Enhancing the status of VET
Presenters

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Enhancing the standing of vocational education and the occupations it serves (SVEOS) – Stephen Billett (Griffith)

The relative low standing of VET and the occupations it serves, is a significant impediment for VET realising its goals.

Influences young people and parents’ decision-making about post-school pathways, and government, community and employer support.

In an era of high aspiration, VET is often seen as an option only for those unable to secure university entry.

Leads to: mismatches with kinds of skills young people are securing and employment opportunities, what employers seek in employees, and potentially lengthy/unproductive tertiary education experiences.

So, enhancing the standing of VET, improving its provision as a worthwhile post-school pathway for young Australians is important.

It is a global issue, however.
Standing of vocational education: a global concern

United Kingdom – concerns about lack of participation (Wolf 2011, 2016)

Germany – ‘war for apprentices’ (Deissinger)

Switzerland – too many young people engaging in degrees with no specific employment outcomes

Korea – strong societal disaffection with manufacturing work (Cho & Apple)

Australia – preference for higher education leading to skill shortages and ‘un-employable’ graduates (Bradley, 2008; UA 2017)

Two concerns: i) young people not being attracted and ii) kinds of qualities needed for many these occupations (Gore et al 2017).

Key global agencies are mobilising

BiBB/Cedefop conference (2017)

Recent UNESCO-UNEVOC virtual conference on Improving the image of TVET (2018)
UNESCO virtual conference: some perspectives

“There are very few youth who want to take up Vocational and technical training because they do not want to be viewed as failures (Kenya).”
“... as we all may know TVET is, at best, viewed as a second or non-preferred choice (Ghana”).
“The overall perception of TVET in Nigeria is generally seen to be poor.” This is characterized by low enrolment of students, apparent lack of interest in the field by students and parents, slim chances of career progression from technical colleges to universities ... “
“In Romania, despite the programmatic drive to reshape the image of initial VET, it has a discrediting societal bias.”
“TVET is still mostly seen as being suited for learners who are "academically challenged" and whose only option is to "work with their hands". (Barbados) 
“ To many people, the vocational trades are viewed as "hands dirty" types of skills.” (Ethiopia)
“In China, the image of TVET is low or poor, compared with the corresponding levels of education ...”,

Improving the image of TVET: Making TVET attractive to youth (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2018)
UNESCO report on work-based learning programs in Arab region (2018)

Societal perspectives of VET and the occupations it serves in Arab region countries

... there is a vicious cycle of negative image, low quality and low self-esteem related to TVET, its students and even its teachers in the Egyptian society and culture. This phenomena, is well documented and acknowledged, however, very little is being done to create awareness to change this. (El-Ashmawi, 2017, p. 5)

Social perspective towards vocational training in general is negative which led to minimal participation in VET in Jordan. (Rawashdeh, 2017, p. 14)

... TVET in Lebanon is socially looked as low image, and the choice of those who have no choice. (Ghneim, 2017, p. 16)

In general, it is socially looked at the TVET sector as low image, and ... it remains a second option for youngsters.... – Palestine (Jweiles, 2017, p. 6)

Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia – mature vocational systems – a more positive picture

Very high aspiration of young people and their parents
TWO RESEARCH PROJECTS: ENHANCING THE STANDING OF VET

1. Perspectives of and suggestions by Queensland students, parents, teachers and employers
2. Evaluating initiatives in Europe and Scandinavia
Research project 1: Enhancing the standing of vocational education and the occupations it serves (QLD study)

What factors influence young people’s decisions about participation in vocational education and training (VET) to prepare for future careers?

How can the status of VET be enhanced to increase uptake by young people?

Three phases

Phase 1 - interviews and focus groups to secure parents, school and VET students, employers and teachers’ perceptions and suggestions.

Phase 2 – a survey of informant populations to verify and extend Phase 1 findings.

Phase 3 – workshops to identify and appraise specific and interventions in Queensland communities.
Phase 1 findings (interviews)

School students’ post-school pathways shaped by a range of close influences (i.e. parents, teachers and peers) and indirect suggestions (e.g. electronic and broadcast media).

They differ in: i) knowledge, ii) level of influence and iii) engagement, and are not always correlated.

For school students who had decided their occupations, the differences were their schools and year-level.

For VET students who had decided their occupations, teachers were more influential than for school students, and VET student families’ knowledge was higher than for school students, and teachers’ knowledge had lower influence than for school students.

Undecided students are often drawn to universities’ social and institutional attractiveness, and breadth of options and pathways. Yet, the specific occupational focuses of VET are barriers for these young people.

School and VET students suggest actions for schools to take, what VET institutions might do to attract young people and governmental support for young people’s engagement in VET.
Phase 2 findings (survey)

Students ranked influences on decision-making ranked as: i) themselves; ii) immediate family (i.e. parents, carers, siblings); iii) school teachers; iv) friends; v) career guidance officers; vi) electronic media; and vii) news stories etc.

Differences between school students’ preferences and adult informants (i.e. parents, school and VET teachers) about strategies for enhancing the standing of VET.

Students ranked desirable employment as: i) future job satisfaction; ii) future job security and stability; iii) personal interests and passions; iv) high-paying future work; v) future prospects; vi) other lifestyle benefits; vii) status of future occupation and viii) status of qualification.

To present VET more positively, students ranked the following strategies:

i) schools providing more personalised career information about VET/jobs;
ii) exposure to a range of work situations while still at school;
iii) exposure to different institutes and education facilities (e.g. visit TAFE institutes);
iv) promoting examples of with successful careers after completing VET;
v) accessible online materials;
vi) wide advertising (e.g. TV, radio, social media); and
vii) simple, easy to understand printed materials (e.g. brochures, guide books).
Phase 3 findings (workshops)

Workshop added a finer level of detail to strategies for SVEOS. Main focus was on localized issues, engagements and agencies as being central to provisions of initiatives to enhance the standing of VET. Suggestions about KPIs for principals, engagement with local workplaces and employers and how teachers in schools can play greater roles were repeated.

Four broad courses of action

The findings suggest positioning vocational education and training (VET) as a viable and worthwhile post-school option through:

i) a public education process – give VET a ‘fair go’ – promoted by government;

ii) actions by schools to promote, inform and advise evenly about different post-school pathways;

iii) VET institutions offering attractive environments and broadly-based programs; and

iv) concerted effort and leadership by government and industry sectors to promote the occupations VET serves.
Research project 2: International ways forward

**Denmark** - The raising of the entry requirements and improved educational facilities and institutions that are modern and attractive to young people (Aarkrog).

**UK** - use of ambassadors – young people who have engaged in trade related occupations and speak at local schools, to create, also, having pathways to higher education (Unwin).

**The Netherlands** - Some elements of vocational education are high status, but lower qualification levels are low status. Fourth level MBOs can lead to either good jobs or to universities of applied sciences (de Bruijn).

**Germany** - vocational technical courses now offered through universities of applied sciences - seen as being more attractive than the dual system approach. Chambers of commerce and large employers are advertising to make occupations more attractive to young people (Deissinger).

**Switzerland** - standing of VET is improving because of societal concerns (expressed in newspapers and television) about the number of young people enrolling in university courses with no link to the labour market (Stadler).

**Finland** - the rise of applied universities helped elevate the standing VET and the occupation (Nokelainen).

**Norway** – Preparing VET teachers in specialised institutions that offer Masters programs and pathways through to PhD has supported its standing (Hiim).
So what?

VET’s appeal to communities and governments, attractiveness to young people, their parents and employers is central to realising its important educational potential.

Improving the standing of vocational education needs to co-occur with promoting the status of the occupations it serves.

This includes essential contributions to local communities, enterprises and fulfilling working life for young people, and teachers in the VET system.

Greater impartiality by parents, teachers and career guidance officers whose personal pathways have not included vocational education and the occupations it serves.

Schools need to ameliorate for the different kinds and level of engagement, knowledge of and influence that school age students are exposed.

The advice provided and options for young people who are undecided need to be available across compulsory and tertiary education.

Brokering of realistic and helpful advice for young people might be considered independent of what occurs in and through education.
Enhancing the status of VET

Case studies from Victoria

Daryl Sutton, Manager, VET
Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Attitudes within schools and family biases support the notion that VET pathways are inferior to University.

Myths and misconceptions surrounding VET have contributed to poor perceptions and can misguide the decisions being made about a student’s secondary education.

Students in the middle years of secondary schooling have little exposure to VET and their knowledge is often limited to hearsay or dated material.

The VCAA VET Unit has started to develop material using a variety of mediums to promote the reality of VET opportunities and outcomes for secondary students.
Multiple initiatives

Get VET campaign

- Teachers, parents, students and industry have been engaged and will be targeted through provision of resources.

SWL Recognition

- The VCAA have implemented a recognition mechanism for the time students spend in a workplace providing greater understanding of the connectedness between VET studies and industry.
Aims

Better understanding
Better perceptions
Better engagement
Inform through exploration
Engage through self reflection
Inspire with success stories

Overview
Publication

Website

Webpages

Printable A3 posters

Extended

NCVER

Informing + Influencing The Australian Vet Sector

VET constantly greeted me with new opportunities to expand my career pathway while building my confidence, challenging my abilities and creating new friendships.

VET success stories

Get VET

Emily

Hospitality

My VET success story

Emily

Words that describe VET:

Measurable, Challenging, Rewarding.

Industries: Hospitality, Retail, Food, Hotel, Leisure

My path started at my local TAFE with a course in Tourism and Catering. After completing the course, I worked at a five-star hotel in the Gold Coast, Queensland. I then started working in a different hotel and was promoted to Assistant Food and Beverage Manager. My current role is as Food and Beverage Manager in a five-star hotel in the Gold Coast.

What's new about VET?

A variety of programs and pathways are available, and there are many opportunities for career progression within the hospitality sector.

How did VET help you?

VET helped me develop my skills and knowledge, which enabled me to advance in my career.

My VET journey

I started my VET journey at TAFE Queensland, studying a Certificate III in Hospitality. After completing the qualification, I worked in the hospitality industry and then moved on to a management role.

My VET success story

I am currently working as a Food and Beverage Manager in a five-star hotel in the Gold Coast, where I have been able to apply my VET qualifications and experience.

How was VET different from school?

VET provided me with the opportunity to apply my learning in a real-world setting, which helped me gain valuable experience.

Conclusion

VET has provided me with opportunities to advance in my career and develop my skills and knowledge.

Get VET

VET success stories

Contact Us
Put VET on display

Pull up banners

A3 posters

Social media

VET in the VCE and VCAL

Get VET

PASSION
JOB OPPORTUNITIES
FLEXIBILITY

www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/getvet

VET myths versus facts

1. Myths: University graduates earn more than VET graduates. facts: VET graduates can earn the same as university graduates after completing a Bachelor’s degree. Examples are police, nursing, and engineering.

2. Myths: There are limited job opportunities for VET graduates. facts: VET graduates can find a wide range of jobs, including those in the skilled trades, health care, and engineering.

3. Myths: VET is only for VCE and VCAL students. facts: VET is available to anyone who needs to improve their skills, including those who have completed their VCE or VCAL.

4. Myths: VET courses not included in secondary schools are not recognized. facts: All VET courses are recognized by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

This is how VET is different

1. Access to opportunities

Get VET students can access opportunities in fields such as engineering, health care, and hospitality.

Get VET

ENGINEERING

See the difference Vocational Education and Training (VET) can make to your VCE or VCAL.

Get VET

HOSPITALITY

Completing my VET courses while at school has reduced the time required to complete my apprenticeship and gave me an understanding of how to become a chef.

Harrison, Apprentice Chef

www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/getvet
The VCAA has engaged with teachers to determine how they best see the Get VET resources supporting students.

- VCE or VCAL subject selection information sessions
- School open nights
- Course counselling
- One-on-one sessions with students/parents
- Share with leadership teams and school staff
- Include in careers curriculum

When and how to use Get VET
Next steps

- Video content
- Industry profiles, pathways and advice
- More success stories
VCAA Contact details and web links

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Get VET

SWL Recognition
Upcoming Events

28th National VET Research Conference
10-12 July 2019
Adelaide

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