Ministerial Review
of Postcompulsory Schooling

REPORT
Volume 1
22 March 1985

Dear Minister

In April 1984, the first stage of our review of postcompulsory schooling culminated in the publication of a Discussion Paper as required by the terms of reference you gave us. We acknowledge the assistance provided by the public response to the Discussion Paper and by the working parties which marked the second stage of the review. We are now pleased to present our final report.

Yours sincerely

Jean Blackburn
CHAIRPERSON

Norman Curry

Tom Doyle

Peter Kirby

Ken McKinnon

Bernard Rechter

Helen Praetz

Marion Russell

The Honourable Ian Cathie M P
Minister for Education
Parliament House
Melbourne 3000
Terms of Reference

• To review the current educational and training provision for 15–19-year-olds who are not in full-time or part-time courses in higher education or in TAFE courses associated with concurrent employment.
• To develop a discussion paper addressing the issues arising in educational provision for this group.
• To organise widespread discussion of the statement and consideration of its implications.
• To establish working parties to explore particular issues raised by the discussion paper and, in the light of the advice of these working parties and of public discussion, formulate proposals for action by those agencies with responsibility for specific activities and by the government in respect of general policies.

Co-ordinating Committee for the Review

Ms Jean Blackburn, Chairperson
Dr Norman Curry, Director-General of Education
Fr Tom Doyle, Director, Catholic Education Office, representing the nongovernment school sector
Mr Peter Kirby, Chairman, Technical and Further Education Board
Dr Ken McKinnon, Chairman, State Board of Education
Mr Bernard Rechter, Chairman, Victorian Institute of Secondary Education
Dr Helen Praetz, Consultant
Ms Marion Russell, Executive Officer

Research assistance
Dr J. K. Matthews (from August 1984)

Secretarial staff
Ms Cheryl Geileskey
Ms Susan Wright (November 1984 to February 1985)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACER</td>
<td>Australian Council for Educational Research. An independent educational research body funded by state and commonwealth governments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASAT</td>
<td>Australian Scholastic Aptitude Test. A test devised by the ACER to determine students' abilities to reason, comprehend, interpret and make inferences from a variety of material in the areas of humanities, social sciences, sciences and mathematics. The questions are not based on any set syllabus, but reflect the range of abilities and aptitudes expected of Year 12 students who intend to pursue further studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>College of Advanced Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTEC</td>
<td>Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| HSC     | Higher School Certificate. The Certificate granted to students who have successfully completed a course of Year 12 studies accredited by the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education. Students can undertake group 1 and/or group 2 subjects or a whole course of studies termed an approved study structure.  
  — Group 1 subjects are assessed by external examination together with a component of moderated internal school assessment. Results can be aggregated.  
  — Group 2 subjects and units are accredited but students are assessed by their teachers with some moderation in some cases.  
  — Approved Study Structures are whole course structures accredited by VISE. Includes STC (see below). |
| OECD    | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. |
| PEP     | Participation and Equity Program. A Commonwealth Government program which makes funds available to schools and TAFE in order to stimulate change in education. Its goal is to increase participation in schooling and promote equity in outcomes. |
| STC     | Schools' Year Twelve and Tertiary Entrance Certificate. This is the most popular of the Approved Study Structures (see above under HSC). Courses are designed and assessed by individual schools which are accredited by VISE to conduct STC. The processes of teaching and learning are moderated by teachers drawn from the group of schools conducting STC. |
| SCOPE   | Co-operative venture between the TAFE Board, the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission, the Ministry of Employment and Training, the Education Department, IBM and the Myer Foundation. Data was collected relating to the subject combinations and ethnic backgrounds of students in Years 11 and 12 in 1984 in approximately 96 per cent of high, technical and nongovernment schools, and VOP and TOP in TAFE colleges. The aspirations of students for continuing education in schools or postsecondary education, or for work, are also covered in the study. |
| TAFE    | Technical and Further Education. The area of postsecondary education not covered by universities or colleges of advanced education. It includes vocational, preparatory and recreational studies and is provided under the auspices of the TAFE Board. |
T12 Technical Year 12 Certificate. A certificate issued by the Education Department to record the successful completion of a course of Year 12 studies in a technical school. Schools are accredited annually by the Education Department to conduct T12, and assessment is internal, with some moderation.

TOP Tertiary Orientation Program. A course of studies conducted by TAFE and accredited by institutions of higher education to provide entry to postsecondary studies.

VCE Victorian Certificate of Education. Proposed certificate recording satisfactory completion of a two-year course of postcompulsory studies, to replace the range of certificates now available.

VCAB Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board. Proposed statutory authority which will assume responsibility for all curricular development, accreditation, assessment and certification at the postcompulsory level.

VISE Victorian Institute of Secondary Education. Statutory authority with responsibility for assisting people in the transition from school to work or further study, and conducting such forms of assessment as may be relevant to this transition. Accredits courses, conducts examinations, and issues certificates for the HSC.

VOP Vocational Orientation Program. Year 11 programs conducted in TAFE colleges.

VPSEC Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission.

VUAC Victorian Universities Admissions Committee.
1 Introduction

1.1 The Review of Postcompulsory Schooling is concerned to establish broad policies for the education of young Victorians within a changing context. The task is urgent. Half of all young people in Victoria now complete a Year 12 in either schools or in colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). The courses which they undertake and the certificates which they gain still reflect the time when studies at the upper secondary level were designed for a minority of young people intending to proceed to higher education. The trend to stay at school for the full secondary span is to be welcomed and further encouraged if we believe that participation in education allows for the development of capacities and skills valuable both to the individual and to the society. However, there must be a radical reshaping of the present provision of postcompulsory schooling so that its curriculum, credentials and structures encompass these broader purposes. This Report outlines the changes now needed to make this stage of schooling purposeful and attractive to an increasing proportion of young people into the 1990s and beyond.

1.2 This Review was opened in April 1984 with the publication of a Discussion Paper. It analysed existing patterns of educational provision and proposed general directions for change in the curriculum, credentials and structures of schooling. The issues raised were the subject of widespread discussion at public meetings throughout the state. Almost 400 written responses to the Discussion Paper were received and analysed and the Committee co-ordinating the Review held further consultations with major respondents regarding the nature of the recommendations to be made. By these means, large numbers of Victorians were involved in discussing options for improved educational opportunities for young people.

1.3 Further consideration of options was undertaken by three working parties which operated between May and November 1984 to examine issues relating to curriculum, credentials and organisational forms. Members of the working parties were drawn from panels nominated by educational providers and organisations. The terms of reference of the working parties and the full advice they gave to the Co-ordinating Committee are included in the second volume of this Report. The Co-ordinating Committee wishes publicly to acknowledge the contribution of time, experience, energy and goodwill of the forty-five members of the working parties, and in particular of Professors Fensham and Scott who chaired two of them.

1.4 Throughout the period of this Review, a number of complementary initiatives have been taken at the state and national levels. In Victoria, collaborative arrangements between schools and TAFE have been extended to allow wider curricular options for students at the senior secondary level. The Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE) recommended a series of changes to the Higher School Certificate (HSC) including the replacement of external examinations by 1990 with moderated, letter-graded, teacher assessments for all subjects within the certificate. Some institutions of higher education have reconsidered their selection procedures and introduced modes of entry to admit disadvantaged students. Industrial training arrangements are being reviewed and a Youth Guarantee Scheme has been proposed to offer young people work and training. At national level, a visiting team of OECD experts has completed its review of youth policies, the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs has reported, a committee has been established to examine quality in education and issues relating to credentials are being considered. The Commonwealth Participation and Equity Program (PEP) is funding initiatives in individual schools and TAFE colleges and also system-wide action to
encourage higher and more equitably distributed levels of participation in schooling. The PEP guidelines note that many of the needed changes require system-wide action to support the development of curriculum appropriate to the upper secondary level, changes in Year 12 certification and the structures of schooling.

1.5 This Review, therefore, is part of the attempt to extend educational opportunities to all young people. Together with these other initiatives, it seeks to transform the postcompulsory level of schooling into a stage in which the great majority of young people can participate. The recommendations have been made after wide consultation and public debate. The changes we advocate in broad policies will enable the Victorian educational response to the needs of young people at postcompulsory level to be improved in terms of its equity and excellence.
2 The Present Position

2.1 Over the past 150 years, Victoria has extended educational opportunities to an increasing proportion of its young people. In colonial times, elementary education was offered to the growing and dispersed population. Until the end of the nineteenth century, most young Victorians pursued studies standardised in form and content, and left school at the end of primary schooling when no longer compelled to attend. Most postprimary education was conducted by private schools but some public continuation schools existed and some primary schools conducted postprimary classes. In 1910, the foundations of the present government secondary system were laid. In subsequent years two types of schools were established. High schools, higher elementary schools and continuation schools offered to selected students an academic curriculum which could lead to the teachers training colleges or the university. Preparatory, trade classes, trade schools and technical schools offered a practically oriented curriculum and a possible route to the technical institutes established in the late nineteenth century.

2.2 After World War II, education entered a second phase in which secondary schooling was made accessible to all. It was provided in high and technical schools and in nongovernment schools, all of which accommodated a sharply rising number of young people. Students stayed longer at school throughout the 1950s; by the 1960s, the period of compulsory education had been extended to fifteen years of age and four years of secondary schooling had become nearly universal.

2.3 From the middle 1960s substantial changes also occurred in the organisation and funding of postsecondary education. Colleges of advanced education offered degree and diploma courses. Technical colleges, known as TAFE colleges since 1981, offered trade and middle-level courses and devised bridging programs, the forerunners of the Tertiary Orientation Program (TOP), which is now used by students for entry to tertiary education and employment.

2.4 Since the 1960s, levels of participation in the upper secondary years of schooling have been rising, despite some fluctuation in the 1970s. This trend of increased retention has been pronounced since 1981 and indicates that we are now entering a third phase of education in which most students will complete the full secondary span. It is time to reappraise the postcompulsory years of schooling as they become a stage of education in which the great majority of students participates.

Participation in Education

2.5 In Australia, in 1983, 94 per cent of all young people stayed to Year 10 at school, 64 per cent stayed to Year 11 and 41 per cent stayed to Year 12. Many others continued their education on a full-time or part-time basis in other settings, particularly in TAFE as Figure 1 shows. As teenagers grow older, their participation in full-time or part-time education decreases. In Australia in 1983, 90 per cent of fifteen-sixteen-year-olds, 63 per cent of seventeen-year-olds, 44 per cent of eighteen-year-olds and 38 per cent of nineteen-year-olds were involved in education on a full-time or part-time basis. In Victoria in 1982, 91 per cent of fifteen-and sixteen-year-olds, 71 per cent of seventeen-year-olds, 54 per cent of eighteen-year-olds and 46
per cent of nineteen-year-olds were engaged in full-time or part-time education. Many young full-time students are also part-time workers but young part-time students are usually found in apprenticeship or certificate courses in TAFE. Apprenticeship courses can be entered only by those who have found employment in the trade; and entry to TAFE certificate courses is highly selective, with the number of places available being determined by openings in the labour market. While the inclusion of first-year enrolments in TAFE certificate courses would give a more accurate picture of the levels of full-time educational participation by young Victorians, their purpose, curricula, structure and methods of entry bear a closer relationship to postsecondary forms of vocational education than to the forms of postcompulsory schooling. Postcompulsory schooling covered by this Report is confined to Years 11 and 12 of schools and, in TAFE, to Vocational Orientation Programs (VOP), Tertiary Orientation Programs (TOP) and formal study courses that do not result in the awarding of a recognised credential.

Figure 1: Education participation by sex and age, Australia, 1983

Source: Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC)

2.6 Table 1 estimates the proportion of a cohort of young people in schools alone and in schools and non-vocational courses (VOP and TOP) in TAFE in all states in 1982. When schools alone are considered, the participation rate of 33.4 per cent in Victoria is lower than that in four other states, and lower than the national average. The role that TAFE plays in postcompulsory schooling in Victoria is clear, for when full-time TAFE students are added to those in schools, Victoria's participation rate rises a further 11.3 per cent to 44.7 per cent, exceeding that of all other systems except the ACT. On this basis, Victorian levels of participation are high when compared with the other Australian states and with the national average.
Table 1: Age-weighted participation rates* in the final year of schooling, full-time students by state, 1982 (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>School only</th>
<th>School and TAFE Stream 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Age-weighted participation rates attempt to overcome the difficulties associated with retention rates (the proportion of Year 7 students remaining to the last or second-last year of schooling) and participation rates (the proportion of the age group remaining in education). Age-weighted participation rates take into account the overall size of the age cohort and the average age of students in different education systems.

2.7 Levels of participation in postcompulsory schooling have been rising for some time in Victoria but have risen sharply since 1982, especially in government schools. Of the 67,579 Victorian students who began Year 7 in 1980, almost four-fifths remained in school to undertake Year 11 in 1984. Of these, 25,453 or 47.6 per cent attended government high schools, 9,885 or 18.5 per cent attended government technical schools and 18,114 or 33.9 per cent attended nongovernment schools. Retention into Year 12 has increased 10 percentage points between 1981 and 1984. Of the 28,946 students in Year 12 in 1984, 51.5 per cent attended government high schools, 4.7 per cent attended technical schools and 43.8 per cent attended nongovernment schools. The small proportion of young people in technical schools reflects the fact that Year 12 and a Technical Year 12 (T12) Certificate were added relatively recently in technical schools. Even now Year 12 is offered in only half of them.

Table 2: Apparent retention rates to Years 11 and 12, Victorian schools, 30 June 1981–30 June 1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government schools</th>
<th>Nongovernment schools</th>
<th>All schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>Year 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>89.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Department and Commonwealth Schools Commission

2.8 The number of young people who undertake postcompulsory schooling in VOP and TOP in TAFE must also be taken into account. Table 3 shows the enrolment patterns of full-time students aged 15–19 years in these courses since 1981. Enrolments in VOP and TOP peaked in 1983 and have declined somewhat in 1984; preliminary figures show a further decline in 1985. When these TAFE enrolments are added to school enrolments, the apparent retention rate to the second-last year of schooling rises to 80.9 per cent, and to the last year of schooling to 50.7 per cent for 1984. Of those undertaking a Year 12 of full-time schooling in 1984, 85.4 per cent attended schools and 14.6 per cent attended TAFE; 62.6 per cent attended
public institutions. It should be noted, nonetheless, that 12 900 young Victorians did not remain to complete an eleventh year of schooling and that an additional 33 000 did not undertake a twelfth year. While many of these young people found jobs, or entered apprenticeship, certificate courses in TAFE, or the variety of postschool training in the private sector, many others suffer prolonged unemployment and lack the educational requirements for entry into postschool education or training.

Table 3: Number of 15–19-year-olds in full-time VOP and TOP, Victoria, 1981–84

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>VOP</th>
<th>TOP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1498</td>
<td>4353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1404</td>
<td>4873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1577</td>
<td>5211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>4940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: TAFE Board.

Present Curricula in Schools

2.9 Since the publication of the Discussion Paper, three investigations of the curricula available to students in Years 11 and 12 in schools have been undertaken. The Education Department surveyed all government high schools and a large sample of technical schools in 1984 and calculated the proportion of students studying particular subjects. VISE examined student enrolment patterns in HSC subjects, units and study structures in both government and nongovernment schools. The SCOPE project surveyed all students in Years 11 and 12 in 1984 to determine the number of subjects taken in eight subject categories*, namely English, foreign languages, human studies, performing arts, mathematics, science, commercial studies, and practical studies. While all three investigations show the subjects and courses undertaken by students in the postcompulsory years of schooling in all schools throughout Victoria, the data at present available do not describe the combinations of subjects taken by individual students or the curricular options open to them.

2.10 Table 4 shows the spread of studies of students in Year 11 in 1984 in government high and nongovernment schools. The proportion of students studying between none and three subjects in each of the eight subject areas is shown. At Year 11, almost all students studied English and mathematics, with over 40 per cent taking more than one branch of mathematics. Almost one-third of students studied more than one science subject and one third studied none. Sixty per cent of Year 11 students were undertaking at least one subject in the commercial area and 31.4 per cent two or more. The minority status of students studying the humanities subjects

*At Year 11 the subjects included in the eight categories were:

- **English**: English, English as a second language, literature, remedial
- **Human studies**: History, geography, social studies, environmental studies, general studies, humanities, politics
- **Performing and creative arts**: Art, music, drama, film & TV, pottery/ceramics, craft, photography
- **Mathematics**: Mathematics, terminal mathematics, computer studies
- **Science**: Biology, chemistry, physics, environmental science, agriculture, earth science
- **Commercial**: Economics, accounting, typing and shorthand, secretarial studies, legal studies, general business education
- **Practical**: Graphic communication, home economics, human development and society, technical/trade studies, woodwork, needlework, metalwork.
was most striking with 52.6 per cent of students having no systematic exposure to history, geography, politics, social studies or other subjects in this category. Only 14.9 per cent of students were undertaking more than one humanities subject. Although students enrolled in foreign language studies at the Saturday School of Modern Languages have been omitted, 84 per cent of students at school took no foreign language, 72.3 per cent took no subject in the creative and performing arts and 62.2 per cent took no practical studies, the category which includes home economics, human development and society, technical and trade subjects and graphic communication. The inclusion of home economics and especially of human development and society (an HSC group 1 subject) in the practical studies category is questionable and exaggerates the percentage of students undertaking studies in this category.

**Table 4: Percentage of students by subject category and number of subjects taken, Year 11, high and nongovernment schools, Victoria, 1984**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject category</th>
<th>Number of subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign languages</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human studies</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing &amp; creative arts</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: SCOPE 1984*

2.11 Table 5 shows the pattern of Year 11 studies in technical schools. The most noticeable difference between technical and high schools is that three-quarters of the technical school students were undertaking practical studies in contrast to the much smaller proportion in high schools. Another feature of technical schools was the absence of any study of foreign languages. The Education Department’s survey of technical schools showed that the most frequently studied subjects at Year 11 were English, humanities, mathematics, science, woodwork, furniture and building subjects and vehicle group studies.

**Table 5: Percentage of students by subject category and number of subjects taken, Year 11, government technical schools, Victoria, 1984**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject category</th>
<th>Number of subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphics</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human studies</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing &amp; creative arts</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: SCOPE 1984*

*Subject categories are the same as those used for high schools, with the exception of graphics, which replaces foreign languages.*
2.12 The pattern of studies in high and nongovernment schools is similar in Year 12 to that in Year 11 as Table 6 shows. As in Year 11, almost all students were studying English, with the great majority taking only one English subject. The small proportion studying foreign languages remained stable, and there was little change in the percentage studying humanities. The major variations from Year 11 were:

- a big decline in the proportion taking mathematics, with 41 per cent of students taking no subject in this category;
- a decline of 12 per cent in the proportion of students studying any of the performing and creative arts, of 13 per cent in those taking practical studies, and of 14 per cent in those studying commercial subjects.

The Education Department survey and the VISE study showed that subjects with high participation rates at Year 12 were English, biology, commercial and legal studies, history, general mathematics, chemistry and accounting.

Table 6: Percentage of students by subject category and number of subjects taken, Year 12, high and nongovernment schools, Victoria, 1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject category</th>
<th>Number of subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign languages</td>
<td>83.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human studies</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing &amp; creative arts</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>75.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SCOPE 1984

2.13 Gender differences are also apparent in the subject choices at Years 11 and 12. At Year 11, more males than females took two or more subjects in the mathematics/science areas and more females took two or more subjects in the English, humanities and commercial areas. More females than males studied subjects in the areas of foreign languages, performing and creative arts, and practical studies. At Year 12, specialisation in mathematics/science subjects was largely male and females predominated among those taking two subjects in English and the humanities.

2.14 It is clear that very few students in Year 11 and even fewer at Year 12 in high and nongovernment schools studied the performing and creative arts, practical subjects or languages in 1984. Half studied no humanities subjects and a third no science subjects. While most studied mathematics at Year 11, two-fifths did not in Year 12. At Year 11, specialisation was greatest in mathematics and science but at Year 12 the overall percentage of students studying one or more mathematics subjects declined. VISE has shown that despite the fact that 104 subjects are now accredited for study in the HSC, 80 per cent of the candidates were enrolled in various combinations of just fifteen subjects in both 1953 and 1983. Twenty years ago, the most frequently studied subjects were drawn from the mathematics, science, humanities, commercial, foreign languages and arts areas but, by 1983, the numbers enrolled in foreign languages and the arts had declined to the extent that these categories were no longer represented in the fifteen most popular subjects.
Curricular Options in TAFE

2.15 Students seeking more applied studies may transfer to TAFE for VOP at the end of Year 10 or to TOP at the end of Year 11. The variety of VOP makes curricular analysis difficult as programs can be pre-certificate, pre-TOP, or skill-access courses; and data on student enrolments in fields of study are lacking. In TOP, almost 90 per cent of full-time students in 1983 were enrolled in applied art, applied science, business studies and general studies, with the remaining 10 per cent enrolled in building, drama, electronic data processing, engineering, music, paramedical, personal services, secretarial studies and social science. Apart from the study of English, the subjects that students undertake in these courses are not known.

Availability of Curricular Options

2.16 Students are constrained in their choice of subjects to a large extent by what schools and colleges can offer, which in turn is related to the size of the year group on individual sites. Table 7 shows the distribution of student enrolments in Years 11 and 12 in 1984 and the projected distribution in 1989 for Years 11 and 12 separately and combined. In 1984, 72 per cent of high and technical schools had 120 or fewer Year 11 students and 97.4 per cent had 120 or fewer Year 12 students. Projections for 1989, based on present retention rates, show that 74.9 per cent of Year 11 groups and 96 per cent of Year 12 groups would not exceed 120 students. Although numbers would increase if retention levels rose, the size of the 15-19-year-old group is declining overall. After peaking in 1986 with 361,700 persons, it will decline by 16,000 by 1991 and by 41,000 by 1996 (see Appendix I).

Table 7: Distribution of enrolments in Year 11 and Year 12, government high and technical schools, February 1984, February 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers of students enrolled</th>
<th>1984</th>
<th>1989 (projected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>Year 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-120</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121-140</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141-160</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161-180</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181-200</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-220</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221-240</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241-260</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>261-280</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>281-300</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-320</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321-340</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>341-360</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 360</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Department

*Projections are based on 1984 levels of retention.
2.17 A strong correlation exists between the size of the student population in a school or college at Years 11 and 12 and the number of curricular options available to students. At Year 12, surveys have shown that, in 1983, school groups of 20 students were offered eleven subjects while school groups of 120 students or more were offered twenty-seven subjects. A study by VISE showed that most schools offered between fifteen and seventeen subjects at Year 12 and that the same sixteen HSC group 1 subjects were offered in half the schools. Almost every school offered subjects within the categories of humanities, mathematics/science and commerce, and 60 per cent of schools also offered art, which was more widely available than its total candidature would indicate. However, only one-third of the schools offered any other creative or performing arts option, and less than one-quarter offered physical education. Where school enrolments fell, schools tended to maintain the number of mathematics/science subjects, but to limit the range of subjects offered in other areas. No single HSC group 2 subject was offered in sufficient numbers of schools to represent a generally available curricular option. Only 15 per cent of the options notionally available cater for the great majority of HSC students. Surveys show that usually one or two HSC group 2 subjects are offered alongside a group 1 core. Students in country schools face an even more restricted choice of HSC group 1 subjects.

Table 8: Number and proportion of full-time students in HSC, TOP and T12, 1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HSC group 1 and 2 subjects</td>
<td>24 986</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSC approved study structures (including STC)</td>
<td>1 267</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>5 953</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T12</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33 098</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: VISE, Education Department and TAFE Board

Certification at Year 12

2.18 The range of the certificates available at Year 12 shapes the curricular options for students. The number and percentage of all candidates in all Year 12 certificates in 1984 is shown in Table 8. The vast majority of full-time students at Year 12 is enrolled in either HSC subjects or TOP and alternative courses remain small. When all HSC candidates are considered (see Table 9), group 1 subjects in students' choices predominate. Overall, in 1984, 92.9 per cent of HSC candidates were enrolled in at least one group 1 subject, and a high proportion of the 15.5 per cent of candidates taking both group 1 and group 2 subjects added a single group 2 subject to a basic group 1 course; 3.1 per cent were enrolled in group 2 subjects only and of the 4.1 per cent in approved study structures, the great majority was enrolled in STC. There has been a movement towards group 2 subjects and approved study structures between 1982 and 1984 but the proportion of students in those subjects and courses remains small overall.
Table 9: Number and percentage of HSC candidates by type of course, 1982–84

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>1982</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>1983</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>1984</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 subjects only</td>
<td>24,087</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>23,671</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>24,309</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 and 2 subjects</td>
<td>1,715</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>4,873</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2 subjects only</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved study structures</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1,277</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26,770</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>28,694</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>31,418</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: VISE

Transition to Higher Education

2.19 The number of students who continue their education on a full-time basis in colleges of advanced education and universities has fluctuated over the past few years in Victoria. In 1976, 12,145 Year 12 students went straight on to higher education, and in that same year 18.3 per cent of those Victorians who were aged seventeen in 1975 went straight on. The number and proportion of Year 12 students immediately entering higher education fell steadily until 1982, when 10,532, or 15.5 per cent of seventeen-year-olds entered higher education. In 1984, 12,485 students or 18.5 per cent of the age group continued their studies in higher education. This represents 19 per cent of those who started in secondary school seven years earlier.
3 Changes Are Needed

3.1 Within secondary schools Years 11 and 12 are in important respects tied to each other and distinguished in significant ways from the compulsory years preceding them. The major certificate, the HSC, nominally relates only to studies in Year 12, but it also shapes options at Year 11. Many Year 11 subjects are prerequisites for Year 12 studies and Year 11 is often used as a kind of trial run in which some students are eliminated or change direction and plans. The strong movement by students from nongovernment and government schools into TOP in TAFE after Year 11 is in part an aspect of this predictive process; another is the departure of great numbers at the end of Year 11 for whom the major purpose of the HSC is irrelevant or for whom success in those competitive terms is unlikely. Those going on and those not going on to higher education must more equally be served in the postcompulsory phase. To do that the purposes of the final two years of secondary schooling taken together must be reconsidered.

Purposes of the Phase

3.2 Years 11 and 12 are in important senses the culmination of an educational process that begins with the students' first entry to school. For those who complete the full twelve years the latter years build in more sophisticated and specialised ways on the foundations laid over the span of compulsory attendance. Most students, however, do not at present complete the full twelve years, and so fail to experience the culmination of any planned curricular sequence. Significant discontinuities in the educational progression occur at the completion of Year 10, a point coinciding for most students in the Victorian system with the end of compulsory attendance. Beyond this level, elements of curriculum compulsory in earlier years become optional; broad areas of the curriculum are fragmented into a number of more specialised offerings; and new studies can be undertaken. These changes underline the fact that the postcompulsory years have purposes somewhat different in emphasis from those of the compulsory years of schooling. This is recognised in the recent Ministerial Paper Number 6 which provides the framework for curriculum over the compulsory years in Victorian schools. Furthermore, the postcompulsory years have distinctive purposes arising from their being at the point where schooling meets the wider community, from differences in aptitude and interest within the student group and from the age of students themselves.

3.3 The 'community' to which schooling relates changes at postcompulsory levels from that closely associated with the school itself towards a broader reference group. Because this phase of schooling stands at the interface with further study in postsecondary institutions, with employment and with full legal citizenship, the form of its public mandate can no longer be so open, so locally responsive as that of the compulsory years. This is recognised in the processes of accreditation and certification that now shape curricular offerings and assessment at upper secondary levels. At Year 12 subjects for most students are accredited by an independent and representative statutory body, VISE, or through arrangement with postsecondary institutions. The users of the certificates to which these studies lead, as well as the society at large, have an important and legitimate interest in the nature of studies.
and standards of achievement which they represent. The certificates are a form of quality assurance, affirming that the studies themselves are well designed and worthwhile and that the assessments given are comparable across students and institutions, and represent significant standards of achievement. This is the only stage throughout schooling at which a form of quality assurance within a total community framework operates, and the certificates themselves provide a basis for selection into further studies and employment as well as being a record of students' achievements in study.

3.4 At the postcompulsory level, the students' wide differences in capacities, interests and intentions about their futures must be taken into account. It is no longer possible or desirable to hold all students within common studies for the greater part of their curriculum, or to assume that a single standard or the same range and types of achievement may be a common goal. Differentiation in courses and levels of study not appropriate over the compulsory years become appropriate on the basis of differences among students and on the basis of the differing competencies relevant to varying postschool activities. These differentiations must be accommodated within a framework that expands rather than restricts subsequent options for all students and continues to emphasise their common humanity and citizenship. Both the distinctive characteristics and the distinctive tensions of the postcompulsory phase hinge around the need to respond more actively to a variety of student aspirations and capacities while at the same time resisting the pull of too strong a differentiation.

3.5 Provision at the postcompulsory level must recognise that students have options other than continued schooling open to them. Their own purposes in continuing study must then find a strong place in the justification of curriculum; what is offered must be attractive to them in terms of those purposes and be responsive to the voluntary nature of their continued participation. This necessarily involves a wider range of study options and orientations than those available during compulsory schooling. There is much evidence that students at this level definitely want their studies to contribute to their preparedness for the next stage of their lives, to their improved understanding of the adult world they are entering, and to the development of skills valuable in working life (Collins and Hughes 1982, OECD 1983, Sturman 1979, Williams and others 1980). If more students are to be encouraged to stay in school rather than attempt early entry into the workforce, the curriculum at this level must respond to these desires. It cannot simply float up to postcompulsory levels the forms of general education of the compulsory years.

3.6 The age of students requires that institutional practices which are part of the curriculum be markedly different from those considered suitable for young adolescents. Continuing students are on the verge of full legal adulthood (if they have not already passed it) at Year 12. The arrangements within which they learn should move decisively over the two-year period towards those of tertiary education and of task-oriented adult activities within work situations and beyond them.

3.7 For all these reasons, the Committee believes it is important to recognise the distinctive new elements that enter consideration at the postcompulsory level. This perspective has implications for the framing of an appropriate curriculum and options within it, for the shape and legitimation of the certificate marking successful completion of the phase and for the institutional arrangements within which it is provided.
Encouraging Higher Participation in the Postcompulsory Years

3.8 The proportion of students staying into the postcompulsory levels of secondary schooling has been rising, largely in response to the changed and uncertain employment situation (see Chapter 2). In 1981, 70 per cent of the students who had entered secondary schools at Year 7 four years earlier stayed into Year 11. By 1984 this percentage had risen to 79 per cent. Those staying to Year 12 in secondary schools of all types rose from 33 per cent in 1981 to 43 per cent by 1984; and when parallel TAFE courses at Year 12 are also included, about 50 per cent of students were participating at that level in 1984. This is higher than at any previous time in the state’s history, and the increases may be expected to continue.

Equity Reasons

3.9 For equity reasons, the Committee believes that rises in retention should actively and urgently be encouraged beyond the level that will automatically occur given changed circumstances. At present those from more advantaged families and districts already participate to very high levels to the end of Year 12, the first step towards professional training. This additional advantage helps to explain why 20 per cent of children born to fathers in the highest three classifications of occupations are by age 19 attending university, compared with only 7 per cent of those in the lowest three. Overall, a smaller proportion of that highest group (34 per cent) than of the lowest (54 per cent) is engaged in no postschool study of any kind at age 19 (CTEC 1982). Successful schooling to the end of Year 12 is a key factor in more socially equal postschool opportunities.

Labour Market Considerations

3.10 For many years now, full-time openings for young people in the workforce have been falling. Higher participation in postcompulsory schooling has been, at least in part, a result of that. The more recent decline in the rate of growth of the economy has resulted in persistent unemployment, particularly high among the young. At any one time, some 22 to 25 per cent of 15–19-year-olds seeking work are unable to find it. While for many of these, unemployment is temporary and part of the pattern of high turnover characteristic of the youth employment market, intervals of unemployment between jobs are lengthening. With every extension of the interval of unemployment, young people run a greater risk of being permanently excluded from jobs. Many young people have great difficulty in getting a foot in the labour market at all.

3.11 This situation is unlikely to change markedly. At any likely growth rate in the level of economic activity, total job openings will, on all predictions, fall short of the numbers seeking work. Moreover, since the numbers of people actively seeking work also rise as overall employment increases, the pool of unemployed is reduced only marginally. In these circumstances, the young, inexperienced and unqualified will continue to experience difficulties in finding work, and the position of those who have long sought, but not found, their first employment will be improved only slightly, if at all. The education system cannot directly do anything about increasing the number of job openings for young people. But it does have an obligation to ensure that it does not, by intent or default, exclude young people who could be given developmental opportunities within it. More positively, it needs to ensure that it is making such opportunities available, given the destructive nature of the alternative for many young people.
3.12 Those attempting to enter the workforce with minimal schooling and without work-related qualifications will in present and probable future circumstances be confined throughout life to a secondary labour market characterised by intermittent and part-time employment and low income. They are unlikely through experience on the job to move into better paid and more secure positions. While holding qualifications is no longer a guarantee of continuous employment or of employment appropriate to them, the absence of qualifications is a serious disadvantage as an increasingly higher proportion of the population comes to hold them.

3.13 The benefit of competencies gained through acquiring qualifications is not entirely dependent on being employed by someone else. These competencies may also serve in other income-earning and income-substitute activities and are often in fact used in a wider range of activities and employment than the apparent specificity of the training often suggests. It is, quite simply, better to have some potentially income-earning competency than to have none, and better to be equipped to enter postschool education and training than to be excluded from such possibilities.

3.14 The case for higher participation should not rest too heavily on improved individual chances of employment or of employment appropriate to qualifications gained. It is risky to associate continued learning too closely with individual employment prospects because the gains are uncertain, and not necessarily connected with the individual’s capacities and achievements. It is risky also if its major result is to heighten competition for limited places in professional training courses at universities and colleges and employment-associated courses in TAFE. It is, moreover, undesirable. Closely associating continued learning with improved employment prospects promotes false beliefs, attributing unemployment and poverty to individual deficiencies. It thus pretends that individuals can control what is only marginally under their control, without placing on all individuals the responsibility for participating in the design and implementation of social solutions. That path can only lead to a more polarised society.

3.15 To link continued learning too closely with employment prospects is also undesirable in more narrowly educational terms. It reinforces a belief already strong among students that the major or only reason for engaging in demanding studies is to use the acquired knowledge and skills in income earning. The corollary is that those who are unlikely to use them in work do not need to know much about such things as science, mathematics or history. A productive approach to the dilemmas involved could be to make the study of work in its changing forms, definitions and availability, and as it is affected by technological change, a common element of curriculum at postcompulsory levels. This would enlarge the perspective beyond that of the individual, as well as provide an essential backdrop to students’ own work and study plans.

Benefits to the Society and the Individual

3.16 It is not possible to assert with any confidence that the overall skills of the workforce will need to be higher as a result of technological changes, since such changes could equally result in an even wider polarisation of workforce skills than already exists with a de-skilling of many middle-level jobs and the elimination of many unskilled ones. It is, however, possible to assert that, in the face of uncertainty, the best policy is to ensure that as many young people as possible have a sufficiently high level of initial educational achievement to possess a flexible basis for the acquisition of specific skills, to have some conceptual understanding of technology and of productive processes, and to take their place confidently as participants in the work environment.
3.17 Better educated individuals have broader options in employment and beyond it than do less educated people. Working life will remain important as a source of income, identity and social contact for individuals. The time involved in it, however, has been steadily if gradually declining over a century, and is likely to do so further, giving expanded time for other pursuits more freely chosen. Personal resources developed through education can increase the satisfaction to which people potentially have access and give them confidence in exploring new fields.

3.18 While the number of informal channels through which information and ideas can be gained is increasing, the schools' distinctive purpose is the systematic development of a framework of time, values, ordered information, concepts and theory to which casually acquired information and ideas can be related throughout life, and the framework itself modified. A commitment to the disinterested pursuit of knowledge and the testing of hypotheses and belief against evidence where appropriate is built into this educative purpose. Putting knowledge into a context of action and commitment by demonstrating its significance in ordinary lives, its relevance to social issues and socially valuable tasks not only gives it reality but removes it from being a specialist pursuit and makes it part of life itself. Knowledge becomes the rightful property of all reflective and reasoning people, whether the object of reflection and reasoning is a practical task, the development and reconsideration of personal identity or perennial human experiences and dilemmas. Many important ingredients of the educational purpose are not useful in any narrowly instrumental sense. Imagination fed by access to written and spoken literature, music, art and other cultural forms representing "humanity holding a great continuous discussion throughout the ages and across the world" is not narrowly useful. It does, however, contribute greatly to the quality of many lives.

3.19 The rising complexity of moral and political issues in the contemporary world and the dangerous consequences of allowing those issues to be annexed as the exclusive province of technical experts emphasise the need for a better educated society. Individual economic prospects have their place in motivations to continue in education, but the struggle for competitive advantage needs to be tempered by a sober appreciation that fates inescapably shared may well be more important to prospects of survival and to the possibility of individually satisfying lives than anything individuals can control. The hazards of living in a nuclear age are only the most dramatic example of these inescapably shared fates. We do not claim that education necessarily makes people more moral or more humane. We do believe, however, that it potentially does provide a basis for sharing the collective experience of the human race, for gaining a sense of identity with it, and for gaining access to its best validated knowledge and artistic achievements. Such a basis provides a common background important in binding a society, in making possible more equal and reasoned discourse within it and confident participation in its affairs. Learning environments which themselves build a sense of mutual responsibility and co-operation can additionally contribute to the effectiveness of democratic processes.

Ways of Encouraging Higher and More Equitably Distributed Participation

3.20 The Committee believes that Victoria should set itself a target of achieving, by 1995, 70 per cent participation to the end of Year 12 of schooling and be committed to making the necessary changes in educational provision to enable that to happen in ways promoting both equity and excellence. The reasons for urging this arise equally out of developments occurring in work and society and out of a
belief in the potential of well conceived and well conducted education to expand the resources individuals bring to living and to the operation of a democracy. The target of 70 per cent participation to the end of Year 12 is both desirable and possible to achieve by 1995 provided that appropriate changes in the structure of financial support for young people and in the nature of postcompulsory provision itself are made. While this 70 per cent level has already been reached in some schools and localities, the challenge is to make it widely spread. Such a level of participation in 1984 would have involved an increase of 12 900 students on those actually enrolled in Year 12. If the target of 70 per cent participation in schooling to the end of Year 12 is to be achieved by 1995, the proportion remaining in school would have to rise at an average of 2.4 per cent per annum.

3.21 Higher participation to the end of Year 12 will depend mainly on young people from lower income families continuing their education and will be achieved basically in districts where participation is now lowest. It will occur only if certain steps are taken which deliberately seek to promote higher participation by less advantaged groups. Policies of youth support followed by the Commonwealth Government are crucial if less advantaged youth are to participate in the full span of schooling to a target level already surpassed among more advantaged groups. The OECD team which recently reviewed youth policies in Australia claimed that income support should provide opportunities as well as money for young people. Its primary purpose should be to increase the proportion of young persons from disadvantaged backgrounds participating in education and training, making sure that all young people are assured of at least an adequate preparation for work and adulthood (OECD 1984).

3.22 Many inquiries over a number of years have analysed and recommended change in the pattern of financial support for young people. These need now to be followed by action. If our society believes that continued education is preferable to unemployment for teenagers, and that young people should not be trapped in the precarious secondary labour market by inadequate qualifications, it should ensure that, especially for those in financial need, continued learning is made more attractive than unemployment or entry into dead-end jobs. Changes in this direction are fundamental to increased participation and to its more equitable spread, both at upper secondary and postsecondary levels. The Committee believes that the importance of this proposition must emphatically be asserted.

3.23 Changes in the basis of financial support for continuing education are a necessary condition for higher and more equitably distributed educational participation to the end of Year 12 and beyond. They are, however, of themselves insufficient. Postcompulsory provision must itself change significantly if it is to become a phase appropriate for the great majority of the age group. The goal of 70 per cent participation to the end of Year 12 by 1995 is attainable provided that provision of schooling is designed with that objective in mind, and that developments are not restricted to the essentially ad hoc adaptations that have characterised past responses to rising enrolments. The courses in which many students will be enrolled will not be identical with those now predominating. There will be an increase in the number of ways in which those who have left school and are without work can combine training in the workforce with part-time formal training. These alternatives to full-time schooling should include opportunities for part-time and discontinuous participation in postcompulsory schooling and extended provision of training shared between workplaces and TAFE. Two further conditions must apply to the encouragement of higher participation to the end of Year 12: schooling must offer students distinctive benefits which they cannot equally well or better gain by other
means; and there must be no conscription of participants, as that would have destructive effects not only on the unwilling students but also on the capacity of schools seriously to advance their own distinctive purposes. We recommend:

Recommendation 1: That increased participation in schooling to the end of Year 12 energetically be pursued with the objective that by 1995, 70 per cent of an age group will complete Year 12 of schooling. The Victorian Government should commit itself to the realisation of this target and to the support of changes necessary to make it effective.

Recommendation 2: That the Victorian Government pursue with all urgency changes in the Commonwealth policies of financial support for young people so that, for those in financial need, continued educational participation, at least to the end of Year 12, be made as attractive as unemployment benefits.

New Directions Proposed

3.24 The balance of this Report lays out proposals for action designed to make provision at postcompulsory levels more congruent with contemporary needs. Continuing into a twelfth year of schooling must be made attractive to students presently seeing little point in doing so, or alienated by the terms on which it is offered. Postcompulsory provision must equip students who will follow more advanced and more specialised studies beyond Year 12. It must ensure that those who will move directly from school into the workforce have broadly useful skills and a significant credential which has wide currency and forms a basis for return to study at a later date. It must do all this without cementing distinctions between students of varying aptitudes and different immediate futures, both because the claims of common humanity and common citizenship are stronger than those of occupational distinction and because the type of course followed and achievements registered in youth can no longer be allowed to curtail opportunities for life. Over a lifetime, all who desire to do so should be enabled to improve upon base qualifications, to change occupational direction and to engage in further formal learning as and when they desire or need to do so. The notion of the once-for-all chance in youth is already being eroded by the return to study by older people, and this tendency may be expected to accelerate. Arrangements must provide fast and slow means of acquiring higher qualifications and not erect barriers to further education.

3.25 Postcompulsory provision now needs to be conceived and planned as a whole rather than in segments determined by different future paths. The distinctions between practical and theoretical studies, and between vocational training and education, had their origins in a different economic structure and in a less open society than now exists. The present four-way competition between nongovernment schools, government high and technical schools and TAFE at this level results in insufficient numbers of students on most sites to offer a comprehensive curricular range. Priority is being given to maintaining an adequate number and range of HSC group 1 subjects in order to keep open the widest subsequent options for students in postsecondary education and employment. Courses and subjects that cater for students with other purposes and interests use the resources left over after these mainstream curricular options have been provided. As a result, despite the increased numbers of subjects and courses accredited within HSC over recent years, the actual curricular options to which most high school students have access have become
narrower rather than wider over the past thirty years. Further, the type of institution attended also circumscribes the kinds of studies undertaken. Technical studies and the resources necessary to mount them are present in technical schools and in TAFE—but not in high schools or most nongovernment schools. Government schools are poorly provided with resources needed to mount a range of high-quality studies in the creative and performing arts. TAFE has those. In major TAFE colleges enrolling relatively large numbers of students in TOP, a wide variety of applied studies is offered, but preparatory studies for courses of a theoretical type in higher education are typically absent.

3.26 Bringing together all the public resources devoted to Years 11 and 12 in an area in an overall provision plan would give all students wider opportunities and curricular options, and result in the more effective use of the resources themselves. For such developments to be effected in ways promoting both excellence and equity, a single agency must bear responsibility for the postcompulsory phase within the public sector and command all the resources devoted to it. Schools and TAFE colleges, in attempting to increase student options through linking course offerings, have often encountered problems in negotiating each other's services from separate budgetary allocations. For this reason, and because of the need to view provision as a whole, the Committee recommends that the Education Department should assume responsibility for all public-sector provision at Years 11 and 12. A transfer of resources should be made between schools and TAFE to reflect the distinctive responsibilities of each sector. The schools should be funded to enable them to contract services from TAFE and from other sources, where needed, so that a comprehensive curricular range can be offered at Years 11 and 12. In this way, resources could be shared where appropriate by several providers rather than being unnecessarily duplicated in each. Further consideration should also be given to the position of TAFE courses currently offered in schools with the possibility of the TAFE Board gaining direct responsibility for them.

Recommendation 3: That within the public sector the Education Department be responsible for all schooling at Years 11 and 12 and that the allocation of resources between the Education Department and TAFE reflect this responsibility. Resources used to provide Years 11 and 12 courses in TAFE should be frozen at present levels pending evaluation and transfer.
4 Shaping Postcompulsory Curriculum

4.1 The links between curricular, credentialling and structural issues are obvious. The certificate which marks graduation from secondary schooling and entry to the next phase of students' lives is the public expression of the acceptability of the curriculum at senior levels. The structures needed at that level and the public acceptance itself depend on the range and kinds of studies to which it is believed all students should have access. Within this apparently seamless web, curricular policies are, however, basic. They drive the system.

4.2 In the broadest and most general terms, the overall curricular analysis of the Review's Discussion Paper won wide support. There was overwhelming agreement on the need to give students wider curricular options than they have at present beyond Year 10, and to develop more explicit connections between academic study and its applications and between theory and practice. Both the curriculum and credentials working parties supported the organisation of curricular offerings over Years 11 and 12 as a course of study covering two years. They recommended that semester-length units over the two years would permit greater flexibility than do existing annual subjects. Both favoured inclusion of some common studies, allowing considerable latitude for local design of content, learning modes and assessment within an overall framework. Each suggested a framing of units into common studies and two other groupings, each of which would contain a considerable variety of options. The working parties wished to affirm but limit degrees of specialisation within the continuing general education of all students at this level and to allow for differing modes of assessment within a common certificate. This chapter draws heavily on the working parties' reports, though it does not endorse the detailed advice of either. The full reports of the working parties should be read by those interested in details of agreement and differences among the three sets of recommendations.

Combining Years 11 and 12

4.3 There are many advantages in regarding Years 11 and 12 as a phase of schooling distinguished by a somewhat different balance of considerations from the compulsory years. The organisation of curricular offerings across the two years in semester-length rather than year-long units enables a greater variety of combinations and options to be offered. Varying depths of study can be provided. The opportunities for students to change direction, redeem failure, and experiment with new areas and kinds of study are increased. Since semester-length units give students twice as many choices over the two years as do year-long units, clear specification and justification of prerequisites could result. Discontinuous attendance is more readily accommodated and credits toward the certificate can be cumulative over the two years. The introduction of the four-term year in Victorian schools in 1987 facilitates the development of semester-length units of study at upper secondary level.

Recommendation 4: That from the beginning of 1987, courses in Years 11 and 12 be organised as a course of study over two years in semester-length units, not assigned to a particular year level except as required by sequential studies composed of more than two semester units.
A Comprehensive Curricular Range

4.4 A curricular rationale within which systematic options can be designed and made available to students should replace continued reliance on ad hoc extensions to subject offerings. The remainder of this chapter sets out an extended discussion of the main aspects of such a rationale. Many additional subjects and study programs added to the postcompulsory curriculum over recent years have been due to initiatives taken by teachers in individual schools and in subject associations. These offerings have been restricted by the type of institution in which they are taught, since they vary in facilities, equipment and teacher expertise. Complete study programs such as the STC have been as much a response to the problem of providing a more appropriate curriculum for a limited number of students in a particular place within given facilities as a consequence of any consideration of a curricular range to which all students should have access. The distinction between group I and group 2 HSC subjects often reflects historical accident rather than definitions of what is needed as preparation for higher education. Many group 2 HSC subjects are extremely valuable contributions towards a wider curricular range. Despite their high quality, they have proved less attractive to students because they open up narrower subsequent options than do group I subjects, on which selection into higher education is primarily based. T12 does not lead into most subsequent study options. TOP in TAFE provides some valuable extensions to studies at upper secondary level but their availability is confined to students taking the full program in TAFE.

Sharing the Culture

4.5 Any discussion of curriculum must begin by asserting the primacy of essentially common and cultural purposes. In present circumstances, high levels of anxiety about individual employment prospects are leading to the ascendency of narrowly instrumental views about schooling and to a preoccupation with skills at the expense of content. Young people are culturally deprived if they emerge from twelve years of schooling without even the most rudimentary knowledge of the history, art forms and philosophical underpinnings of their own society, or if they are terrorised by situations requiring quantitative or scientific reasoning. They are economically, culturally and socially deprived if over the twelve years of schooling they have not developed, through studies having significant content, relatively high levels of competence in the skills of oral and written communication and in mathematical operations. Views about the content of the curriculum, desired common and optional studies and the spread of studies all should pursue, relate not only to individual differences in capacities and interests. They also concern those elements of the culture that are considered important to share. The continuing process of cultural formation should be part of the studies undertaken by all students at postcompulsory levels and be seen as crucial for their full and confident participation as adults in a democratic society.

4.6 The art of teaching is to seek out ways of making important knowledge interesting and real to students of varying experience, capacities and backgrounds and to ensure that each student reaches the most sophisticated mastery possible. The task encounters problems at the stage where schooling meets the outside world. At that stage, competitive pressures heighten as achievements are compared within a single frame of reference. Teachers who believe in the importance of substantial progress in learning by all students face great difficulties within present arrangements. Large
numbers of students unlikely to reach standards appropriate for entry into higher education in mathematics, science and humanities can nevertheless significantly improve their levels of competence and gain much from courses which enable them to do so. The existence of a single reference point for judging achievements, which must be registered over a fixed period of time and assessed within a single mode, effectively prevents such students from advancing in study and can persuade them that there is little point in attempting to do so.

Redefined and Strengthened Academic Studies

4.7 The first and basic ingredient of the comprehensive curricular range to which all students should have access is a variety of studies within each of the major curricular areas: the study of their own society, arts/humanities, science/technology and mathematics. This apparently traditional view does not require all students to follow those courses usually prescribed as preparation for higher education. Rather, it calls for a reconsideration of such studies in contemporary terms: While not denying that abstract studies are important, it challenges the notion that only those studies confined within accepted definitions of the academic disciplines can be intellectually demanding and rigorous.

4.8 Some types of traditional studies were originally designed for a minority of students, especially males occupying high social positions. Such studies were associated with the way of life of a limited social group. They were deliberately abstracted from the concerns of ordinary people's lives and from productive activities, since most of those engaging in them were by birth and definition not involved in either. As the productive significance of science and mathematics became evident in the nineteenth century, and as the functions of government extended and its basis became more democratic, a struggle was waged which resulted in the introduction of a wider number of vocational courses and of new social groups into the universities. The admission of women was long delayed and bitterly fought. These struggles, with the exception of the admission of women, were already over when Australian higher education took shape, but their echoes are still heard. The separation of theoretical and applied studies and the lower prestige of the latter except when located in universities is one of these echoes. Another is the assumption that whole classes of people are incapable of sustained intellectual effort. The fact that, until this century, women were seen as by nature to constitute such a group reveals and challenges unstated assumptions still widely current about other groups, often disguised within theories of individual difference. A third echo is the tendency towards mystification of key concepts that makes important insights inaccessible to non-specialists even at a general level.

4.9 Traditional academic studies are nevertheless important for all in giving access to structured, substantiated knowledge. Such knowledge not only enables people to act more powerfully in the world on the basis of a better understanding of it, it also represents important achievements of the human mind, imagination and spirit to which all have the right of access. Enabling people to move confidently within a cultural mainstream of ideas and discourse is an aspect of social participation for which schools have major responsibility. Those who follow no further studies in science, mathematics, history and literature should have gained, through sustained and well structured study at upper secondary levels, a framework of ideas and range of interests valued throughout life.
4.10 Nonetheless, traditional academic studies need careful review if access to the insights they potentially can give is to become more generally shared. Those that consist of specialist preparation for a limited number of occupations must be justified in the secondary curriculum on the same basis as other vocational studies. Although such specialist preparation is necessary for some, it must be clearly identified as preparatory to very specific occupations rather than widely applicable in subsequent studies or contributing to the general education of non-specialists. Further, some traditional academic studies are abstracted from an historical and social context, from their applications in productive activities and from major issues of the contemporary world. Studies at upper secondary level in mathematics, physics and chemistry designed to give students a theoretical base for later applications in higher education hold little appeal for many students. Most of them do not continue those studies into higher education and so presumably never get to the point of seeing the application of the theory. This is a further important reason why concepts should at school be associated with their areas of applications.

4.11 The Committee believes that the quality and rigour of academic studies should be strengthened for all students at upper secondary levels. Students already committed to such studies should be extended to their full capacity. Those not yet so committed should receive every encouragement to become so. At the same time there is a need to expand the avenues of acquisition of intellectual competence by developing studies having more applied orientations. Theoretically based vocational studies should be linked to the development of identified skills. Content within the major study areas should link with issues of the contemporary world and of student concern.

4.12 All studies should offer students serious engagement with serious ideas. No particular selection of knowledge from mathematics, the sciences, technology, history or literature can any longer be regarded as self evidently more fundamental than any other. For inclusion in the curriculum the content must be significant in itself and in terms of extending insights into important ideas, techniques, cultural achievements and human experience. Provided that such studies are as well structured as the examples given later in this chapter, draw on theories having relevance beyond the particular area of application, and develop critical judgement and the testing of belief through evidence where appropriate, they should be regarded as intellectually respectable and demanding.

4.13 The integrity of the culture with which the school is concerned is questionable if it fails to acknowledge the contributions of all major social groups to the collective experience, identity and operation of the society. Academic study of the social world often neglects the history and experience of women, of ordinary people and of ethnic minorities in definitions of human identity in general and Australian identity in particular. Changes making such studies socially inclusive are also needed.

4.14 The insistence on study in arts/humanities, science/technology and mathematics in the comprehensive curricular range to which all students should have access may seem at first sight a conservative view of the major purpose of schooling. In some ways it is. In two ways it is radical. First it asserts that the sustained, structured development of knowledge and skills should provide access to major areas of the culture for all students, not just for those intending to engage in related studies in higher education. Secondly it challenges the definitions of culture that exclude applied studies, the application of important ideas to contemporary life and the experience and contribution of major social groups.
Activity-based Studies

4.15 For many students, the inclusion of significant practical, work-related studies in the upper secondary curriculum is vital for their continued participation, employment prospects and further study plans. Vocationally oriented applied studies should suit a broad group of occupations rather than be specific to particular jobs. Such studies should include the acquisition of competence in practical work-related skills, although associated with theory where relevant. While work experience and community service should also be included in a comprehensive curricular range, the Committee believes that these experiences should be integrated into wider studies. The objective of all activity-based studies should be mastery in doing something as well as thinking and writing about it. Vocationally related activity-based studies will be only part of the range of activity-based studies offered. The creative and performing arts, at present sparsely represented in upper secondary curricula, also come into this category.

Recommendation 5: That all students in Years 11 and 12 have access to a comprehensive curricular range, including a variety of optional studies within each of the major areas of arts/humanities, science/technology and mathematics; and to a range of activity-based studies.

Specialisation and Spread of Studies

4.16 The analysis of the curriculum undertaken by students in 1984 which is presented in Chapter 2 must give cause for concern. Although almost all students take English over the two years, only 16 per cent in each year study any other language. More than half in both years do not take any human studies (which include history, geography, politics and social studies) and more than a third take no science. Mathematics shows the greatest variation over the two years. Only 10 per cent of students in Year 11 but 41 per cent of students in Year 12 take no mathematics. The proportion taking two mathematics subjects falls from 36 to 18 per cent between Years 11 and 12, while 25 per cent take two science subjects over both years. The group of students is not identical over the two years because of the relatively high proportion of students leaving at the end of Year 11. Nevertheless, some aspects of the picture are clear. Specialisation within mathematics/science or humanities/commercial studies strengthens at Year 12. A higher proportion of female than of male students takes neither mathematics nor science at Year 12. The proportion of young women taking two studies in both areas is relatively low, limiting their subsequent study options. Very low proportions of students in schools undertake studies in foreign languages, the performing arts and practical studies.

4.17 The Committee believes that all students should continue studies in all the major areas of the curriculum. Although specialisation is important at this level, it should not preclude further and more sophisticated engagement with the major areas of human endeavour and achievement. Science and mathematics are significant areas of the culture to be followed in some form by all, but those particularly drawn to them should have their horizons extended through other studies bearing on the human condition. The reverse is equally true. At present all students are obliged to study the equivalent of four semester-length units of English over the two years, but studies in science or mathematics are not compulsory. This results in an unbalanced form of cultural literacy and forecloses future options.
4.18 Mathematics, taken broadly, is a language having relevance comparable with that of literacy. Very few, if any, studies in higher education or other vocational fields can now be taken successfully by those having only basic arithmetical competencies. The relevance of mathematical concepts to all technical and technological studies is obvious, but statistics and a grasp of quantitative reasoning are also required in most areas of the humanities, and in social and behavioural sciences. Those lacking such a base are at a disadvantage in many aspects of living.

4.19 As participation increases, we expect that single and sequential units in activity-based studies will become increasingly popular with students, provided that the framing of the credential and the methods of selection for higher education do not preclude them. Some studies of these kinds are important for all students, and those following a strongly academic path should particularly be encouraged to undertake units in them. At least some of these units, particularly in the creative and performing arts and in vocational skill areas, should be available within two-unit and three-unit sequences, the latter including related units of theoretical study.

4.20 Sequential studies building to high levels of mastery are also essential. Students would take more than half of all studies over the two years in sequential studies. These prepare students for higher education and TAFE courses, accommodate the differing interests and capacities of students and provide unique satisfaction associated with high involvement. Without them, the curricular experience of students could become trivial and fragmented. Nonetheless, a variety of options within each field must be available for study at varying levels of depth. The major offerings, including those in mathematics and physical science, must become a vehicle for the education of all students, including those not intending to pursue these studies further. The competing claims of specialisation and breadth can be reconciled more easily when the curriculum is organised in semester units and extends over two years.

4.21 The Committee recommends that all students should take three sequential semester-length units within each of the three major areas of arts/humanities, science/technology (including various forms of applied science as well as traditional studies of an academic kind) and mathematics (with similar extensions to existing studies). To increase flexibility in the framing of curriculum over the two years, it is further recommended that each student should take a total of twenty-four semester-length units in order to qualify for the full Certificate marking successful completion of postcompulsory schooling.

Recommendation 6: That all students, within twenty-four units of semester length taken over Years 11 and 12, follow at least one three-unit sequence of study in each of the areas of arts/humanities, science/technology and mathematics.

Recommendation 7: That all students be strongly encouraged to take at least one unit over the two years in activity-based studies; and that units within these areas be associated with related theoretical units to form the basis of some two-unit and three-unit sequences.

Curricular Implications

4.22 Sequences in any area of study designed to have wide applicability should not exceed three units. This should not result in lesser preparation of students undertaking studies in higher education. Nevertheless, given the very broad range of courses in higher education involving science and mathematics, some agreement must be reached with those conducting such courses about essential preparation for
these studies. At present, it is widely alleged that the special requirements of tertiary engineering courses dominate school subjects in the physical sciences and mathematics to an unwarranted degree. One solution to the need for this specialised preparation could lie in providing an additional special unit of study taken for engineering courses, or other courses having highly specific prerequisites. The three-unit sequences should provide the normal basis for ranking and admitting students to particular courses in higher education although admission might be made conditional on the completion of additional special units in the final semester. On the other hand, those who were not admitted on the grounds of results achieved by the end of the third semester could be reconsidered for entry because of their work in additional special units, but this later work should not count for ranking.

4.23 Extending options within the major curricular areas is an essential aspect of encouraging a spread of studies for all students. Each major curricular area will provide forms of study that are not concentrated in a single study mode. At present, the high degree of specialisation in mathematics and physics and their orientation towards higher education effectively excludes students not following this path from these studies at school. They often have limited relevance except for particular subsequent studies and are abstracted from applications. One serious outcome is that the overwhelming majority of primary teachers—those entrusted with imparting the basic stages of mathematical and scientific learning—has no serious background in these areas, having ceased to study them at the earliest possible level. More girls should also be encouraged to continue study in mathematics and the basic sciences in order to broaden their subsequent options, but present courses may not be the most suitable for this purpose. Finally, apart from some relatively low-level courses in business mathematics and mathematics for technicians in technical schools, intellectually demanding forms of applied mathematics and physics with productive, social and vocational significance are lacking.

4.24 This calls for the development of some new courses, and the rationalisation of others. Applications in broad fields will be needed. Some examples of innovative approaches are being developed within the Reality in Mathematics Education Project of the Curriculum Branch of the Education Department and for the Australian Institute of Engineers under the title of Mathematics and Careers. Another is the text for Years 11 and 12, Elements of Chemistry, published by the Australian Academy of Sciences. In the United Kingdom, a statistically based approach to mathematics education involves the analyses of contemporary social issues, including social and economic trends, comparative living standards and the terms of trade between developed and Third World countries. Statistical approaches could be attractive to those whose major interest is in the humanities. The use of calculators with intermediate memories further opens up the possibility that many mathematical concepts once thought accessible only to a talented few could become more broadly understood.

4.25 Similarly, the development of courses in the humanities and social sciences that connect more directly with the major concerns of young people and with the issues facing us all can give these studies reality for many students. Such studies include social history bearing on the life and work of ordinary men and women and the study of Australian culture drawing on the experience of all migrant groups. The project in Australian Studies recently initiated by the Curriculum Development Centre is an example of what is needed to provide a study of society and culture in which many young people will find echoes of their own experiences.
Recommendation 8: That studies in the major curricular areas in Years 11 and 12 be so designed as not to prevent students from taking only the first unit of a sequence. No sequence should exceed three units although provision can be made for additional specialist units.

Recommendation 9: That a major curricular project be mounted by the new Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board (the establishment of which is later recommended), in each of the areas of mathematics and science/technology; and that each project survey and evaluate present courses in its area of reference, and propose and develop a number of courses in each to include both applied courses and courses suited to the general education of students not following further specialist studies in either area.

Recommendation 10: That the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board negotiate with major providers of postsecondary courses to establish agreement about the content of studies in mathematics, physics and chemistry commonly applicable to the range of courses they offer, and to make special arrangements for any additional prerequisites for particular courses.

Broad Vocational Specialisms

4.26 As far as possible, all upper secondary studies should open up pathways for further education and training. In the past those leading into TAFE courses have received less attention than those leading into higher education. A possible form of specialisation within the major curricular areas which was suggested in the Discussion Paper was that of broad vocational specialisms. As in the case of preparation for higher education, particular three-unit sequences should be developed in these specialisms. They should involve combinations of practical and theoretical study which could provide entry into vocational training within TAFE. They could also be cross-credited into certificate courses in TAFE and perhaps into apprenticeship, as well as being accredited as part of the Victorian Certificate of Education. Openings for apprentices have diminished overall and some 'apprentices' now follow full-time studies before finding employment. As the trend towards more broadly-based initial apprenticeship training develops, the case for including units counting towards apprenticeship within the context of general secondary courses should be examined.

Recommendation 11: That cross-crediting of units of study in the upper secondary curriculum into TAFE certificate courses and apprenticeship be further encouraged, and that the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board negotiate with the Industrial Training Commission and the TAFE Accreditation Board with the objective of reaching agreements facilitating such arrangements.

4.27 Studies at upper secondary level should provide opportunities for students seeking entry to the workforce to acquire widely applicable work-related skills. If they are to have serious purchase in employment terms, the skills will need to be developed to higher levels than can be obtained through such existing arrangements as link courses. The Committee does not favour the framing of all options in the major curricular areas within an occupational orientation, however broad. That would be too restrictive and could result in divisive tracking. It could also impede rather than encourage regeneration in the major academic areas themselves, consolidating their perceived major purpose as preparation for higher education. We also oppose a degree of specialisation in practically oriented vocational studies that does not open up windows on a wider world. However, we share the view of
the two working parties that mathematics and science in particular should include orientations applying them to broad fields of use, including occupational areas, and that groupings of occupations which might be used as a basis for such developments should be investigated further.

**Recommendation 12:** That groupings of occupations which could provide a basis for practically oriented vocational studies having relevance for a number of occupations and for the development of applied studies within the area of mathematics and science/technology be investigated by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board.

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**Common Studies**

**4.28** All students at the postcompulsory level should engage in some common studies. At this stage, students are pursuing a variety of paths and differences in the aptitudes and interests of students have widened. Common studies affirm the value of certain learnings for all students and provide the meeting point for the members of a generation. They are the means through which all students encounter issues of human, social and personal concern. In the present HSC, English is compulsory for all students and although loosely framed and admitting wide choices within it, brings all students together for reading, discussion and reflection on experience. While such a compulsory course does fulfil some of the aims of common studies, another path is to require that all students undertake a spread of studies in several designated broad curricular areas. These areas of curriculum are important for all since they are the means by which knowledge of major areas of human achievement is gained and widely applicable skills can be developed. This approach has been followed by the Committee which has recommended that the curriculum should be framed in ways which ensure that all students engage in some studies in each of the major curricular areas. We also believe that certain subjects should be taken by all.

**4.29** Both the curriculum and credentials working parties recommended that all students should follow some studies in common areas of the curriculum as well as undertaking subjects in common. The credentials working party saw common studies as a significant part of the overall curriculum, involving up to one-third of studies over the two years in communication and numeracy (both broadly defined), and the study of society. On the other hand, the curriculum working party saw commonality as a common spread of studies within which there would be numerous options, and a relatively small component of studies actually undertaken in common. It recommended that a commonly undertaken study should bear on a major social issue varying in focus over time and be backed by intensive curricular development. Our own position is close to that of the curriculum working party and we believe that English and the study of work in society should be studied by all.

**The Study of Work in Society**

**4.30** The study of work in society seems to us to be a meeting point for all students at postcompulsory level, and to provide the substance of what should be studied by all. There was considerable support for this idea among respondents to the Discussion Paper. This common study should have a social frame of reference and be placed
within the context of life situations. It should bear particularly on the stage of life of students at postcompulsory level, who are moving into adult participation in the society and contemplating their own futures. This subject would not replace the more discipline-oriented studies in the social sciences, just as the study of literature is still available despite the existence of compulsory English. Such studies as history, geography and legal studies would continue to be offered separately within the arts/humanities part of the curricular framing.

4.31 The study of work in society could give an overview of changes in the nature and organisation of work since the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century and cover the impact of present changes in technology and in the structure of the workforce. It could illustrate the variety of ways in which people in Australia acquire incomes and engage in income-substitute activities, including unpaid services and do-it-yourself work. Within this focus the impact of changes within work and on life patterns in general could be highlighted. Particular attention could be given to the impact of changes on the lives and employment of women, on child-rearing and the care of other dependent people, and to the unresolved issues surrounding the separation of income-earning activities from the domestic unit. In this way, inclusive social history would be related to technological change. Such an approach would assist students towards better informed choices about their own futures and offer broader perspectives on employment and unemployment, and paid and unpaid labour, than can be given by either career counselling, with its focus on individuals and particular occupations, or by experience in unskilled work.

4.32 The relevance of the study of work for the postcompulsory years has other dimensions. It would broaden the perspective of the upper secondary curriculum. It would promote equity by giving students of all backgrounds, and particularly young women, a more informed basis for thinking about and planning their own life directions. It would provide a vehicle for research and for purposeful contact with the adult community, as well as giving a motivational framework for the development of communication skills and quantitative reasoning. Individualised approaches to career planning have little relevance to a high proportion of students and, unless underpinned by better social understanding, can help to sustain the belief that the employed and secure owe nothing to those not so fortunately placed. The study of work could additionally illustrate that being employed by someone else is not the only way that skills gained in education can be used to improve one’s standard of living.

4.33 A study so focussed will clearly require considerable curricular development. It essentially represents a form of socio-economic history brought forward into the present, interacting with the history of technology and involving contact with work places and the life experiences of various older men and women. A framework for the study and some special materials would need to be developed, and existing materials recommended for optional use (including printed materials and such television series as ‘Out of the Fiery Furnace’ and ‘Shoulder to Shoulder’). In addition, part of the course should involve direct observation and experience of work, including child-care, and oral history.

Recommendation 13: That the study of work in society occupy two compulsory and sequential semester units over Years 11 and 12; that it be pursued in the contexts of technological change since the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century and in present day Australia; that it involve direct observation and experience; and that it include the study of work undertaken in domestic units, in unpaid and paid capacities, and affecting women and men.
Recommendation 14: That a major curricular development project underwriting the above study be mounted, beginning in 1985.

Ensuring High Literacy Standards

4.34 The amount of time devoted to common studies at present in Years 11 and 12 should not be reduced overall. Almost all students take the equivalent of four semester-length units of English over Years 11 and 12. The study of English provides a more open focus for wide reading and for the consideration of human and personal concerns than is possible within the logico-rational requirements of other studies. It also provides the major means of ensuring that standards in literacy are met. However, we do not believe that the study of English is the only basis for ensuring high literacy standards. The study of work in society recommended above would also serve as a medium through which literacy and broader communication skills could be developed and tested, with the additional advantage of building skills in social research. Reading, discussion and writing are features of most other subjects and forms of writing appropriate to each area of study should be considered integral to teaching, learning and assessment in them. For some students, competency in organising and expressing ideas and correct and appropriate language use can equally well be developed and tested through those subjects. Nonetheless, we are aware of the general public belief that a pass grading in compulsory English assures that certain standards of literacy have been met. Other studies do not cover the kinds of reading that the present compulsory study of English does.

Recommendation 15: That the study of English occupy two compulsory and sequential semester-length units over Years 11 and 12 for all students.

4.35 This Committee is concerned that improved measures should be taken to ensure that all students have sufficient competence in literacy and number to take their place confidently in the society and to have access to further study. The Discussion Paper suggested that some form of assessing competence in these areas, based on content familiar to students, should be introduced at the end of Year 10. The credentials working party, while sharing the concern, did not agree with this proposal. It advised that all students should undertake compulsory and common studies in the areas of communication skills and numeracy as part of the Certificate. We do not endorse this, since we believe that skills are an inadequate basis for curricular design. It also recommended, however, that steps should be taken to ensure that, by the end of compulsory schooling, all students had competence in communication skills and number operations adequate to be able to engage in postcompulsory studies. This the Committee favours strongly.

4.36 Teachers need more assistance than they now have in the identification of students falling seriously behind their peers in the skills of literacy and numeracy at all stages of schooling, particularly over the compulsory years, and in identifying and remediating these difficulties. No well based case exists for claiming that the level of performance in basic skills is declining. The available Australian evidence points to improvements. Nevertheless, the standards needed by everyone for full social participation are rising and within overall improvements in standard there is still legitimate reason for concern that an unacceptably high proportion of students fails to reach those standards. Both establishing and testing minimal standards of competence are fraught with difficulties not well understood by many advocating such moves. Nor are there any established ways for overcoming difficulties experienced by some students in either area. We support the recommendation of
the credentials working party that tests should further be developed and consistently used to ensure that individual students, their parents and teachers are conscious of levels of achievement attained. These tests could assist teachers in ensuring that all students (with minor and justifiable exceptions) emerge from their period of compulsory schooling competent in oral and written communication and in the basic mathematical processes.

Recommendation 16: That standardised tests in oral and written communication and in the basic mathematical processes be developed and used consistently over the period of schooling to enable teachers and parents to identify and assist in rectifying deficiencies in students' achievement in these areas.

Orientation Towards the Adult World

4.37 The Committee is particularly concerned about the institutional arrangements and climate within which students approaching full adult status, or having already attained it, continue their studies. The preceding discussion of the curricular content of the upper secondary years has emphasised its orientation towards the next stage of students' lives—as workers, citizens, and continuing students. Institutional arrangements are a prominent aspect of students' curricular experience, playing an important part in orienting them towards adult roles, and could be influential in encouraging the continued participation of those now alienated by their experience of schooling. It is neither appropriate nor developmental for students to constrain them at senior secondary levels within rules and arrangements appropriate to early adolescence. That is, of course, an important additional reason for favouring provision of upper secondary schooling on a separate campus where feasible. Within this more appropriate educational environment students should, of course, have access to counselling and other support services. An adult atmosphere does not involve indifference to students.

Recommendation 17: That in content, learning modes and institutional practices, curriculum over the postcompulsory years be oriented towards the adulthood students are entering. In particular, institutional practices should enable students to:

- Contract voluntarily into courses with the acceptance of requirements associated with them.
- Increasingly over the two years be obliged to be present on campus only for contracted sessions.
- Assume active responsibility for their own learning.
- Move across locations for different aspects of study as needed.
- Assume collective responsibility for the organisation and rule of their own adult community outside areas of teachers' professional responsibility.
- Contribute routinely to curricular review through their responses to courses, learning modes and assessment practices.

4.38 The reforms proposed could be facilitated or frustrated by the nature of the credentialling process and by the ways of providing for selection into higher education within it. Offering broader options for all students can only result in more appropriate and satisfying choices by students if the shape and operation of the credential allow and encourage them. It is to these issues that we now turn.
5 The Common Credential

5.1 The emergence of a Year 12 certificate as highly significant to the individual futures of the majority of an age cohort is a relatively recent phenomenon. Progression through secondary school was once marked by a series of exit points at Years 9, 10, 11 and 12, each giving access to particular levels of employment and further training. Apprenticeship was entered after Year 8 or Year 9; the public service required a Year 10 certificate; entry to teachers college and nursing required the satisfactory completion of Year 11. Entry into university was once open on the completion of Year 11, then of Year 12, to all those who had satisfactorily followed a prescribed range of studies and who were able to afford it. Competition at this point was confined to seeking a limited number of scholarships. Now, however, Year 12 is needed for access to options formerly spread over a number of exit points, and competition for places in higher education is now strong. A Year 12 certificate has become crucial for a wide range of opportunities and for large numbers of students. Its nature must be changed to reflect its changed significance.

5.2 The variety of Year 12 certificates that now exists in Victoria must be replaced by a single certificate within which achievements in the comprehensive curricular range recommended in the last chapter can be legitimated, assessed and recorded. The number of certificates and their differing modes of assessment have led to public confusion, to unequal subsequent opportunities for students and to the worsening of difficulties associated with selection into higher education. As participation in postcompulsory schooling rises, the necessary variety of content and forms of achievement should be brought together in a single certificate which should mark the successful completion of upper secondary schooling and become the basic qualification required for subsequent studies.

Existing Year 12 Certificates

5.3 The mainstream Year 12 certificate continues to be the HSC based on group 1 subjects. Students generally complete four or five accredited subjects in which results are determined by a combination of external examinations and externally moderated assessment of student work by their teachers. The certificate issued by VISE shows the subject, year of completion and grades obtained on a six-point (A–F) scale with marks standardised on a 100-point scale.

5.4 Attempts in Victoria to reconcile the educational and selecting functions of certificates have resulted in the development of a number of Year 12 certificates alternative to the HSC based on group 1 subjects. These alternatives reflect the variety of purposes of postcompulsory schooling beyond the preparation of a minority of young people for further participation in education. Within the HSC program, alternatives include seven approved study structures, including STC, and a broad range of group 2 subjects and units. Of these, the STC poses the most fundamental alternative to mainstream certificates: courses vary from year to year and are designed by individual schools and teachers with substantial participation by students. Schools are accredited to conduct STC and the processes of teaching and learning, but not the content, are moderated by teachers drawn from the group of schools undertaking
STC. Students are assessed by their teachers and the subsequent HSC certificate issued by VISE states that the candidate has satisfactorily completed a Year 12 course of study. The achievements attained by the student throughout the course and in subject areas are described and teachers’ recommendations regarding the suitability of the student for further study are included. Arrangements are rather different for HSC group 2 subjects and for single units where course content is centrally accredited, students are assessed by their teachers, and external moderation of this assessment takes place in some subjects. Results are reported on a two-point (pass/fail) or six-point (A–F) scale and the certificate sometimes supplies descriptive assessments, designed to provide additional information for the range of users of the certificate, including employers and institutions of further and higher education.

5.5 Outside the HSC program, Technical Year 12 certificates issued by the Education Department also record the units successfully completed by students on a two-or six-point scale, together with a descriptive statement of achievement in each unit. Schools are accredited annually by the Education Department to conduct T12, students are assessed by their teachers and some moderation occurs. Finally, TOP certificates, issued by the higher education institution which accredits TOP courses and moderates its assessments, state that the successful student has met the requirements for admission to a degree course. Subjects are listed and results usually recorded according to a six-point scale. Although TOP has become the most popular Year 12 certificate among the alternatives to the HSC group 1 mode, the number of students enrolling in the other school-assessed programs described above has grown slowly but steadily.

5.6 The broadest range of options is open to those who have completed HSC group 1 subjects, that is, those subjects which involve a component of external examination and from which scores can be aggregated. The scores of those seeking entry to higher education on the basis of other qualifications, especially TOP, are now discounted by a certain percentage by many institutions, although TOP is a preferred mode of entry into a few courses in colleges of advanced education. The abundance of qualified applicants for coveted courses, the shortage of places overall, the administrative ease and the apparent objectivity of aggregated scores for selection have intensified competition among the young and entrenched the dominance of the HSC group 1 subjects. Other users of certificates—students, parents and the community—are confused by the variety of certificates awarded and their different modes of assessing students and recording results. Many employers favour applicants holding certificates with grades or marks in subjects with which they are familiar, which have been externally examined and which rank the performance of applicants. The popularity of the HSC group 1 mode as a selection device in the labour market has increased in times when the number of applicants exceeds job vacancies.

5.7 Students’ preferences for remaining in a familiar school and accepting the courses it offers have certificating as well as curricular consequences. Gaining a T12 certificate, for example, opens few opportunities in higher education, and remaining at school rather than transferring to TOP can exclude the option of pursuing studies in, for example, art and design. Those who lack access to reliable information and whose friends and contacts have little experience of extended education are most victimised by the present system. If hampered by previous decisions, students often seek to use certificates designed for one purpose for a variety of other purposes. For example, although TOP was intended originally to prepare students for and give access to only those courses conducted by the college or university that accredited and moderated it, it was almost immediately used to gain entry to the full range of courses in other institutions. T12 was introduced as a
final year of schooling for those in technical schools and not as a means of entry to further education, but recently T12 students have sought entry to institutions of higher education. There is now pressure for all certificates to include information to assist students gain admission to further educational opportunities and to become multi-purpose certificates alternative to the HSC. Thus the variety of certificates contributes both to the inequity and the inefficiency of the present system.

A Single Certificate

5.8 The introduction of a single certificate to mark the completion of the full span of schooling would overcome many of these difficulties. There was overwhelming support in the responses to the Discussion Paper and unanimity in the working party on credentials for the introduction at the earliest possible date of a single certificate to replace all existing certificates at the Year 12 level. We recommend:


The Purposes of the New Certificate

5.9 The primary purpose of the certificate gained at the Year 12 level should be to mark the successful completion of schooling and record achievements over the postcompulsory years. The present (and past) emphasis on comparing students' achievements to determine their fitness for higher education has caused large numbers of students to be excluded from participating in the full span of schooling. A certificate encouraging higher retention into Year 12 must favour and record achievements over a much wider range of studies and activities than those covered by any existing certificate. Such a development has consequences for assessment practices, since activity-based aspects of curriculum such as dance and drama, or automotive practice, cannot be assessed in the same way as can achievements amenable to written tests. No single standard of performance adjudging preparedness for higher study can apply even to all studies amenable to written testing, and assessment difficulties will increase if achievements in different types of studies within the major curricular areas are to be ranked in relation to each other, or aggregated into a single score. There is no valid method of comparing achievements varying widely in kind or of aggregating the results of such comparisons.

5.10 The second important purpose of the certificate is to assure the quality of courses and of standards, and the impartiality of assessments. At this point of schooling it is appropriate that interests beyond those of providers and participants are able more directly to influence the curriculum through the accreditation process than is possible at earlier stages. Accreditation of programs opens the aims, scope, content and modes of assessments, within subject areas and overall, to public scrutiny and thereby acts as an important guarantee of quality in schooling. Central accreditation of courses, including their content and learning processes, and central responsibility for assessment provide reassurance that similar grades in similar studies represent similar achievements throughout the state and that students are not advantaged or disadvantaged on the basis of institution attended or area of residence. These points were strongly emphasised in responses to the Discussion
Paper, and were often associated with a desire to preserve or extend external examination as well as to insist on the importance of the central accreditation of all units contained within the certificate. Experience elsewhere, both in Australia and overseas, shows that external examining is not a necessary component of the guarantee of standards and impartiality. However, the central accreditation of units and the moderation of assessments by individual teachers and schools are both essential features of a certificate having wide currency. A strong body of opinion among responses also supported this position.

5.11 A third purpose of the certificate is to attest preparedness for further study, to assist in the selection of students for higher education and in the cross-creditation of elements of the common certificate into TAFE courses. As already argued, senior secondary studies must include in-depth courses giving a good basis for higher education. But this preparation should not be highly specific to a narrow band of postsecondary courses, nor so pervasive as to preclude the student's continued general education. The Committee sees no disadvantage associated with the greater attractiveness to students of courses that also prepare them for higher education. On the contrary, such choices are rational from a student's perspective since they keep open the widest subsequent options. This endorsement, however, has two provisos. The first is that these courses should provide avenues of achievement for more young people than just those preparing for higher education. The second is that the courses themselves should deepen and refine students' understanding of a field of knowledge, and of the world, in ways that are valuable for those who do not take them further as well as for those who do. There seems, regretfully, no way of eliminating the competitive pressures associated with selection for higher education while places there are so severely rationed. These pressures can however be reduced. The next chapter discusses these matters in detail.

5.12 The cross-crediting of units of the Victorian Certificate of Education into TAFE courses and the inclusion of some vocational studies within the Certificate will require changes in the accrediting authority and the teaching of some units of the Certificate in TAFE under contract to the Education Department.

Recommendation 19: That all units within the Victorian Certificate of Education be accredited by a central agency which should also oversee modes of assessment and the moderation of assessments across wider groups of students than those in individual institutions.

Framing the Certificate

5.13 The Certificate will be framed in accordance with the curricular recommendations of the preceding chapter. It would therefore be organised in semester units. Greater flexibility in student choices would result from a certificate composed of twenty-four units, rather than of eleven subjects which are now undertaken by students over Years 11 and 12. While leaving details of the design open for further consultation and decision by the new accrediting and certifying agency, a certificate framed along the lines recommended in the previous chapter would have something like the following form:

- It would be composed of twenty-four units cumulative over Years 11 and 12.
- It would include a range of studies in the major curricular areas of arts/humanities, science/technology, mathematics, and a range of vocational and activity-based studies.
It would oblige all students to have at least one three-unit sequence in each of the three areas of arts/humanities, science/technology and mathematics.

It would also oblige all students to follow a common two-unit study in the study of work in society and two units of compulsory English.

It would restrict any formal sequence to no more than three units while providing scope for further specialist single units which might build upon the sequences. Such specialist units could be undertaken as preparation for certain courses in higher education or as part of certificate courses and other studies in TAFE.

5.14 Such a pattern would mean that a student with strong interests in mathematics and science and seeking to pursue subsequent studies in science or engineering, for example, could take four three-unit sequences in science and mathematics. These would form a partial basis for ranking for selection into postsecondary education and would be sequential. Two units of the study of work in society and a further two in English would be obligatory for all students. To meet the requirements of the Certificate, this student would complete a three-unit sequence over the two-year period in arts/humanities, leaving the balance of five units to be chosen from any other accredited units. As these other units could include specialised preparation for subsequent studies in TAFE or higher education such a student could take further units in mathematics and science. A student specialising in arts/humanities would follow a similar pattern, with major sequences in arts/humanities, and a three-unit sequence in each of mathematics and science/technology. Of course, specialist opportunities would not be confined to the major curricular areas, nor need students be highly specialist at all. Within the overall requirements of the Certificate for breadth and depth of study, there is scope for both the specialists and those with wider interests. The units in the sequences would relate to each other in any of several ways. A first unit of some sequences would provide a general overview of an area of study; others would not. Units in some sequences would build directly upon the previous one(s) as might a particular sequence in mathematics; other sequences would require that expertise be developed through the combination of several units, as might a sequence in materials technology comprising units of practical and associated theoretical studies in each of wood, metal and plastics technology.

Recommendation 20: That the Victorian Certificate of Education be awarded to students who successfully complete twenty-four units within prescribed patterns which include sequential units, common studies and other studies.

5.15 The Committee believes that this framing is consistent with the principles advised by both the credentials and curriculum working parties, in a form which is more flexible and open that the detailed recommendations of either group. The principles commonly espoused, and endorsed by this Committee, are that:

- Years 11 and 12 should be regarded as a curricular entity.
- Units of study should be based on a semester rather than a year.
- Over Years 11 and 12 some framed spread of studies allowing degrees of specialisation should form the basis of curricular options for all students.
- Within this framework there should be some common studies.
- The specialisations followed should include sequential studies for academic preparation, and others articulating into further studies in TAFE and into employment.
• The studies should not be so strongly framed as to prevent students exploring areas of established or possible interest beyond their common studies and general study orientation.

• The association between theoretical and applied studies should be strengthened.

Accumulating Units

5.16 It is a matter of concern that the majority of students who leave school at the end of Year 11 do not gain a widely accepted certificate from the education system. While we expect that more of these students will in future stay to complete the full Victorian Certificate of Education, certificates indicating partial completion should be made available to students who leave at any time after completing any unit, giving a basis on which later credits towards the Certificate can build. This would also allow the completion of the Certificate on a part-time basis. In addition, students who find difficulty in completing the Certificate within two years could spend longer time gaining it. This would have particular advantages for those changing future plans over the two years, for those experiencing learning difficulties and for immigrant students who have little or no English. The semester-length units enable failure more readily to be redeemed, and the Committee, along with the credentials working party, believes that when students repeat units, the Certificate should record only the highest assessment gained.

Recommendation 21: That those leaving at any stage after the completion of any unit be issued with a certificate indicating partial completion of the credential and recording units satisfactorily completed.

Recommendation 22: That the Certificate record only the highest level of achievement gained in units attempted more than once.

Assessment within the Certificate

5.17 There are both advantages and problems associated with applying different modes of assessment to different studies within a common certificate. When some studies are fully or partly externally examined and others are not, greater prestige attaches to the former, largely because many employers, community members and some institutions of higher education believe that comparisons of performance are more reliably and impartially recorded through this mode of assessment. When courses used as a basis for selection into higher education are the only ones with external examinations, this problem is intensified, often leading to a belief among students and the public that courses not so distinguished do not represent achievements significant in kind or standard. Research has shown that assessment by writing under pressure, as represented by external examinations, is no more reliable in ranking students and measuring achievement than are teachers' assessments, provided these are moderated across a larger number of students than those of a single institution. Many significant achievements are evident in products
or activities; written testing is inappropriate for them. Nor is it appropriate to apply measures designed to test competence to participate in higher education to other studies. Although they may be amenable to written assessment, these studies have other primary intentions and applications. Because assessment is inextricably part of the teaching and learning process, practising teachers should play the major role in it. They do of course in institutions of higher education. Those who obtain degrees and diplomas are not externally examined and results are not moderated across universities and colleges.

5.18 All studies within the common Certificate will be accredited by a central agency to ensure quality, to contain variety within a given field in the interests of users of the Certificate, and to ensure that all studies are rigorous and challenging. This accreditation, as is now the case, will include appropriate ways of assessing studies and activities different from each other in intent and kind, and provide for moderation across schools. The inclusion in the moderation process of other people having special and relevant experience as well as practising teachers could strengthen this moderation process and act as a further assurance of standards. Present indications are, however, that important and influential groups in the community, including some users of the Certificate, do not yet have sufficient trust in the outcome of assessments made by teachers even when moderated across a wider group. The Committee acknowledges this and considers that, at least in the short term, there should be a continuance of partial external assessment in some of the studies within the Certificate which are to be used as the basis for ranking students for selection into higher education (see Chapter 6).

Transition to the New Certificate

5.19 The new Certificate will subsume all existing Year 12 certificates and should be introduced at the earliest possible date. In phasing out existing certificates and replacing them with the Victorian Certificate of Education in 1987, the co-operation of all agencies that now accredit courses and issue certificates will be essential. During 1986, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board will determine the requirements of the Certificate on the basis of consultations with all parties involved and in accordance with the principles enunciated in this report. For 1987, the subjects now available in the HSC and in TOP will be categorised into fields of study and accredited as two-semester units on an interim basis. While whole courses of study, including STC, T12 and other approved study structures will not be included as such, the units which make up such courses can be accredited on an interim basis and form part of the overall offerings. Until 1990, students will be able to select units from all these options and the Certificate will be based on Year 12 only. In 1990 the new Certificate will come into full operation. In preparation, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board will need immediately to commence developing the new common studies with a societal orientation, accrediting a wide range of studies with a great variety of modes of assessment and, where appropriate, arranging for cross-crediting into postsecondary courses.

5.20 Elements of TOP which require specialist facilities and expertise only present in TAFE will continue to be offered there under contract to the Education Department. However, it is recommended that TOP as such cease to operate at the end of 1986.
Recommendation 23: That all studies presently included in the Higher School Certificate, the Tertiary Orientation Program and Technical Year 12 become part of the Victorian Certificate of Education in 1987 and over 1986 be accredited on an interim basis.

Recommendation 24: That by 1990 the new Certificate be fully operational and be based on the curricular policies recommended in this Report.

Recommendation 25: That elements of the Tertiary Orientation Program where they involve facilities and expertise available only in TAFE continue to be offered under interim accreditation and under contract to the Education Department; but that the Program as such cease to operate at the end of 1986.
6 Selection into Higher Education

6.1 Institutions of higher education face serious selection problems as higher proportions of the age group complete secondary schooling and seek admission to limited numbers of places in them. The schools face the difficulty of ensuring that students entering higher studies are well prepared for them, while also diversifying curricula to accommodate students having a wide range of capacities and moving into a wide variety of activities in the society. Seeking a reasonable and equitable solution to the problems faced by both parties is now urgent.

6.2 It is not entirely true to claim that the dilemmas faced by the school sector would be eliminated by a considerable increase in places in higher education, or that this would solve the difficulties of selection faced by the institutions themselves. This increase would, however, considerably reduce problems on both sides. The demand for places in higher education among those who have completed secondary schooling in the previous year is difficult to quantify with any precision. The notion of being ‘qualified’ to enter is itself imprecise, since when there is a shortage of places, ‘qualification’ is in effect synonymous with being offered a place. The estimate is further complicated by the pooling of applications for places in most institutions. Students may apply for more than one institution and/or type of course and many students making application are not serious contenders on the basis of their Year 12 achievements. Estimates of demand can be inflated by these means. Nonetheless, although it is by no means established that the demand for higher education necessarily rises commensurately with increased enrolments in Year 12, it is abundantly clear that competition for places in higher education is intensifying, and that students who could be successful in higher studies are denied access. At the very least, overall numbers of places in higher education should be provided at a level accommodating a fixed proportion of those completing Year 12 in the previous year, while also providing for the considerable number of older and overseas students who now participate. The proportion of Year 12 students immediately transferring to higher education has fallen from 54 per cent to 42 per cent between 1973 and 1984. This proportion is likely to decline further, unless more places are provided in higher education, given the projected increases in the numbers of students completing Year 12. The Committee believes that the present proportion should be enlarged to some agreed level.

Recommendation 26: That the Victorian Government urge the Commonwealth Government to restore the level of places in higher education to that representing at least 50 per cent of students enrolled in Year 12 in the previous year after allowance has been made for mature-aged and overseas students.

Reducing Competition for Entry

6.3 The problems of selection are not confined to those arising from an overall shortage of places in relation to demand. They are intensified by the fact that demand is not simply for ‘a place’, but for a place in a preferred institution and course. This increases the competition among students and encourages course choices based on the level of aggregate score achieved in the selection process rather than on inclination or particular suitability for the related profession. To deal with quota-driven competition for particular professional courses and to ensure that the students who end up in them are well placed there, action within institutions of higher education themselves is required. Benefits to both students and institutions
would result if entry into highly coveted professional courses were delayed until after a year or more of initial postsecondary study common to a number of courses. Students could make more informed career choices, thereby lessening failure in and withdrawal from these highly desired courses. Such changes would involve delayed specialisation in courses but whether they would involve lengthening the period of professional courses is a matter of dispute among those in higher education. Some reallocation of students across institutions would be necessary at the end of the initial study since professional courses are not available in all institutions. Such arrangements already exist in some countries, and are favoured by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and by the vice-chancellors of Australian universities.

6.4 The speed with which the selection process is now operated also causes difficulties. Offers of places are made and accepted within a few weeks of the availability of HSC results and precede the commencement date of courses by only a short interval. The process of selection is further complicated because of the pooling of applications and by the hierarchy of institutions and courses. Places in institutions and courses placed low in this pecking order are most frequently taken by those students who have not been offered places of their first preference. The shuffling process gives no real opportunity for the consideration of any information relevant to student suitability beyond that conveyed by an aggregated three-digit score, dubious in reliability and validity, but attractive because of its apparent objectivity.

6.5 This haste and the exclusion of other relevant data from the selection process can be overcome, as it is in many other countries, by a prior sifting process, based on school assessment of student suitability and likely success in studies. This assessment can be made known as early as the middle of the preceding year and can be followed by supplementary assessment, interviews and demonstrated competence in any prerequisites highly specific to particular courses. The present extreme pressure on places results in an obligation publicly to demonstrate some apparently objective way of admitting or rejecting particular students at the margin. It therefore sustains the present arrangements, even though their imperfections are manifest. If it could be accepted that the real difficulty lies in trying to select students from the middle of the continuum ranging from those clearly likely to those unlikely to be successful, more leisurely and satisfactory means could be used to distinguish among those in that middle group. This could also allow moderated teacher assessments more readily to be accepted as the first step in the selection process, with resulting benefits to school-level education. More open movement and cross-crediting across courses and institutions in the whole tertiary sector would reduce the significance of a first placement and serve the interests of equity at the same time.

6.6 There is growing consciousness of the need to reduce the influence exerted by selection into higher education on curriculum in upper secondary schools. A more rounded and less highly pressured educational experience in schools is beneficial for those wishing to enter higher education. Too heavy an emphasis on selection inhibits the development of the broader curricular range now needed. Many tertiary educators are conscious of this need and of the importance of encouraging higher and more socially representative participation in Year 12 as a necessary basis for improved equity in higher education itself. Better methods of selection into higher education are also actively being sought. A number of national inquiries are already in progress since similar problems exist in all states. The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, a committee of the Australian Vice-Chancellors, the Commonwealth Curriculum Development Centre and some institutions of higher education are discussing, or experimenting with, new
arrangements. The overall climate is such as to admit the consideration of radical changes, leading over time to improvements in what is admittedly a complex field. There are no perfect answers, particularly while a shortage of places makes the act of selection so significant and while public faith in the possibility of a precise and objective ranking of applicants is strong.

6.7 We believe that a new climate of opinion in institutions of higher education and beyond, and improved techniques arrived at through experimentation, will lead to desirable changes in selection procedures occurring over a reasonably short period of time. The rationale presented in the proposal to establish a multi-sector institution, the Western Melbourne Institute of Post Secondary Education, is an example of the ways in which the significance of initial selection could be reduced by enabling freer movement across courses in the postsecondary sector, including TAFE. As a result, the Committee has confined itself to a statement of principles which should inform negotiated changes and interim arrangements for selection within the common Certificate.

6.8 The first of these principles is that selection should be based on a limited number of studies within the Year 12 certificate rather than being based on the full range of studies undertaken by students at postcompulsory level. This would reduce the salience of selection within the upper secondary curriculum while retaining specialist preparation as an element in it.

6.9 The second is that the aggregated score of performance at Year 12 should be abandoned. The unreliability of the aggregate score is widely acknowledged but it is retained for want of a better method of selection. In some countries, for example England which has much more intense competition than has Victoria for entry to higher education, students' performance in subjects is ranked on just a five-point (A-E) scale. Students gain a place in an institution of higher education if they obtain certain grades. While letter grades are less spuriously precise than percentage scores, a single grade covers a range of student achievement and masks differences within that grade. On the other hand, the aggregate score, formed from standardised assessments from schools and external examinations, ranks students in order of merit but does not represent fixed standards of achievement or of preparation for later studies. The subjects from which the score is compiled are to a great extent ignored and serious incompetencies can be concealed. Students of the humanities, in which results are less well inter-correlated, are penalised relative to students of mathematics and science, in which results are significantly inter-correlated. The aggregate score has become a global measure of academic aptitude that makes no concession to the possibility that high-level aptitudes may be moderately specialised and that qualities other than those measured by the score are important for success in further studies and professional life. Obtaining high scores becomes a major focus at the upper secondary level, resulting in rivalry between students, didactic methods of teaching and rote learning. The school's role in the allocation of life chances is enhanced at the expense of the continuing education of all students and appreciation of a wide range of valued capacities.

6.10 The third principle is that teachers' assessments of student performance should form the major component of selection procedures and that school-assessed student performance should be moderated by panels of appropriate experts drawn from schools and postsecondary institutions. Teachers' assessments of students' work produced throughout the year now form at least part of the assessment procedures at Year 12 throughout Australia. These assessments can be based on a substantial amount of student performance at a number of points throughout the course and can assess features that cannot be measured by a brief examination. With the expansion of the
range of studies and increased diversity of learning approaches, teachers' assessments will grow in importance as more aspects of student performance will not be amenable to written tests. School assessments can, however, be affected by the relationship between student and teacher, increase the pressure on students throughout the year, and vary according to the criteria employed by the teacher and the school. External moderation of assessments can overcome these shortcomings and guarantee that standards are maintained. Many teachers at secondary and postsecondary institutions already engage in this form of quality control, which has greater validity than statistical moderation and which results in the professional development of all involved. Under this system, assessments given by individual teachers are adjusted by their peers who consider the assessments given in relation to agreed common standards of performance. The Queensland education system relies on this process to ensure equitable comparisons between students.

6.11 The fourth principle is that the selection process should extend over a longer period of time than it does now. The granting of provisional entry in the middle of Year 12 with opportunity to tap other relevant information, delayed entry into highly specialised professional courses, the possibility of mid-year entry to higher education (as practised in some countries) and bridging courses within the higher education sector for highly specialised prerequisites should all be investigated and advanced. Success in postsecondary studies depends on factors other than academic performance at Year 12, including motivation for undertaking and liking of the course, emotional stability, financial situation, age and personal maturity. Specialised rather than all-round competencies are also often involved. The high attrition rates in postsecondary courses suggest that these factors may be important determinants of success. However, if institutions are to draw on a variety of additional sources of relevant information about students, including profiles of student achievements, school recommendations and data gathered from auditions, interviews, workshops and supplementary testing, greater time must be available for the selection process and greater resources allocated to it by institutions.

6.12 The fifth principle is that alternative methods of admitting continuing students to postsecondary institutions should be encouraged. The dangers should not be ignored of concentrating this phase of education too strongly around the achievements gained by students at Years 11 and 12 and the pathways opened up or closed off by them. In the light also of the longer term goals of more flexibly scheduled and higher levels of participation in all forms of education, institutions should experiment with alternative modes of entry. Some institutions have already initiated experiments designed to admit people who experience some disadvantage under the present arrangements and who are therefore underrepresented in the institution. Bridging courses could be devised to provide an adequate background for those who desire entry to certain specialised courses, for example, science courses, but who lack school studies in the area. If additional cognitive data is thought to be appropriate, some forms of testing, such as the Australian Scholastic Aptitude Test (ASAT), provide reliable and valid data on academic aptitude without affecting the curriculum of schools. ASAT is used in Queensland, Western Australia and the ACT as part of the selection process. Similar tests are used in the United States to rank applicants for entry to postsecondary institutions.

Recommendation 27: That funds from the Tertiary Participation and Equity Program be allocated to institutions of higher education to assist them to develop, implement and evaluate approved alternative means of selecting students and of assisting them to complete successfully the courses undertaken.
Selection within the Common Certificate

6.13 The Committee acknowledges that institutions of higher education have legitimate claims for access to comparable measures of the achievements of students seeking to pursue further studies. It is difficult to work out ways of providing for that within a certificate designed for a majority of the age group, most of whom do not immediately proceed to further studies. The Committee's recommendations are guided by the principles outlined above and by the view that the longer term future will hold more flexible and open educational pathways than those now existing. Possible options are, however, constrained by community attitudes and by existing arrangements. We therefore propose steps that in the short term would provide very considerable improvements to the present situation and would not impede the implementation of more far-reaching changes over the longer term.

6.14 Attitudes to the worth and value of external examinations are polarised. The working party on credentials unanimously opposed the retention of external examinations at Year 12, drawing attention to the abandonment of almost all external examinations in schooling in Australia. It suggested that, over time, community attitudes now supporting external examinations at Year 12 would change. Many of the responses to the Discussion Paper also opposed the continuation of external examinations. VISE has indicated its intention to eliminate all external examinations from the assessment process by 1990. External examinations have been abolished in many countries which continue to select students for admission to higher education and to compare students across schools. Closer to home, Queensland and the ACT do not have external examinations and they are optional in New Zealand for students seeking to improve their school-based assessments.

6.15 On the other hand, many of the responses to the Discussion Paper supported external examinations at Year 12. Some universities and colleges sought to retain them believing them to be an objective measure of student performance. Support for their continuation came from some employers, some nongovernment schools, and parents and school councils in rural areas who considered that their students would be stigmatised or their achievements overlooked without an external objective measure of performance. Other responses expressed the fear that the abolition of external examinations could mean that institutions of higher education would introduce separate examinations which would impose both greater constraints on the curriculum and demands on students than exist now; or that these institutions would recruit selectively from particular schools, especially nongovernment schools with approved curricular orientations.

6.16 The Committee proposes that external examinations be retained for the present. However, we propose that their use be confined to a limited number of three-unit sequences classified as 'preparatory studies', assessed equally by external examinations and by externally moderated teacher assessments. Students seeking to pursue studies in higher education need take no more than three of these three-unit preparatory studies. These will be developed by the new accreditation authority in collaboration with the postsecondary institutions. It is possible that external examination of some studies which require the sequential development of knowledge and skills would span the content of the three-unit sequence but in other cases it would be based on the work covered in fewer units. We envisage that assessment results would be available to postsecondary institutions soon after the end of the third semester. This would lengthen the time for the selection process and allow students to undertake at school further specialist or prerequisite studies for admission
to courses in the final semester of Year 12. Tests such as ASAT could be used, if desired, to supplement the various achievement assessments.

6.17 Eligibility for admission to institutions of higher education should depend on the satisfactory completion of the full Certificate of Education. Students must have completed all requirements for the Certificate, including the common studies in the study of work in society and in English and three-unit sequences in each of arts/humanities, mathematics and science/technology.

6.18 As students' results in the preparatory studies would be known soon after the middle of the year, institutions of higher education would have time to seek other relevant information about applicants. They would be encouraged to develop further and evaluate reliable admission procedures. It is proposed that school assessment be used in the majority of units required for the completion of the Certificate. This considerably reduces the significance of external examinations for all students and confines this form of competition to those who wish to enter higher education on leaving school. We believe that as a result of our recommendations in this area some broadening of student choices would occur, the preparation of students for higher education would be improved, a fairer basis of selection would be provided, and completion of the Certificate would open up a range of work and further study options. We recommend:

Recommendation 28: That students be deemed to be eligible for admission to institutions of higher education only if they have

(i) satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Victorian Certificate of Education, as specified in Recommendation 20;

(ii) satisfactorily completed three accredited preparatory studies assessed in equal proportions by external examinations and externally moderated teachers' assessment.
7 The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board

7.1 A new statutory body should be created to take overall responsibility for curricula and credentialling at the postcompulsory level. Significant problems have arisen because the development of curricula, its accreditation and assessment at the upper secondary level are undertaken by several different, autonomous agencies, including VISE, the Education Department, TAFE and schools. This overlap has led to the duplication of effort and the evolution of different perspectives which have impeded the articulation and implementation of a curricular rationale for the postcompulsory period. The new authority must encompass all interested parties to ensure that the Certificate of Education is comprehensive and common to all students. Since we are proposing that curriculum at this level should include practical and vocational studies, some units of which will be taught in TAFE, and because we hope that arrangements for cross-crediting courses into TAFE certificates may be extended, TAFE will need to play an important role in the accrediting authority, along with technical school teachers whose Year 11 and Year 12 courses will now become part of the Certificate. A significant proportion of students at senior secondary levels is enrolled in nongovernment schools and these schools should also play a major role.

7.2 The authority of this new body and public confidence in the Certificate it issues will derive in part from its independence from the major providers or beneficiaries of upper secondary education. It should not be part of, or directly linked with, any provider, organisational structure or major interest group; or dominated by any particular sectoral or ideological interests. A single authority with responsibility for curriculum and certification at this level is now the pattern in all Australian states.

7.3 This new authority would replace VISE which was established in 1976, when a minority of young Victorians stayed to Year 12. VISE does not encompass all forms of Year 12 certification available to students, especially the forms developed for those not seeking entry to postsecondary education. These other certificates, especially TOP and more recently T12, have not been brought into VISE’s ambit. Their separate existence outside VISE has impeded the incorporation of all forms of Year 12 accreditation and certification within a common framework.

7.4 It was the view of the working party on credentials that the introduction of a new curricular rationale and a Certificate of Education for Years 11 and 12 to replace the range of certificates currently available brings with it the necessity to establish a new authority to replace all those handling present certificates. Although VISE could be revamped and given new terms of reference to handle more specifically the development and accreditation of curricula and the certification of students at the upper secondary levels, the introduction of a new authority signifies a break with former patterns. We recommend:

Recommendation 29: That a Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board be established with overall responsibility for the development and accreditation of curricula and for certification at the senior secondary level.
Curricular Leadership

7.5 The implementation of the recommended policy changes in curriculum and certification at the upper secondary level would become the primary responsibility of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board. Strong curricular leadership at the central level is needed if all upper secondary courses are to be transformed within a reasonable time so as to relate theory and practice where appropriate and to accommodate the needs of the wider group of students. Although the full impact of the changes proposed will extend over a number of years, priority should be given to an overall review of present offerings in major curricular fields and to the development within them of study schemes providing a wider, more applied and more socially inclusive approach. The new compulsory study of work will need to be developed and vocational courses reviewed and regenerated. The proposed spread of studies will also require innovative approaches for students who at present restrict their courses to highly specialised areas. Subjects bearing on major issues of the contemporary world will necessitate the formation of interdisciplinary courses presently rare at upper secondary levels. Many, if not most, existing curricular offerings will remain, but over time a range of new courses will eventuate, and courses closely related in substance and learning modes will be rationalised.

7.6 The challenging curricular changes now needed at the postcompulsory level will be undertaken by teams of staff seconded to the Board on a short-term basis. The majority of those involved in curricular development would be outstanding teachers in schools who would bring to the task their experiences of learning processes and expertise in curricular design and its implementation. Curricular development should also involve the secondment of suitably accomplished personnel from TAFE colleges, institutions of higher education, the business community and the Curriculum Branch of the Education Department. Rather than duplicating the resources of the Curriculum Branch the Board should draw on them for specified purposes of curricular development and maintain a sufficiently close liaison with the people in charge of curricular development for the compulsory years to ensure continuity where appropriate. Within the overall budget of the Board, a sum should be allocated for the secondment of personnel, with the expectation that significant numbers of people will be seconded for particular purposes. Curricular projects identified by the Board will also be contracted to education providers. It is envisaged that, on the basis of its expertise and resources, the Curriculum Branch would be a major recipient of such contracts.

7.7 Central initiatives in curriculum support rather than usurp the teacher's role. Over recent years, it has become apparent that the responsibility for determining the content of courses has become an added burden to many teachers. Those who teach at a number of levels of the secondary school have limited time to give to the development of courses, and the small size of schools results in the formation of too small a professional peer group at any one site for the collective development of curricular initiatives or proposals for accreditation. We believe that teachers would be greatly assisted by the availability of curricular guidelines sufficiently precise and concrete to offer them guidance regarding the structure and content of courses, favoured processes for learning and criteria for assessment. These guidelines would not involve restrictive detail but would be flexible and open enough to allow teachers to make choices among materials, approaches and applications on the basis of their own professional judgement. The processes of learning remain teachers' professional domain, as they alone are able to determine optimal approaches and modes of learning in view of relevant circumstances and in relation to particular groups of students.
Professional Development

7.8 The Board will also play a major role in teacher support and development, which is essential to the success of new curricular initiatives. Without the active involvement and commitment of teachers and of school councils to new perspectives on upper secondary schooling, nothing of significance can happen. Teachers, students, school councillors and others concerned will need time and opportunity to consider the direction of the new policies and to review existing offerings and arrangements so that, ultimately, curricular perspectives can become explicit, public and to the maximum degree, common. Evidence has firmly established that teachers learn best from other practitioners. A productive approach would involve the release of outstanding teachers to participate with their peers in curricular development. Participation in the moderation of school assessments at Year 12 has proved a most significant and influential means of teacher development and is one which should be strongly pursued. The major contribution of teacher training institutions to the transformation of upper secondary curricula would be in the expansion of task forces through which experienced teachers undertaking higher degrees would work with teachers in schools on curricular development and other appropriate tasks.

Certification

7.9 The new Board will assume overall responsibility for the new Certificate marking the end of postcompulsory schooling. It will authorise this common certificate for all students at this level. As a result, all young people in Victoria, regardless of school attended or area of residence, will receive a statement of their achievements during the postcompulsory years. Public confidence in and acceptance of the new Certificate will be enhanced by the existence of a single, central authority responsible for ensuring that high and uniform standards of quality are met in all subject areas. The Board will recommend appropriate assessment procedures for units and determine the mode and form of the final assessment to appear on the Certificate of Education. Eventually, the Board will develop more flexible patterns of certification linking schools, institutions of higher education and TAFE. Brining accreditation arrangements for both TAFE and schools together could be a first step in forging closer relationships between accrediting authorities in all educational sectors. This would enable the transferring of credits between sectors, the opening up of more varied pathways between them and a more honest consideration of the best location for particular courses.

Structure and Membership

7.10 The membership of the Board and the manner of its appointment are crucial to its credibility and its successful operation. The Board will provide a forum for all major groupings with an involvement or interest in postcompulsory schooling. These include most importantly those in the education sector, especially the Education Department, other education authorities and those teaching at this level of schooling. Others with a claim to representation include postsecondary institutions of all types, students, employers, employees, parents, school councils and members of the wider community. It is important that those appointed should have the full confidence of those they represent, and that they carry a degree of authority and
responsibility within their own sector. This would suggest that some members ought to be appointed to the Board by virtue of their positions as chief administrators of educational sectors. The representatives of secondary education would then include the Director-General of Education, the Chairperson of the State Board of Education, the chief administrator of the Catholic school system, and the presidents of the relevant teachers' union and principals' association. Leading administrators of the TAFE and higher education sectors would also be included in a postsecondary category. The inclusion of the heads of major agencies and organisations on the Board will lend it authority and credibility and ensure that the interests of these bodies are represented. However, it must be balanced by the representation of the actual practitioners, particularly classroom teachers, who will be affected by the decisions the Board makes. The best way to ensure that these members are genuinely representative is to make provision for them to be elected by their professional peers.

7.11 Greater difficulties attend the adequate representation of those who are to be the voice of the community. Members of parliament are perhaps a logical choice and could be recommended by the government and opposition parties respectively. Parents and school councils can be represented by their associations. However, the membership of those who are not collectively organised, including students and employers, is more difficult. While some direct representation may be desirable, the Board could be required to engage in regular consultations with groups of young people and with groups of employers. These consultations could provide opportunities for more disparate views to be discussed with the Board. Overall, there should be an appropriate balance between members appointed automatically by virtue of their position as heads of major agencies or interest groups, members elected by their colleagues or peers in a particular field of endeavour, and members appointed by the Minister on the basis of expertise or other relevant factors. We would expect that appointments would reflect an appropriate gender balance and the inclusion of minority groups. Although the Board would seek to provide a forum for all interested parties, the Board itself should meet no more frequently than quarterly.

7.12 The Board should be chaired by a full-time director with overall responsibility for its operations. It is envisaged that the work of the Board in the major areas of curricular development, accreditation, assessment and certification would be undertaken by small expert committees which would be appointed by the Board and would operate within the framework of policy it has devised. Below this level there would be a range of smaller committees working in specified areas. The Board and its committees would be serviced by a small secretariat which would not itself engage in any curricular or policy development. We believe that the authority should not duplicate in size, or in conditions of tenure, the large resources in curriculum already present in the Education Department. We further propose that the permanent staff of the accrediting and assessment authority should be kept as small as may be consistent with its special obligations, in the expectation that major curricular development projects will be contracted or will be operated through staff seconded on a temporary basis, mainly from schools and from the Curriculum Branch. The career paths of the small permanent staff of the Board should be articulated into the mainstream of education and public service. It is envisaged that the staff of the Board would be career members of the Victorian Public Service under the auspices of the Public Service Board, with the same conditions of service and career opportunities as all other public servants.
Changeover Arrangements

7.13 Appropriate arrangements will need to be made to continue the present pattern of certificates while preparing for the introduction of the new Certificate, and to deal with the problems of transition from old to new. The process would be expedited if the position of the Director of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board were to be filled with all possible speed. This person will bear a major responsibility for the implementation of this Review overall and will need to be involved at the earliest possible point in any new arrangements. We recommend:

Recommendation 30: That the Director of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board be appointed by the end of 1985 and assume responsibility for the operation of VISE in 1986.

7.14 Under its broader legislative responsibility to assist those completing school, VISE is in the process of investigating the development of computer-based information for those seeking entry to postsecondary courses. At present, information about the nature and content of postsecondary courses is not collated. Each provider publishes a separate handbook. In a complex and rapidly changing field, careers teachers in schools cannot provide comprehensive information or counselling to students regarding course options within chosen areas of interest. The need for accurate, up-to-date and impartial information about education and work will increase in a future characterised by more discontinuous patterns of participation in both. The Victorian Government's proposed Youth Guarantee Scheme recognises the necessity for providing information and counselling to young people regarding options in education and employment. Co-ordination of information and advice is required across all sectors of education and across the labour market if young people are to gain access to broader opportunities. The co-ordination of information regarding educational opportunities is an important task and responsibility for it should be seen as part of the implementation of the Review.

Recommendation 31: That the group charged with oversight of the implementation of the Review, as recommended in Chapter 9, in liaison with the Youth Affairs Bureau, advise the Minister regarding the location and structure of a well based and openly accessible education information service to assist young people and displaced workers in formulating study and training plans.

7.15 It is apparent that relevant expertise already present to a high degree in VISE will be essential in order to deal with the more focussed responsibilities of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board. Staff employed in VISE have extensive experience in the accreditation of curricula at this level and in the range of assessment procedures that can be employed. The transition period and the changeover process will require continued co-operation from the staff at VISE. They will be indispensable in handling the temporary accreditation of existing subjects within the new Certificate for the interim period from 1987 to 1990. All staff already employed should be given the opportunity, after individual counselling, for redeployment at present salary levels within the public sector. All positions within the new authority will be advertised and present VISE staff will, of course, be eligible for appointment to the new agency.
8 Organisational Forms for Postcompulsory Schooling

8.1 Curricular reforms have frequently been associated with the reshaping of educational structures. Organisational forms are not ends in themselves but are the means of meeting educational and societal purposes which change over time. Present curricula at postcompulsory levels are the result of attempts to respond to rising participation by modifying the original intent of each separate segment of provision. When the opportunity to participate in secondary education was extended to all, Victoria continued until 1983 its practice of maintaining, in the public sector, small separate high schools and technical schools. Since that year, all new secondary schools have been comprehensive, combining the features of high and technical schools. The Committee believes that existing high and technical schools should be amalgamated to give all students access to a more comprehensive curriculum and to broaden the opportunities of students in technical schools. The workforce structure to which technical schools originally related no longer exists. In the interests of developing a higher theoretical basis for technical pursuits, and of giving more students the experience of relating practical and theoretical studies, we are recommending that all public-sector secondary provision become comprehensive. As a first step in the process, wherever there are high and technical schools in the same country town or metropolitan area, a joint council should be established charged with the task of integrating the activities and programs of the two schools. We recommend:

Recommendation 32: That the concept of comprehensive postprimary education be extended through the integration of the activities and programs of neighbouring high and technical schools under a single council from 1 January 1987; that all existing high technical or technical high schools should become postprimary schools from that date; and that by January 1988 all schools become comprehensive rather than being designated, equipped or staffed as technical or high schools.

8.2 The report of the working party on organisational forms, published in the second volume of this Report, outlines many of the attempts being made to increase participation and to broaden curricular options for students in the postcompulsory phase. Modifications to school organisational arrangements include the vertical grouping of students across Years 7-12 or Years 11-12 and the development of a unit-based curriculum shared by all students. The introduction of off-campus studies has been assisted by the use of electronic media, one-way and two-way audio and video and teleconferencing. Visiting specialist teachers and mobile resource centres, such as libraries, workshops and craft centres, extend local resources. Linkages have been made between schools and specialist facilities. Resource centres provide services to a number of schools and often to the wider community. Shared resource programs enable students at high schools to undertake programs at adjacent technical schools. Pairs or groups of adjacent schools are also being formed into networks or clusters which share resources and special projects. Some of these linkages associate government and nongovernment schools and many have access to the programs and resources of TAFE colleges. Throughout the period of this Review the increase in this inter-organisational co-operation has been notable. There appears to be widespread agreement that some restructuring of present provision is necessary, and is urgent in those areas strongly affected by demographic changes.
Isolated Schools

8.3 The situation of students in isolated schools warrants particular attention. These young people already travel considerable distances to school and parents are reluctant to send them away to larger centres to complete their education. Levels of unemployment are high, resulting in the forced migration of many to the cities for work or further education after completion of their schooling.

8.4 The lack of curricular options beyond traditionally academic ones has contributed to the low levels of participation in education in rural areas. The difficulty of providing an appropriate curricular range for the small numbers of students enrolled at the senior secondary levels in isolated rural schools is acknowledged in the special staffing formula used by the Education Department to allocate resources and staff to schools in rural areas. The initiatives undertaken through the Country Education Project in providing mobile resource centres and visiting specialist teachers and the experiments in electronic means of linking students and teachers offer some valuable means of expanding the curriculum. Widespread support was expressed in country areas for the building of specialist resource centres with associated hostel facilities to which students from surrounding schools could travel for weekly periods.

8.5 The unit-based curricular structure recommended in Chapter 4 of this Report would enable country students to undertake studies not provided at their schools through spending blocks of time at TAFE colleges, other schools or specialist resource centres. The nature of the facilities provided requires investigation as there is little point in duplicating, for example, the sorts of facilities now found in technical schools and many TAFE colleges, which have become increasingly inappropriate to the future labour requirements of the Victorian economy. We recommend:

Recommendation 33: That the Education Department, drawing where appropriate on the expertise of the Country Education Project develop, implement and evaluate electronic means of expanding the curricular range available to students attending schools in rural areas.

Recommendation 34: That an appropriately designed specialist resource centre and associated hostel facilities for the use of a number of schools be established in an area of rural Victoria at present educationally disadvantaged and lacking such facilities, and that it be evaluated with a view to establishing more such centres over the longer term.

Competing Provision

8.6 In larger provincial centres and in the metropolitan area different conditions have prevailed. The existence of three types of publicly supported secondary provision at the postcompulsory level—government high and technical schools and nongovernment schools—creates problems in curricular and resource terms and unduly restricts the options available to students at all locations. While the major area of recognised competition is that between secondary schools and TAFE where TOP programs are available, a long-running competition for the same group of students occurs between technical and high schools, and between government and nongovernment schools.
8.7 As Victorian schools are small overall, very small numbers of senior secondary students are located on individual sites. Table 7 of this Report shows that in 1984, only 28 per cent of Year 11 groups and 3 per cent of Year 12 groups in government schools had more than 120 students. At Year 12, 65 per cent of students in government schools were attending schools with 60 or fewer enrolments at that level. If the retention rates in Year 12 did not rise above 1984 levels, the declining numbers in the relevant age cohort would result in many schools having lower enrolments over Years 11 and 12 than they have now, although all schools, of course, would not be similarly affected. If the recommended target of 70 per cent participation in Year 12 were to eventuate, higher overall numbers would clearly be involved. This would still not result, however, in numbers sufficient in most schools to enable them independently to offer the recommended curriculum. Even very high retention cannot result in high numbers in Year 11 and 12 combined while the overall size of schools remains small.

New Organisational Forms

8.8 It is quite clear that no single way of reorganising educational structures presently draws wide support within the Victorian educational community, nor is everywhere feasible or desirable. The responses to the Discussion Paper and the Review’s working party on organisational forms were divided on the issue of separate provision for senior students. While a majority of responses to the Discussion Paper either favoured some form of institutional separation of the postcompulsory age group, or was prepared to consider it as an option, there was a substantial minority that was opposed to any form of organisational restructuring that would involve such a separation. The strongest opposition came from the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) and individual high and technical schools, especially those in small country centres. There was strong support for separate institutions from the TAFE sector, and support was also received from tertiary institutions, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, and a range of Education Department bodies, parents, and principals. The main areas of concern related to the professional satisfaction and industrial welfare of teachers, the effects on students in the compulsory years, the effect on student retention and the problems associated with isolated rural areas.

8.9 The common ground shared by almost all the responses was a recognition that structural issues need to be addressed in order to overcome problems of fragmentation, of small numbers of students on individual sites inhibiting curricular breadth, and of providing an appropriate educational atmosphere for postcompulsory students. Insofar as there was any consensus of opinion on this issue, it was that no single institutional form should be imposed across the state. A clear majority maintained that a diversity of structures should be allowed to take account of demographic and geographical factors, existing provision, and community wishes. Most recognised that central guidelines would have to be drawn up to provide a framework for local restructuring, and that local initiatives without overall guidance or direction were unlikely to produce lasting solutions.

8.10 The Committee believes that it is now timely to move beyond the modification of existing structures and to introduce new organisational forms. We believe that the creation of separate campuses and institutions for students in the postcompulsory phase could advance the principles of participation and equity, offering students access to a comprehensive curriculum in an educational environment which reflects their near-adult status. Three types of comprehensive upper secondary institutions deserve consideration.
(i) **Complexes of schools**, formed from the amalgamation of several adjacent postprimary schools, would have separate campuses for senior students. The complex could possibly operate under an umbrella council with individual schools retaining separate councils and administrations. Curricular planning would encompass the full secondary span and teachers would be appointed to the whole complex rather than to an individual campus and would, over their working lives, teach students at all year levels.

(ii) **Senior secondary colleges** would bring together Years 11 and 12. After completion of Year 10 students would move to a new institution which could be multi-campus or single-campus, and governed by its own council. Staff need not be appointed exclusively to such colleges but rather to groups of secondary schools within an area. Over time, staff could move between the earlier years and Years 11 and 12.

(iii) **All-age community colleges** would bring together Years 11 and 12, the full range of TAFE courses and the first years of science, arts and commerce/economics courses conducted at present in universities and colleges of advanced education. Colleges would be single-campus or multi-campus and governed by a single council.

8.11 It is apparent that these three types have common advantages. All three bring together larger numbers of students and teachers, thereby assisting curricular renewal at this level. The presence of more students means that more curricular options can be provided. Victoria’s only senior high school at Bendigo offered its 327 Year 12 students twenty-eight HSC group 1 subjects, eight group 2 subjects and thirteen subjects for the Bendigo High School Certificate, a course with a secretarial emphasis developed by the school. TAFE colleges with large TOP enrolments also offer numerous subjects. The Ballarat School of Mines offered forty-six subjects in TOP in 1984. In the ACT, Erindale College offered fifty-seven subjects accredited by the ACT Accrediting Agency, thirty-seven of them for tertiary entry. Courses are offered in the areas of art/technology, English, behavioural sciences, English as a second language, foreign languages, history, physical education, mathematics/computing, performing arts, science, secretarial studies and social sciences. More than forty registered recreational or vocational courses, ranging from sports to cooking, stained-glass techniques, stage production, welding and photography are offered in the evenings as well as during the day, attracting adults with hobby interests as well as full-time students at the college. In Tasmania, Elizabeth Matriculation College in Hobart offers sixty-six subjects within five different ‘lines’. This contrasts with between fifteen and seventeen subjects available to Year 12 students at most Victorian schools.

8.12 The economic and sure provision of a greater range of curricular options would not require the creation of very large institutions. Some preliminary work published in the second volume of this Report shows that, with a curricular spread one third larger than that now typically available, the rate of per student costs falls sharply until 300 student enrolments are reached and then shows a slow decline between enrolments of 300 to 600 students.

8.13 Separate campuses and institutions enable the provision of a less restrictive educational environment while maintaining a framework of pastoral care. Students can progressively assume more responsibility for their studies and for the time spent outside the classroom. Restrictions on study and personal habits should lessen over the two years to become no more stringent than those accepted in purposeful adult activities within the community. Students can participate significantly in the governance of the institutions they attend. Separately organised postcompulsory institutions have proved universally popular with the young people who attend them and their introduction in Victoria is likely to encourage more young people to...
remain in school. Although a transition to a new institution or campus at the end of Year 10 may tempt students to drop out of schooling rather than transfer, many students have been prepared to transfer to TAFE colleges to undertake TOP, partly because it offers a new start. While retention rates reflect many factors, participation levels have risen where there are separate institutions for senior students. As opportunities for recurrent education are extended as an essential part of employment, to meet leisure and recreational needs and to satisfy a desire to know, those returning to study are unlikely to return to schools as presently constituted. Separate postcompulsory institutions or campuses could provide more congenial re-entry points.

8.14 Community colleges, which blend upper secondary schooling and a broad range of postsecondary courses, offer many additional advantages. As well as increasing the number of places in tertiary education, they provide familiarity with higher and further education for those who, themselves or through contacts, lack that familiarity. Blurring the boundaries between sectors and developing cross-crediting arrangements between them allows students to undertake some studies at an advanced level, thereby diminishing also the importance of the certificate awarded at the end of schooling in selecting students for higher education. Students could readily sample courses and could change curricular tracks without leaving the college.

8.15 We note that plans have been announced for the development in 1987 of the Western Melbourne Institute of Post Secondary Education, to be located in the western suburbs. It will offer degree and diploma courses and TAFE courses in such a way that students will be able to select subjects from all streams and to transfer from one to another. We strongly support this development which could provide a valuable pilot scheme for working through some of the issues which arise in the transfer of credits between two education sectors. We also believe that with the addition of upper secondary classes, it could form the basis for a post Year 10 community college. We recommend:

Recommendation 35: That, where feasible, all new provision in the public sector at the upper secondary levels be located in separate postcompulsory campuses or colleges.


Recommendation 37: That where locally favoured and where feasible, two examples of senior colleges and community colleges be established by the earliest possible date in areas currently educationally disadvantaged.

Recommendation 38: That priority be given to establishing Years 11 and 12 in association with the kind of provision planned for the Western Melbourne Institute of Post Secondary Education, to form a postcompulsory community college.
Issues Arising

8.16 These three forms of separate postcompulsory institutions also present various problems which must be resolved prior to their introduction. It is important to recognise that the introduction of separate institutions results in the creation of two new structures, both the Years 7–10 school and the senior college. We believe that the success of one form must not, and need not, be at the expense of the other. A rationale already exists for the compulsory years of schooling to be free from the constraints imposed by the credentialling requirements of the later years. There is some evidence that senior students take the available leadership roles regardless of their year level. While the most senior students can provide role models for junior students, it seems unfair to deprive older students of educational opportunities because their presence has beneficial effects on younger students. We note that flourishing Years 7–10 schools exist in the Catholic system and in Bendigo and that neither in those schools, nor in similar circumstances in Britain, do all the most accomplished teachers seek to transfer to the higher levels. Over the longer term, we believe that schooling will be more radically restructured. It is likely that the compulsory years of schooling will be organised within Years P–10 schools and that the postcompulsory years will be organised in a variety of modes which offer more flexible pathways to a variety of postschool destinations. However, in the interim, positive steps need to be taken to avert any difficulties which could arise.

8.17 Any restructuring of educational provision will affect teachers' working conditions and careers. Schools, teachers' unions and a range of other respondents were concerned that being confined to teaching classes at any one level may have an adverse effect on teachers' morale, job satisfaction and stress; that promotion prospects and mobility may suffer; that divisions would be created in the teaching service, possibly leading to an elite group of teachers with different conditions; and that industrial problems could arise where teachers under different awards were working in the same institution. Lack of mobility between junior secondary and senior schools has become a problem for teachers in the ACT as teachers of older students are reluctant to move, and the teaching service has been further fragmented in Tasmania.

8.18 It is our view that the negotiation of satisfactory arrangements for teachers would be greatly enhanced if a single union were to cover all teachers in secondary schools in the public sector. At present, teachers in high schools are members of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) and those in technical schools and TAFE are members of the Technical Teachers Union of Victoria (TTUV). Both unions have negotiated industrial agreements with the government and there is some variation of conditions between teachers in high and technical schools. If teachers in all schools are to derive increased job satisfaction from any changes to schools, it is important that a single union represents them and acts on behalf of their professional interests. The amalgamation of high and technical schools and the rationalisation of responsibilities between schools and TAFE will assist this process. On this basis we are confident that solutions to professional and industrial problems can be found. Teachers could be appointed to a whole complex of schools, not just to the senior campus within it, or to a region rather than to any particular school. Appointments to separate postcompulsory institutions or campuses could be made for fixed periods of time, for example for five years, so that teachers would not be permanently excluded from teaching at certain levels. While we note that many teachers seek appointment to Years 7–10 schools in the Catholic sector and evince...
great professional satisfaction, teachers who prefer appointment to schools covering the full secondary span should have that option. Teachers are already employed within a variety of organisational forms. We recommend:

Recommendation 39: That the Education Department immediately establish a task force with substantial representation from the teachers’ unions to identify and resolve any industrial and professional issues relating to the restructuring of upper secondary provision.

8.19 The role of the nongovernment schools is also an issue in any restructuring. We consider that it is vital that nongovernment schools should be fully involved in any planned restructuring in order to increase curricular options for all young people, to reduce the costs of competing provision at this level and to increase further the levels of co-operation. Many nongovernment, especially Catholic, schools have co-operated with government schools and have contracted with TAFE for the supply of services at this level. It is apparent that nongovernment schools will be further affected by the establishing of new structures and by the proposed elimination of TOP. Small schools will encounter greater difficulties in providing the comprehensive curriculum advocated and may wish to form closer curricular associations with government schools. In certain areas, some nongovernment schools may wish to discontinue their upper secondary levels. In the case of religiously based schools this move would, in turn, require the inclusion of religious education or religion studies as curricular options within any comprehensive postcompulsory institution.

Implementing Structural Change

8.20 If all students are to have access to a comprehensive curricular range, all resources at the postcompulsory level in an area will have to be considered in their totality. Existing provision in government and nongovernment schools and in TAFE would need to be surveyed. Information to be gathered would include:

- overall enrolments and retention rates, and enrolments and retention rates on individual sites, by course and subjects;
- projected enrolments overall and projected enrolments on individual sites over a ten-year period;
- facilities available on individual sites;
- numbers of EFT teachers involved, by region and by individual site;
- labour market developments in the area and destinations of exit students;
- arrangements already existing designed to increase students’ access to curricular options and evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses;
- schools and colleges so geographically placed as to make co-operating arrangements among them feasible at this level of provision, paying attention to preferred groupings expressed by institutions themselves.

8.21 The implementation of any restructuring has been considerably simplified by the proposals to transfer responsibility and resources for all government sector provision at Years 11 and 12 to the Education Department, to consolidate high and technical schools, and to consolidate all TAFE activities within TAFE. Extensive consultation with all affected, including students and those who have left school,
parents, teachers, school councils, TAFE providers and the wider community must precede any planning and must be reflected in the plans developed. Local restructuring, including that proposed or already underway, must proceed within policy guidelines. All plans for restructuring must:

- take into account present and projected demographic trends within an area;
- guarantee all students access to publicly provided postcompulsory schooling throughout Victoria;
- be designed to encourage increased participation at the postcompulsory level;
- grant all students access to courses carrying significant credentials with wide currency for employment and future study;
- encourage the provision of a more adult atmosphere for students of postcompulsory age;
- make possible part-time and discontinuous participation in Years 11 and 12 as well as continuous and full-time attendance;
- combine institutionally separated academic and other streams and ensure that combinations of theoretical and practical/vocational study are made available to all students, while allowing degrees of specialisation in either;
- bring together provision in high and technical schools where both exist, and in schools and TAFE in an overall plan of comprehensive curricular development for students in the area;
- increase the comprehensiveness of the range of study modes and options to which individual students realistically have access; (reviews and plans should, to the maximum degree possible, offer students access to the humanities, social sciences, mathematics, science, languages, creative and performing arts, and practical activities having vocational and broader relevance; the curriculum should include experience in socially valuable activities within the wider community);
- seek jointly to resolve the situation in smaller communities where public/private competition at postcompulsory level results in a limited curriculum discouraging higher retention in both sectors;
- include comparative costings of existing and proposed arrangements.

We recommend:

Recommendation 40: That each Regional Board of Education immediately appoint a small committee with representation from the nongovernment schools within the region and the Regional TAFE Board to survey existing educational provision and to develop plans for restructuring within the policy framework outlined in this Report.
9 The Next Stage

9.1 This Review points to a new direction for the education of young people in the postcompulsory years of schooling. Major changes have been suggested in curricula, certification and the structures of schooling. These changes are intended to enable postcompulsory provision to have the following characteristics:

- It must be such that more students want to participate in it and see purpose in it.
- It must be designed within a comprehensive curricular rationale defining a range of options and common studies to which all students should have access to the maximum degree possible.
- It must include significant, practical, work-related studies within a framework of continuing general education.
- It must not be so rigidly tracked into 'academic' and 'non-academic' streams that it excludes students from participating in both.
- It must promote equity in participation in schooling.
- It must give all students access to a common and significant credential.
- It must lead into all forms of postschool study and into employment and citizenship.
- It must have demonstrated relevance to major issues of the contemporary world and to the concerns of students entering it as adults.
- It must relate theory to its applications where appropriate and locate ideas in a social and historical context.
- It must allow for participation of varying kinds—discontinuous and part-time as well as continuous and full-time.
- It must be conducted in ways which move decisively over the two years away from those appropriate to early adolescence towards those operating in task-centred adult associations.

9.2 We believe these changes are necessary if the great majority of young Victorians is to participate purposefully in the full span of schooling. We have argued that this participation should be encouraged in order to promote equity; to enhance personal satisfaction and fulfilment; and to lay the basis for a more highly skilled and productive workforce. The development of all talents is valuable to the society and the skills and talents of today's young people form the basis of the future well-being and prosperity of the society. However, the development of these human resources is a lengthy and expensive process. It is clear that the improvements in the education of young people at the upper secondary level which this Report foreshadows have considerable resource implications. We believe that the Government must now commit the necessary resources to implement the recommendations of this Report.

9.3 There are, of course, considerable social, personal and financial costs also involved in continuing with present policies. Without a comprehensive curricular range and associated changes in the credential, increased participation is unlikely to encompass those young people who are presently excluded from TAFE vocational courses and who find academic courses at the upper secondary level in schools...
unattractive. Nor will young people seeking a less embracing supervision of their lives than that characterising compulsory schooling be attracted to continuing participation unless upper secondary schooling is conducted on new terms. A proportion of those discouraged from continuing with their schooling by present offerings and arrangements will not only experience immediate difficulty in finding work, but will be permanently dependent members of the society, or casual employees, throughout life. Increased participation and improvements in the quality and range of courses and in learning outcomes are essential to avoid the costs associated with failure to prepare the mass of the age group adequately for changing and uncertain workforce requirements and for a more politically and personally demanding future.

9.4 The net financial costs of the changes proposed are difficult to estimate precisely. Increased retention into Year 12 will carry costs which would have to be met anyway, irrespective of the recommendations of the Review. The cost of the changes will nevertheless be considerable, although offset to some degree by reduced recurrent costs per student at upper secondary levels. Even within the restricted curricular range to which most students now have access, relatively small numbers on individual sites have resulted in an average size of teaching groups in government schools at Year 12 of around twelve students. Recurrent costs per student at Year 12 are 78 per cent greater than those at Years 7–10. If present structures of schooling are unaltered, the provision of a wider curricular range would raise unit costs even if levels of retention increased. Structural changes which allow curriculum to be designed and delivered over larger groups of students than at present could give students access to a wider range of options at somewhat lower unit costs than those presently operating. Without such structural changes, however, both dimensions of this outcome could not simultaneously and universally apply. Organising Years 11 and 12 as a curricular entity with many semester units available to all students over the two years could marginally increase the variety of students' options within relatively stable per student costs. Even with this change, preliminary estimates (see Appendix 8) indicate some 300 students at Years 11 and 12 combined would be needed to increase options significantly without large rises in recurrent costs per student. Some individual schools will reach such enrolment levels. The great majority, however, will not. The curricular changes recommended are a necessary condition of higher and more purposeful participation to the end of Year 12. Any reduced recurrent costs per student which could result from associated structural changes are a bonus rather than a major objective.

9.5 The costs of establishing and operating the recommended Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board will be greater than those presently involved in running VISE. The budget allocation to VISE in 1984–85 was $5.7m, of which half is spent on conducting external assessment for the HSC. These costs would not diminish while external examinations are retained, and the extension of moderation to all subjects would require greater resources. The development of a common credential recording achievements over Years 11 and 12, the associated curricular development tasks and the negotiation of aspects of the credential with all relevant postsecondary providers is clearly a major and crucial operation which will involve additional costs in the initial period. Responsibility for the major curricular development projects which have been recommended in mathematics, science/technology and the study of work will be borne by this new authority. The Committee estimates that over the longer term, these additional costs will be of the order of $2.5m a year in constant dollars in addition to the cost of those resources already present within the budget of the Curriculum Branch of the Education Department.
that could be notionally allocated for the Board’s use. In addition, we propose that the cost of curricular projects recommended for immediate development be partly met by a renegotiation with the Commonwealth Government of the terms of operation of the Participation and Equity Program.

9.6 As suggested in Chapter 1, the major changes proposed in this report provide the necessary policy underpinning for achieving the objectives of PEP. Victoria draws $11m a year from the Program. Present guidelines governing the expenditure of funds within the Program require that 75 per cent be spent in 40 per cent of schools in geographical areas where participation in postcompulsory and postsecondary education is relatively low. The capacity of the individual institution to promote higher and more equitable participation is severely constrained unless considerable central effort is put into the development of curricular schemes and materials of high quality, into changing the Year 12 credential and into promoting structural changes which will give students access to a comprehensive curricular range. These changes are urgent and could be assisted, at least in their initial stages, by the reallocation of a higher proportion of the Program’s funds towards system initiatives of a specified kind, perhaps involving matching funds from state sources. We believe that the terms of the Program’s operation need to be redefined to give more emphasis to system-level initiatives. We recommend:

Recommendation 41: That $2.5m additional to the present costs of operating the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education be allocated over each of 1986, 1987 and 1988 to fund the establishment and operation of the new Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board, in addition to a negotiated portion of the budget of the Curriculum Branch of the Education Department representing resources within the Department that could be notionally allocated for use by the Board.

Recommendation 42: That the Victorian Minister for Education enter discussions with the Commonwealth Minister for Education with a view to securing 50 per cent of the funds allocated to Victoria under the Participation and Equity Program in 1986 and 1987 for use in system-level initiatives in postcompulsory curriculum as recommended in this Report.

9.7 Structural changes recommended have a number of associated costs. In the short term, and in most areas, we do not envisage the acquisition or building of new colleges. The declining size of the secondary age group has already resulted in surplus physical capacity in many areas, enabling an existing campus to be refurbished for use by senior students. The legacy of prolonged parsimony in school buildings in the public sector is that many buildings are poorly constructed and inadequate and have already exceeded their projected period of use. Schools generally lack recreational and other facilities appropriate for the use of near-adult students. Further, the teaching of a broader curricular range incorporating practical and vocational studies is hampered by the lack of facilities. Resources for the performing and creative arts are grossly deficient and many of the facilities for technical studies in both technical schools and TAFE are outmoded in kind and insufficient in quantity. There is a pressing need to provide the resources to ensure a wider curricular range for all students, in both rural and urban areas of the state. The structural reforms envisaged overcome the need to provide these facilities on every site in Victoria. Nonetheless we believe that the Government must provide the resources to survey existing provision within each region, to identify gaps and to develop plans after wide consultation at the local level for the best use of resources. These tasks will be the major responsibility of regionally based officers, assisted where necessary by
consultants seconded for short terms. The costs of establishing complexes and secondary colleges will be borne by the Victorian Government, but the capital costs of providing community colleges will be shared with the Commonwealth Government which is responsible for the provision of facilities for postsecondary education. We recommend:

**Recommendation 43:** That the Victorian Government allocate $10m in 1986 and $20m in 1987 and in 1988 to support the restructuring of educational provision at the upper secondary level.

**Implementation of the Review**

9.8 The implementation of the recommendations of this Review will require policy co-ordination at the central level. We are aware of the plethora of authorities, agencies and committees that already exist in all education sectors in Victoria and that tender advice to the Minister. As a result, and because of the segmented and specialised nature of the agencies, problems of overall co-ordination have arisen within the educational sectors and between education, training and employment. We are aware that the Minister for Education is considering the creation of a small, expert ministerial policy unit to co-ordinate advice and data collection, to develop overall policies relating to education and training and to maintain liaison among education sectors and between education and the labour market. We strongly support this initiative.

**Recommendation 44:** That the Minister for Education establish a ministerial policy unit at the earliest possible date.

9.9 Within this context, a small committee is required for a limited period of time at the central level to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of this Review. We propose that a committee chaired by the Minister for Education and composed of the Director-General of Education, the Director of the Catholic Education Office, the Chairman of the State Board of Education and the Chairman of VISE, replaced after an appropriate transition period by the Director of the proposed Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board, should assume this role. The Committee would advise the Minister on the allocation of tasks arising from the Review to existing agencies and supervise their implementation, and oversee the establishment of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board and the management of the transition from VISE to the new Board. It would also ensure the necessary co-ordination between the compulsory and postcompulsory levels of schooling and would maintain oversight of the postcompulsory phase as a whole.

**Recommendation 45:** That a committee chaired by the Minister for Education and comprising the Director-General of Education, the Director of the Catholic Education Office, the Chairman of the State Board of Education and the Chairman of VISE, replaced after an appropriate transition period by the Director of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board, be responsible for monitoring the overall implementation of the recommendations of this Report.
Recommendations

9.10 The recommendations which follow set a new direction for postcompulsory schooling in Victoria.

Recommendation 1: That increased participation in schooling to the end of Year 12 energetically be pursued with the objective that by 1995, 70 per cent of an age group will complete Year 12 of schooling. The Victorian Government should commit itself to the realisation of this target and to the support of changes necessary to make it effective.

Recommendation 2: That the Victorian Government pursue with all urgency changes in the Commonwealth policies of financial support for young people so that, for those in financial need, continued educational participation, at least to the end of Year 12, be made as attractive as unemployment benefits.

Recommendation 3: That within the public sector the Education Department be responsible for all schooling at Years 11 and 12 and that the allocation of resources between the Education Department and TAFE reflect this responsibility. Resources used to provide Years 11 and 12 courses in TAFE should be frozen at present levels pending evaluation and transfer.

Recommendation 4: That from the beginning of 1987, courses in Years 11 and 12 be organised as a course of study over two years in semester-length units, not assigned to a particular year level except as required by sequential studies composed of more than two semester units.

Recommendation 5: That all students in Years 11 and 12 have access to a comprehensive curricular range, including a variety of optional studies within each of the major areas of arts/humanities, science/technology and mathematics; and to a range of activity-based studies.

Recommendation 6: That students, within twenty-four units of semester length taken over Years 11 and 12, follow at least one three-unit sequence of study in each of the areas of arts/humanities, science/technology and mathematics.

Recommendation 7: That all students be strongly encouraged to take at least one unit over the two years in activity-based studies; and that units within these areas be associated with related theoretical units to form the basis of some two-unit and three-unit sequences.

Recommendation 8: That studies in the major curricular areas in Years 11 and 12 be so designed as not to prevent students from taking only the first unit of a sequence. No sequence should exceed three units although provision can be made for additional specialist units.

Recommendation 9: That a major curricular project be mounted by the new Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board (the establishment of which is later recommended), in each of the areas of mathematics and science/technology; and that each project survey and evaluate present courses in its area of reference, and propose and develop a number of courses in each to include both applied courses and courses suited to the general education of students not following further specialist studies in either area.

Recommendation 10: That the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board negotiate with major providers of postsecondary courses to establish agreement about the content of studies in mathematics, physics and chemistry commonly applicable to the range of courses they offer, and to make special arrangements for any additional prerequisites for particular courses.
Recommendation 11: That cross-crediting of units of study in the upper secondary curriculum into TAFE certificate courses and apprenticeship be further encouraged, and that the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board negotiate with the Industrial Training Commission and the TAFE Accreditation Board with the objective of reaching agreements facilitating such arrangements.

Recommendation 12: That groupings of occupations which could provide a basis for practically oriented vocational studies having relevance for a number of occupations and for the development of applied studies within the area of mathematics and science/technology be investigated by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board.

Recommendation 13: That the study of work in society occupy two compulsory and sequential semester units over Years 11 and 12; that it be pursued in the contexts of technological change since the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century and in present day Australia; that it involve direct observation and experience; and that it include the study of work undertaken in domestic units, in unpaid and paid capacities, and affecting women and men.

Recommendation 14: That a major curricular development project underwriting the above study be mounted, beginning in 1985.

Recommendation 15: That the study of English occupy two compulsory and sequential semester-length units over Years 11 and 12 for all students.

Recommendation 16: That standardised tests in oral and written communication and in the basic mathematical processes be developed and used consistently over the period of schooling to enable teachers and parents to identify and assist in rectifying deficiencies in students' achievement in these areas.

Recommendation 17: That in content, learning modes and institutional practices, curriculum over the postcompulsory years be oriented towards the adulthood students are entering. In particular, institutional practices should enable students to:

- Contract voluntarily into courses with the acceptance of requirements associated with them.
- Increasingly over the two years be obliged to be present on campus only for contracted sessions.
- Assume active responsibility for their own learning.
- Move across locations for different aspects of study as needed.
- Assume collective responsibility for the organisation and rule of their own adult community outside areas of teachers' professional responsibility.
- Contribute routinely to curricular review through their responses to courses, learning modes and assessment practices.


Recommendation 19: That all units within the Victorian Certificate of Education be accredited by a central agency which should also oversee modes of assessment and the moderation of assessments across wider groups of students than those in individual institutions.
Recommendation 20: That the Victorian Certificate of Education be awarded to students who successfully complete twenty-four units within prescribed patterns which include sequential units, common studies and other studies.

Recommendation 21: That those leaving at any stage after the completion of any unit be issued with a certificate indicating partial completion of the credential and recording units satisfactorily completed.

Recommendation 22: That the Certificate record only the highest level of achievement gained in units attempted more than once.

Recommendation 23: That all studies presently included in the Higher School Certificate, the Tertiary Orientation Program and Technical Year 12 become part of the Victorian Certificate of Education in 1987 and over 1986 be accredited on an interim basis.

Recommendation 24: That by 1990 the new Certificate be fully operational and be based on the curricular policies recommended in this Report.

Recommendation 25: That elements of the Tertiary Orientation Program where they involve facilities and expertise available only in TAFE continue to be offered under interim accreditation and under contract to the Education Department; but that the Program as such cease to operate at the end of 1986.

Recommendation 26: That the Victorian Government urge the Commonwealth Government to restore the level of places in higher education to that representing at least 50 per cent of students enrolled in Year 12 in the previous year after allowance has been made for mature-aged and overseas students.

Recommendation 27: That funds from the Tertiary Participation and Equity Program be allocated to institutions of higher education to assist them to develop, implement and evaluate approved alternative means of selecting students and of assisting them to complete successfully the courses undertaken.

Recommendation 28: That students be deemed to be eligible for admission to institutions of higher education only if they have

(i) satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Victorian Certificate of Education, as specified in Recommendation 20;

(ii) satisfactorily completed three accredited preparatory studies assessed in equal proportions by external examinations and externally moderated teachers' assessment.

Recommendation 29: That a Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board be established with overall responsibility for the development and accreditation of curricula and for certification at the senior secondary level.

Recommendation 30: That the Director of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board be appointed by the end of 1985 and assume responsibility for the operation of VISE in 1986.

Recommendation 31: That the group charged with oversight of the implementation of the Review, as recommended in Chapter 9, in liaison with the Youth Affairs Bureau, advise the Minister regarding the location and structure of a well based and openly accessible education information service to assist young people and displaced workers in formulating study and training plans.
Recommendation 32: That the concept of comprehensive postprimary education be extended through the integration of the activities and programs of neighbouring high and technical schools under a single council from 1 January 1987; that all existing high technical or technical high schools become postprimary schools from that date; and that by January 1988 all schools become comprehensive rather than being designated, equipped or staffed as technical or high schools.

Recommendation 33: That the Education Department, drawing where appropriate on the expertise of the Country Education Project, develop, implement and evaluate electronic means of expanding the curricular range available to students attending schools in rural areas.

Recommendation 34: That an appropriately designed specialist resource centre and associated hostel facilities for the use of a number of schools be established in an area of rural Victoria at present educationally disadvantaged and lacking such facilities, and that it be evaluated with a view to establishing more such centres over the longer term.

Recommendation 35: That, where feasible, all new provision in the public sector at the upper secondary levels be located in separate postcompulsory campuses or colleges.


Recommendation 37: That where locally favoured and where feasible, two examples of senior colleges and community colleges be established by the earliest possible date in areas currently educationally disadvantaged.

Recommendation 38: That priority be given to establishing Years 11 and 12 in association with the kind of provision planned for the Western Melbourne Institute of Post Secondary Education, to form a postcompulsory community college.

Recommendation 39: That the Education Department immediately establish a task force with substantial representation from the teachers’ unions to identify and resolve any industrial and professional issues relating to the restructuring of upper secondary provision.

Recommendation 40: That each Regional Board of Education immediately appoint a small committee with representation from the nongovernment schools within the region and the Regional TAFE Board to survey existing educational provision and to develop plans for restructuring within the policy framework outlined in this Report.

Recommendation 41: That $2.5m additional to the present costs of operating the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education be allocated over each of 1986, 1987 and 1988 to fund the establishment and operation of the new Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board, in addition to a negotiated portion of the budget of the Curriculum Branch of the Education Department representing resources within the Department that could be notionally allocated for use by the Board.

Recommendation 42: That the Victorian Minister for Education enter discussions with the Commonwealth Minister for Education with a view to securing 50 per cent of the funds allocated to Victoria under the Participation and Equity Program in 1986 and 1987 for use in system-level initiatives in postcompulsory curriculum as recommended in this Report.
Recommendation 43: That the Victorian Government allocate $10m in 1986 and $20m in 1987 and in 1988 to support the restructuring of educational provision at the upper secondary level.

Recommendation 44: That the Minister for Education establish a ministerial policy unit at the earliest possible date.

Recommendation 45: That a committee chaired by the Minister for Education and comprising the Director-General of Education, the Director of the Catholic Education Office, the Chairman of the State Board of Education and the Chairman of VISE, replaced after an appropriate transition period by the Director of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board, be responsible for monitoring the overall implementation of the recommendations of this Report.

Conclusion

9.11 The changes proposed in this Report, while constrained by present realities, particularly by those relating to selection into higher education, will support teachers in the efforts they have been making over two decades to give postcompulsory schooling purpose for the great majority of the age group. Looked at over the longer term, the Committee believes that new patterns of education will emerge in which the major distinction will be between compulsory schooling and all forms of education and training after it. Bringing general education and vocational training into a new relationship within a common Year 12 certificate should be seen within this perspective. It aims to erode rather than consolidate the boundaries between postcompulsory schooling and all subsequent educational opportunities. In the future, people of all ages will combine work and study throughout their lives more flexibly, assisted by shorter overall working lives and work shared through shorter hours. While following the recommendations made here will not bring the best of all possible worlds into being, the Committee believes that the changes it has recommended will be a considerable improvement on present arrangements. They will provide a basis for many young Victorians to participate more fully in their society and will contribute to the development of all young people as knowledgeable, skilful and caring citizens.
Bibliography


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Note (a): 1981 population is 'actual'.