to the tertiary entrance score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OP and a VET certificate</th>
<th>OP but no VET certificate</th>
<th>No OP but with VET certificate</th>
<th>No OP and no VET certificate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 123</td>
<td>24 550</td>
<td>6 868</td>
<td>3 618</td>
<td>38 159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Queensland Portfolio Performance Measurement Branch (data supplied by QBSSSS)

Overall 26.2 per cent of the students who completed Year 12 in 2001 had a Vocational Education and Training certificate either with or without an OP (see Table 5). In the state school system, 30 per cent of students completed with a Vocational Education and Training certificate, and a higher proportion of those state school students completed with a Vocational Education and Training certificate and without an OP than in the other systems (QBSSSS, 2001). Over nine per cent of students completed without an OP or a Vocational Education and Training certificate — over 13 per cent of state school students were in this category. This is a concern, for while these students have remained to Year 12 there must be questions about whether this has prepared them for work or further study.

**Tertiary entrance and completion of vocational qualifications**

There are competing signals to students about the outcomes to be sought from Year 12 in schools. With the development of a mass higher education system in the 1990s, increasing numbers of students have been encouraged to and have applied for entry. The desire to keep that option open (aside from a direct interest in entry into a particular program) underpins the continuing importance of OP eligibility. Yet with the development of vocational education and training in schools in the mid-1990s a signal is being sent that senior schooling can be a place for the development of specific vocational skills and attainment of vocational qualifications.

Queensland has a comprehensive reporting system, and achievements in the range of subjects undertaken within and outside schools are recorded. However only Board subjects contribute towards an OP. During consultations, issues were raised about students who complete a university subject in which achievement does not contribute towards the OP with which they will seek entry to university. Of broader significance, because it involves more students, is the limited extent to which vocational subjects offered in schools contribute towards an OP.
As the OP is used to gain entry to very competitive programs, changes to what can be considered in making up this rank and how it will be considered are sensitive. Students competing for limited places are sensitive to signals sent by changes to what is considered for university entrance and universities are similarly concerned. Yet without attention to tertiary entrance, the intention to facilitate students’ participation in further education through multiple pathways will not be realised. Following any changes made as the result of recommendations from the Senior Certificate Project (Pitman and Herschell, 2002) in Queensland, attention will need to be given to tertiary entrance and how it is related to the outcomes achieved from completion of Year 12 or its equivalent.

Another issue in terms of Year 12 outcomes is the extent to which undertaking vocational education subjects in school leads to a recognised achievement. In part this relates to the extent to which achievement in vocational education subjects is recognised for tertiary entrance, but it is also important that there be recognition in terms of vocational education and training outcomes. Some of the quality issues involved were outlined in section 3.3.1 above and others relate to completion of a qualification.

Some 45 010 students enrolled in vocational education subjects in schools in Queensland in 2000 (see Appendix C). In 2001, 9 991 emerged with at least one Vocational Education and Training certificate. While less than half the 2000 enrolments relate to students who go on to complete Year 12 in 2001, there is still a gap between those who gain a certificate and the proportion undertaking vocational education and training subjects. In part this may relate to the way the vocational education subjects are devised, although it must be recognised that not all students will be interested in completing a certificate in a particular area.

Three of the seven Board subjects with embedded vocational education and training do not lead currently to attainment of a certificate, only to some competencies. The level of certificate able to be achieved in the other subjects varies from Certificate I to Certificate III. The extent to which vocational education subjects might lead to a certificate is a significant matter for further consideration in terms of strengthening the vocational education curriculum and providing better outcomes for young people, whether they are undertaking vocational education in schools or with vocational education and training providers.

Although the overwhelming majority of students who complete Year 12 are in schools, it is important to remember that they are not the only students who will complete the equivalent of Year 12. As will be indicated below, over the age of 21, tertiary entrance may be determined by taking into account a range of factors including other study and work experience — and in this sense the decisions made on these criteria have the function of treating a person as having the equivalent of Year 12 for the purposes of entry to further study.
Apart from this group, there are a large number of people between the ages of 15 and 24 enrolled with a vocational education and training provider. In 2000 there were 100,366 such students and the majority (60,462) were between the ages of 15 and 19. Over 50 per cent of 15 to 24 year olds were enrolled in Certificate II, III or IV level courses — the overwhelming majority at levels II and III. Data from the NCVER student outcomes survey indicate that close to 29 per cent of TAFE graduates between the ages of 15 and 24 stated that they had less than Year 12 or equivalent before they enrolled (NCVER, 2001c).

**Tracking achievement**

It is not possible to be precise about the numbers who might be estimated to have reached the equivalent of Year 12 on present data. However, if there is to be a broader approach to the Senior Certificate (as suggested by Pitman and Herschell 2002), there will need to be a way to capture effectively the outcomes attained by students undertaking studies with vocational education and training providers and considering them in the context of overall certification of Year 12 outcomes.

Current systems do not provide for this possibility. Without such systems it is more difficult to support greater flexibility and movement between sectors as young people gain the educational experience to reach Year 12 or its equivalent.

At minimum, such a system will need a unique student number or identifier in the state that can be used across schooling and vocational education and training sectors. It is also worth investigating whether it could be extended to universities over time. A system to record achievements that are gained in both the schooling and vocational education and training sectors must capture those data over a long period for a single individual. In order to meet commitments to young people about the accumulation of education and training and its certification, it is probably necessary to collect and maintain data for a single individual for ten years.
In summary:

- Year 12 is a key transition point. The way student achievements are recorded and recognised is significant for future opportunities.
- Students are primarily assigned ranks to determine tertiary entrance on the basis of their OP (and associated tests), although students who are not OP-eligible may complete a special test (STAT) to be assigned a rank, or they may be assigned a rank on the basis of other subjects if they have 20 units of competencies.
- The proportion of students who are OP-eligible has been increasing since 1996 and they now comprise 29 per cent of Year 12 students.
- The number of students who complete Year 12 with a Vocational Education and Training certificate has increased significantly. In 2001, 26.2 per cent of students completed with a certificate. Over 72 per cent of students completed with an OP. Over 9 per cent of students completed without an OP or a Vocational Education and Training certificate, and this is a cause for concern for their future transition to work or education.
- There is a need to re-examine the way the various achievements in subjects other than Board subjects contribute to tertiary entrance ranks.
- There is a need to address the extent to which students who enrol in vocational education subjects in schools are able to proceed to complete a certificate.
- Taking into account the students who have not completed Year 12 but are enrolled in vocational education (some 29 per cent of surveyed TAFE graduates in 2001 indicated they did not have Year 12 or equivalent when they enrolled), a more effective system for recording and tracking achievements to allow for greater movement between sectors and over time will be needed.
Recommendations

(6) That in order to recognise the changes in the school curriculum including the greater diversity of subjects undertaken in the senior years, and in particular university subjects and completed vocational education and training certificates, the tertiary entrance system be the subject of a future investigation.

(7) That in the design and delivery of vocational education and training in schools, greater emphasis be placed on encouraging students to complete a certificate.

(8) That a mechanism be developed, involving a unique student identifier, that allows a central record of a student’s achievements to be maintained. The unique student identifier will need to be used in schools and vocational education and training providers (both public and private) for students between the ages of 15 and 19. Data on an individual student will need to be able to be maintained for a long period in order to provide a mechanism for accumulating and testifying to a student’s achievements.

(9) That in providing for more flexible and diverse provision for young people, it be recognised that changes to provision within sectors will not be the full answer; as important for transition is greater collaboration between the sectors. This collaboration is best built by mutual recognition of the distinctive missions and approaches of each sector.

3.3.3 Transitions post Year 12

Transitions post-Year 12 are many and varied. Broadly, students may proceed directly to employment or directly to further study, and of course many undertake some combination of the two. The key transition issues are the impact of Year 12 or its equivalent on access to further study or employment, and any long-term impacts that may arise.

The major area of discussion will be access to further education, either through universities or vocational education and training providers. Yet this is not to ignore employment as an outcome. Lamb and McKenzie (2001) indicate that full-time employment is a sustained outcome for about 20 per cent of school leavers16 straight from school and that a further 24 per cent obtain stable full-time employment after only a short period of insecure employment or unemployment.

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16 The school leavers to whom Lamb and McKenzie (2001) refer are not necessarily those who complete Year 12 — the sample is drawn from Year 10 students.
Lamb and McKenzie (2001) find that about 12 per cent face long-term unemployment or part-time work. They note that most of those with these poor employment outcomes have not completed Year 12 and that increased years of schooling contribute positively to employment outcomes. They also find that either full-time work or a structured education or training experience on leaving school contributes significantly to better outcomes. Our objective then must be to provide such opportunities for our young people immediately on leaving school.

From Year 12 to tertiary entrance

Outcomes from Year 12 have an impact on the choices available to young people. There are immediate possibilities in relation to further study, although such decisions may be deferred. Indeed Lamb (2001) estimates from the results of the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth that about 9 per cent of those entering university deferred study by entering the workforce.

The options for further study for Year 12 students who are issued with a Senior Certificate are many and varied. In part this is because Queensland is the only state in Australia where a student undertaking a non-Board program is eligible to access tertiary education post-Year 12.

Most students use a tertiary entrance ranking to access TAFE or diploma courses at university, although some will get into bachelor degrees with a rank of 75 or above. A Queensland student who is non-OP eligible should theoretically be able to obtain university entrance into any Queensland university course providing they meet the prerequisite subjects and meet the required minimum rank. However such students cannot go to an interstate university, as their course of study is not seen as preparing them sufficiently for university in other states. In this way Queensland pathways are more flexible (TEPA, 2002).

A significant group of students complete Year 12 or its equivalent and seek entrance to a university or vocational education and training provider. In the 2001–2002 admissions period, 22 970 Year 12 students in Queensland applied for either university entrance or a TAFE (full-time diploma) place. The majority, 21 710 were OP-eligible. Of these, 20 971 received an offer through QTAC. In other words, 91.3 per cent of applicants received an offer of a tertiary place.

Of the OP-eligible group 92 per cent received an offer, 82 per cent accepted a university place, and 18 per cent took up a place in a TAFE institute. Some 1320 students were OP-ineligible, and of this same group 1052 received an offer of a tertiary place (80 per cent), 17 per cent of a university place, and 83 per cent a place in TAFE (TEPA, 2002).

These outcomes demonstrate the relatively high level of success in obtaining a tertiary place for those students who apply. Of course receiving an offer does not indicate whether these applicants received their first preference. Of the 22 466 females aged 15–24 who received an offer, 15 364 were offered their first preference, and of the 15 503 males 10 193 were offered their first preference. Thus of those who received an offer 67.3 per cent were offered their first preference (QTAC, 2002d).
**Unmet demand**

In the 2000–2001 admissions period, there were 7,215 applicants (13.1 per cent of all applicants) who did not receive an offer. Of these 1,958 (27 per cent) had listed at least one TAFE preference. Included in the 7,215 who did not receive an offer, 2,246 (31 per cent) were current Queensland Year 12 students, and 1,033 (46 per cent) of these had indicated at least one of their three preferences as TAFE (QTAC, 2001). Some of these students may have taken up study with a vocational education and training provider by applying directly — although this would be for places in programs other than the ones for which they expressed a preference.

Beyond these students, there were a further 4,703 OP-eligible students who did not apply through QTAC for tertiary entrance. A small number may have gone interstate, others may have applied directly to vocational education and training providers or universities or taken up employment.

**Re-entry students**

The transition for students who have disrupted schooling due to ill health, family circumstances or other reasons is difficult. Students who do not complete a Senior Certificate have fewer options for further study. Alternatives available include:

- apprenticeships and traineeships, although levels of literacy and numeracy can be a barrier
- a limited range of Certificate I—III qualifications through an RTO (particularly, a TAFE offering subsidised training).
- agricultural colleges which offer places on the basis of successful interview (QTAC, 2002a, p. 66).

Success in tertiary studies may build upon a range of qualifications, employment experience and personal competencies. Young people who have some external senior subjects, have studied vocational education and training, or have completed an approved bridging course may be considered for a tertiary entrance. In these circumstances, it is recommended that applicants sit the STAT to demonstrate a range of competencies commonly considered important for successful tertiary study. For example, English proficiency is a basic requirement for entry to all tertiary institutions (QTAC, 2002a, p.11).

At 21 years of age, if no other qualifications have been achieved, other criteria such as work experience and personal competencies can be used to gain a rank for tertiary entry. Up until that time an applicant is assessed on their school results only, unless they have gained some other qualification since leaving school, such as:

- Certificates III and IV
- a diploma or one year of full-time study towards a diploma
- a year of university level study.
In summary:

- Over 91 per cent of people who applied for tertiary entrance received an offer of a place. Some 7000 applicants did not receive an offer, and of these, 31 per cent were current Year 12 students. A substantial group of those current Year 12 students were seeking a place in a TAFE program.

- Queensland considers a wide range of student outcomes in terms of tertiary entrance, and is more open in this way than other states. However for students under the age of 21, there is a strong focus on their success in educational programs.

3.3.4 Vocational education and training

One major destination for young people, including post Year 12, is vocational education and training. In Queensland in 1999 over 31 per cent of the population claimed to have vocational educational qualifications (DET, 2001b). Vocational education and training is focused on delivering competencies to ensure employability and include an emphasis on:

- skill acquisition in emerging work areas such as communication and information technology and biotechnologies
- the capacity to support young people’s transition from school to work
- mature age adults pursuing skilling or re-skilling for work.

In this, Queensland mirrors national directions in vocational education and training:

Australian VET offers vocational training to people who want to enter the workforce for the first time, re-enter the workforce, retrain for a new job or upgrade skills for an existing job (NCVER, 2002, p. 3).

While vocational education qualifications offer a ‘stand-alone’ opportunity to gain workplace-related skills, completion or part-completion of these qualifications can also provide an alternative path to higher education. Vocational education offers a direct transition to employment or to further study. This is evident from Table 6.
Table 6 2001 Student Outcomes Survey (for 2000 graduates) — employment / study outcomes by age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group (after study)</th>
<th>Derived labour force status (after study)</th>
<th>Enrolled in further study</th>
<th>Age group further study outcome (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Not in labour force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>3 135</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24</td>
<td>4 624</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>7 759</td>
<td>1 409</td>
<td>1 073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: – NFI indicates that no further information was available.
Source: NCVER, 2001c

In 2000, 33 per cent of surveyed Queensland TAFE graduates from vocational education and training courses went on to further study, while 74.5 per cent were employed after graduating (NCVER, 2001a). The proportion going on to further study was higher in the 15 to 24 year age group (see Table 6). Of the 15 to 24 year old TAFE graduates who went onto further study, 35 per cent used their vocational education and training qualification to gain recognition of prior learning in their further study (NCVER, 2001a).

In 2000, 13.2 per cent of Australia’s working age population undertook some vocational education and training. This represented student growth of approximately 77.4 per cent in the past decade (NCVER, 2001b, p. 2). In Queensland, student growth in the past decade was much higher (97.4 per cent). Table 7 indicates the distribution of young people across the different providers.

Historically participation in vocational education and training in Queensland has been below the national average — in 2000 Queensland had a participation rate of 10.3 per cent compared the national average of 12.1 per cent (all persons 15 to 64 years). The proportion of young people attending a TAFE institute in Queensland was 6.8 per cent, less than the Australian average of 9.0 per cent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6272.0, 1999b). In 1998 the Cullen Report (in Schofield, 1999 p. 6) argued that to meet Queensland’s skilled workforce needs in 2005, approximately 250 000 more workers required vocational education and training qualifications.

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17 For this report a ‘graduate’ is a student who satisfactorily completed a course of study at TAFE in Australia. Students participating in recreational, leisure or self-enrichment courses and students who did not have an Australian address were excluded from the survey.
18 For this report ‘unemployed (persons)’ are persons who were not employed during the reference period(s) and who had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time during that period.
19 For this report ‘not in the labour force’ are persons who were not in the categories ‘employed’ or ‘unemployed’.
Table 7 Percentages of provision by different provider types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>TAFE (16 of 1171)</th>
<th>Private providers (784 of 1171)</th>
<th>Agricultural colleges (4 of 1171)</th>
<th>Total students (see note)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–19 yrs</td>
<td>50 111</td>
<td>9 415</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>60 462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24 yrs</td>
<td>34 148</td>
<td>5 337</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>39 904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–24 yrs</td>
<td>84 259</td>
<td>14 752</td>
<td>1 275</td>
<td>100 366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total all ages</td>
<td>235 950</td>
<td>27 272</td>
<td>3 376</td>
<td>266 947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Total students and percentages are based on all provider types (Adult Community Education (ACE), TAFE, private providers, agricultural colleges and universities) excluding QBSSSS data.

Source: Department of Employment and Training, 2002c

The 15 to 24 year age group constituted 39.7 per cent of all enrolments in vocational education and training in 2000 (up from 38.5 per cent in 1998). Over the years 1998 to 2000, the percentage of 15 to 24 year olds enrolled in an apprenticeship or traineeship in Queensland, as a percentage of the total number of 15 to 24 year olds enrolled in vocational education and training, increased from 22.3 per cent to 27.4 per cent. This is consistent with national enrolment trends. In 2000, approximately 20 per cent of all vocational students chose new apprenticeships.20

In 2000, DET’s DELTA database showed that, 6 240 students (17 per cent) indicated they had a prior qualification (ranging from Certificate I to a postgraduate diploma). The Australian vocational education and training statistics (NCVER, 2000, p. 16) indicate 4.6 per cent of vocational education and training students had a prior education level of above AQF 5, while another 18.2 per cent had other post-school qualifications.

Vocational education and training transitions

There are three major transitions involving vocational education and training:

- the movement of students from work to undertake further study through vocational education and training
- the movement of students from vocational education and training to further study in universities
- the movement of students from universities to vocational education and training.

In Table 8 below, the major reasons TAFE graduates give for undertaking a vocational education course are work-related — only 7.7 per cent explicitly cite getting into another course of study (NCVER, 2001a). This gives an indication of the overall importance of each of the transitions (involving vocational education and training) to students.

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20 New apprenticeships refers to both traineeships and apprenticeships — consistent with the introduction in 1998 of the national ‘new apprenticeship’ scheme.
Table 8 Main reason for undertaking a vocational education and training course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15-24 year olds as at 25 May 2001</th>
<th>To get a job (or own business)</th>
<th>To try for a different career</th>
<th>To get a better job or promotion</th>
<th>It was a requirement of my job</th>
<th>I wanted extra skills for my job</th>
<th>To get into another course of study</th>
<th>For interest or personal reasons</th>
<th>Other reasons</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2 880</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>2 637</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>1 083</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>10 308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCVER Student Outcomes Survey, 2001

*Work to vocational education and training*

This is a preferred option for young people in the workforce who do not have a Year 12 qualification, or for those with a Year 12 qualification who want to undertake vocational studies or whose Year 12 qualification may have been insufficient to gain direct tertiary entrance to a university. Young people use vocational education and training to acquire additional generic skills or technical skills to improve their opportunities for success in further study or for employment.

Individuals can choose to participate in a range of certificate and diploma qualifications in vocational education and training and be eligible for a tertiary entrance ranking. For example, completion of Certificate IV in Adult and Tertiary Preparation (ATP) can also provide an opportunity to obtain an appropriate rank for tertiary entrance. Preliminary 2001 data indicate that 2598 Queensland VET clients were in such programs, and of these 61 per cent were aged between 15 and 24 (DET, 2002).

Barriers to entry to vocational education include:

- insufficient literacy and numeracy skills
- costs of education in those courses where full fees are charged
- limited places in some popular courses raising the rank required for entry.

*Vocational education and training to university*

Robinson and Misko (2001) reported on a relatively low proportion of Queensland vocational education and training graduates completing their vocational education and training qualification and progressing onto further study.

... some 33 per cent of Queensland TAFE graduates go on to further study, which is the lowest further study rate of TAFE graduates of all states and territories. However, if they do go on to further study, one-quarter of them go onto university... (Robinson and Misko, 2001 p. 60).

This was a higher proportion going on to further study at university than all other states, except Victoria.\(^\text{21}\)

\(^{21}\) Both the ACT and the Northern Territory also had a higher proportion going on to further study at university (Robinson and Misko, 2001, p. 60).
In the 2000–2001 admissions period, some 3914 people with a prior completed TAFE or part completed TAFE qualification applied through QTAC for university entrance. Of this cohort 81.6 per cent received an offer and 76 per cent accepted that offer. In 1999, some 6 per cent of students admitted to a bachelor or lower level university course in Queensland had a completed or partially completed TAFE qualification (Robinson and Misko, 2001).

Barriers to moving from vocational education and training to university are:

- articulation or the rank given for complete or incomplete vocational education and training compared with entry ranks, particularly in high demand programs
- credit transfer — that is, the extent to which prior vocational or other education is taken into account on enrolment and credit is granted for prior vocational education and training study.

The last two issues are discussed in Chapter 5.

**University to vocational education and training**

The issue of university to vocational education and training transition (‘reverse’ transition) is one that has been reported to involve a movement of considerable size and complexity with claims that as many 40 000 vocational education and training clients per year nationally are in transition from university (Golding and Vallence, 1999). In Golding and Vallence (1999), Haas argues that

... ‘reverse articulation’ is a phenomenon which has grown without any perceived encouragement by government, education authorities or institutions. Demand has been a function of individual need (Golding and Vallence, 1999 p. 2).

In Queensland a significant number of students undertaking vocational education and training courses have previously completed university-level degrees (12 100 or 4 per cent in 1999) (DET, 2001b). The frequency in vocational education and training courses of students who had completed a university degree was slightly higher for female students than for male students.

Various researchers including Golding and Vallence (1999) have identified some parameters and characteristics of the university to TAFE movement, including:

- the increasing demands for practical information technology skills
- the desire to gain vocationally specific training and/or to update existing practical skills
- personal development reasons
- its suitability for those students who did not complete their university degree.

Other studies indicate that university graduates tend to study individual modules or a mix of modules to acquire practical skills.
A recent Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) project (Teese and Watson, 2001) looked at the current AVETMISS reporting standard, which asks enrolling TAFE students to indicate ‘completed qualifications’, thereby minimising inclusion of information about university non-completions in TAFE enrolments. A high proportion of vocational education and training students do not answer the question about prior qualifications on the enrolment form.

This path and the one above are the subject of more discussion in Chapter 5.

**Issues about type of participation in vocational education and training**

In 2000 a high proportion of vocational education and training students in the 15 to 24 year age group were enrolled in Certificate II and III qualifications. Enrolments in non-training package courses (not award courses) comprised 18.6 per cent (see Table 9). In order to increase the level of skills, particularly higher level technical skills in the workforce, there will need to be an increase in the proportion of young people in vocational education and training undertaking Certificate IV and diploma level courses22. This suggests a need to examine the vocational education and training being provided in schools up to Year 12 to assist with transition to higher level vocational education and training after leaving school. This issue also has implications for the process of articulation discussed in Chapter 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2000 qualification level</th>
<th>Agricultural colleges (%)</th>
<th>Private providers (%)</th>
<th>TAFE (%)</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AQF Certificate II</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF Certificate III</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF Certificate IV</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF Diploma</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-training package</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not an award course)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate not elsewhere classified</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate — Trade</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Employment and Training, 2002

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22 While a higher proportion of people with higher skill levels will not produce of itself more highly skilled jobs, there is an argument for some encouragement of a supply-side push.
This issue also involves examining the role of employers in the provision of training. There are two aspects of this: first the provision of entry-level training and second the development of higher level vocational skills. A recent report (Hall et al. 2002) has argued strongly that there has been a decline in employer-funded training and that such employer-funded training as is provided has ‘become increasingly concentrated in narrow, task-specific skill acquisition’ (Hall et al. 2002, p. 17). The authors also argue that employer training has become focused on entry level training rather than continued development and upgrading. Training is more likely to be provided to the already highly skilled and to those employees in managerial positions: there is evidence of less attention to the need to take staff in lower skilled positions through further training to ensure that their skills are upgraded.

There is room to consider the way employers might be encouraged to become a stronger part of a partnership with government and training providers to provide for a more highly skilled workforce. An example of one way of proceeding at entry level is provided by the undertakings in the building and construction industry. More generally Hall et al. (2002) raise questions about the need, at federal level, to re-examine the place for a skills levy to ensure that employers contribute to enhancing and upgrading workforce skills.

Building and Construction Contracts — The Structured Training Policy, commonly known as the ‘10 per cent training policy’ was developed to ensure that apprentices, trainees and cadets comprise 10 per cent of all labour hours on relevant State Government building and construction projects. This policy was undertaken in 1999 to assist contractors to enhance the skills base of the building and construction industry.
In summary:

- In Queensland about 6.8 per cent of 15 to 24 year olds attend a TAFE, less than the Australian average of 9.0 per cent.
- The majority of those enrolled in courses (rather than modules) have come to vocational education and training with completed Year 12 or its equivalent.
- The major reasons TAFE graduates give for undertaking a vocational education and training course are work-related—only 7.7 per cent explicitly cite getting into another course of study.
- In 2000, 74.5 per cent of graduates from vocational education and training courses in Queensland were employed after graduating while 32.8 per cent went on to further study. The proportion going on to further study was higher in the 15 to 24 year age group.
- The general barriers to entry to vocational education and training are preparedness for study (particularly literacy and numeracy); cost, particularly for courses where full fees are charged; and prior qualifications in those popular or high-demand courses.
- In the 2000-2001 admissions period, some 3914 people with a prior completed TAFE or part-completed TAFE qualification applied through QTAC for university entrance. Of this cohort 81.6 per cent received an offer and 76 per cent accepted that offer.
- Two issues in the transition from vocational education and training to university are articulation or the rank given for complete or incomplete vocational education and training compared with entry ranks, particularly in high-demand programs and the amount of credit granted for prior vocational education and training study.
- ‘Reverse articulation’ is a less prominent issue. In Queensland in 1999, 12 100 or 4 per cent of students undertaking vocational education and training courses had previously completed university-level degrees.
- It is difficult to estimate the numbers who enter vocational education and training courses with incomplete university qualifications.
- In 2000, a high proportion of vocational education and training students in the 15 to 24 year age group were enrolled in Certificate II and III qualifications.
- There is a need to increase the proportion of young people in vocational education and training undertaking Certificate IV and diploma-level courses.
Employers need to be more involved in the provision and funding of training, particularly to encourage the development of higher level vocational skills.

3.3.5 Higher education

Higher education is the other major further education destination for young people. Currently, there are nine universities in Queensland teaching approximately 140,000 students. These institutions include public universities and one private university. A further 13 non-university providers deliver a range of higher education programs in Queensland to over 4,000 students.

Higher education has a number of functions and its distinctiveness comes from the extent to which they are interwoven. The recent review of Australian higher education notes:

- It [higher education] values learning through life. It promotes the pursuit, preservation and transmission of knowledge. It extols the value of research, both ‘curiosity-driven’ and ‘use inspired’. It enables personal intellectual autonomy and development. It provides skills formation and educational qualifications to prepare individuals for the workforce. It helps position Australia internationally (DEST, 2002a, p.1).

In terms of the education of young people, higher education provides a combination of general or liberal education with professional or vocational education, integrating the generic attributes of a general education with more specialised or professional knowledge.

Between 1991 and 2000 the number of students in higher education in Australia increased by 30 per cent (to 695,485) and undergraduate enrolments increased by 38 per cent (DEST, 2002a). Much of this increase was in fee-paying students, both overseas and domestic postgraduate (DEST, 2001). Queensland had 45 per cent enrolment growth in the same period (from 86,176 students to 125,185) and was, with New South Wales, one of the states with fastest growth (DEST, 2001). Around 61 per cent of higher education students in Australia are below the age of 25 (DETYA, 2001) and in Queensland close to a quarter of 15–24 year olds are in higher education.

About 17 per cent of the Australian labour force and 14.2 per cent in Queensland claimed an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification in 2001 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6227.0, 2001a). In 2000, 83 per cent of graduates reported that they were in full-time employment and 15 per cent that they went on to further full-time study (DEST, 2001).

Entry to university is now available through a variety of pathways as described above (in section 3.3). Barriers to entry for those programs with the highest demand remain, in general, the results gained at the end of secondary school or after further study. In many cases this further study is a year or more of successful study in another university degree than the one for which enrolment is sought. Various forms of other experience including work experience are given ‘notional’ ranks that allow entry to university courses.

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23 These data relate to all universities in Australia, the results for each Queensland university are reported separately. Queensland universities cluster around the Australian average for full-time employment and rate in general a little higher than the Australian average for graduates proceeding to further full-time study.
The major transitions to higher education are from school, from vocational education and training and from work; ‘reverse articulation’ or the transition from university to vocational education and training has been discussed in the previous section.

**School to university**

In 2000 the number of Queensland Year 12 students enrolling in university was about 36 per cent of those completing Year 12 (QBSSSS, 2001). School leavers are the predominant group that enter universities in Australia, usually around 50 per cent or more (Dobson et al., 1998). In Queensland in 1996, school leavers comprised approximately 51 per cent of commencing students. The next most numerous category was those with previous higher education experience (complete or incomplete) at 25.8 per cent. Queensland admitted a larger proportion of students in this category than the Australian average (Dobson et al., 1998).

Most school leavers enter university through a system that takes into account their school performance and provides a relative ranking. Some universities in Queensland are providing more direct entry arrangements where students may undertake introductory subjects within particular programs while at school, or are admitted on the basis of direct evidence from the school about their performance. Currently only small numbers of school leavers enter university this way.

While school leavers form the majority of the commencing undergraduate intake, in general in Australia they do not necessarily perform better than groups admitted on other bases (Dobson et al., 1998). However research shows that in Queensland, school leavers perform as well (that is pass subjects at the same rate) as most other admission groups, apart from university graduates who, not surprisingly, perform better and TAFE graduates, who perform worse (Dobson et al., 1998).

Evidence on the transition from school to university suggests that a significant group of first-year students, around one-third, are concerned that their choice of course is not correct (McInnis and James, 1999). Also, higher proportions of school leavers than other students experience adjustment difficulties, from establishing consistent study habits to clarity of direction and expectations about grades (McInnis and James, 1999).
These factors contribute in part to the overall success rate of students in higher education programs. Urban et al. (1999) suggest that about 80 per cent of students eventually complete an award but that only about 60 per cent of undergraduates complete an award at the institution at which they first enrol24. Subsequent research (Martin et al., 2001) broadly confirmed these earlier findings, and noted final completion rates of between 72 and 71 per cent. Both sets of research note that younger students are more likely to complete than older students. Yet students who enter on the basis of having finished secondary education are less likely to complete than those who enter with previous higher education or work experience (Martin et al., 2001). Students who enter on the basis of TAFE experience have broadly the same completion rates as those admitted on the basis of secondary education.

Vocational education and training to university

This transition has been discussed in section 3.3 above. As indicated there, a small proportion of university entrants is those with complete or incomplete vocational education. Robinson and Misko (2001, pp. 61–63) report the wide variation among Queensland universities in the proportion of students with vocational education and training qualifications given entry. For example, Griffith University (10.5 per cent), Queensland University of Technology (10.4 per cent) and University of the Sunshine Coast (9.1 per cent) had the highest proportions of their intake from students who completed or partially completed a course in the vocational education and training sector.

The variation in intakes is a result not only of individual university articulation and credit transfer policies and their operation in relation to overall student demand. It also reflects, in part, particular individual arrangements for collaboration and transfer that may be struck between a university and a vocational education and training provider. These issues are further discussed in Chapter 5.

Work to university

This is a viable pathway if the applicant has a reasonable Year 12 qualification or extensive work experience in an area where they have had a degree of responsibility. Alternatively in Queensland they may be able to submit a successful application based on their personal competencies and be accepted into one of their preferred courses on this basis. The tertiary entrance ranks derived from employment improve with the length of the term of employment. The rules for the various universities vary widely, however. For example some will accept personal competencies for 18–21 year olds; some limit the ranks they will accept; and some universities have other ‘alternative entry schemes’. As indicated above, those who enter this way seem to have comparable outcomes to those admitted on other bases.

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24 These results are reported in terms of students who first enrolled in 1992, the 60 per cent completion relates to outcomes by 1997. Martin et al., (2001) report 64 per cent completion by the same cohort by 1999 using a slightly revised model.
In summary:

- Queensland had 45 per cent enrolment growth in higher education in the period 1991 to 2000 (from 86,176 students to 125,185) and close to a quarter of 15–24 year olds are in higher education.

- In Australia in 2000, 83 per cent of graduates reported that they were in full-time employment and 15 per cent that they went on to further full-time study. Queensland universities report slightly higher proportions of graduates going on to further study than the Australian average.

- In Queensland, school leavers perform as well (that is pass subjects at the same rate) as most other admission groups in university, apart from university graduates, who perform better and TAFE graduates, who perform worse (Dobson et al., 1998).

- While younger students are more likely to complete than older students, those who enter on the basis of having finished secondary education are less likely to complete than those who enter with previous higher education or work experience (Martin et al., 2001).

- Students who enter university on the basis of TAFE experience have broadly the same completion rates as those admitted on the basis of secondary education (Martin et al., 2001).

- A significant group of first-year students, around one-third, are concerned that their choice of course is not correct and higher proportions of school leavers than other students experience adjustment difficulties (McInnis and James, 1999).
Recommendation

(10) That in providing for more flexible and diverse provision for young people, it is recognised that changes to provision within sectors will not be the full answer; as important for transition is greater collaboration between the sectors. This collaboration is best built by mutual recognition of the distinctive missions and approaches of each sector.

3.4 Conclusion

In the past decade more educational choices for young people have become available. The negative consequences of making a choice of one set of subjects, or one particular program over another, are much diminished and there are many ways to alter direction within and between educational pathways. Australia is unusual in the extent to which young people combine work and study and therefore move between employment and education.

Yet while these general trends are true across the system and for the majority of young people, this does not mean that there are no barriers and no dead-ends. The decision to leave school early has much higher negative consequences than it once had, as more people engage with education and expectations of the skills needed for our future increase. Those who stay at school to Year 12 but emerge without an OP or a vocational certificate are also likely to find the transition from school to work and further education more difficult.

The picture outlined in this chapter puts the options before us. Retention to Year 12 must be increased, but retention is not enough. Those who stay to Year 12 must emerge with outcomes that will prepare them for further education and work. To increase retention further will require greater flexibility in schooling, its modes and its pace, to engage students in an educational experience that is an effective transition to work or further education. The final years of school are not the end point of a schooling experience but the beginning of a longer-term learning engagement.

Finally, while each educational sector can ensure that its goals in relation to general education or workplace competencies and professional skills are met, this will not be enough to ease the transitions for young people and make the system navigable. That requires greater collaboration between the sectors, and it is to the ways and means to achieve this that the next chapters turn.
Chapter 4 Access and local flexibility

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 outlined the major changes in schooling, vocational education and training and higher education that have occurred over the past decade. The diversity of education and training options for young people has increased. Vocational education in schools, new apprenticeships, more choice in senior schooling and less reliance on performance in particular subject areas by universities, as well as more methods of alternative entry to universities, have all improved access to education and training for young people, as well as the ability to move between sectors.

These observations all hold at the state level; however, consultations raised issues about the availability of options across the state. For example, some regional schools and rural schools may be disadvantaged in terms of subject choice, and a region may be disadvantaged in terms of availability of vocational opportunities in different educational settings. So the first issue to be explored is the access that young people have to appropriate education and training. Access must be considered not only in terms of geographical location, but also in terms of other factors that affect access such as cultural or socio-economic background.

However there is another side to access. Access must also be sensitive to circumstance and local opportunity. This is in part about recognising that the nature of demand by students for education and training options might vary depending on their circumstances. Account must also be taken of the different capacities and potentials for engagement across sectors by region or local area. The inter-sectoral possibilities in Mt Isa will vary from those of Cape York, as will those of Caboolture from Logan.

Considering local issues means understanding constraints but also recognising the potential for local initiative and innovation. As the Whittlesea Youth Commitment in Victoria demonstrates, the involvement and cooperation of schools, vocational education and training providers and other community organisations in a local context can forge new ways to address issues of transition from school to further education and work for young people (Kellock, 2001). The Dusseldorp Skills Forum has also assisted similar innovative work with local communities on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. There is a need to make local involvement a stronger part of better outcomes for young people. Such involvement can be the bridge or the glue that makes the connections between sectors.

This chapter examines:

♦ the patterns of access to education for Indigenous young people, those from low socio-economic backgrounds and those in rural and remote areas and the ways in which access and therefore educational outcomes might be improved;
the possibilities for greater local flexibility and local cross-sectoral collaboration to fuel innovation and better outcomes.

4.2 Access

There are a number of factors that will affect access. Some of them relate to the opportunities available locally, for if young people have to travel long distances to access education and training and employment then the barriers to participation increase.

Other factors relate to the way socio-economic disadvantage may, of itself or in combination with other factors, inhibit the ability of young people to move to take advantage of opportunities in other areas, or affect the quality and range of what is available in the areas in which they live.

Finally, there are the particular factors that affect Indigenous young people, ranging from the greater proportion of these young people who live in more isolated or sparsely populated areas, to the likelihood that they and their families will face socio-economic disadvantage, as well as the racial and cultural issues such as inclusiveness of curriculum or pedagogy that may affect their participation in education and training.

More than half of Queensland’s population lives outside Brisbane. Moreover the population is spread very thinly, particularly outside the coastal regions, with most of the state having fewer than two people per square kilometre. The statistical divisions of North, Central and South West have fewer than 50,000 people each. Even in the coastal regions outside Brisbane, population density is typically less than 200 per square kilometre (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 Queensland Year Book, 2002a). The size of Queensland, the spread of the population and the low population density combine to pose considerable problems in providing a range of educational and training opportunities across the state. They also affect levels of economic activity and job opportunities.

Around 3.1 per cent of the Queensland population is Indigenous. According to the 2001 Census, this is a higher proportion than in most of the other mainland States and Territories. Over 45 per cent of Indigenous people live in the North, Far North and North West divisions, in comparison to the non-Indigenous population where close to half are in Brisbane. Indigenous people make up close to 10 per cent of the population living in the North, Far North and North West statistical divisions. As indicated above these areas have relatively low and generally dispersed populations.
Figure 4 gives a picture of socio-economic disadvantage in Brisbane as represented by unemployment levels. The highest unemployment rate is in the South and East Brisbane statistical division (Australian Bureau of Statistics 6291.0, 2002d). The picture for Queensland shows that the regions outside Brisbane with the highest unemployment rates were Wide Bay-Burnett and North and West Moreton, followed by South and East Moreton (Australian Bureau of Statistics 6291.0. 2002d). The latter two regions surround Brisbane and are also those experiencing the highest population growth in Queensland.

Figure 4  Brisbane metropolitan area: spatial representation of unemployment by statistical local area, December quarter 2001, metropolitan area

Source: Department of Employment and Training, Labour Market Research Unit 2002

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26 Based on small area estimates.
4.2.1 Rural and remote areas

As indicated above, dispersed populations are likely to diminish the range of educational and training opportunities that can be offered. Table 10 below illustrates the spread of state schools in Queensland. While there are a large number of schools outside Brisbane, rural areas have a large number of P-10 schools — indeed most schools in this category are in rural areas. Given the difficulties of maintaining viable numbers of students in Years 11 and 12 where the average school is small, it is not surprising that there are fewer schools that continue to Year 12 and more that combine primary and secondary education. This highlights the fact that in rural or remote areas students are likely to have to travel considerable distances to a school that offers Years 11 and 12.

Table 10 Number of state schools in Queensland by structure and location, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools (Years 1 to 7)</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools (Years 8 to 12)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-10 (primary and secondary to Year 10)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-12 (primary and secondary to Year 12)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools of distance education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education units</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special schools</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>1291</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Queensland Centre Information System (2002)

The difference in access to secondary schools that go to Year 12 is clear in the maps (located at Appendix D), which show the differences in numbers and distances in some areas of regional Queensland compared with Brisbane. For example, the Corinda and Stafford educational districts in the Brisbane region have seven and five state high schools respectively in relatively small areas. These are also areas that have a high representation of independent and Catholic high schools; there are more than five independent and Catholic high schools in the Brisbane central area of the Stafford district map.

In contrast, in the Mount Isa education district, there are four P-10 schools (Mornington Island, Normanton, Doomadgee and Richmond) and one P-12 school (Cloncurry) as well as the two state high schools in Mount Isa. There were 44 students in Year 10 in the P-10 schools in July 2001.

27 'Urban' is defined as within a local government area with a population of equal to or greater than 10 000 persons. 'Rural' is defined as areas with a population of fewer than 10 000 persons.
In the Longreach education district, there are two P-10 schools (Alpha and Aramac) and four P-12 schools (Winton, Hughenden, Barcaldine and Blackall) as well as Longreach State High School. There were 12 students in Year 10 in the P-10 schools in July 2001. There is one non-state high school in each of the Mount Isa and Longreach districts, but these provide education to Year 10 only.

In the Cape and Gulf region, there are two P-10 schools (Kowanyama and Aurukun (Western Cape College)) and four P-12 schools at Weipa (Western Cape College), Lockhart River, Bamaga and Cooktown. There were 12 students in Year 10 in the P-10 schools in July 2001. All Catholic and independent high schools (including Wangetti Education Centre) in the region are located either in Cairns, or within an hour’s drive of Cairns.

Potentially, around 68 students across these isolated areas could have completed Year 10 in July 2001 in state schools and would have been forced to either move to a more populated area or access the School of Distance Education if seeking to continue into Year 11.

Of the 16 TAFE institutes (with their more than 80 campuses) in Queensland, 8 (with 43 campuses) are located outside Brisbane. As might be expected, these institutes and many of their campuses are located in major population centres on the coast. Mt Isa Institute has a campus in town and one in the Gulf and the Tropical North Institute also has campuses in the Torres Strait Islands. There is also a campus of the Southern Queensland Institute in Roma called the College of the South-West. This College offers Years 11 and 12 as well as vocational education programs; it also has a campus at Charleville.

As Figure 5 demonstrates, the level of participation in vocational education and training outside Brisbane is relatively close to the proportion of the population outside Brisbane. This is probably due in part to the number of TAFE campuses outside Brisbane. The presence of a substantial number of TAFE campuses provides opportunities for developing solutions to address the issue of retention. There are almost as many TAFE campuses in rural areas as there are schools that go to Year 12. In some areas, such as Roma and Mt Isa, both Years 11 and 12 and other vocational programs are delivered on the one site or through a single multi-sector institution. These solutions provide possibilities for more flexible options for senior schooling and for young people.
Queensland also currently has eight universities with 26 campuses — seven of them publicly funded and one private. There is also a substantial campus of the multi-state Australian Catholic University in Brisbane. These universities range in size from 25,371 effective full-time students at The University of Queensland to 2,052 at the University of the Sunshine Coast in 2000 (DETYA, 2001). The majority of these universities and their campuses are located in the south-east corner of the state. The exceptions are James Cook University with campuses in Townsville and Cairns, Central Queensland University with campuses in Bundaberg, Emerald, Gladstone, Mackay and Rockhampton, and University of Southern Queensland with a campus in Hervey Bay. Most of the campuses outside major regional cities such as Townsville, Cairns or Rockhampton, are small and offer a limited range of the total offerings of the university.

Clearly the size of the population in a region affects the range of educational institutions that will be established and maintained, and the lower the level of participation the larger the population base that will be needed to sustain a particular institution. So it is not unexpected that there are fewer high schools than primary schools and so on through less vocational education and training providers to fewer campuses of universities in the more sparsely populated areas of Queensland. The presence of fewer educational sites is of concern if this appears to be associated with less favourable outcomes for young people in these regions because of limited opportunities.

28 There are also 13 other providers of higher education accredited to deliver specific programs.
29 Although, as Figure 5 demonstrates, the number of clients outside Brisbane does not suggest under-provision of vocational education and training in the regions.
In 2001 there was a total of fewer than 1500 full-time secondary school students in five educational districts in Queensland: Chinchilla (911), Longreach (605), Mt Isa (1236), Roma (968) and Torres Strait Islands (427) (Education Queensland, Corporate Data Warehouse, 2001). As Table 11 below indicates, the retention rates of students in these districts were also very low compared to the state average, ranging from a low of 24.8 per cent in Roma30 through to 53.4 per cent in the Torres Strait. All these districts retain less than 55 per cent of their young people to Year 12. This is also true of other districts, such as Emerald and the Darling Downs. In the latter two districts, retention rates declined substantially between 1997 and 2001 (see Appendix E).

Low retention rates in state schools in these districts may be partially explained by students moving to finish their schooling in non-state schools or in state schools in other areas. Current data do not allow assessments about the overall outcomes for young people from these regions. However the retention rates do suggest that young people leave schools in these regions before Year 12, and that there is a need to focus more directly on these areas of low retention to gain a more accurate picture of outcomes for young people.

30 This rate is likely to be artificially low because Years 11 and 12 in Roma are taught in the TAFE College of the South-West rather than in a secondary school. This data also indicate why there is a need for a standard student number in order to more effectively track outcomes for young people.
Table 11  Student Year 12 apparent retention rate, Queensland state schools by district (excluding Brisbane), 1997 to 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All locations</th>
<th>1997, July</th>
<th>2001, July</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All locations</td>
<td>70.78</td>
<td>73.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundaberg District (BU)</td>
<td>63.78</td>
<td>70.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns and Cape District (CC)</td>
<td>69.83</td>
<td>69.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinchilla District (CH)</td>
<td>51.91</td>
<td>53.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling Downs District (DA)</td>
<td>67.25</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald District (EM)</td>
<td>57.37</td>
<td>47.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraser–Cooloola District (FC)</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>64.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladstone District (GL)</td>
<td>58.96</td>
<td>69.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast North District (GN)</td>
<td>80.52</td>
<td>80.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast South District (GS)</td>
<td>73.62</td>
<td>80.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich District (IP)</td>
<td>57.86</td>
<td>63.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Burnett District (IB)</td>
<td>57.18</td>
<td>58.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longreach District (LO)</td>
<td>46.15</td>
<td>44.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay Hinterland District (MH)</td>
<td>64.67</td>
<td>61.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay North District (MN)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooloolaba District (MO)</td>
<td>74.46</td>
<td>78.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Isa District (MI)</td>
<td>43.35</td>
<td>47.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nambour District (NA)</td>
<td>70.36</td>
<td>75.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton District (RH)</td>
<td>64.85</td>
<td>67.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma District (RO)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Burnett District (SB)</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>60.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablelands–Johnstone District (TJ)</td>
<td>67.11</td>
<td>66.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toowoomba District (TO)</td>
<td>64.57</td>
<td>73.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torres Straight Islands District (TS)</td>
<td>38.17</td>
<td>53.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville Burdekin District (TB)</td>
<td>69.42</td>
<td>83.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville North and West District</td>
<td>64.85</td>
<td>60.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick District (WA)</td>
<td>59.37</td>
<td>62.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Moreton District (WM)</td>
<td>62.64</td>
<td>61.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Queensland Corporate Data Warehouse. Years 8–12 apparent retention rate. Figures are based on full-time students.

As Table 12 demonstrates, state schools in a number of regions outside Brisbane also have higher proportions of students finishing Year 12 without an OP or a vocational certificate, and tend in general to have slightly lower proportions of students completing with an OP and slightly higher proportions completing with a certificate than the state average. The same pattern holds true for non-state schools although the overall proportion finishing with an OP, for example, is much higher than for state schools, and correspondingly fewer students finish without an OP or a certificate.
These patterns suggest that there are regional disadvantages that lead to less successful Year 12 outcomes even for the comparatively small group that continues to Year 12 in these areas. While some of these factors will be beyond the school environment and relate to other factors affecting aspiration and motivation, they nevertheless raise questions about ways to enhance outcomes for students in more remote regions.

Table 12  Attainment: OP and Vocational Education and Training Certificate breakdown, Queensland schools by statistical division, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Division</th>
<th>OP &amp; Cert.</th>
<th>OP but no Cert.</th>
<th>No OP but Cert.</th>
<th>No OP &amp; No Cert.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Non-state</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Non-state</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>1,619</td>
<td>1,504</td>
<td>13,076</td>
<td>11,474</td>
<td>5,348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>5,936</td>
<td>6,731</td>
<td>2,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central West</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling Downs</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreton</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>2,606</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>1,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide Bay – Burnett</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Queensland Portfolio Performance Measurement Branch (data supplied by QBSSSS, 2002)

The factors to be considered in terms of improving outcomes for young people in regional and remote areas relate in part to access to a wider range of educational opportunities. In smaller educational institutions it is difficult to provide a wide range of choice. Yet to ensure institutions large enough to provide a broader range means fewer of them in sparsely populated areas and greater distances for young people to travel, with all the costs and dislocation that attend such moves.

**Distance and on-line education**

Distance education both at secondary and tertiary level may make education accessible despite remote location. Queensland (and Australia in general) has a long tradition of successful distance education. Indeed Australia has been a leader in this field.
There are seven Schools of Distance Education (SDEs) located throughout the state to provide education to students who cannot access face-to-face teaching. Education Queensland’s SDEs are based in Brisbane, Cairns, Emerald, Rockhampton, Charleville, Charters Towers, and Mount Isa (School of the Air). Professional staff, support and resources support these students and their home tutors or supervisors. However of the seven SDEs, only Brisbane provides Year 11 and 12 subjects. A student enrolled in a secondary school in a regional area can use the SDE to access subjects that are not offered at their school.

Vocational education and training, given its strong focus on work experience and placement, has not traditionally been engaged with distance education. However in recent years, with the changes in information and communications technology and client demand, TAFE Queensland’s on-line capability has been expanded. It is developing a number of courses to be delivered on-line and into remote areas.

Both University of Southern Queensland and Central Queensland University offer substantial distance education offerings\(^\text{31}\), as does the Gatton campus of The University of Queensland in various agricultural programs. A number of universities offer courses and programs by distance through Open Learning Australia.

Distance education is changing with the impact of information and communications technology and these changes have the possibility to enhance the educational experiences of those in rural and remote areas. There are possibilities of greater direct or synchronous interaction through various computer-mediated tools. Asynchronous interaction through email, bulletin boards and chat rooms also provides opportunities for more immediate feedback and a richer set of interactions than could be provided by print supplemented with telephone.

A pilot program in virtual schooling is underway in state education. It is currently providing 475 state secondary school students in 64 rural, remote and small state high schools with access to an enhanced subject offering (seven subjects) via intranet and internet technologies. This service is being delivered from six delivery sites that include five secondary schools and AccessEd. Students have two on-line lessons per week in addition to the time they have for their regular studies. The on-line lessons involve phone and internet conferences held with a teacher in Brisbane and other students in schools across the state, just like a virtual classroom. The system is interactive, with students and teachers communicating via keyboard, graphic tablet and voice. By 2002–2003 the number of school-based curriculum delivery points in this virtual school will increase to eight and the number of subjects provided to nine.

\(^{31}\) For example of University of Southern Queensland’s total enrolments in 2001 some 74 per cent were external (or distance education) students.
As noted above, TAFE Queensland is continuing to develop its on-line programs. In 2000 and 2001 an action learning project was undertaken in the Torres Strait to use on-line communication as a tool for delivering training to remote and isolated communities. The program was successful, but there were a number of problems related to on-line delivery, most notable being the high cost of internet services and technical difficulties with equipment and services.

Similarly universities that have been major distance education providers, such as University of Southern Queensland, have moved from more traditional distance delivery to on-line courses and programs. Even those universities without a strong focus on distance education have begun developing on-line courses, although many of the full programs delivered in this way are postgraduate rather than undergraduate at present.

While virtual or e-education offers possibilities for extending the quality and range of education provided to young people in remote areas, there are problems to be overcome. First, there is great variability in the level of resources available in schools or other educational centres in the state; and the variability within a single sector such as schooling is multiplied when the variety of systems and resources in place across the sectors is taken into account. Second there is limited infrastructure in some areas to support on-line education. In particular, remote areas face limited service providers and high costs of internet connection. These are a disincentive both to individual students and to institutions such as schools.

Third, there is also the issue of requisite skills and capacity to use the technology effectively, and availability of appropriate learning and technical support.

Distance education via traditional means requires a level of independence and time management. As a result higher numbers of students typically fail to complete successfully if they study in this mode. The move to on-line education brings with it similar demands on the student and requires a re-orientation not only in the way the student learns but also in the type of effective support to be provided. In other words, in order to take advantages of new opportunities significant obstacles need to be overcome and new models for supporting education put in place. Given the implications in terms of costs and related resources, there is room for greater collaboration across sectors in ventures in these areas.
One area where greater collaboration could be explored is the provision and support of e-learning or on-line centres. There are possibilities not only to develop more effective infrastructure but to provide better resources in terms of support for students. This is an area where statewide and local approaches need to be combined. Resource development is expensive and might be better resourced at the state level across the sectors (particularly schools and vocational education). However support for students would be better delivered through local collaborations, but needs central encouragement and support. The difficulty in these models is negotiating the funding and other barriers to sharing resources and access between sectors. For example there are issues to be resolved if one institution such as a university were to provide on-line library resources to a vocational educational institution and a school. While greater collaboration should be encouraged between sectors, this area needs a judicious mix of system-wide collaboration on resources and local area involvement and solutions around delivery.

**Vocational education and training in schools in remote areas**

Particular difficulties face vocational education and training in schools in rural and remote areas. As noted above, a smaller proportion of students remain at school until Year 12 and yet the vocational education program in schools is funded for Years 11 and 12 — not before. Unless the students who leave school go on to a TAFE or other vocational education and training providers on leaving school (or to full-time employment) they are more at risk of poor future employment outcomes. Some schools, such as Goondiwindi and Charleville State High Schools, have implemented approaches that involve students in Years 9 and 10 in vocational education or preparation for vocational education (DETYA, 2000). Consideration should be given to providing some support for such programs in areas where schools identified have low retention rates to Year 12.

Another difficulty for schools in rural and remote areas is gaining and retaining teachers with the specialist educational skills to be able to support vocational education and training programs. In the absence of teachers with expertise, there is a lack of information and understanding about what is required. An investigation by the Commonwealth into vocational education in schools in rural and remote areas argued that there was a need for a knowledgeable facilitator who can research and advise schools on the range of programs and resources available and their appropriateness to the community’s requirements (DETYA, 2000). There is also sometimes a shortage of suitable work placement opportunities.
It is not possible to mandate a solution to shortages of work placement opportunities or to the retention in small schools of teachers with expertise in developing and delivering vocational education. As indicated in Chapter 3, the demands of meeting AQTF standards to deliver vocational education and training programs in schools require certain levels of expertise of teaching staff. However it is possible to build small teams of vocational education experts or specialists in some regional areas, who would be available to visit schools to assist in the development and maintenance of effective vocational education and training programs. Such experts would also be able to contribute to assessment of students in these programs and in so doing ensure the overall quality of the education provided.

As students undertaking vocational education may need to travel considerable distances to participate in work placement or work experience to meet the requirements of their program, there needs to be access to financial support to recognise the costs of being away from home for these periods. There are living-away-from-home allowances for students in certain circumstances, but these do not cover short absences. Such a concept needs to be extended to the relatively short periods when a student may need to be away to complete either particular work experience or bloc sessions.

In summary:

- Retention rates to Year 12 in many rural and remote areas are lower than the state average — in a number of areas below 50 per cent.

- Higher proportions than the state average finish Year 12 without an OP or a Vocational Education and Training Certificate, and fewer with an OP.

- Distance and on-line education has the potential to ameliorate the more limited access of students in rural and remote areas to Years 11 and 12 — but not without attention to the barriers to its effective provision and to support of students engaged in this way.

- Vocational education in schools in rural and remote areas needs a stronger support base in terms of specialist expertise.
4.2.2 Socio-economic disadvantage

Without more detailed research it is not possible to present a finely grained picture of the intersection of socio-economic disadvantage and access to education and training in Queensland. Appendix E on retention rates shows that school students in Brisbane who are in districts with a higher proportion of socio-economically disadvantaged people do not necessarily suffer very low retention rates. Lower retention rates are found outside Brisbane and the south-east corner generally. It is likely, however, that the aggregation of results across a district mask particular issues regarding Year 12 retention, since research from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth (Lamb et al., 2000) indicates that young people from low socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to leave school early.
Some investigation has been done of participation in vocational education and its links with socio-economic disadvantage. The indicator of disadvantage being used is the level of unemployment by region in Brisbane. This preliminary analysis incorporates data from 2001 TAFE students, ABS population series and the small area unemployment rate estimates from the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Figure 6 provides a snapshot of TAFE participation by statistical local area (SLA) in Brisbane. From this figure, high TAFE participation rates are observed in particular suburb clusters, with the south side of Brisbane having much higher participation rates than the north side. In particular, in areas surrounding major TAFE campuses such as Mt Gravatt, Yeronga and Bayside, participation rates are generally high (as might be expected). There are possibly two effects that contribute to this higher participation:

- students responding to travel costs and moving to areas close to TAFE campuses that they are attending
- the location of a TAFE college nearby encouraging higher local participation as the cost of attending TAFE relative to other educational options is reduced.

Data available for this analysis are not sufficiently detailed to quantify the relative strength of these effects. Ideally, research would need to take into account the effect of socio-economic factors on TAFE participation. For example, given that the socio-economic status of parents is a good predictor of educational choices of children, TAFE participation is likely to be higher in areas in which average income is lower, or in which educational qualifications are lower. TAFE participation may be high in these areas for reasons unrelated to the location of institutes.

Comparing Figures 4 and 6, there appears to be a positive correlation between areas of high unemployment and high TAFE participation. This was tested empirically to determine the strength of the relationship (Labour Market Research Unit, Department of Employment and Training, 2002). By applying this test to the 2001 average unemployment rates for SLAs in south-east Queensland and average annual contact hours per student, it was found that there was a highly significant positive correlation between the rank of SLAs in unemployment rates and their rank in TAFE participation. In other words, the test suggested that areas with high unemployment rates relative to other areas have higher TAFE participation on average as well.

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32 Participation rates have been approximated by applying current TAFE enrolment data to estimated resident population data as at December 2000. This was further adjusted to an average student contact hours basis to overcome the identification problem caused by students being enrolled in more than one course or institution. Enrolment data relate to TAFE institutes only, excluding Adult Community Education (ACE) courses and other vocational education and training courses available through agricultural colleges, universities, schools and private providers.

33 The test used a Spearman’s rank correlation test.
Correlation, however, does not imply causation and it is likely that there are unexplained factors influencing both TAFE participation and unemployment rates. This may be due to requirements imposed in relation to unemployment benefits that lead to increased participation in vocational education in those areas. There may be a range of other factors. This preliminary analysis does indicate however that areas of socio-economic disadvantage do not experience lower levels of participation in TAFEs. The positive correlation suggests that these educational opportunities may be being taken up where they are needed. There is potential for further research to follow up these results.

During the 1990s, evidence shows that the proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds participating in higher education remained virtually stable (14.7 per cent in 1991 and 14.6 per cent in 2000) (DEST, 2002a). Marks et al. (2001) find that socio-economic background has a negative impact on student performance during the final years of school (as measured by their final tertiary entrance score) — although if their Year 9 achievement is not low, socio-economic background is not a strong indicator of Year 12 outcomes.

34 These are estimates based on the student’s postcode from their home address.
In Queensland the proportion of students from low socio-economic background at university is generally higher than the national average, varying from a low of 17.3 and 17.7 per cent at Queensland University of Technology and The University of Queensland respectively, to highs of 42.5 and 40.5 per cent for the University of the Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland University respectively (DEST 2002a). Students of low socio-economic background once admitted to university have the same retention and success rates as the rest of the student population. It is access to universities that remains the issue for those of low socio-economic background, not performance once admitted.

There are a variety of programs that assist disadvantaged youth to make the transition from school to work or further education. For example, in Logan City there is high youth unemployment, a significant Indigenous population and a high degree of cultural diversity.

The Logan Industry Training Network was established in 1998 and involves six state and one Catholic high school in central and west Logan. The Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEF) reports that up to 450 students are expected to take part in structured work placements next year. To overcome the issue of too many students and not enough employers, program staff are developing links with existing industrial estates and forging new relationships with the local business community (ECEF, 2002a).

The Sunshine Coast has a similar scheme. Based at Maroochydore, the Sunshine Coast Schools–Industry Links Scheme provides workplace learning opportunities for students from seven schools (state, Catholic and independent) in the surrounding area. The program, which was established in 1997 with ECEF assistance, places over 400 students across a range of industries as far away as Cairns and Brisbane. Students are introduced to the program in Year 10 though a range of career events. The program has strong representation from industry, schools, the training sector and the local community (ECEF, 2002b).

All the universities run schemes providing transition assistance to some students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and usually special entry provisions for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The University of Queensland runs *UQLink*, Queensland University of Technology has *Qstep*, Griffith University has *Unireach*, Central Queensland University (CQU) a series of such programs, and so on. There remain significant differences in terms of the proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds in specific universities. Much of the difference relates to flexibility of entry criteria and the extent of special entry provisions.

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**Under the Get Set for Work Program, the Worklinks Group will run a program for unemployed early school leavers aged 15 to 24.**

The project participants will receive industry-specific vocational education and training in up to two industries: retail, childcare, automotive, hospitality and/or warehousing.

They will undertake two 50-hour blocks of training throughout the 16-week project. At the end of the first block, they have the choice to continue training in the same industry or change to another industry.
4.2.3 Indigenous students

As indicated above, a higher proportion of Indigenous than of non-Indigenous students live outside Brisbane. For these reasons as well as those associated with race they face a number of barriers to gaining access to good educational and employment outcomes.

The majority of the 6 780 Indigenous students in Queensland are enrolled in state schools; with around 21 per cent in non-state schools. Figure 7 indicates the proportion of Indigenous students by age not enrolled in Queensland schools compared to non-Indigenous students. At ages 15 and 16, 22.3 and 36.5 per cent of the Indigenous population is not enrolled at school compared to 3.6 and 11.8 per cent of the non-Indigenous population (see Appendices F, G and H).

Figure 7 Queensland percentage of population not enrolled in school, indigenous and non-indigenous, by age, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: a) State school enrolments — EQ Corporate Data Warehouse, August 2001 student census
b) Non-state school enrolments — Commonwealth DEST, August 2001 student census
c) Estimated resident population — Australian Bureau of Statistics population census, August 2001 (2002c)

Figure 8 shows the apparent retention rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to Year 12. Although retention rates for Indigenous students have improved in the past few years, going from 30.6 per cent in 1995 to 36.3 per cent in 2001, they are still very low compared with those for the non-Indigenous population whose retention rates rose from 73.2 per cent in 1995 to 74.5 per cent in 2001.

It is notable that retention rates of Indigenous students in non-state schools are the equivalent of the Queensland average, and the gap in retention rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is much lower in these schools. Some of this difference may be related to the socio-economic background of Indigenous students in state and non-state schools, as well as to selection effects in terms of scholarships for Indigenous students in non-state schools. The difference in retention of Indigenous students between state and non-state schools is so great however that it is worth further investigation to see if there are strategies being employed in non-state schools that may be fruitfully applied in state schools.
Marks et al. (2001) found that Indigenous students had lower tertiary entrance scores than non-Indigenous students, and in examining the reasons found the outcome was partially explained by lower levels of literacy and numeracy at Year 9, but almost none of the difference was explained by socio-economic background. They also found that schools themselves had a small effect on outcomes, and this was an effect related to school environment and parental aspiration. Their research suggests the importance of initiatives such as the Cape York Partnership and other initiatives that make the local Indigenous community a significant part of local solutions.

Figure 8 Queensland: apparent retention rate for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by category of school, 2001

Table 13 below shows the outcomes of schooling for those Indigenous students who remained until Year 12. Overall again results are worse than those for non-Indigenous students, with a higher proportion (some 34 per cent) completing without an OP or a Certificate compared to a Queensland average of 9 per cent. As with retention, outcomes are better in the non-state schools.
Table 13 Queensland Schools: OP and Vocational Education and Training Certificate breakdown by statistical division, Indigenous students, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Division</th>
<th>OP &amp; Cert.</th>
<th>OP but no Cert.</th>
<th>No OP but Cert.</th>
<th>No OP &amp; No Cert.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Non-state</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Non-state</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central West</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling Downs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreton</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide Bay – Burnett</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Queensland Portfolio Performance Measurement Branch (data supplied by QBSSSSS), 2002

Indigenous participation in vocational education and training is reasonably high. The participation of young Indigenous people has remained strong though stable since 1996; the proportion of 15 to 18 year olds in the age group 15 to 24 has increased from 50 per cent in 1996 to 61.1 per cent in 2000. The highest enrolments are in the North Queensland region as Table 14 shows.
Table 14 Indigenous 15-24 year old clients by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DET region</th>
<th>Indigenous clients</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane North</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane South &amp; Gold Coast</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Queensland</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Queensland</td>
<td>2,108</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West Queensland</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide Bay/Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated/Unknown/Other</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Clients</td>
<td>5,177</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
These data represent client enrolments in all vocational education and training activity associated with all fund codes.
The data include vocational education and training delivered by TAFE institutes, private providers, agricultural colleges and universities. It does not include data supplied by the Board of Senior Secondary School Subjects (QBSSSS).
Course enrolments may be double-counted if more than one provider enrols clients.
Course enrolments may be double-counted if clients are enrolled in modules from different courses.
The above ‘Indigenous clients’ are those who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent on enrolment.
Source:
It is not possible to estimate with any certainty what proportion of Indigenous students complete a vocational education qualification. However from Table 15 we can see that the majority of enrolments were in Certificates I, II and III — with Certificate II being the most numerous category. Again, compared with overall Queensland enrolments a lower proportion of Indigenous students enrol in higher-level certificates.

---

35 These are regions defined by the Department of Employment and Training.
### Table 15 Vocational education: Indigenous enrolments by qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification level</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1999</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1998</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indigenous enrolment</td>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>Indigenous enrolment</td>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>Indigenous enrolment</td>
<td>% of total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF — Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF — Certificate I</td>
<td>1 752</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>1 893</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>1 561</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF — Certificate II</td>
<td>2 456</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>2 284</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>1 618</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF — Certificate III</td>
<td>1 551</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>1 551</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF — Certificate IV</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF — Diploma</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Certificate — Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Certificate — Post-Trade</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Diploma</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate — Not elsewhere classified</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1 110</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate — Trade</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable (i.e. not an award course)</td>
<td>1 171</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>1 001</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Attainment</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1 039</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total indigenous course Enrolments</td>
<td>8 471</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>8 647</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>8 443</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

These data represent client enrolments in all vocational education and training activity associated with all fund codes.

The above data include vocational education and training delivered by TAFE institutes, private providers, agricultural colleges and universities. It does not include data supplied by the Board of Senior Secondary School Subjects (QBSSSS).

Course enrolments may be double counted if more than one provider enrols clients.

Course enrolments may be double counted if clients are enrolled in modules from different courses.

The above ‘Indigenous clients’ are those who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent on enrolment.

In Australian higher education in 2001 some 1.2 per cent of students were Indigenous, compared with their proportion in the population of 1.7 per cent; this represented increased participation, up from 0.9 per cent in 1991 (DEST, 2002a). In Queensland universities, the proportion of Indigenous students ranged from 0.6 per cent at the University of the Sunshine Coast to 3.3 per cent at James Cook University.
The improvement in participation of Indigenous students in higher education demonstrates the way alternative entry schemes have increased opportunities. Yet the success and retention rates of Indigenous students in higher education have remained below those of the overall student population.

There has been a large range of initiatives at both state and Commonwealth level addressing issues in relation to Indigenous education and training. Many of these initiatives have made a difference.

For example, the Community Employment Assistance Program (CEAP) funds community and public sector organisations to provide employment assistance to the long-term unemployed or particular disadvantaged groups to assist them to find employment. This assistance may include literacy and numeracy assistance, living skills, vocational training, work experience, job search and job placement assistance. Although in the majority of cases projects encourage inclusive recruitment, there have been 48 Indigenous-specific projects funded under CEAP.

Table 16 indicates outcomes from October 1998 to June 2002 (bearing in mind that some projects are still ongoing).
Table 16  Project outcomes from October 1998 to June 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Period of unemployment</th>
<th>Post-project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>&lt;12 mths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 21 yrs</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–25 yrs</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Employment and Training, Employment Initiatives, 2002

There are a number of strategies to address educational outcomes in Cape York. The *Partners for Success Strategy* is aimed at improved educational outcomes for Indigenous people. It is based on shared responsibility between Education Queensland and Indigenous communities. This initiative has links to the Cape York Partnerships and initiatives under the Queensland Government Ten Year Partnership (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, 2002). Processes associated with school–community partnerships have seen the development and implementation of localised approaches to address local challenges. The major thrust of the strategy rests with increasing Indigenous community participation in decision making at the local school level. While the strategy has a statewide focus, it has initially concentrated on those school communities with an Indigenous student cohort of 80 per cent or more.

A ‘place management’ approach to delivery of training has been put in place by the Department of Employment and Training. It includes adopting the Cape York Purchasing strategy, a new model of funding training, which will ensure a more coordinated approach between training organisations and government agencies on the ground, ensuring better linkages between schools and vocational education and training providers.

The Western Cape College is an example of local collaboration. It is a multi-schooling campus that consists of four communities in Cape York including Aurukun, Jessica Point, Mapoon and Weipa North. The College provides education from preschool through to Year 12 or its equivalent, including flexible pathways through to employment. The College is also part of the *New Basic* trial through all four school communities and provides a robust curriculum framework to support quality community engagement.

A common feature of the programs described above is a focus on ensuring the involvement of the local Indigenous community in designing and delivering programs to address the particular area of disadvantage identified. As many of the programs have recognised, low levels of literacy and numeracy are a major barrier to successful outcomes. However effective literacy and numeracy programs may be best delivered in company with other education or employment initiatives.
In summary:

- For Indigenous young people rates of retention to Year 12 are lower than for the rest of the community, as are outcomes from Year 12.

- There is substantial participation of Indigenous young people in vocational education and training (above the proportion of Indigenous people in the population).

- Participation of Indigenous people in higher education has improved, but remains below the proportion of Indigenous people in the population.

- Overall educational outcomes are worse than for the non-Indigenous population.

- Research suggests that a key issue is the level of literacy and numeracy at Year 9 and its effects on educational outcomes.

- A number of successful local initiatives have been undertaken bringing together local Indigenous communities, employment projects and education and training opportunities.

Recommendations

(15) That in those areas with low retention rates, there be a targeted initiative with local communities to address work education and readiness with Indigenous students, focusing on enhancing literacy and numeracy.

(16) That there be a pilot project to investigate partnering non-state and state schools with Indigenous students in strategies to improve retention rates.

(17) That in the development of local models for improving collaboration between sectors, there be provision for ‘transition’ brokers in regions with large Indigenous populations to work with local Indigenous students and communities to facilitate transition to work or further education.
4.3 Local flexibility

In the following chapter the systemic barriers that impair connections and effective collaboration between the educational sectors are explored. At the systemic level solutions must tackle large issues and try to forge outcomes and understandings that will underpin better and more equitable access for all.

System change is costly and involves major change management issues, as new ways are constructed and old ways modified. As is clear in the next chapter, a major system-wide change in educational policy to competency-based assessment in vocational education has meant reconsideration down to individual program level of the nature of the articulation between a particular vocational education program and a specific higher education one. This is a good example of the way one large system-wide change can have many ramifications and unexpected consequences.

While systemic change is necessary for some issues, it is not always an appropriate context for experimentation. It must necessarily look to the system-wide consequences and care less about the detail of its effects in local settings. Many of the issues that have been discussed in this chapter point to the patchwork that makes up system-wide outcomes. Retention rates have improved in Queensland, but a number of groups and regions lag behind. Vocational education in schools provides more opportunities, but what is possible depends on local employment and resources.

For these reasons it is important to foster sensitivity to local circumstance. In the local circumstance lie the opportunities for innovation. The costs of trying new relationships and forging new understandings are necessarily less. At the local level the opportunity to observe more closely the strategies that work and to build a sense of why they work is better. The local level provides a flexibility that is important to building better transitions for the diverse conditions of young people.

There is a variety of forms that local collaboration can take. Some involve specific projects in local areas, such as some of the examples cited in the previous section. Some can involve partnerships between an employer or set of employers and a school or set of schools. An example of a small initiative to foster retention in the USA is the State Department’s Stay in School Program. This employs a small number of young people, offering them part-time work while they are at school and full-time work in vacations.
Other initiatives involve particular local forms of cross-sectoral collaboration. An example of this type of collaboration to provide greater opportunities for students in remote areas is the Mt Isa Education and Training Precinct. Education Queensland and the Department of Employment and Training are working jointly to establish this precinct, which provides links between public education and training providers. Kalkadoon and Mount Isa State High Schools and the Mount Isa Institute of TAFE will join together to become one multi-campus college. The precinct will also incorporate the state's first government-run residential education facility that will target students from outlying areas, particularly Indigenous students who are currently at risk of not completing their Year 12 or an equivalent qualification.

Yet other initiatives involve the development of community collaborations. The Whittlesea Youth Commitment is one such example developed in a local community, with involvement from a range of sectors and community organizations, to assist young people at risk of leaving school early and others to make a smooth transition to work or further study. This approach has been adapted in other circumstances and is the type of initiative that underpins the Victorian Government's Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs).

Thirty-one LLEN projects were established as a result of the Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria (Kirby, 2000), which aimed to enhance the education, training and employment opportunities for young people at the local level.

The LLENs are built upon three key themes in the Victorian Government's commitment to education reform:

♦ community building
♦ innovation
♦ development of infrastructure.

The formation of LLENs meant a significant shift to local decision making and partnerships and away from centralised decision making. The LLENs look at their local communities with a particular focus on economic activities and youth. They facilitate activities or programs in their communities to promote economic growth or assist local youth. A key role of the networks is to improve outcomes for young people, including improved rates of participation in learning, higher qualifications, and greater success in finding employment.

The LLENs are based largely on local government area boundaries. Membership of a LLEN is drawn from any individual or organisation with an interest in post-compulsory education training and employment within the area governed by that LLEN. Representatives of schools and vocational education providers make up the majority of members, although membership is voluntary. Some organisations, that operate across local area boundaries belong to more than one network.
At present the 31 LLENs are each funded to the extent of $225,000 to $400,000. Funding is for the development and implementation of high-priority initiatives and for administrative and operational costs. LLENs are purchasers, not providers, of services and programs. The LLENs have a three-year agreement with the Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission (formerly the State Training Board).

The Gold Coast Youth Commitment is a network that builds on the learning that occurred in the Whittlesea project and other similar projects in Victoria. The network is a community partnership consisting of key stakeholders concerned for the future welfare of its youth, particularly those in transition from school to work or further study. It aims to assist young people on the Gold Coast to complete Year 12 at school or with another training provider, obtain Year 12 or equivalent education or training qualifications, such as a TAFE certificate, or obtain a full-time job that is linked to education and/or training.

The strategies involve personal action plans for all secondary students, and skilled transition brokers to case manage all students leaving school prior to completion of Year 12 and to identify job opportunities. The network is linked to a youth program at the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE where staff work closely with young people who are disenchanted with the school system. This program assists them to go back to school or into apprenticeships, traineeships, further training or work.

These initiatives are good examples of local involvement. In the Whittlesea Commitment some of the early targets have been achieved. For example, there was very little information on what happened to young people when they left school. Without that information, designing strategies that intervene at appropriate points is haphazard. Data collection has improved immeasurably through cooperation between sectors and an understanding of the importance of this data to shaping better outcomes. School retention rates have also improved since increased attention has been directed to this area (Kellock, 2001). Some other benchmarks have not yet been achieved, but progress to date indicates the importance of intense local focus on these issues.

While most of these projects work with a range of young people their focus is largely those young people at risk. This type of initiative, seen more broadly in the Victorian LLENs example, is worthy of support and development to ensure greater focus on issues of retention and transition.
**Recommendations**

(18) That there be support for local innovation in providing greater diversity in modes of provision in education and training for 15 to 24 year olds.

(19) That local or regional networks be developed to encourage cross-sectoral, industry and community involvement in improving outcomes for 15 to 24 year olds. These networks could assist in identifying areas for innovation and for greater cooperation or cross-sectoral planning and provision. They should be broadly based and include a variety of representatives from groups such as schools, vocational education and training providers, employers, local government, universities, and community.

**4.4 Conclusion**

In rural and remote areas retention to Year 12 and outcomes from Year 12 for young people are, in general, worse than in metropolitan areas. For Indigenous young people, of whom a large percentage is located outside Brisbane, the outcomes from schooling are even worse. In part this may be the result of less opportunity to complete Years 11 and 12 in the rural and remote areas, and the lack of choice available given the difficulties in providing a range of possibilities. The broad picture suggests that there should be concerted attention to the way schooling and senior schooling are delivered in these areas.

A positive feature of access in rural and remote areas is the significant number of TAFE campuses spread throughout the state. Also, involvement of Indigenous students in vocational education and training is comparatively high. There are significant access programs for Indigenous youth in vocational education. It appears however that the models being developed in Mt Isa that bring greater collaboration between vocational education and schooling may be an important part of the solution to improving the likelihood that those in rural and remote areas, and Indigenous students, will reach Year 12 or the equivalent.

The solution in these areas is not going to lie only in the schooling sector. Given the difficulties of providing an adequate range of opportunity without a reasonable scale of activity, the objective of ensuring that a higher proportion of young people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, reach Year 12 or equivalent will need to be sought through collaborative ventures between the sectors.
There are possibilities for augmenting delivery in remote locations by distance and on-line means. Development of appropriate resources for this type of activity will need to be supported centrally at state level and would be best if it also involved collaboration between the sectors. Without that collaboration there will be investment undertaken in different e-learning platforms with different protocols in each sector and less ability to use resources across sectors where appropriate.

However on-line education will not, of itself, provide greater incentive to complete Year 12 or equivalent. On-line education requires substantial resources ‘on the ground’ to provide support and learning assistance and encouragement. This again requires resources in the regions (as with virtual schooling) to support the learner.

Finally, the lesson from looking at access problems for various groups is the differences in their local circumstances. Local solutions that have been piloted are very important to achieving objectives. They have the advantage that they are able to develop more detailed knowledge of the particular barriers affecting young people in an area and are able to mobilise action from across a range of sectors. The nature of the issues raised and the resources needed to deal with them will not come from one education sector. They require collaboration, and it is most effectively gained and maintained at the local level.
Chapter 5  Connecting the sectors

5.1  Introduction

Previous chapters have outlined the current patterns of participation by young people in education and work. In doing so they have pointed to the multiple paths available between various types of education, training and work. They have emphasised the fact that these paths are not simple linear progressions from school through one or two sequential experiences of education and training to work. They have outlined the way schooling has increased the diversity of its provision and the way vocational education and training and higher education have allowed students with a broader range of previous education or work experience to gain entry.

As with the diversification in modes of transport that allows road, rail, air and sea to provide different ways to reach the same destination, there has been an increase in ways that people may access education and training. However for young people not every mode is equally easy to access, and some provide for a less predictable and bumpier ride.

Some of the factors that affect the ease with which people are able to move around among different educational experiences relate to individual and social circumstances. Others derive from reasonable expectations about the level of skills and knowledge that people need to bring from one educational experience to another. Yet there are some that proceed from the way the various educational sectors organise themselves, and the organisational routines and responses they build in relation to various incentives, such as funding, or in response to imperatives, such as federal or state government policy.

This chapter examines two broad aspects of the ways the various educational sectors connect, since they affect the extent to which we can as a society honour our commitment to young people to provide them with access to knowledge and skills that will give the opportunity for rewarding lives. These two aspects are cross-sector qualification linkages and funding.

The chapter examines:

♦ methods to improve cross-sector qualification linkages principally between vocational education and training and higher education

♦ ways to change funding and planning mechanisms to facilitate greater collaboration between schools and vocational education providers.
5.2 Cross-sector qualification linkages

The development of flexible and diverse educational paths for young people relies in part on the basis on which they are able to move between educational sectors to build skills and knowledge. There are three factors in these transitions:

♦ the requirements for achievement at Year 12 or equivalent and the way achievements are compared to provide information for tertiary entrance

♦ how this information is used by the vocational education and higher education sectors for tertiary entrance

♦ the way achievements from one sector are accepted and valued by another in decisions about entry and credit.

The first of these factors, in particular the requirements for achievement at Year 12 or equivalent, is in Queensland the subject of a separate report (Pitman and Herschell, 2002). That report recommends a new Senior Certificate that records achievements in a range of subjects. These achievements can be accumulated over time, and may be drawn from the diversity of the school curriculum as well as from other providers. Such a proposal implies the need for easier transition across sectors.

The second factor is reliant on the first, since tertiary entrance is dependent on assessment and relative ranking of achievements on the Senior Certificate and its equivalents. When the precise nature of reform to the Senior Certificate in Queensland is agreed, there will need to be a re-examination of tertiary entrance. This issue is, however, beyond the terms of reference of this Review.

The third factor, on which this section focuses, is cross-sector qualification linkages, primarily those that have been called credit transfer and articulation.

The recent ANTA–Australian Vice Chancellors’ Committee (AVCC) Project on pathways between vocational education and training and higher education defines cross-sector qualification linkages as

... any formal connection between a VET qualification or the parts of a VET qualification and a HE qualification or parts thereof that is developed to create a cross-sectoral learning pathway or learning model, negotiated by organisations in both sectors with the authority to develop and/or issue qualifications (Carnegie, 2000, p.viii).

More diverse types of linkage have been developed between the sectors over the past decade. The ANTA–AVCC *Pathways to Partnership Report* identifies four major types of linkages:

♦ credit transfer\(^{26}\) (individualised or structured)

♦ articulation\(^{27}\) (nested and dual-sector awards)

---

\(^{26}\)Credit transfer is the process of linking individual components of one qualification and another qualification to establish credit exemptions (Carnegie, 2000).

\(^{27}\)Articulation is the process of linking qualifications that are at a similar level.
combined dual-sector qualifications undertaken concurrently

♦ other forms of qualification linkages (such as between vocational education and training diplomas and postgraduate awards).

Beneath these four categories are a plethora of individual agreements between universities and public and private vocational education and training providers. Indeed one of the trends of the past few years has been a move towards individual agreements between a single university and a single vocational education and training provider. These agreements are usually for a specific program or set of programs. In other words, links have become more numerous, more specific and particular in their operation in recent years. In part this has been a response to the development of National Training Packages in the vocational education sector, and in part a response to changes in the way institutions respond to their prospective student markets.

Before discussing the issues that arise from these broad changes in the relationship between the vocational education and training and higher education sectors, it is necessary to briefly outline the features of these four broad types of linkage.

### 5.2.1 Credit transfer

The credit transfer process involves taking subjects or modules in one program or course, or a whole qualification, and establishing equivalence for the purpose of exemption in another subject or module or another program. Essentially the judgment being applied is that the knowledge and skills gained in one setting can be deemed equivalent to those being offered in another, and so the student is exempted from having to repeat that part for which they gain exemption.

Credit offered may be specific, that is, it is deemed to replace an identified equivalent core or compulsory part of the other program. It may be unspecified, that is, a judgment is made that completing a given subject or qualification indicates a general level of skill and knowledge that can replace a part of the new program the student is entering.

The decision about the credit to be offered may be assessed for each individual student by the teaching area. In universities, decisions about credit are often made for an individual at the level of the department, school or faculty that is responsible for the program or sequence of subjects for which credit is sought.

In other circumstances the credit to be offered may be the subject of an agreement between two institutions, and so a standard amount of credit may be granted to people with the relevant completed qualification. Such agreements may also specify credit to be granted for incomplete qualifications.

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*Articulation is the connection between two qualifications in terms of the level of credit or advanced standing that an individual will automatically receive (Carnegie, 2000).*
Similar agreements have been struck between a set of institutions. For example in the late 1990s, TAFE Queensland developed an agreement with the majority of universities in Queensland for crediting at least one year for an undergraduate qualification if students had completed a diploma qualification at a Queensland TAFE institute. The introduction of new National Training Packages has been problematic for this arrangement and has led to reconsideration of these previous understandings by Queensland universities. This was highlighted during the consultation phase of this Review.

The AVCC has credit transfer arrangements for TAFE qualifications in 13 fields of study. The credit transfer agreement specifies a minimum level of credit, effectively one year of a related three-year or four-year undergraduate program for a completed diploma. The agreement has a number of conditions. It applies only to the universities listed under the particular field of study. Credit is likely to be specified in relation to particular subjects in each university. Credit depends on how long it was since the diploma was completed: many universities impose a ten-year limit on taking into account past studies, whether in vocational education and training or in higher education. The university may also impose requirements in terms of level of achievement in a diploma. And finally none of these arrangements guarantees entry. The nature of this systemic arrangement emphasises the particularity of the way credit is granted.

Carnegie (2000) notes there are two forms of credit. Block credit essentially gives an unspecified amount (such as one year of credit) for gaining a particular level of qualification in the relevant field, while content-based credit matches specific curriculum and outcomes.

The AVCC agreement is structured as if it is to be based around block credit, but is often operationalised in universities as content-based credit around a minimum guideline about the amount of credit to be granted. Credit on the basis of content equivalence is usually the stronger element when the two approaches are mixed. This approach recognises directly the knowledge and skills gained in the other qualification and seems therefore a more defensible way to provide credit.

The attachment to specified credit in higher education is, however, one of the factors that affect the ease of credit transfer. It finds its mirror in the reliance in the vocational sector for determination of credit, on assessment of competencies attained (which affects credit transfer from higher education to vocational education and training).

An emphasis on specified credit appears to be more flexible and to ease transition between sectors, yet it is open to implementation in ways that minimise this transition. For example, an overly rigid and detailed approach to assessing equivalence of content between different subjects can result in findings that nominally similar subjects do not cover the same material. Similarly, the assertion that competencies can be gained only in certain ways can prevent recognition of the knowledge and skills developed in different educational settings. Both are used to protect standards, and also to insist that students undertake the majority of their program in the sector to which they have now moved.
It is for these reasons that a general specification of minimum levels of credit is needed to ensure appropriate recognition of prior study. As has been indicated above, while individual universities have concluded such agreements with particular vocational education and training providers, it is not clear what the minimum level of credit will be for a student across universities.

For transition from vocational education and training to university, the 2001 NCVER student outcomes survey data show clients who have used their TAFE qualification to gain recognition of prior learning (RPL)\(^{28}\) into further study. Further study has been identified by level of qualification being studied (such as a bachelor’s degree or higher) (see Table 17).

### Table 10  Credit from course completed in 2000 towards further study (by qualification level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of qualification being studied for</th>
<th>Yes, applied and got some (%)</th>
<th>No, applied but did not get any (%)</th>
<th>Don’t know, exemptions applied for but still under consideration (%)</th>
<th>Total of cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree or higher</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1 181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate diploma</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced diploma</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate diploma</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced certificate</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of competency or proficiency</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate IV</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate III</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate II</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate I</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other certificate</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school qualification e.g. mature age, night school</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of attainment</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other course</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td>1 182</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>3 250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCVER 2001c student outcomes survey

\(^{28}\) *RPL means recognition of competencies currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. Under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), competencies may be attained through any combination of formal or informal training and education, work experience or general life experience. The evidence may take a variety of forms and could include certification, references from past employers, testimonials from clients and work samples that can be validated* (ANTA, 2001b, p. 5).
5.2.2 From school to vocational education and training

The competency-based assessment system in vocational education and training means in theory that if a school student has achieved certain competencies then they should be given credit for these through RPL when they enrol in further vocational education and training at a TAFE institute or with a private provider.

As indicated earlier, concerns were expressed by industry and by some vocational educationalists about the quality of the vocational education and training that some students had undertaken at school. Some of these concerns related to what was perceived to be the inadequate workplace experience involved in school-based vocational education. During consultations some of those involved with vocational education from schools expressed concern that students were being required to repeat aspects of courses that they had previously completed. There is no evidence available beyond these anecdotes that this is occurring in any widespread way. If it were occurring generally or in some particular areas of vocational education and training that would be a cause for concern. This is a matter worthy of further investigation.

5.2.3 From vocational education and training to higher education

Training packages have redefined the basis of qualifications in VET and established competencies as a fundamental basis for assessment (Carnegie, 2000).

The higher education focus on content equivalence as the basis for determining credit for prior study has been made more difficult in the context of National Training Packages. Many universities have reconsidered the amount and type of credit given. In the face of less certainty, agreements tend to be struck with particular institutes or providers. While there is no reason to discourage individual agreements or the development of stronger collaborations, there is a question to be asked from the perspective of the individual student (rather than the institutions): have these changes facilitated or eased transitions?

The particular features of National Training Packages that have caused difficulty are the potential variability in the packages, and the emphasis on competencies (which tend to be seen as particular or generic skills rather than in-depth knowledge). Wheelahan (2000) notes:

... most [respondents] said that they [training packages] spelt the end of generic arrangements ... because higher education had no idea of the curriculum that was used to prepare students to be assessed as competent ... [competency based training] had also stripped many of the qualifications of content, in particular, the knowledge base and capacity to pursue intellectual inquiry (Wheelahan, 2000, p. 44).
Both of these features essentially relate to the way National Training Packages are constructed in terms of competency in a set of workplace-based skills. In some the knowledge-based requirements are clear and in others this is not the case. Some Training Packages have a very broad range of units available and no requirement that some units are core, which means significant variability in the units that a student has completed in a qualification and sometimes leads universities to assess each applicant as a separate case (Carnegie, 2000).

University curricula are designed around content (and this is the basis on which credit is determined). As well, curriculum is linked more or less closely to a set of graduate attributes and these attributes, besides specifying attainment of generic skills in areas such as communication or problem solving, also usually require development of a body of knowledge in a particular field. So translation between the two approaches to determine credit is likely to be time-consuming and more difficult because of the differences in underlying educational philosophy.

The ANTA–AVCC Pathways to Partnerships Report also raised another concern specifically about the way competencies for diplomas were defined. As diplomas are the level at which credit is given for movement to university, this is important. It has been argued that in diplomas ‘a significant emphasis on generic managerial-supervisory competencies is evident rather than an emphasis on high-level technical related competencies’ (Carnegie, 2000, p.190). In the context of credit transfer this is a problem, since the equivalence being sought to a bachelor’s degree will involve an assessment of knowledge and technical content.

5.2.4 From higher education to vocational education and training

There has been very little focus on the issue of credit to be granted for those who move from higher education to vocational education. The vocational education system uses the RPL process to determine current competency and students are provided with credit29.

One argument is that this is not a matter for major concern since most higher education students (apart from those who are undertaking study for personal interest or recreational reasons) who move to vocational education are gaining skills in a field unrelated to their university studies. The argument is that since it is these particular workplace skills they seek, they are either not interested in credit or it is not appropriate that they receive it (Carnegie, 2000).

29 Students are required to pay standard tuition fees for the relevant competencies.
Certainly there is no simple translation of the vocational education to higher education credit transfer model in the context of a completed higher education qualification in a related field. However the most important issue is for those students who have incomplete higher education qualifications. They may not be seeking to gain skills in a field unrelated to the one in which they initially enrolled at university. Of the 3,407 applicants through Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) to TAFE Queensland in 2000, 186 (5.5 per cent) had an incomplete degree compared with 12 applicants who had a complete degree (2001 unpublished data QTAC, (2002d)).

The other concern expressed about credit for higher education is indeed the mirror of the universities’ concerns about competencies. It is suggested that successful completion of a university subject is not the equivalent of achieving competencies based on industry standards. This is argued because competencies are seen as having been developed and applied in a work-related context. This is again a demonstration of the different educational philosophies underpinning vocational and higher education. In the ANTA–AVCC survey, 65 per cent of TAFE and 71 per cent of private providers agreed with the statement:

... completion of a subject ... at a university does not provide satisfactory achievement of competency for the purpose of achieving credit towards a VET qualification (Carnegie, 2000, p. 122).

It is clear that equating a particular subject with a competency might be difficult and in a number of cases there would be no equivalence between a competency and a single subject. However to carry this argument to its logical conclusion would be to suggest that, in a workplace, a graduate with a Bachelor of Commerce degree would not have a number of the competencies to be found in someone with a Diploma in Business Services. That the two graduates would have completed their education through different approaches and different emphases, and that each might have some skills developed on graduation that the other might not, may be true. This is not an argument, however, that looking at a range of successfully completed subjects and a set of competencies and establishing equivalence is not possible.

There are difficulties in equating competencies with university subjects, but as with the reverse case they will need understanding and collaboration if ways are to be found to make transition between sectors more navigable.

5.2.5 Making credit transfer work

There are of course successful examples of the negotiation of new credit transfer arrangements from vocational education and training to higher education in the new circumstances. It is clear however that it needs the development of better understandings in each sector of the differences and of ways to negotiate them, as well as a willingness to collaborate. Examples cited of successful outcomes in Wheelahan (2000) and Carnegie (2000) involved individualised approaches in which both the vocational education and training and higher education sectors essentially modified their approaches to make arrangements work. Most of the examples cited were of
close and more integrated arrangements rather than a broad credit transfer agreement. It is in this context that many of the issues about knowledge and skills and competencies will be resolved.

Translating these resolutions to broader situations is the challenge. It is clear that broader credit transfer arrangements need to be built from discussion and agreement by the different providers within fields of study, since the particular complexion of the issues to be dealt with varies by field. At present there are perceived difficulties and no clear forums for the sectors to get together and discuss other arrangements. There is no place to share practice or to discuss more innovative arrangements in terms of concurrent qualifications or other articulation arrangements.

5.2.6 Articulation

Articulation arrangements provide for credit or advanced standing between one qualification and another but usually in an integrated way. Sometimes these come in the form of nested programs where a student proceeds seamlessly from a certificate to a diploma to a degree. The student may enter or exit at various points along the way with a completed qualification. Or the articulation may be at the end of a completed qualification. For example Brisbane and North Point Institute of TAFE have diplomas in the areas of children’s services, community services, justice, and information technology (software development) that all articulate to bachelor’s degrees at the Queensland University of Technology.

Some articulations involve guaranteed progression from one qualification to another if satisfactory results have been achieved. Others give certainty on advanced standing but may require the student to gain entry to the next qualification. These arrangements provide greater certainty for students and usually build stronger collaborative relationships between providers.

5.2.7 Dual-sector qualifications

In some cases more integrated arrangements are established across sectors, such as dual-sector qualifications where students undertake concurrent study in both awards. These awards can be linked or they can bring together complementary awards in different fields of study.

An example of the first is the three-year hospitality management program between The University of Queensland and Southbank Institute of TAFE (COTAH). In this award, students begin with a diploma program that has an additional university subject ‘bolted on’ to the curriculum. Students complete a diploma with Honours and move to the Bachelor of International Hotel and Tourism Management. They can complete this degree in three years given the advanced standing from the diploma. The program is co-located at the Southbank campus of the TAFE, and uses teachers from both institutions.
Consultations with universities also identified other dual award programs at QUT. QUT offers students the opportunity to enrol simultaneously at a TAFE institute and at QUT. It appears, however, that in Queensland there is very little evidence of concurrent study in complementary awards — that most articulation is ‘end-on’. This indicates the need for support and encouragement for greater dialogue between the sectors on these issues.

5.2.8 Other linkage issues

One other area that affects credit transfer and some articulation arrangements is tertiary entrance. As discussed in Chapter 3, a variety of forms of evidence are used and students are admitted based on this evidence, which could include incomplete or complete vocational education and training qualifications or work experience or a combination of factors. As previously discussed, vocational education and training qualifications are assessed and students assigned a rank, which in turn determines the programs to which they can gain admission. Not all universities in Queensland assign the same score to completed vocational education and training qualifications.

Table 18, as taken from Robinson and Misko (2001, Table 22, p. 66), indicates the number of students gaining admission to Queensland universities on the basis of completion or partial completion of a TAFE course. In general, the credit granted towards a bachelor’s degree is from a diploma or advanced diploma. As the table indicates, the proportion of students commencing a university program on the basis of completed or partially completed TAFE qualifications remains comparatively low (7.1 per cent overall).
Table 11  Students commencing a university course at bachelor level or below at a Queensland university by basis for admission to current course, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Completion or partial completion of a TAFE course (other than a secondary education course at TAFE)</th>
<th>Satisfactory completion of the final year of secondary education at TAFE</th>
<th>Total TAFE</th>
<th>Satisfactory completion of the final year of secondary education at school</th>
<th>Other basis for entry</th>
<th>Total commencing students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Queensland University</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith University</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Cook University</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Southern Queensland</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Queensland</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportion of students (%)

Source: Robinson and Misko (2001, table 22, p. 66)

One particular issue in the assignment of rank is the way that competencies are assessed in vocational education and training qualifications. Essentially competencies are assessed on a pass/fail basis rather than on a graded scale. As a result universities assign the same score to all vocational education and training applicants at the same qualification level. As a result all vocational education and training applicants with that qualification sit on the same rank. This may restrict entry for some students who may perform better than average if the average rank assigned falls below a cut-off for entry.

In some cases where there are close collaborative arrangements other approaches are taken. For example the entrants from the Adult Tertiary Preparation Certificate at the Logan Institute of TAFE are given guaranteed entry to certain specified programs at Griffith University if they successfully complete the program. However graded results are also produced for all these applicants and Griffith has a staff member co-located at the Institute. A high-graded result will allow entry to some professional programs which typically require higher entry scores than the set of programs to which guaranteed entry is given. This is an example of the way a graded score produces a finer grained set of ranks for those who complete vocational education and training qualifications and potentially greater options for entry to students completing vocational qualifications.
Performance level assessment (PLA) is a supplementary reporting assessment system of TAFE Queensland. It identifies students who excel in their achievements and demonstrate evidence of additional effort and performance against identified PLA criteria. A PLA may be awarded following the initial achievement of competency. The PLA reports provide additional information to students, employers and universities concerning student achievement. Not all TAFE courses or units within courses are deemed suitable for PLA.

In Queensland the TAFE network has been piloting PLA and it remains optional across the system. Only some qualifications are being assessed using this system during 2002.

The Schofield report (1999) *Quality in the Traineeship System in Queensland* suggested that a form of ‘graded assessment’ would be advantageous. Employers wanted to know how well their trainees were progressing and the provision of graded assessments, rather than ‘competent/not yet competent’ had benefits for the employer and student. This approach was later supported by the Training and Employment Board and the Training Recognition Council and restated in the report by Robinson and Misko (2001).

Universities would support a sector-wide strategy. As consultation identified, ‘Recent targeted trialling of performance-level assessment in the TAFE sector to allow individual performance to be recorded can only enhance movement across the sectors and should be implemented sector-wide’ (The University of Queensland response, 2002).

Other states have been piloting a scored assessment system in recent years. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and the New South Wales Board of Studies have been developing a standards-referenced model, while other approaches to graded assessment are being adopted in other jurisdictions. Western Australia has developed a similar approach to that of Victoria and trialled a system of graded assessment across thirteen TAFE institutes, with the intention of phasing it in for all training packages by the end of 2004.

Performance-level assessments for diploma and advanced diploma courses would assist reassessment of the ranks assigned by universities for vocational education qualifications.

### 5.2.9 Transparency and systemic cross-sector linkages

The increasing reliance on individual arrangements and collaborations has brought much-needed diversity and innovation in the development of pathways. It should be further encouraged since these local arrangements often provide significant benefits to industry, community and students apart from their benefits to the providers. However specific local agreements should not come at the expense of some general understandings and expectations at state level about the transitions between educational qualifications. It was for this reason that at national level the Australian Qualifications Framework was developed. This framework is of little benefit without some underpinning in real cross-sectoral qualification linkages.
The erosion of general understandings about credit transfer is an issue for a student moving between sectors. First it means that possibilities for articulation and credit vary depending on the vocational education and training provider and higher education institution that the student attends. Even when a student is going from a qualification in one field of study, such as business, to further study in the same field the amount of credit granted will vary in ways that reflect the nature of the particular agreement between the two institutions in question. Second, the variety of arrangements and the complexity of information involved detract from the transparency of linkages and may discourage movement between sectors.

Individual arrangements have two sides. On one side is the positive effect of building collaboration and perhaps partnerships between institutions that are beneficial to cross-sectoral movement. They enable institutions to build the detailed knowledge and relationships that assure them of the overall quality of the programs and students. For institutions they may be seen also to provide an ‘edge’ in a competitive student market, and indeed this is often part of the incentive for their development. For example, in international student markets the ability to ‘guarantee’ entry and the level of credit from a vocational education and training provider to a university is a significant marketing advantage.

However the benefits to institutions must be balanced with the benefits to students. For students these arrangements may improve certainty about future possibilities once they are enrolled. They may also offer the prospect of more coherent and integrated curricula as they progress through qualifications. However, they may discourage a broad choice among other possibilities for further study because the incentives are ‘locked’ into the favoured partner. They may make transition the sort of decision that has to be made when enrolling in the first qualification rather than easing the more disparate paths and transitions towards lifelong learning.

The ANTA–AVCC Policy Guidelines on Cross-Sector Qualification Linkages (AVCC, 2001) have been developed to provide organisations determining structured cross-sector qualification linkages with a framework to guide and facilitate them. The guidelines are designed to provide students and organisations with information about these processes, to help understand and clarify the pathways and outcomes. They are based on recognition of and support for a diverse set of arrangements and models for linking qualifications across sectors. These provide a national framework, but they do not generate specific minimum agreement about credit transfer and articulation across a set of institutions in particular fields.

For these reasons it is important that the work currently going on in TAFE Queensland to map competencies to curricula in some key study areas is widened and that new statewide understandings are forged across a range of study areas. These agreements will need to be built up from groups from both sectors representing each field of study but they will enhance the work that is already occurring.
In summary:

- The difference in educational philosophy between higher education approaches to curricula and the competency-based approach of vocational education and training has produced barriers to effective cross-sector qualification linkages in terms of credit transfer and entry ranks.

- Credit transfer arrangements between vocational education and training and higher education have become more numerous over time, and also more likely to be individual arrangements between a vocational education and training provider and a university in a particular field of study.

- Credit transfer arrangements are as a result more diverse, the ability of the student to gain a clear understanding of what is possible is compromised, and ease of transition from one sector to the other is affected.

- Credit transfer arrangements from incomplete higher education to vocational education and training are not well-defined.

- Local possibilities for concurrent dual-sector qualifications or other articulation arrangements need stronger encouragement.

- Commitment to introducing performance-level assessments for diploma-level qualifications in vocational education would provide finer grained assessment of ranks for entry to higher education and facilitate transition.
Recommendations

(10) That to improve entry possibilities, performance-level assessments be implemented for diploma-level programs in vocational education and training.

(11) That to improve the transparency of credit transfer arrangements between vocational education and training providers and universities, representatives of both sectors meet in field of study groups to develop guidelines about minimum levels of credit to be provided to students; the oversight and development of this process to be facilitated by a committee constituted to represent the sectors but with an independent chair.

(12) That the above field of study groups also consider the guidelines for credit from complete and incomplete university programs to vocational education programs.

5.3 Funding

As is clear above, the vocational education and training and higher education sectors have different missions and differing educational philosophies. While there are increasing examples of collaboration from agreements and partnerships between individual institutions to co-location and the development of educational precincts, there are also barriers to cooperation and these barriers can have the effect of inhibiting achievement of greater and better transition between sectors.

The school sector also has a complex relationship with the other sectors. It prepares students for further education in the vocational or higher education sectors. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, in Queensland the school sector has also developed a substantial presence in delivering vocational education and training principally at the Certificate I and II level. Schools are responsible with the vocational education and training sector for providing school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

Concerns have been expressed by some employers and industry groups about the quality of some school-based vocational education. Moreover there are issues for schools in ensuring that they and their teachers can be accredited in line with national standards, and in the cost of providing some breadth in their vocational education offerings.
In all these instances of collaboration and overlapping responsibilities, issues arise about the most effective use of resources, both human and capital. Funding history drives much of the way the sectors organise themselves and this has to be considered in any collaborative venture. Yet it is from greater collaboration that better and more innovative opportunities proceed, and from this improved transition outcomes for young people will come.

Wheelahan (2000) provides a dramatic characterisation of the various ways that funding can affect collaboration in her case study of Twin Peaks University (a dual sector institution in Victoria) as it tries to develop a nested course in food science. Her case study highlights a variety of obstacles, but in terms of funding she finds barriers ranging from the different way that teaching is funded across sectors and how that teaching funding is allocated, to the different ways students are charged and staff are paid. There are also issues about use of buildings and equipment.

It is with the way funding and its allocation within sectors affects possibilities for collaboration — and therefore improved transition options for students — that this section is concerned. The funding issues are many and include:

♦ the ability of schools to access appropriate expertise and infrastructure in vocational education
♦ the importance of maximising the effective use of expertise and infrastructure in delivering education
♦ the necessity of building the basis for stronger collaboration in order to ease transitions for young people between education sectors and between education and work.

5.3.1 Funding for schools

Queensland state schools receive both core and targeted funding. The basis of most allocations is student enrolment numbers.

Core funding

Core funds provide for the day-to-day running of the school, largely through a school grant that provides a base and then a per capita rate to recognise the size of the student population. Enrolments in years 10 to 12 attract a small addition to the per capita rate. This additional rate was introduced in 1999 when state TAFE cooperative programs and senior school support grants were merged into the school grant.
**Targeted funding**

Targeted funds support the achievement of specific outcomes such as school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and VET In Schools (which has two components — embedded and 'stand-alone' vocational education and training). The targeted funding for these two areas, given increasing enrolments, is not large. For embedded vocational education and training, approximately $500,000 is allocated per annum to all state schools on the basis of actual student enrolments in vocational education and training subjects, with different funding levels per enrolment based on the certificate level. A further $250,000 is allocated for stand-alone vocational education and training on the same basis.

The School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships Program has funding of $1.6m in 2002. These funds are allocated as a standard amount per apprenticeship or traineeship commencement, with an extra amount per student for those identified with a disability or in rural and remote communities.

The targeted funds outlined above come from the ANTA VET in Schools Program funding of approximately $3.6m per annum to Queensland schools (including $2.3m to state schools). These funds have been provided through the Department of Employment and Training (DET) since 1997 through an annual Performance Resource Agreement signed by DET and Education Queensland setting out priorities and performance indicators for the expenditure of the ANTA funding. The other two schooling sectors, the independent and Catholic sectors, prepare their own Performance Resource Agreements with DET.

The majority of funds allocated to a school are core funding, and these may be allocated in accordance with the school’s needs and priorities as set out in its annual operational plan. In theory schools should be able to respond to changes in community need. In practice discretionary funding is limited; most school resources come in the form of teacher salaries, which are not available to the school for re-allocation to other priorities.

Funding provided by Education Queensland to non-state schools is allocated through a model based on a per capita component and a needs-based component. There is a weighting for secondary schools but no specific targeting of Years 10 to 12. The State Government contributes approximately $260m annually to the non-state school sector through a program of grants and subsidies. The funds provided include funds for recurrent, capital and some special initiatives.

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30 Of course the school’s general funding in the form of teacher salaries, for example, also covers those students in vocational education programs.

31 These include initiatives such as special funding in relation to students with disabilities.
Capital funding

Government provides funding to develop state schools and through the Capital Assistance Scheme provides State Government funds to help eligible non-state schools meet costs associated with approved capital projects, including planning, construction or upgrading of educational facilities. The External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme assists eligible non-state schools to meet external infrastructure costs associated with capital works. Two capital assistance authorities, the Queensland Catholic Education Capital Assistance Authority and the Independent Schools of Queensland Block Grant Authority, administer these schemes on behalf of the Queensland Government. To receive capital assistance a non-state school must be listed with one of these authorities.

Student contribution to schooling

In the schooling sector, state schooling is provided nominally free of charge to students. Some funds are collected from students by schools and these vary from school to school. Essentially such charges relate to non-compulsory extras. Contributions to a capital fund to assist with buying equipment or building extra facilities are also usually solicited. Non-state schooling is funded in part by student fees to cover the costs of education.

Some forms of government assistance are directed towards the cost of education provided to students and their parents. These include a textbook allowance. Living-away-from-home allowances are also paid on behalf of students who attend approved primary or secondary schools and who are compelled by geographical isolation to board away from home in order to attend an approved school with the required year level.

5.3.2 Vocational education and training funding

Queensland’s vocational education and training system is funded by the state (62 per cent), the Commonwealth (mainly through ANTA — 22 per cent) and through fees, charges and commercial activities (12 per cent). Thus the sector must meet both Federal and state government priorities (see Appendix I).

At the state level, vocational education and training is a key means to implement government priorities of improved employment and a more highly skilled workforce. In comparison with the rest of Australia, Queensland shows a high cost per publicly funded output (15.2 compared to the national average of 12.732).

In comparison with other States and Territories, Queensland has under-invested in VET historically and the Queensland Commission of Audit revealed that Queensland has one of the lowest levels of participation in training in Australia (Fitzgerald et al., 1996). In addition to this Queensland also has one of the lowest levels of per capita training expenditure amongst Australian States and Territories (Schofield, 1999) (Labour Market Research Unit, DET, 2002, p. 42).

32 Excluding abnormal expenses, Queensland’s 2000 unit cost is approximately $14.55 and its efficiency improvement from 1997 to 2000 is approximately 4 per cent (Australian National Training Authority, 2000, Annual National Report Vol. 3 p. 113, (2001a)).
The Queensland Department of Employment and Training (DET) distributes in the order of $407m a year in public funds to the vocational education and training market for training. The key funding mechanisms are:

- direct grants to public providers
- contestable funding
- targeted training and employment programs.

One major difference between the vocational education and training sector and the schooling and higher education sectors is the element of contestable funding. Wheelahan (2000, p. 14) argues that the vocational education sector funding is more ‘market driven’ because of this contestable funding where the government ‘purchases’ education from providers, whether public or private, on the basis of tender and in terms of the priorities it sets for vocational education.

The other difference in funding for this sector is the basis on which most funding is allocated. In schools the variable base unit is an enrolment (effectively understood as a single full-time student): ‘... schools are funded according to student (per capita) enrolments in a calendar year’. In vocational education it is student contact hours as ‘VET providers are funded on the basis of teaching time’ (Chapman et al., 2001, p. 5). As vocational education is competency based, contact hours may vary with the level and content of the course or module and there is no notion of a standard school year or semester of study on which to calculate an equivalent full-time student. As a result it is the hours provided as well as the bodies receiving the tuition that provide the variable unit of funding.

**Direct grants to public providers**

Grants to public providers that are used for state and regional strategic training priorities are determined through strategic planning processes that identify the most important training priorities for industry and communities.

Although the regional planning process identifies a range of local priorities, they are regarded as a guide to public providers within the relevant region. This flexibility, with stated local priorities, acknowledges that industry demand and individual demand are not necessarily aligned. The vocational education and training purchasing system is designed to ensure that the strategic priorities of state, industry and community are met, while allowing flexibility at the local level.

To this end, the DET negotiates performance agreements with TAFE institutes for the delivery of publicly funded training and their community obligations. Institutes deliver the negotiated nominal annual hours (AHCs). The performance of institutes in achieving strategic priorities is monitored as part of DET’s review of institute performance agreements. The performance of institutes, in terms of delivering the annual hours agreed, informs the resource allocation in the budget for the next financial year. Where there is under-delivery, funds for the following year reflect the capacity of the public provider to deliver its negotiated targets and contribute to strategic training priorities.
**Contestable funding**

There are two elements of contestable funding: strategic competitive purchasing of training by government from public or private providers and ‘user choice’. Apprenticeships and traineeships are funded through user choice, a demand-driven funding mechanism where an employer and trainee choose a contracted RTO to deliver the training required. The participant must be employed to be eligible for training through this program.

While both forms of funding are applied to government priorities, they build competition between providers into the model. The assumptions of purchaser/provider models of this type are that the purchaser will ‘stand in’ for the client, ensuring that training is responsive to client demands, not merely to provider preferences. DET, through setting strategic priorities, is able to shape priorities in areas of contestable funding, including user choice.

Some public funds are also made available to non-registered community organisations, skill centres and Indigenous training organisations that play a role in preparing individuals for participation in the formal vocational education and training sector. DET’s employment programs also support people in the community who would not normally access the formal training system. Training funds are also provided to the vocational education and training system through other agencies such as Farmbis, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), and Queensland Health.

Queensland’s Breaking the Unemployment Cycle programs aim to create additional apprentice, trainee and job placement opportunities over a six-year period (1998–2004), at a cost of approximately $470m. To date the initiative has created over 38,000 jobs since it began in October 1998.

There are programs targeted to meet specific needs, including the Youth Access Program, Community Training Partnerships and a range of labour market programs. The Youth Access Program is an early intervention strategy targeting secondary school students at risk of leaving school early. The program provides a pathway for students to access pre-vocational and work readiness programs leading to school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. The range of specific programs identified here provides examples of targeted funding to specific initiatives that improve employment and educational outcomes for young people.

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43Employment Initiatives, DET, 2002

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**Capital funding**

DET spent approximately $54.8m\(^{34}\) during 2000–2001 on capital and infrastructure activity. The Commonwealth provides approximately $28.9m\(^{34}\) per annum of this funding. Some major capital works such as the TAFE Queensland Technology Platform (24.6\(^{34}\) per cent of the total DET capital expenditure) is funded across the TAFE system centrally. There are also direct capital grants and funds for specific areas and equipment. Funds are distributed to TAFE institutes and agricultural colleges on the basis of annual reviews and planning. The Capital Investment Strategic Plan provides the broad planning options for the department and training providers. Privately owned RTOs can apply to the department for direct capital grants for the development of infrastructure such as skills centres.

**Student contributions to vocational education and training**

Since 1991 students in TAFE institutes have contributed towards the cost of their government-funded training. Fees have been set at 10 per cent of costs. TAFE students are required to pay their fees (tuition and student services) up-front and apply for exemptions and payment instalments upon enrolment.

In the interests of equity and access to publicly funded vocational education and training, the Training and Employment Regulation (2000) outlines the conditions for tuition fee exemptions and payment instalment schemes as well as providing fee ceilings. Several government-funded programs do not attract tuition and/or student services fees. Programs such as adult migrant programs, programs under the Indigenous education policy, and any program with a primary focus on assessing an individual’s literacy or numeracy needs are included in the exemptions regime of the Training and Employment Regulation.

Significant numbers of TAFE students are granted discounts or exemptions on the basis of extreme financial hardship, and a 75 per cent exemption to the tuition fees applies for eligible students. Students who have not completed Year 12 and are under 17 years of age at the end of February in the year of course enrolment can attract 75 per cent exemption from the tuition fee (Training and Employment Amendment Regulation No. 173, 2001b). This also applies to Board subjects deemed equivalent to Year 11 or 12.\(^{35}\)

In some TAFE institutes in Australia up to 20 to 30 per cent of students may request exemptions for fees. It has been suggested that:

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\(^{34}\) Infrastructure Development, Planning & Purchasing, DET, 2002

\(^{35}\) (b) for a subject in a program of study that includes BSSSS subjects, or the subject is in a program of study that is considered by the director to be equivalent to Year 11 or 12 — the student was or will be under 18 at the end of February in the year in which the subject is taken ... (Section 4, p. 7).
Given the low level of knowledge about tertiary education that students possess when making the transition from school to tertiary education (see James, Baldwin & McInnes, 1999) it cannot be assumed that all TAFE students have the ‘social knowledge capital’ required to access student loans and diverse payment options, particularly those who come from families where they are the first to enter tertiary education (Chapman et al., 2000, p. 8).

Prior to the new regulations, TAFE institutes offered fee exemptions for any Board subject or Board-registered subject undertaken as part of a student’s secondary education in cooperative programs. Under the new regulations, fee adjustments also apply to students who transfer enrolments in a subject provided it is ‘substantially the same’.

5.3.3 Higher education funding

Responsibility for higher education in Australia is shared between the Commonwealth and state governments. However since 1974 government funding has come predominantly from the Commonwealth government. In recent years the Commonwealth has reduced its share of funding to around 50 per cent of the total funds available to universities. Other funding sources being used by universities to offset the declining allocations of Commonwealth funding include:

- fee income from domestic and international students
- HECS\(^{36}\) income
- income from commercialisation of research and intellectual property and consultancy activities.

Government funding to universities is allocated broadly on the basis of a funding rate per effective full-time student unit (EFTSU) against a specified set of places. Enrolment above the numbers agreed attracts a small extra payment per student.

Within Queensland, during the past decade successive state governments have also provided significant funds to universities for capital development and other purposes. Since the late 1980s these funds have totalled approximately $290m and have been used:

- as a short-term measure to accelerate participation rates in advance of planned provision by the Commonwealth of additional student places
- to enhance the capacity of regional institutions to address the higher education needs of regional and remote areas
- to leverage additional Commonwealth funds for particular projects such as new campus developments
- to fund projects of particular strategic significance to state economic or social goals and priorities, such as funding of pre-tertiary programs.

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\(^{36}\) Higher Education Contribution Scheme, which in 2000 provided about 18 per cent of university revenue (DEST 2002b, p. 55)
A major part of this state funding has been in the form of capital assistance for new campus developments at Bundaberg, Mackay, Cairns, Ipswich, and the Gold Coast. It has also covered various pre-tertiary programs provided by The University of Queensland, Griffith University and University of Southern Queensland, nurse education programs, and funding for some student places from 1989–95.

**Capital funding**

Capital funding for higher education — apart from direct state government assistance — either comes from the Commonwealth or is sourced from other income or borrowed. Unlike state schools or TAFEs, public universities have the capacity to borrow to fund their own capital development. Capital funding from government comes in two ways:

♦ as a notional portion of the base operating grant — the capital ‘roll-in’
♦ as a specific allocation from the Capital Development Pool.

Universities are not eligible for funds from the Capital Development Pool on a regular basis. The Capital Development Pool for Australia was $41m in 2002 (DEST 2002b). In Queensland, advice to the Commonwealth on the allocation of this money is provided through the Office of Higher Education in Education Queensland.

**Student contribution to higher education**

Since 1989 higher education students in non-fee-paying places have been contributing to the cost of their education through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS). Students in fee-paying places are principally domestic postgraduate coursework students, international students and a small number of domestic undergraduates. The majority of undergraduates contribute through HECS, which sets a fee per course that varies by category of program. This fee can be paid up-front, or deferred and paid back through the taxation system when the student reaches a set income level. A deferred loans scheme, the Postgraduate Education Loans Scheme (PELS), was introduced in 2001 for postgraduate coursework students. This scheme differs from HECS in one major way: the university sets the fee for the course, rather than there being a specified set of fee bands set by the Commonwealth Government.

### 5.3.4 Cross-sectoral funding issues

A series of cross-sectoral funding issues creates barriers, as well as offering opportunities for improving pathways. This section addresses three:

♦ the overlap between vocational education and training in schools and through TAFEs and other providers
♦ the opportunities through capital planning to improve collaboration across sectors
♦ the effect of different fee regimes on maximising pathways.
According to Robinson and Misko’s research ‘... policies currently in place to prevent double dipping by schools have actually contributed to an unintended duplication of VET provision and an inefficient and wasteful use of resources’ (Robinson and Misko, 2001, p. 5).

The relationship between vocational education in schools and vocational education and training has been discussed previously. In summary, young people wishing to undertake vocational training are provided for in both the vocational education and training and schooling sectors. Although it is not possible to accurately estimate the numbers of young people engaged in vocational training across both sectors in any one year, it may be in excess of 60 000. In addition there were over 4 300 young people engaged in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in 2001, apart from those engaged in apprenticeships and traineeships through the vocational education and training sector directly.

Provision of services in both sectors has the advantage of maximising opportunities to undertake vocational education and training in different settings. In schools students can combine vocational education with other subjects and be part of the school community. In TAFE, or with other providers, young people are engaged in a generally more ‘adult’ learning environment and have a potentially broader range of certificates from which to choose.

Current growth in the provision of vocational education in schools suggests that demand is high in the 15 to 17 year age group. Overall in terms of building a more skilled workforce it would be desirable to encourage young people to complete lower level vocational qualifications between the ages of 15 and 19 years before entering the full-time workforce if possible, as a direct preparation for proceeding to higher level certificates and diplomas.

Yet the marginal funding allocated to vocational education and training in schools is not large and may act as a restriction on provision in the schooling sector. The unit costs of vocational education in schools tend to be higher than for general subject provision, as vocational education and training:

- often needs different facilities
- typically involves small classes
- brings costs in terms of coordination, access to work placement and related matters.

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37 ‘Double dipping’ is perceived to occur because schools have already been publicly funded to provide a full secondary education to senior secondary students (Robinson and Misko, 2001, p. 5).

38 This is a very crude estimate based on the fact that over 48 000 students are in vocational education and training in schools in Queensland and the great majority are engaged in studies at Certificate I and II level, and that at least 20 per cent of the 168 474 students aged 15–24 in vocational education and training in Queensland are studying at Certificate II level.
To increase vocational education and training in a school may mean restricting other subjects available. The funding provided in the vocational education and training sector comes on a different basis from that provided for schools, and vocational education and training providers face imperatives to meet strategic priorities that do not include vocational education in schools.

As Robinson and Misko (2001) note, in an attempt to stop double dipping schools faced barriers to accessing vocational education for their students offered by a vocational education and training provider. Consultations provided many anecdotes about their inability to use the vocational education and training provider, usually a TAFE, to offer a course because of financial barriers and therefore mounting that course inside the school.

These funding barriers then work against making a clear judgment about which setting might provide the most effective, quality provision in an area. There are questions to be asked about whether range and quality of vocational provision for those in school might be improved if there were a greater ability for vocational education courses to be taught in some cases:

- by VET providers for schools
- in VET facilities for schools, or
- jointly and cooperatively by both sectors.

While schools and vocational education and training sectors plan and fund separately, the potential for greater flexibility in provision, greater effectiveness and efficiency and greater collaboration in vocational education and training for 15 to 17 year olds are reduced. Changing the funding and planning processes to promote these broader goals is an important objective to increase cross-sectoral collaboration. It is suggested below that this will not be accomplished fully by merely increasing the funds going to support the VET in Schools program. It requires thorough revision of the way education is funded and provided in this area.

**Cooperative program funding**

Cooperative programs have been operating between TAFE and the secondary school sectors for over 12 years. They aim to enhance access to vocational education and training by school students, and to assist students’ transition from school to vocational education and training and work. Two types of programs are available: TAFE Queensland institution-based cooperative programs delivered by TAFE institutes, and school-based cooperative programs delivered by schools under extended registration with a TAFE Queensland institute. Under extended registration arrangements, schools use their own teachers to offer vocational education and training programs in cooperation with a TAFE institute under that institute’s registration.

Prior to 1999, Education Queensland regional offices managed the distribution of funding for cooperative training programs delivered by TAFE Queensland institutes to government schools. In addition, funds were available from Education Queensland for TAFE institutes to manage extended registration arrangements.
Since 2000, funding for cooperative programs has been allocated directly to schools, and programs are undertaken at the discretion of each school. Programs are provided on a non-commercial fee-for-service basis and the participating government schools subsidise the cost of training.

In the non-government sector, TAFE Queensland has provided non-direct grant funds to support cooperative programs. These are used to fund tuition fees, supplement funding to some courses, undertake quality management of extended registration, and subsidise the salary of the Association of Independent Schools Queensland’s cooperative program coordinator.

Concerns have been expressed by TAFE about cooperative programs since it was felt that the funding provided did not cover their costs of delivery. One way to ensure that schools and TAFE worked collaboratively on how they would provide vocational education and training for young people would be to provide more funding to sustain this program. Such funding would need to be separate from and above current funding.

This would have the effect of changing calculations about where vocational education and training for young people might best be provided. It would need to be considered in the context of funding for the VET in Schools program, in order to identify an appropriate mix of funding. In particular, the funding provided relative to the costs of mounting vocational education in a school or purchasing from a vocational education and training provider would affect the extent to which a school chose one form of provision over another. Such a funding change would alleviate some of the barriers currently encountered by schools in accessing vocational education and training. It would require an increase in the funding to non-state as well as state schools.

**Funding for collaboration**

It is not clear how the above changes would lead the two sectors to consider jointly their provision in these areas. It would cast schools in the role of another purchaser, and it would be expected that the response of vocational providers would depend on the amount of funding provided.

Another model, and the one proposed in this Review, is to reconsider the way that planning and funding for vocational education for 15 to 17 year olds are undertaken across state schools and TAFE institutes. The proposed model would require further investigation and substantial change to the way vocational education and training is funded across the two public sectors. The model as described is addressed to the state sectors. However, it would be possible to extend its operation to the non-state sectors. The first feature of this model is local input to planning for delivery of vocational education and training to 15 to 17 year olds.

An identified local region or cluster would (from discussion in its local network) indicate to a central allocation authority the provision the two sectors were proposing to make for vocational education and training in each sector for the coming period. Taking this into account, allocations would be made to the institutions in each sector for vocational education and training for this group, and would constitute a ‘profile’ for delivery in that local region.
Actual delivery would be compared with the proposed profile at the end of
the period, and adjusted to take account of over-or-under provision between
sectors and across regions over time. It would be preferable to make
allocations and adjust profiles in relation to actual delivery over a rolling
triennial period in order to minimise fluctuations, given the relative
inflexibility of staffing and infrastructure.

The 15 to 17 years olds would effectively represent the amount of vocational
education and training currently being delivered to 15 to 17 year olds who
have not completed Year 12 or equivalent. Given demand for vocational
education by this group in schools and in vocational education and training
providers it would be desirable to increase the amounts currently allocated
to meet projected increased demand and to recognise the costs of vocational
education, particularly its higher cost for schools compared with their
current funding levels.

The profile and subsequent allocation of resources would allow vocational
education to be undertaken in schools or in TAFE or in courses provided
jointly. The planning should cover vocational education programs for 15 to
17 year olds, not including apprenticeships and traineeships, which should
continue in the present way. It should be possible for young people up to,
for example, age 19 years who have not attained a Senior Certificate or its
equivalent to have access to programs provided under this funding. This
would be important to facilitating part-time study over a period of time.

Such a model would allow for some central priorities to be given effect if
needed, such as concentration on completion of particular vocational
certificate levels by this age group as part of reaching the Senior Certificate.

Such a model of allocation would have the effect over time of allowing local
regions and clusters to provide the type of vocational education in the
settings that seemed most effective, as well as taking some account of
student preferences in terms of provision. It is not completely student-
driven because it relies on a profile being developed at local level and then
agreed at a more central level where account can be taken of broader
priorities. However by comparing projected allocation against actual
enrolments in vocational education options, some adjustment can be made
over time to recognise student demand. It would necessarily lag behind that
demand, and any adjustments to funding could take account of capacity to
increase provision in one particular area or sector. It could also take account
of the counter side of that judgment such as the need to maintain some
capacity in a particular area.

Such a model would also recognise the overall objectives in relation to
education for 15 to 17 year olds—that is, that they could combine education
in various settings and could combine such education with work.
Some obvious issues arise. The first would be possible difficulties in shifting resources, since the current funding is in large part tied up in funding the salary of a particular teacher. This can be addressed by accepting that profiles must be decided initially recognising that it might not be possible to make large shifts in provision between one sector and another. Over time comparison with actual outcomes and general shifts would allow greater flexibility. There will always be constraints in terms of capacity to take students, and conversely the need to maintain a viable offering that will moderate shifts. This system is also likely to require more sophisticated enrolment and student information systems to track students across sectors and over time to capture actual enrolments.

It would be a major change, and would therefore require change management as different organisational structures with different cultures were engaged in a joint decision about provision of a particular form of education to a particular cohort. If they wished non-state schools or private providers could be involved, either systemically or individually, by joining a cluster.

*Capital planning*

As discussed above, each sector has its own mechanisms for planning future capital expenditure. If there is to be greater collaboration, there is reason to look at the planning for expensive infrastructure across the sectors. Currently each sector will plan without knowledge of the plans of another. As a result expensive facilities are duplicated or a facility is built in one institution that with minor modification could provide for students from two or three different institutions.

*Student fees*

As the three public sectors have different student fee regimes, questions arise wherever there is intersection between two sectors. In the discussion above there is a fee issue implicit in the model. As already indicated, technically there are no fees for the provision of education in state schools; however, vocational education courses in TAFE do attract fees, although the level of the fee may vary depending on the course and the status of the student. Currently, students who are under 17 years and do not have a Senior Certificate have a 75 per cent exemption from fees. While this makes their situation more comparable to that of school students it is not really an equivalent situation.

It would be possible to keep the current model and accept that school students will face some fees if they enrol with a TAFE. It would seem however that if the proposed model outlined above were used the situation for both schools and TAFE should be the same—that is, there should be no difference in what is charged. Problems with building greater cooperation would increase in the presence of fees in one and not in another.
This is an area to which specific attention must be given: the barriers inherent in different fee regimes for undertaking vocational education and training with a TAFE, for example, compared with undertaking another subject in a school are important. As the financial arrangements for TAFEs are based on an ability to earn income from fees across their courses a change to this regime requires reconsideration in terms of overall funding and priorities.

The other area in which fee regimes diverge is between TAFE and public universities. As indicated above, university students pay HECS and TAFE students pay up-front fees, which may be low and subject to exemption based on a number of conditions including financial hardship. The issue raised relates to transition from TAFE to higher education, and concerns the equity of funding arrangements. It is put in the following way in *Higher Education at the Crossroads*

This student [in an articulation from TAFE to university] will have paid up-front fees while at TAFE and will have contributed under HECS—with the option of a loan—while at university. The contribution from this would be significantly lower than that of a student who undertook their Commerce degree solely through the university, but against this the student would not have been able to borrow from Government for the TAFE-delivered part of the degree. In addition the studies undertaken at TAFE will have been heavily subsidised by the State Government yet there is no State subsidy for the student who completed their degree entirely at university (DEST, 2002a, p. 16).

In general, vocational education and training, particularly at certificate level, does not yield the income in employment that would justify a deferred loans scheme such as HECS. The issue of the differences in TAFE and university fee regimes is only relevant in the case mentioned above, since notionally both students will have the same income-earning capacity and the same outcome and yet they face different costs. This issue has already been the subject of discussion at the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and is part of the investigations in *Higher Education at the Crossroads* (DEST, 2002a). If the proportion of students articulating from TAFE to university increases, it will become a more urgent policy issue.
In summary:

- The basis of funding in the three sectors is different in terms of the basic unit of funding and its responsiveness to strategic priorities at state and local level and to student demand.

- The fee contributions that students make to public schooling, vocational education and training and higher education also vary both in type and level—from very limited charges, through up-front fees with a substantial and varied set of exemptions, to deferred loan schemes.

- Capital funding for all three sectors is planned and funded differently.

- The differences in the way state schools and TAFEs are funded, particularly the limited discretion in state school funding and the prohibition of ‘double dipping’ has proven a barrier to state schools using TAFEs or other vocational education providers to deliver vocational education and training for their students.

- More effective provision of vocational education and training to young people requires more collaborative planning between the schooling and vocational education and training sectors.

- There is also a need to encourage local variation in the type and spread of provision between schools and vocational education and training providers, separately and jointly.

- Such collaboration would be assisted by coordinated forward planning of expensive capital infrastructure across the sectors.

- There is a need to examine the differences in fee regimes and to remove the barriers to movement that these differences pose.
Recommendations

(13) That there be a new model for determining the provision of vocational education and training for 15 to 17 year olds across the school and vocational education sectors, beginning with the state school and TAFE systems.

a That through discussion and representation from the local networks (referred to in recommendation 19 above) a desired profile in a region (or cluster) for delivery of vocational education and training for 15 to 17 year olds, including those in the senior years, be identified.

b That, this profile for regions for the provision of vocational education and training for those students who have not yet gained Year 12 or equivalent, be determined to allow these young people to access vocational education in a school or TAFE or in both settings.

c That the desired or planned profile for a region or cluster be examined in terms of actual enrolments and funding adjusted over time in relation to reflect any major changes.

(14) That there be cross-sectoral forward planning at state level in relation to the provision of expensive infrastructure for schools, TAFE and for universities (where this relates to capital development pool funds).

5.4 Conclusion

The barriers to transitions between sectors identified here are the product of systemic differences in philosophy and organisation. Sectors work with different educational missions and with funding arrangements that provide particular incentives and disincentives. While each system has its own internal logic it can create difficulties for students negotiating their way between them, and increasingly more students do try to do so.

In the case of barriers that relate to appropriate recognition of previous study and experience, there is a need for negotiation at field of study level by people from the relevant sectors. At present this is largely done at the level of individual arrangements between institutions. The proliferation of these individual arrangements increases choice and fosters better understanding and often coherence in paths between institutions. It needs to be supplemented by similar work at state level across sectors in fields of study.
Statewide discussion and negotiation of minimum understandings is not only important for providing greater transparency and ease of transition between sectors. It should also be used to foster broader discussion about other articulation arrangements, including concurrent dual sector qualifications. Dual degrees have been very important within universities, and there is room for consideration of where complementary studies in vocational education and training and higher education would be better used.

Funding arrangements provide particular challenges. As movement across sectors increases, differences in student fee regimes become a more significant issue. There are issues of equity in treatment and questions about situations in which the fee becomes a barrier that prevents more effective provision across sectors. If more dual or multi-sector institutions are created this issue needs to be the subject of more sustained work and reform. It is not only a matter for states, but for state and federal governments.

Drawing on the distinctive strengths of each sector and encouraging arrangements that make the most of these strengths and yet respond to local circumstance needs more direct encouragement. There is an opportunity and a need to consider planning provision for vocational education for young people jointly across schools and vocational education and training. Such planning would allow greater direct attention to local needs as expressed through local networks, and would be more responsive to student demand. It would provide a mechanism for giving effect to particular priorities such as increasing completion of vocational education qualifications by young people. It is from such collaboration that better educational experiences and outcomes are likely to flow.
Chapter 6  Guidance in a complex field

6.1 Introduction

There are two significant features of the various paths for young people sketched in Chapter 3. First, there are many options available and therefore the decision making involved at any transition point is complex. Second, there is no single decision point that sets the path thereafter. The kinds of skills that are needed in a growing knowledge economy change constantly. Skill development extends through life and is fundamental to career development. Young people will find that there are various stages when they will need to assess their next steps. There is, therefore, greater demand for career information, career counselling and guidance services.

Effective provision of career information, career counselling and guidance services helps young people by allowing better matches between people's skills and interests and available opportunities for work and learning. While these areas are typically cast as ancillary or support services in education, they are integral to effective educational development and vital for transition to work. The questions related to the organisation and delivery of information, guidance and counselling services is an important key to making lifelong learning a reality.

This chapter examines:

♦ the ways people might be able to develop more effective career planning and understanding of the processes for accessing appropriate guidance
♦ the way existing individual guidance might be improved
♦ the particular, special supports necessary to mentor and guide young people who have left school early or are otherwise disengaged from education.

6.2 Making choices

Much research on career choices for young people focuses on choices immediately on leaving school. We know that there are a variety of influential sources of advice, primarily career guidance staff and other teachers and educators in the school and parents and friends (Harvey-Beavis and Robinson, 2000; James et al., 1999). It is clear that the information on which students base their judgements is:

♦ relatively limited, tending to be highly impressionistic and general rather than specific about the nature of the course or the experience (James et al.; 1999)
♦ greater about universities than about vocational education and training (Harvey-Beavis and Robinson, 2000).

There are a number of important elements to the process of making choices. These include:

♦ the information available to students, their parents and friends, in terms of both ease of access and quality
♦ access to a variety of sources of advice, information and guidance about key issues to be investigated
♦ the guidance available to provide information and to interpret and advise students
♦ the support available where difficult transition issues need to be negotiated.

The discussion below examines current provision and the areas that need to be improved if appropriate support for young people is to be provided. Consultations during this Review emphasised the importance of career guidance to all stakeholders. It was felt that it was not given sufficient attention and that as a result, options were not well understood and so young people were more likely to fail to make successful transitions from school to further education or from work to further education. Generally career guidance has been treated as an ancillary service, yet with the development of more diverse options and multiple pathways and increasing change in occupations and expectations, its role has become more critical. Without effective career guidance the ability of young people to access new possibilities and to meet the challenges of a changing economy over time is compromised.

6.3 Access to information about options and pathways

Within each of the educational sectors, the school, vocational education and training provider or university provides information, counselling and guidance about options available within and beyond the education and training it provides. These services are one of the major organised sources of information for young people in making decisions. Research indicates that the staff in these career guidance areas, along with the teachers or other educators with whom students come in contact, are among the most significant sources of advice for young people making career choices. Much of the access to authoritative information about careers and further education options for school leavers comes from material distributed by staff in career guidance areas (James et al., 1999, pp. 15-16).

Staff providing this guidance rely on information from various sources. Some of the most important and most used are the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) guide to tertiary courses, and the materials produced by universities and vocational education and training and providers outlining study options. The websites of universities and vocational education providers have become more important in recent years as a source of this information – allowing more detailed material to be provided than can be contained in printed booklets.

There are also broadly based websites that bring together material about a range of courses and the jobs or careers with which they are associated. The power of these sites is to be able to make links across diverse information sources. The major new initiative in this area is myfuture <www.myfuture.gov.au> a new, world standard on-line career exploration and information system providing Australia-wide information. This new site was a joint Commonwealth-states initiative. It is designed for those wishing to explore their skills and interests, identify possible career paths, develop their career plan, and research options for further study and training.
While particularly useful for young people making decisions about subject choice, vocational pathways and employment, *myfuture* may also assist adults returning to the workforce or changing career direction.

*Myfuture* is the latest and most integrated of the sites\(^{49}\) that have attempted to bring together material on career and education options. It has the advantage that it can store broad profile material on an individual’s interests, previous education and skills. In this sense it is able to tailor the material provided to meet the individual’s needs, rather than providing more general information and links.

Printed material or other resources are, however, of limited use in initial decision making. An important first step in decision making is understanding a career planning process and identifying the steps that need to be taken, including identifying the interests, skills and education that are involved in particular choices. While interactive websites can help people through this process, they must first know about such sites and be motivated to use them. This is why support of another kind is necessary to access and make sense of appropriate information for career planning. The major support provided to students has been career guidance and counselling staff.

One of the issues that young people raise about guidance is the volume of material that they sometimes feel is pushed at them from these sources. Students need assistance in making sense of their interests and abilities as well as the complex information about options. With the inevitably limited time available to each student for individual assistance through this complex decision-making process there is a need for further support. A most appropriate place for this is through school curriculum.

A recent OECD report on career guidance and counselling argued that career guidance needs to be an integral element of education and training curriculum from early teens into adulthood, rather than being restricted to transition points or to individuals with problems (OECD, 2002).

Currently career planning or preparation is not an integral part of Queensland school curriculum. A *Review of the Provision of Career Guidance in Education Queensland Schools* in 1999 identified the need for such a curriculum and currently Education Queensland has a draft *P-12 Career and Work Preparation Outcomes Framework* as a possible curriculum starting point for schools.

A trial of a Commonwealth-funded program, The Real Game, is being conducted in Queensland schools as part of a national pilot project. This resource is a quality life skills and career education program that provides schools with an example of how career education can be integrated into the P-12 curriculum. Careers curriculum should be made a priority, particularly through early secondary years of schooling. As is made clear below, the individual support that can be given through officers with career guidance responsibilities or through teachers would be better given in the context of a more systematic understanding by young people of career planning and options.

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\(^{49}\) *Job and Course Explorer (OZJAC), The Australian Career Directory and the DEST website <www.careers.gov.au> all provide a range of material and some interactive tests to assess career interests.*
OECD reports have identified the provision of early labour market experience as an integral part of the educational curriculum through work placements, work shadowing or school-based enterprise. A developed careers curriculum is able to address in part the issues of transition from school to work by providing another place outside the vocational education and training curriculum where some students may be able to gain labour market experience.

The introduction of a careers curriculum would also facilitate achievement of other objectives. For example the Review of Career Guidance (1999) recommended that schools institute a system of career action planners for students (Education Queensland, 1999). Some work has been done within Education Queensland on the type of planner that might be developed. An example of such a planner or record might be a paper or electronic record of a student’s career development, commencing in secondary school. The record would enable school personnel to ‘track’ students’ progress in terms of their career development and, in higher grades, their specific career goals. Such records or portfolios have the advantage of providing for more effective guidance and feedback in interactions with students and their parents.

The basis of such a planner or record can be found in many of the resources on career planning, and some of the very basic information for such a record can be constructed by an individual through the myfuture website. By integrating such an activity with a careers curriculum, better understanding would be provided for the student and the quality of the advice able to be given in any individual session would be much improved.

**In summary:**

- There are many sources of information for young people about career choices and options for further study and employment.
- Access to this information and an ability to make effective use of it are dependent on the implementation of a careers curriculum in secondary schools.
- Such a curriculum would provide a way to build student skills and understandings and provide learning that would enhance students’ ability to access information and guidance throughout their careers.

**Recommendation**

(25) That a careers curriculum be implemented in secondary school, to provide students with the skills to improve their ability to gather information and make informed choices about future directions; and that within this curriculum there be provision for development of a student career plan or portfolio.
6.4 Career guidance and individual assistance

As indicated above, each educational sector has career guidance or career counsellors who provide assistance to students about future options. However each sector is necessarily oriented to providing advice for students within that sector. As a result young people who are not engaged either in schools or further education are outside most of the current major guidance systems. If unemployed, their advice comes from Centrelink or elements of the job network (although most of the focus for job network providers is the longer term unemployed).

There are also commercial services that charge fees for advice. For example the Tertiary Advice and Counselling Service (TACS), which is part of the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre, provides a career advice service at a cost, either face-to-face or over the telephone for those outside Brisbane. Young people have to know about and have the funds to access these services.

The Dusseldorp Skills Forum\textsuperscript{50} has commented that a feature of Australia’s ‘loosely coupled’ system of education-to-work arrangements is that the individual is largely left alone to construct pathways into work. Assistance currently available to young people from government, education institutions and employers is often piecemeal and fragmented.

The findings of research into the apprenticeship and traineeship markets conducted by Bonsall and Associates (2001) indicated that perceptions about traineeships and apprenticeships among school leavers and job seekers tended to be patchy and based on hearsay. This research opens up a number of important issues about when and how to inform all young people about post-school options.

Services need to be delivered in such a way that they empower all young people to construct their own pathway from compulsory education to further education and training or work in an integrated way.

6.4.1 Schools

In state secondary schools the primary responsibility for career guidance lies with guidance officers. Teachers support career guidance personnel by delivering career education programs, coordinating work experience and visits to career markets, and generally by themselves being a source of career advice for students.

In 2001 there were approximately 408 full-time equivalent (FTE) guidance officer positions. Guidance officers have a wide range of responsibilities including personal, welfare and crisis counselling as well as career and educational counselling and the coordination of career education programs. Only those responsible for guidance in secondary schools have specific career guidance responsibilities. It is estimated that of the 408 guidance officer positions only 155 were specialist guidance officers with career guidance responsibilities; the remainder were either specialist P-7 officers,

\textsuperscript{50} The Dusseldorp Skills Forum is an independent non-profit association aiming to stimulate innovation in education, to promote skills development in the wider community, especially in young people, and to emphasise the importance of the workforce in Australia’s continuing development.
worked in P10 or P-12 settings, or were involved only in behaviour management programs. The majority of P-12 guidance officers are likely to have been trained as guidance officers (primary) and thus have no direct training in careers and vocational guidance.

The ratio of guidance officers to secondary students in 2001 was approximately 1:1167. The metropolitan ratio of guidance officers (secondary) to secondary students was about 1:780. The work of these officers is coordinated at the district level by senior guidance officers, although the latter are responsible across the wide range of areas identified above.

The position of guidance officers in non-state schools is not very different, most having a range of responsibilities beyond careers guidance. The Strategic Renewal Framework 2002-2006 for the Catholic Schooling Archdiocese of Brisbane indicates that personal development guidelines, of which career information and education are components, will be updated and integrated into the curriculum. In addition, the Framework sets an expectation that central, regional and school-level services will be provided in the area of guidance and counselling, which are part of the secondary guidance counsellors’ role. The current provision of secondary guidance counsellors in Catholic schools is one FTE officer per 600 students.

As is clear from the above, secondary guidance counsellors can spend a high proportion of their time dealing with personal and crisis counselling. Although the number of guidance officers available for a school population may vary between schools, numbers of officers are not sufficient to provide intensive individual assistance for every student — and they are likely to be under pressure at key decision-making times.

Moreover the spread of responsibilities for guidance officers is quite diverse. While it is clear that for a number of students there is an overlap between personal, welfare and careers counselling, the skills and education needed to provide effective advice and referral in these areas are quite different.

Recent reviews have indicated that attention needs to be given to appropriate initial education and training for staff holding these positions. Equally as important is the need for ongoing staff development and advice. For example, a component of training and mentoring in the Brisbane Catholic Education Guidance program is mandatory supervision for counsellors involving one individual and two group supervision sessions per term. In addition, ten professional practice days per year that involve career education and counselling as a component are provided.

Given the complexity of advice and information being provided to school students and their parents through individual and group sessions, the need for strong central support and ongoing professional development is high. For example, a range of studies has identified the tendency for students in senior school years to concentrate on universities as their major choice and the tendency for advice on these options to be greater (Harvey-Beavis and Robinson, 2000). As a result most students know less about vocational education and training than university education and the deficit is greatest in relation to apprenticeships and traineeships (TEPA, 2000). Consultations provided anecdotal evidence that this continues to be the situation in Queensland. It is important that the guidance available to students is able to outline the full range of options for education and work.
6.4.2 Vocational education and Training

Each TAFE institute employs its own guidance staff, in many cases on a sessional basis. As in schools, these staff may have a variety of roles and these may vary by institute. Table 19 gives some indication of the variety of provision among TAFE institutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institute</th>
<th>Enrolments</th>
<th>Guidance provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moreton</td>
<td>15 870</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>15 500</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>7 000</td>
<td>0.5 counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeronga</td>
<td>25 000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Isa</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>Advice is outsourced. There are 2 Indigenous support officers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bremer</td>
<td>10 950</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Queensland</td>
<td>21 862</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Queensland</td>
<td>19 000</td>
<td>Counsellors do not have a major focus on career counseling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Learning Institute</td>
<td>Approx. 17 191</td>
<td>Sessional provision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Some of the staff involved in TAFE institutes concentrate on job placement as well as careers advice. However, overall their roles are general and cover a range of responsibilities to students enrolled. In the private vocational education market the focus is on job placement rather than career advice. With business and hospitality courses being the major commercial markets, the focus is on traineeships, work experience and a move to employment as soon as possible. There is no primary role for personal counselling. Management teams provide advice on best courses at the point of entry to the private college in question. This is based on student education level and student aspirations.

Overall it is clear that there are a limited number of people providing guidance and career advice to students within vocational education and training. This affects the ability of such staff to provide effective advice on transitions.

6.4.3 Higher Education

All universities provide a careers and employment service, which is usually located with a range of other student services such as counselling, welfare, health, chaplaincies, student equity and student disability. In terms of career and employment guidance, the services focus primarily on assisting students and recent graduates of the university to make informed course and career decisions in order to reach their employment goals. These services usually work beyond guidance to provide opportunities for employers to meet and interview prospective students, and in this way provide a job placement service.

As with vocational education providers there are not large numbers of staff employed in these areas — typically fewer than three for enrolments in excess of 25 000 effective full-time students. However unlike the staff engaged in schools and vocational education providers they are concentrated on career guidance.
Apart from these staff most universities have programs in place for attracting prospective students. These services are not part of career guidance but of admissions services or student recruitment and marketing. They liaise primarily with schools and provide advice to school students about university options. These services maintain close links with schools and their guidance officers to provide advice about university options. At various times, universities and vocational education providers come together in major exhibitions or careers market activities to provide information to school students and others about options for further study. It is these activities that are often an important secondary source of information for young people.

6.4.4 The Queensland Studies Authority

Until 2002 the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority (TEPA) was the statutory body with legislated responsibility to ensure that information about all tertiary entrance procedures and processes was made available to all Queensland school students. The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) was established on 1 July 2002, replacing TEPA. The QSA incorporated the responsibilities of TEPA in relation to tertiary entrance processes and procedures, and the small number of staff involved in providing information about further education options were absorbed in the new authority.

In addition the QSA, having also incorporated the previous BSSSSS, has vocational education functions that require it to exercise powers delegated to it by the Training Recognition Council and to inform the public about accredited vocational education and training courses, vocational placement schemes and training organisations registered under the delegation.

A range of material was produced by TEPA to inform the community generally about options. Along with individual institutions, officers of this organisation also conducted an extensive and expanding program of school and community visits, along with presentations to groups of guidance officers, school counsellors and school administrators, and coordinated career market and tertiary expo events across Queensland.

6.4.5 Issues for guidance services

There are a number of major issues in relation to guidance services, related to:

♦ the ability of those who give advice to access appropriate and current information about options
♦ the need for ongoing professional development of staff providing guidance
♦ the need for services that reach and support those young people who have left school early or are ‘at risk’ of doing so.

The first relates to the ability to provide effective information and ongoing development to guidance staff and others who may provide assistance. There are limited numbers of trained staff working in career guidance. Although they provide individual assistance to students, they must also provide seminars and general advice to groups and be able to point others, such as their colleagues, to sources of advice.
As Footprints to the Future (Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce 2001) indicated people want more detailed, accurate, easy to understand, and accessible individualised information and advice on study and course options, prerequisites and job opportunities, and practical information about education costs and fees. They also want information about jobs, career paths, getting a job, work experience, volunteer work and other options.

It is important that there is central support for professional development of guidance officers so that they can play their part in meeting these needs. There is also a need for a service within the state that can provide current advice on options across all educational sectors.

The previous central authority, TEPA, did attempt to undertake some of these functions with a limited number of staff. There is a need to consider this role in terms of the new QSA. There are significant demands on the QSA in terms of curriculum development and certification. There is however a need for a central independent authority to gather information for dissemination to guidance officers across the educational sectors. Such a body would also be able to provide a focus for networking and professional development for officers across the sectors.

Without such an authority, guidance staff are dependent on the information sent to them by providers and on their own contacts and initial training. It is clear that this model (which prevails at present) makes it difficult for officers to keep up to date and probably is part of the reason why information about options at university is better disseminated to students than other pathways.

Mentoring and personal advisors or brokers

As is clear above, another serious issue is catering for young people who are not at present engaged in school or further education. There are some government programs that focus on these groups. For example, the Jobs Pathway Program (JPP) is a Commonwealth Government-funded program under which contracted organisations provide a support service to youth (15-19 year olds) at risk of not completing school or gaining access to employment, further education or training. In Queensland there are currently 16 contracted organisations servicing 155 Education Queensland high schools, 29 secondary departments and 4 special schools and 118 non-state schools.

Career and transition projects, which will run for one year and are funded by the Commonwealth, are designed to provide enhanced career and transition support to young people aged 13-19. Contracts were awarded in Queensland to Southern Queensland Consultative Committee (Toowoomba), Springwood State High School, Woodridge State High School, South Burnett Training Centre and Marsden State High School.

There are a number of possible models for mentoring assistance. Piatt and Robinson (2001) discuss a mentoring scheme supported by government and run through a group of universities where about 900 students act as mentors to young people and provide information about higher education. They argue

... [these] mentoring schemes have the advantages of offering role models closer in age to the young person than teachers ... they tend to be more respected by younger peers and have more up-to-date experience of education than older adults (Piatt and Robinson, 2001, p. 70).
Some universities in Queensland offer some of this type of mentoring support. For example, the Unireach Program at Griffith sends university students out to act as mentors and study guides for young people in a number of schools where few students go on to attend university. These students provide assistance and information for students completing Year 12. This is a single initiative funded by the university, but one that provides effective assistance to a group of young people. This type of model can improve transition for young people in school who might not consider further education without this assistance.

In England, an advice service called ‘Connexions’ was introduced to provide a service to disengaged youth between the ages of 13 and 19. The service provides a single personal advisor or broker for a young person to coordinate a range of areas of need including those provided by youth agencies, careers services, education, police and social services. One important feature of this service is the ability to broker a range of needs for an individual and to bring the services needed together around the individual through a local broker. This sort of work is also undertaken in a number of the local networks and programs set up in Australia but it is not a widespread and universally accessible service like the Connexions service. A major issue in making such a service effective is encouraging young people to use it. This model provides professional support person that helps young people make sense of the many services with which they might need to interact.

Both the need for initiatives such as this and the difficulty of engaging the students ‘at risk’ are clear. Many of the young people outside the education system, and a proportion within, need a particular focus on individual needs and circumstances that goes beyond advice and guidance. Many OP-ineligible students are less likely to attend careers events, conduct personal research or directly contact universities or TAFEs (TEPA, 2000). Lack of information is significant for rural and remote students and students from low socio-economic groups—the most vulnerable groups. There needs to be provision within guidance services for more specialised mentoring and assistance to young students who are at risk and have less access to advice from others. A careers curriculum with a requirement for plans should provide a means to identify those in need of greater individual assistance and to better target services to those students.

**In summary:**

- There is a need for central support to provide accurate and current information across educational and work options to guidance staff.
- There is a need for a source of support for networking and ongoing professional development of such officers to ensure that they can provide high quality guidance services.
- There is need for more intensive assistance and mentoring for some young people.
- There are a variety of mentoring models possible but they may need greater coordination and support.
6.5 Conclusion

The quality and level of provision of career and guidance services are disparate and uneven across the state. Currently, responsibility for their provision in schools lies primarily with guidance officers. Their work is highly valued by schools and their communities. However, the effectiveness of their career guidance service is often closely related to the demanding, complex and diverse nature of their role: career and educational counselling and the coordination of career education programs as well as personal, welfare and crisis counselling for large numbers of students.

It is critical for all students to have access to developmental, coherent and integrated career information and guidance services at the local level. Such provision is appropriately part of the wider provision of education, skill development, learning, employment and other social services and will be most effective with combinations of face-to-face and other delivery modes. A significant focus of the service provision needs to be students and young people at risk of not completing Year 12 or its equivalent, and this service needs to include the provision of specialised mentoring and guidance practices for effective individual support.

The provision of proactive, preventive and responsive career and guidance services requires knowledgeable and skilled careers advisers who have current information on further education and training options through access to on-line and face-to-face networks. Clearly, there is a need for an information broker to ensure currency in relation to education and training options and to network this information through careers and guidance staff.

The organisation and delivery of information, guidance and counselling services are the key to making lifelong learning a reality for all students and young people.
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Dr Lyn Holman, Academic Registrar, Griffith University  
Professor Alan Knight, President of the Academic Board, Central Queensland University  
Kerry Martin, Planning Officer, Student Affairs, University of the Sunshine Coast  
Alyson McGrath, Manager, Academic Services, Bond University  
Professor Robin McTaggart, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Staff Development and Student Affairs), James Cook University  
Ray Morley, Director, Student Services Department, Queensland University of Technology  
Professor Ian O’Connor, President of the Academic Board, The University of Queensland  
Professor Royce Sadler, A/Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Teaching and Learning, Griffith University  
Chris Sharpley, Director, Institute for Health Science, Bond University  
Kurt Timmins, Group Manager (Student Affairs), University of Southern Queensland

**Youth sector**

Terri Benvin, Trainee, Department of Education and Training  
Geoff Bowman, TAFE student  
Natasha Boyle, A/Youth Affairs Officer, Office of Youth Affairs, Department of Employment and Training  
Jillian Covey, Job Placement, Department of Employment and Training  
Lisa English, university graduate  
Narelle Eggins, Student Counsellor, Resource Management, Yeronga Institute of TAFE  
Mathew Hawkins, university graduate  
Michael Hong, Griffith University Student Services  
Eleesa Johnstone, A/Senior Youth Affairs Officer, Office of Youth Affairs, Department of Employment and Training  
Allan Potts, Griffith University Student Services  
Daniel Sherverton, Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA)  
Paul Spooner, Youth Advocacy Centre  
Current students from Brisbane State High School  
Current students from John Paul College
### Appendix B  Written submissions

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## Appendix C  Number of schools providing VET in schools programs

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Data source: as reported by the MCEETYA Transition from School Taskforce

Notes:

Tasmanian Government data for 2001 will be under-reported (and appear as an apparent decline from 2000) as statistical collection procedures and reporting are being redeveloped to meet MCEETYA AVETMISS-compliant reporting requirements for 2003. Difficulties for 2001 data include, significantly, (i) incomplete collection and (ii) enrolment data collected six months later in the calendar year.
Appendix D  Regional maps, Education Queensland
Appendix D (cont.)
Appendix D (cont.)
Appendix D (cont.)
### Appendix E  Student Year 12 apparent retention rate, Queensland State schools by district, 1997 to 2001

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Source: Education Queensland Corporate Data Warehouse. Years 8–12 apparent retention rate. Figures are based on full-time students.

Analysis of apparent retention rates by district are significantly influenced by demographic trends. In many rural and remote areas, population declines and/or changes in the labour market have created significant population impacts. These substantially affect apparent retention rates in localities where relatively low numbers of students are concerned.

Published analysis of apparent retention rate data in Queensland schools does not include those students attaining equivalent VET qualifications.
### Appendix F

Total number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in state and non-state schools and proportion of total Indigenous and non-Indigenous population not enrolled, by age

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<th>Non-Indigenous students (No.)</th>
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Sources:

- a) State school enrolments — EQ Corporate Data Warehouse, August 2001 student census
- b) Non-state school enrolments — Commonwealth DEST August 2001 student census
- c) Estimated resident population — ABS population census August 2001
Appendix G  Apparent retention rates for secondary students from Year 8 to Year 12 indigenous and non-indigenous, Australia, 1995 to 2001

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<td>74.5</td>
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Source: ABS Cat. No. 4220.0, *Schools Australia*, 2001
Appendix H  Apparent retention rates for secondary students from Year 8 to Year 12 by Indigenous and non-Indigenous by category of school, Queensland, 2001

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(a) Full-time students only.

Source: EQ Corporate Data Warehouse and Centre Information System
Appendix I Annual National Priorities for 2003

The National Strategy (1998–2003) and the ANTA Agreement (2001–03) identify the broad objectives that have been agreed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers to create a strong, nationally consistent, industry-led vocational education and training system to benefit the nation, its industries and its people.

The ANTA Agreement also acknowledges the importance of expanding vocational education and training, including New Apprenticeships, and identifies the ongoing importance of quality and efficiency. Cooperative government action to achieve these objectives is underway and will continue in 2003.

Ministers have also agreed that a number of national priority areas will be identified for 2003 to provide a specific focus for action in that year. A focus on these priorities is not intended to diminish efforts in all of the above-mentioned areas.

In 2003, priority work will be undertaken to:

(25) A. Strengthen and promote the image and role of vocational education and training in Australia, including in relation to employment and VET’s role in supporting innovation in business and industry.

Planned outcomes

♦ Vocational education and training will be recognised as providing both leading edge and broad ‘innovative work’ skills to support innovation in enterprises.
♦ Links between VET and employment programs/services will be improved.
♦ The benefits of vocational education and training, and its appeal to young people and their parents, will be promoted.

(26) B. Improve pathways between the vocational education and training sector and the schools and higher education sectors.

Planned outcomes

♦ Pathways from VET in schools to further education, training and employment will be improved.
♦ The new VET in Schools Framework will be implemented to improve the quality of VET in schools and its relevance to industry.
♦ More students will have the opportunity to benefit from credit transfer and articulation arrangements between VET and higher education.

(27) C. Enhance the capability of vocational education and training professionals to provide quality learning experiences for clients and to facilitate innovative partnerships between training organisations, enterprises and communities.
Appendix I (cont)

Planned outcomes

♦ Professional development will include a stronger focus on teaching and learning methodologies, including the application of technology.
♦ A broader range of VET professionals will participate in professional development activities.
♦ Professional development will support high quality assessment practices at the provider level.
♦ The capability of VET professionals to develop and sustain partnerships at the local level will be improved.
♦ Educational leadership skills within registered training organisations will be further developed to support implementation of Training Packages in response to local needs.

(28) D. Achieve agreed outcomes for 2003 of the Blueprint for implementation of Bridging Pathways, the National Strategy for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in VET, and the Blueprint for implementation of Partners in a Learning Culture, the National Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in VET.

Planned outcomes

♦ State and Territory action plans for 2003 and identified actions in the Blueprints for the National Strategies will be implemented by December 2003.
♦ The level of participation in vocational education and training by people with a disability, and their associated outcomes, will improve.
♦ Strategies will be implemented that lead to improved employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who successfully complete their VET studies.

(29) E. Achieve improved training outcomes for older workers.

Planned outcomes

♦ Innovative and responsive skill development options will be available for older workers.
♦ More effective skills recognition processes will be in place.

(30) F. Improve the client focus of vocational education and training, particularly for individuals and small business.

Planned outcomes

♦ Accessibility to information on vocational education and training will be improved.
♦ The language of VET will be simplified.
♦ Streamlining processes and improving national consistency will remove sources of complexity in the VET system.
Appendix I (cont)

- Easier navigation systems will be provided for users, including through continued development of the VET portal.

(31) G. Refine Training Packages and their implementation to improve their quality and enhance their flexibility to meet clients’ needs, particularly for individuals and small business.

Planned outcomes

- Generic employability and emerging technical skills will be embedded in all new and reviewed Training Packages, and subsequent training delivery and assessment.
- Further access by small business to Training Package competencies and qualifications will be promoted.
- New Apprenticeship options will be improved.
- Commonwealth and State/Territory New Apprenticeship support services will be improved.

As well as these national priorities, individual States and Territories may also establish local priorities for 2003.