

The Review of Pathways Articulation

*through the post-compulsory
years of school to further education,
training and labour market participation*

Margaret Gardner

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Queensland Government

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A review requested by the
Queensland Minister for Employment and Training
and the Queensland Minister for Education

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Professor Margaret Gardner
Chair

Table of Contents

<i>Chapter 1</i>	<i>Introduction.....1</i>
1.1	Overview
1.1.1	<i>Establishment of the Review.....</i>
1.1.2	<i>Terms of Reference</i>
1.1.3	<i>Steering Committee</i>
1.1.4	<i>Reference Group.....</i>
1.1.5	<i>Secretariat.....</i>
1.1.6	<i>Consultation process.....</i>
<i>Chapter 2</i>	<i>Executive summary and recommendations... 7</i>
2.1	Executive summary
2.2	Recommendations.....
2.2.1	<i>Patterns of education – journeys and consequences.....</i>
2.2.2	<i>Access and local flexibility.....</i>
2.2.3	<i>Connecting the sectors.....</i>
2.2.4	<i>Guidance in a complex field</i>
<i>Chapter 3</i>	<i>Patterns of education and training..... 15</i>
3.1	Introduction.....
3.2	From 15 to 24 years.....
3.3	Transitions
3.3.1	<i>Transition to Year 12</i>
3.3.2	<i>Year 12 (or its equivalent)</i>
3.3.3	<i>Transitions post-Year 12</i>
3.3.4	<i>Vocational education and training</i>
3.3.5	<i>Higher education</i>
3.4	Conclusion
<i>Chapter 4</i>	<i>Access and local flexibility..... 52</i>
4.1	Introduction.....
4.2	Access
4.2.1	<i>Rural and remote areas</i>
4.2.2	<i>Socio-economic disadvantage.....</i>
4.2.3	<i>Indigenous students.....</i>
4.3	Local flexibility
4.4	Conclusion

Chapter 5	Connecting the sectors.....	82
5.1	Introduction.....	
5.2	Cross-sector qualification linkages	
5.2.1	<i>Credit transfer.....</i>	
5.2.2	<i>From school to vocational education and training.....</i>	
5.2.3	<i>From vocational education and training to higher education</i>	
5.2.4	<i>From higher education to vocational education and training.....</i>	
5.2.5	<i>Making credit transfer work.....</i>	
5.2.6	<i>Articulation</i>	
5.2.7	<i>Dual-sector qualifications.....</i>	
5.2.8	<i>Other linkage issues.....</i>	
5.2.9	<i>Transparency and systemic cross-sector linkages</i>	
5.3	Funding	
5.3.1	<i>Funding for schools.....</i>	
5.3.2	<i>Vocational education and training funding</i>	
5.3.3	<i>Higher education funding.....</i>	
5.3.4	<i>Cross-sectoral funding issues.....</i>	
5.4	Conclusion	
Chapter 6	Guidance in a complex field	114
6.1	Introduction.....	
6.2	Making choices	
6.3	Access to information about options and pathways	
6.4	Career guidance and individual assistance	
6.4.1	<i>Schools</i>	
6.4.2	<i>Vocational education and training.....</i>	
6.4.3	<i>Higher Education.....</i>	
6.4.4	<i>The Queensland Studies Authority</i>	
6.4.5	<i>Issues for guidance services.....</i>	
6.5	Conclusion	
Bibliography		
Appendixes		

Index of Tables

Table 1	Percentage of persons enrolled by type of educational institution attended, 2001
Table 2	Number of student enrolments and number of schools with vocational education and training programs, 1997 and 2001
Table 3	School-based apprenticeships and traineeships
Table 4	Trends in OP eligibility and Queensland Core Skills test participation between 1996 and 2001
Table 5	OP and VET certificate breakdown, Queensland state and non-state schools, 2001
Table 6	2001 Student Outcomes Survey (for 2000 graduates) — employment/study outcomes by age group
Table 7	Percentages of provision by different provider types
Table 8	Main reason for undertaking a vocational education and training course
Table 9	Participation of 15 to 24 year old vocational education and training clients by qualification level
Table 10	Number of state schools in Queensland by structure and location, 2001
Table 11	Student Year 12 apparent retention rate, Queensland state schools (excluding Brisbane), 1997 to 2001.....
Table 12	Attainment: OP and vocational education and training certificate breakdown, Queensland schools by statistical division, 2001.....
Table 13	Queensland Schools: OP and Vocational Education and Training certificate breakdown by statistical division, Indigenous students, 2001
Table 14	Indigenous 15-24 year old clients by region.....
Table 15	Vocational education: Indigenous enrolments by qualifications
Table 16	Project outcomes from October 1998 to June 2002
Table 17	Credit from course completed in 2000 towards further study (by qualification level)
Table 18	Students commencing a university course at bachelor level or below at a Queensland university by basis for admission to current course, 1999
Table 19	TAFE guidance provision

Index of Figures

Figure 1	Participation in education and employment, 15 to 24 year olds, 1999.....
Figure 2	Status of year 2000 school leavers in May 2001.....
Figure 3	Student education profile
Figure 4	Brisbane metropolitan area: spatial representation of unemployment by statistical local area, December quarter 2001, metropolitan area.....
Figure 5	Regional participation in vocational education and training 2000
Figure 6	Brisbane metropolitan area: participation of TAFE in training in 2001 by SLA, per head of population aged 15–64 in 2000,
Figure 7	Queensland: percentage of population not enrolled in school, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, by age [Qld] 2001
Figure 8	Apparent retention rate for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by category of school, Qld 2001.....

Index of Appendixes

Appendix A	Participants.....
Appendix B	Written submissions.....
Appendix C	Number of schools providing vocational education and training in schools programs.....
Appendix D	Regional maps, Queensland.....
Appendix E	Student Year 12 apparent retention rate, Queensland state schools by district, 1997 to 2001
Appendix F	Total number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in state and non-state schools and proportion of total Indigenous and non-Indigenous population not enrolled, by age, 2001
Appendix G	Apparent retention rates for secondary students from Year 8 to Year 12, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, Australia, 1995 to 2001 ..
Appendix H	Apparent retention rates for secondary students from Year 8 to Year 12, Indigenous and non-Indigenous by category of school, Queensland, 2001
Appendix I	Annual National Priorities for 2003

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Review's recommendations make these general assumptions:

- ◆ In order to maximise the likelihood of the majority of 15 to 24 year olds reaching Year 12 or equivalent a diverse and flexible range of educational and training opportunities must be available.
- ◆ This diversity and flexibility must recognise the differences in the experiences and expectations of young people and provide for a variety of educational and training experiences and contexts.
- ◆ The education and training provided must respond to the possibilities for local or regional collaboration and innovation in order to minimise the disadvantages of limited populations, geographical isolation and socio-economic disadvantage.
- ◆ The provision of a range of educational and training opportunities must recognise the importance of specialisation for students and educational and training providers. Neither vocational education nor schooling should be urged along a path that blurs essential distinctions in purpose and culture. There should be an expectation that individual schools or vocational education providers have the possibility of specialisation of offering and mission.
- ◆ With a flexible and diverse range of educational and training opportunities, the certification that signals completion of Year 12 or its equivalent should provide for the recognition of essential skills and attributes as well as achievements in the range of subjects, courses or work placements undertaken.
- ◆ While affirming the importance of diversity and specialisation of mission, barriers to students attempting to move between types of education and training should be minimised.
- ◆ Minimisation of barriers includes facilitating the ability of students to combine vocational education and generalist education where possible; providing clearer and more transparent identification of requirements for entry to various forms of post-school qualifications and movement from one to another; and ensuring a better regime for recognition of outcomes from each form of education and training by providers.
- ◆ Finally, support for better outcomes from a more flexible and diverse set of education and training options depends upon assisting young people to make informed choices with a clear understanding of the consequences, and supporting students at risk with greater levels of mentoring and guidance.

1.1.1 Establishment of the Review

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

1.1.2 Terms of Reference:

The Review examines:

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

The Review provides recommendations to government on:

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

- ◆ funding mechanisms that can provide greater efficiencies, flexibility and quality in the delivery of programs and services
- ◆ methods of facilitating school-based apprenticeships and traineeships
- ◆ proposals for national reform of the training system to facilitate the other recommendations of this Review.

1.1.3 Steering Committee

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

Professor Margaret Gardner (Chair)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), The University of Queensland
Mr Darren Byers	Principal Treasury Analyst, Queensland Treasury
Mr Kevan Goodworth	Assistant Director-General, Education Services, Education Queensland
Ms Zea Johnston	A/General Manager, Strategic Directions, Department of Employment and Training
Mr Chris Robinson	Deputy Director-General, Department of Employment and Training
Mr Brad Swan	A/Assistant Director-General, Strategic and Executive Services, Education Queensland
Mr Doug Watson	Director, Social Policy, Policy Division, Department of the Premier and Cabinet

1.1.4 Reference Group

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

Mrs Lorrie Maher	Association of Independent Schools of Queensland
Ms Jill Lange-Mohr	Australian Council for Private Education and Training
Mr Brett Lee	Australian Industry Group
Ms Jane Pavlovic	Commerce Queensland
Mr Ken Rogers	Education Queensland
Mr Paul Dickie	The Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of Queensland
Ms Patricia Waldby	Independent Parents' Federation Council of Queensland
Mr Jack Beach	Isolated Children's Parents' Association
Dr John Dungan	Office of Higher Education (External Portfolio Relations)

Mr John Corbett	Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies
Ms Gabrielle Power-West	Queensland Catholic Education Commission
Mr Garry Cislowski	Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Associations
Mr Terry Donaghue	Queensland Independent Education Union
Mr Jeffrey Morris	Queensland Public Sector Union
Mr Paul Reardon	Queensland Teachers' Union
Mr Craig Sherrin	TAFE Queensland
Professor Diana Davis	Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority (TEPA)
Ms Elizabeth Dallaston	Youth Representative
Mr Keppel Schafer	Youth Representative

1.1.5 Secretariat

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

1.1.6 Consultation process

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 2 Executive summary and recommendations

2.1 Executive summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ◆ With greater choice and accessibility of education in the senior years of school and beyond, the negative consequences of leaving school early and not undertaking further study have become more marked and require greater attention.
- ◆ Access to the diversity of educational training experiences for all young people irrespective of circumstance becomes significant, and so attention needs to turn to the flexibility of modes and pace of delivery in order to allow more people to gain from the diversity of options available.
- ◆ Greater choice within sectors brings complexity; access to information and guidance becomes more important; and transparency and clarity of arrangements for transition between sectors need to be greater.

Too many young people leave school early and do not find full-time work or undertake further study to increase their chances of employment. In 2000, 16 400 young people in Queensland left school before Year 12 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6227.0, 2001) and in 2001, 29 per cent of them were unemployed and 76 per cent were not in further education or employment. Retention and outcomes from Year 12 tend to be worse in a number of rural areas, with retention rates below 50 per cent in some cases. In Queensland, compared to Australia, a higher proportion of 15 to 24 year olds without a post-school qualification are neither working nor studying (Norton, 2002).

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

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

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

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

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

Underpinning the recommendations are two assumptions that seek to build or use cross-sectoral links to solve issues of transition:

- ◆ The key to effective collaboration and the development of networks between sectors is recognition of the different missions and specialisations within each educational sector and in community organisations. Strong networks are built where each organisation brings its strength to the table and collaborates in the development of joint solutions. When sectors are encouraged to blur their missions, the incentive for collaboration and cooperation decreases.
- ◆ The most effective networks will be built at the local level. They are able to follow in detail the issues affecting young people. They can see the operation of transition or cooperation between sectors in their area. They are more able to craft solutions that will meet and use local circumstance effectively. Local networks must be empowered, however, by being given clear roles and central support for those roles.

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

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

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

2.2 Recommendations

2.2.1 Patterns of education — journeys and consequences

- (1) That there be support from all sectors of schooling and vocational education and training for increased flexibility and diversity in the provision of education and training targeted at young people in the 15 to 24 year age group in order to meet the needs of this increasingly diverse group of students.
- (2) That there be recognition of the need for schools, in particular, to develop more flexible types of provision and settings for students of 15 years and beyond. This could be achieved across the schooling systems in the state, either through explicit development of senior colleges in some locations or greater flexibility in provision within a school for students in the senior years. Flexibility within a school could include greater flexibility in timetabling, in pace or in the modes through which curriculum is delivered.
- (3) That in order to ensure more effective outreach and inclusion of those students in the 15 to 24 year age group who are at risk of not continuing to participate in education or training, there be support for greater experimentation with other types of education provision or settings inside schools or vocational education and training providers and/or in the community, that might more readily accommodate more intermittent or part-time modes of education.
- (4) That there be strong support and funding for delivery of curricula that concentrates on work readiness or work education skills to be offered in schools or through vocational education and training providers. This curricula should be seen as a foundation for further vocational education.
- (5) That the method of offering vocational education and training in Queensland schools be re-examined, with particular attention to the quality of the vocational education provided where it is embedded in subjects, in comparison to other vocational education and training. In particular there should be a stronger focus on provision of work placement for students in such programs.
- (6) That in order to recognise the changes in the school curriculum including the greater diversity of subjects undertaken in the senior years, and in particular university subjects and completed vocational education and training certificates, the tertiary entrance system be the subject of a future investigation.
- (7) That in the design and delivery of vocational education and training in schools, greater emphasis be placed on encouraging students to complete a certificate.
- (8) That a mechanism be developed, involving a unique student identifier, that allows a central record of a student's achievements to be maintained. The unique student identifier will need to be used in schools and vocational education and training providers (both public and private) for students between the ages of 15 and 19. Data on an individual student will need to be able to be maintained for a long period in order to provide a mechanism for accumulating and testifying to a student's achievements.

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

2.2.2 Access and local flexibility

- (10) That for remote areas, there be specific attention to enhancing particular subject areas important for students aiming to complete Year 12, through on-line provision of content and interactive sessions with experienced staff.
- (11) That there be specific provision to encourage collaboration between schools, vocational education and training and higher education in developing e-learning or on-line education projects that will assist students in remote areas to build transitions to further education.
- (12) That in recognition of the difficulty of providing vocational education and training for students in remote areas, consideration be given to funding teams of vocational education experts for particular regions to provide expertise in running pre-vocational and vocational education and training programs for students in schools in these areas. These teams would provide expertise in developing vocational education programs and involvement through team-based assessment of competencies.
- (13) That consideration be given to an 'away from base' support for financially disadvantaged students who need to remain away from home for limited periods to complete vocational education and training or related concentrated educational experience.
- (14) That those regions and areas with low levels of retention to Year 12 be the subject of targeted programs to develop new local approaches to provision of education for the senior years (including the initiatives mentioned above).
- (15) That in those areas with low retention rates, there be a targeted initiative with local communities to address work education and readiness with Indigenous students, focusing on enhancing literacy and numeracy.
- (16) That there be a pilot project to investigate partnering non-state and state schools with Indigenous students in strategies to improve retention rates.
- (17) That in the development of local models for improving collaboration between sectors, there be provision for 'transition' brokers in regions with large Indigenous populations to work with local Indigenous students and communities to facilitate transition to work or further education.
- (18) That there be support for local innovation in providing greater diversity in modes of provision in education and training for 15 to 24 year olds.

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

2.2.3 Connecting the sectors

- (20) That to improve entry possibilities, performance-level assessments be implemented for diploma-level programs in vocational education and training.
- (21) That to improve the transparency of credit transfer arrangements between vocational education and training providers and universities, representatives of both sectors meet in field of study groups to develop guidelines about minimum levels of credit to be provided to students; the oversight and development of this process to be facilitated by a committee constituted to represent the sectors but with an independent chair.
- (22) That the above field of study groups also consider the guidelines for credit from complete and incomplete university programs to vocational education programs.
- (23) That there be a new model for determining the provision of vocational education and training for 15 to 17 year olds across the school and vocational education and training sectors, beginning with the state school and TAFE systems.
- a. *That through discussion and representation from the local networks (referred to in recommendation 19 above) a desired profile in a region (or cluster) for delivery of vocational education and training for 15 to 17 year olds, including those in the senior years, be identified.*
 - b. *That this profile for regions for the provision of vocational education and training for those students who have not yet gained Year 12 or equivalent be determined to allow these young people to access vocational education in a school or TAFE or in both settings.*
 - c. *That the desired or planned profile for a region or cluster be examined in terms of actual enrolments and funding, adjusted over time to reflect any major changes.*
- (24) That there be cross-sectoral forward planning at state level in relation to the provision of expensive infrastructure for schools, TAFE and for universities (where this relates to capital development pool funds).

2.2.4 Guidance in a complex field

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

- (26) That there be a central independent authority to act as a broker bringing information together on further education and training options and as a focus for networking and information sharing for careers advisers.
- (27) That within the counselling and guidance services provided, there be a focus on youth 'at risk' that ensures a higher level of individual support and mentoring in selecting options for final years of school or further education and training.