

Central TAFE

Response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training – “Combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions”

Background

Central TAFE comprises four main campuses within a six-kilometre radius of the Perth Central Business District. It is a registered training organisation offering more than 200 fully accredited award courses within the Australian Qualifications Framework. The College predominantly offers Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses and provides a range of customised fee-for-service training courses. Courses are delivered in the following areas:

- Art, Design and Media
- Health, Community Services, Tourism & Languages
- Engineering, Technology & Business

Central TAFE provides quality vocational education and training to around 26,000 students each year. The College is committed to assisting people to become job ready and prepared to meet the challenges of the workplace. To this end, delivery and assessment of our programs takes place via face to face or online classes, either off the job or in the workplace.

Central TAFE is highly responsive and well connected to industry. Its courses are practical and job focused and its method of operation is student-focused and driven by employment outcomes.

The VET in Schools Program at Central TAFE

The VET in Schools program aims to support the key drivers of the College vision by focusing on the provision of pathways for school students into further education, training or employment. In 2008, 24 programs have been delivered to over 500 students, with the aim to give students an introduction to the industry area of their choice. Specifically, the VET in Schools program at Central TAFE is focused on:

- Addressing skill shortage areas as outlined in the 2008-2010 Western Australian State Training Profile
- Focusing on the Creative Industries as Central TAFE has a well established reputation as an industry leader in these areas
- Supporting Schools where practicable with delivery to disengaged students, in order to reconnect them with learning, and to encourage them to undertake further training, education or employment
- Introducing school students to a range of industry areas and qualifications available at Central TAFE, by providing short “taster” or try an occupation programs

The VET in Schools Program at Central TAFE offers school students the opportunity to complete Certificate II and III qualifications in the following areas:

- Creative Industries – ie. Visual art, design, multimedia, screen and music
- Business & Management – ie. Financial services, legal administration and information technology
- Health, Education & Community Services – ie. Foundation health, community services work, children’s services, beauty therapy and teacher assistant
- Sciences - ie. Engineering, electrotechnology, laboratory operations, civil/structural drafting and mining

- Sport & recreation – ie. Sport, tourism and events management

These programs are delivered by Central TAFE lecturers, one day per week throughout the course of the academic year, with school students attending one of Central TAFE's seven campuses. Some of the programs are able to be completed in one year with students meeting the requirements to obtain a certificate, whilst others require students to commit two years to complete the program and successfully achieve a full qualification.

The majority of VET in Schools programs requires school students to be concurrently enrolled into units of Workplace Learning with their school. Workplace Learning units are endorsed by the Western Australian Curriculum Council and contribute to school students achievement of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE). School students who undertake workplace learning units with their school, are required to attend a designated workplace one day per week for the academic year. If these students are undertaking a VET in Schools program with Central TAFE, then their placement is in the same industry area as the program they are undertaking with the College. This work experience is invaluable as it enables students to consolidate classroom learning and gain real experience in an industry area of their choice. Even if students do not continue on in the same industry area after they have completed their schooling, they have gained valuable employability skills – communication, customer service, interpersonal skills and other workplace related skills such as workplace etiquette. Work placement also allows lecturers to assess students in the workplace as part of a holistic approach to delivery and assessment practiced throughout the College.

Case Study 1: Recognition of Prior Learning in the Beauty Therapy VET in Schools Program

The VET in Schools Beauty Therapy program at Central TAFE comprises of two qualifications – Certificate II in Makeup Services and the Certificate II in Nail Technology. This program has been delivered to over 90 students in 2008 – several groups being comprised of school students from various schools throughout the metropolitan area and two groups comprised of students at academic risk from John Forrest Senior High School in the Eastern Suburbs and Sevenoaks Senior College in the Southern Suburbs.

An evaluation of the 2008 program by lecturing staff, the Learning Portfolio Manager and the Manager Education Pathways Support (who manages the VET in Schools program across the College); has led to the program being reconstructed for 2009 delivery. The 2009 program has been reconfigured so that school students will still attend Mt Lawley Campus one day per week throughout the academic year; but this day will now be much more focused on providing students with the practical skills the industry requires, with the theoretical aspects covered in a workshop that will begin each day's lesson. The generic employability skills – such as communication, dealing with customers, occupational health and safety - that comprise the core units of both qualifications, will be undertaken by each student either during the course of the work placement organised by their school (Workplace Learning units); or, recognising that many of their students hold part time or casual jobs in the community – lecturers have compiled assessment instruments that enable students to be recognised for the skills they have obtained on the job, during the course of their part time or casual employment.

This recognition of prior learning enables the qualification to be delivered in one year, as opposed to the previous two years. This enables students to gain entry level employment in the industry in less time, maintaining their engagement in the program and providing a smoother transition into the workforce. Students are able to “learn as well as earn” – to see

that education can help them to understand and perform their job more ably by enriching the employment experience.

Case Study 2: Engaging the disengaged – the Sport TRAC program

In 2005, the Fremantle-Peel District Education Office's Retention and Participation (RAP) Coordinator and Aboriginal Programs Coordinator, approached the then Health, Sport & Lifestyle Portfolio at Central TAFE; to enquire about the possibility of providing a specialised sport program for the disengaged youth in their region. This program was to provide training and the acquisition of skills based around an industry area that interested these youth, whilst also opening a pathway to further education, training or employment. As school attendance was an issue in this region, due to high levels of unemployment and low socio-economic status of residents of the area; the involvement of specialist staff from the local Community and the provision of lunch for these students was considered to be vital to the success of the program.

Central TAFE's lecturing staff devised a program specifically tailored to these disengaged youth ie. units were organised into clusters or skill sets so that if students did not complete the whole qualification, they were still able to gain transferable skills and/or part time employment at local recreation centres, eg. officiating social games of various sports. Specialist staff, such as St John Ambulance and Department of Sport & Recreation Officers; were employed to assist in the delivery and assessment of the program. Mentoring support from the District's Aboriginal Liaison Officer and Community Policeman was also provided on a regular basis.

The clusters delivered were as follows:

- **Senior First Aid** - delivered by St John Ambulance
- **Officiating** (ie. Umpiring/refereeing) – generally delivered via Basketball as this allows students who complete this cluster of units to apply for casual employment in recreation centres etc. Basketball has been identified as one of the most commonly offered social sports at Recreation centres
- **Coaching** – Level 1 Coaching General Principles course – recognised by the Department of Sport & Recreation and the Sport & Recreation Industry as the first level of coaching skills required by coaches in all sports in WA.
- **Sports Specialisation** – AFL was delivered in conjunction with the local Western Australian Football League (WAFL) team, Peel Thunder. Students also undertook an Auskick coaching and officiating course, which enabled them to seek casual employment
- **Structured Workplace Learning** – was built into the program to deliver the employability skills that students need to support them in gaining work in the sport & recreation industry. Units include Organise and complete daily work activities, Deal with client feedback and Follow defined Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures. Students were placed with sports stores, recreation centres and local businesses in order to meet course requirements

The Sport TRAC program was delivered one day per week by Central TAFE lecturers in 2006, on site at the Billy Dower Recreation Centre in Mandurah and on site at Pinjarra Senior High School in Pinjarra. Students were required to apply to enter the program with successful applicants drawn from across the Fremantle-Peel region.

Whilst there were “teething problems” throughout the first year of delivery of this program, the successful re-engagement of the majority of the students led to a second year of delivery in 2007. Several graduates of the program have since gained employment in the local community, and several of them have continued on into the Certificate IV in Sport (Development) at Central TAFE.

The Sport TRAC program has also been successfully translated for delivery to disengaged youth in the West Coast Education District in 2008, and will again be offered in this District in 2009. Delivery has been made possible via successful applications for funding to the WA Department of Education and Training, and from the continued success of the program in re-engaging students at risk in the District.