Qualifications and Skills for Tasmania Tomorrow

June 2007
The Qualifications and Skills for Tasmania Tomorrow initiative will ensure that the educational excellence of our senior secondary colleges and the vocational expertise of our highly regarded TAFE Tasmania meet the needs of even more Tasmanians. It responds to the Tasmanian community’s desire, set out in Tasmania Together’s benchmarks, for lifelong education and training, and well qualified individuals and a skilled workforce.

More young and more mature-age Tasmanians will be able to take a course that meets their aspirations and suits their learning style. More Tasmanians will gain a post-school qualification, including the new Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE), and have greater life and work choices.

Our enterprises will be better able to train their staff and to be more productive.

By investing in more qualified and skilled people, and more productive enterprises, we will improve our society and economy. Not just for today, but for Tasmania tomorrow.

Under this initiative three new organisations will be created from our colleges and TAFE Tasmania, each focused on a specific role, using these working titles:

- an 'academy' focused on academic learning, with a curriculum and academic pathway for Year 11 and 12 students seeking university entrance;
- a 'polytechnic' focused on practical learning, with a vocational pathway, supported by academic courses as well, for both Year 11/12 and mature-age students seeking employment outcomes or university articulation; and
- a 'training enterprise' focused on skills development for employees in enterprises, in line with their enterprise’s skills needs.

Qualifications and Skills for Tasmania Tomorrow will begin in January 2009. I look forward to sharing your views on this initiative and to discussing with you its implementation.

David Bartlett MHA
Minister for Education
June 2007
# Qualifications and Skills for Tasmania Tomorrow

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### SECTION ONE: QUALIFICATIONS and SKILLS

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**WORKPLACE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

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Our education and training system is an investment in the future of every Tasmanian; for them, and for Tasmania tomorrow. Ensuring that individuals fully develop their potential will enrich their lives, and also sustain and strengthen Tasmania’s community and economy.

To achieve this, Tasmanians need to have exceptional opportunities for learning at all stages of their lives – learning that enables them to fulfil their highest aspirations, and which is not limited or constrained by the education and training system.

Our system must support personalised learning, individual success, and lifelong learning. It must demand high quality learning and responsiveness from everyone it involves. It must be a system where more Tasmanians engage in learning throughout life, in the best possible learning environment, and gain meaningful qualifications.

Consider what this will mean for a child born in Tasmania today – a child, say, called Lucy.

Lucy’s Story

In her ‘Launching into Learning’ program, Lucy will discover the joys of early learning from a young age alongside her parents. Learning to read will prepare her for the formal years of schooling.

On starting primary school, her early learning emphasis in the Tasmanian curriculum will be on acquiring the basics, English and maths. She will, of course, also learn lots of other things. Through primary school she will learn and achieve the highest outcomes she can in these and other important areas like ICT, science, history, the arts, and health.

As she progresses from primary to high school, Lucy will be given the best possible support to make this transition. She will follow a curriculum that will offer her rich learning experiences, with more personalised learning and more learning experiences beyond the formal classroom. It will include a focus on the skills that she will need for future success in education, training and employment.

From Year 8, Lucy will begin to plan what she wants to do after high school. With the help of her parents, teachers and pathway planning officer, she will think about her future education, training and work. As she develops her pathway plan, Lucy will carefully consider who she is, where she is going, and how she might get there.

By Year 10, Lucy and her family will have to make some important decisions about her future, but she will have the best possible education and training opportunities open to her. She will have a choice of courses, a broad educational program, and personalised learning in high-quality learning institutes, to enable her to achieve her goals. Lucy will be able to make an informed and realistic choice.

Lucy’s choice may see her undertake academic studies in an institute that prepares her for university. Throughout her studies, she will experience a curriculum that provides her with academic, social, work, and community life experiences.

Or, because Lucy is a practical learner, she may enrol in a course at the ‘polytechnic’, leading to a vocational qualification at certificate level III, then on to an advanced diploma with articulation to university. During her studies at the polytechnic, as well as undertaking a course in a national training qualification, she can also enrol in our curriculum and enjoy social, work, and community experiences.

Whatever path she chooses, Lucy will be encouraged to continue her education and training beyond Year 10, and to gain a meaningful qualification or to enrol in further education to set her up for future life and work choices.

As a young adult, Lucy will have the educational foundation she will need to participate fully in the community, and to build a career. All of her achievements will be captured in the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE), marking the end of her first stage of lifelong learning after school.

Whether seeking a career change or to improve her qualification or skills, Lucy will be able to re-engage with learning at any time during her life. The university and the polytechnic will offer courses for mature-age students, or if Lucy is undertaking enterprise-based training in her workplace, she will be supported by our training enterprise, or a private provider.

Whatever course she takes, Lucy will have developed a passion for learning that will remain and will be supported throughout her life, for the benefit of Lucy and for our community.
IMPROVING OUTCOMES

The Government has three important themes for education: getting ready for school in the early years, improving literacy and numeracy, and significantly increasing post-school retention rates and qualifications.

To improve post-school outcomes, there are three priorities:
- young people need the right career advice, and accessible and attractive pathways to qualifications, to further education, and to employment;
- employees in enterprises require ongoing skills development, learning and relearning as an integral part of their working lives; and
- those not in the workforce need to be supported back into learning, particularly with adult literacy, to help them have a job and economic independence.

Research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) makes it clear that higher levels of education pay off for both individuals and countries. The benefits for individuals are in higher average earnings. For countries, increasing the average level of education by one year raises GDP, and attaining literacy scores 1% higher than the international average improves productivity.

Education can help us to overcome the challenges of youth disengagement, skills shortages, and low productivity. We need to set the foundations now, to significantly improve educational – and social and economic – outcomes for Tasmania tomorrow.
Engaging our Young People

Currently, our post-Year 10 retention rates are too low with only, at best measure, 65% of students staying on until Year 12. Research tells us that the cost to young people of early disengagement from education is profound and potentially lifelong, and can affect their relationships with family, friends and community as well as their own self perception and confidence. The costs to the community as a whole – through lost productivity, ongoing skills shortages, and demands on the health, justice and welfare systems – are extensive.

So it’s crucial that our education and training system supports them in ways that meet their needs and which encourage them to keep on learning. Young people need guidance in making choices about their career. They need relevant, accessible and attractive pathways to training and employment. They need to learn to be effective in the workplace.

Reducing Skills Shortages

Along with other Australian states, Tasmania is currently experiencing employee shortages in the professions, trades and other skilled jobs. In four years our working age population will peak, and then decline. This means there will be fewer people available to work and provide goods and services. Right now, 86% of the jobs in Australia require a post-school qualification – in Tasmania only 47% of the workforce has that level of qualification. So, it’s essential that we help those not currently participating in the workforce to find their way in through learning, particularly in areas like literacy and numeracy.

Improving Productivity

Tasmania’s productivity is already low compared with the rest of Australia. Combined with our ageing population, there is a real risk that low productivity will lead to a reduction in real income and living standards in Tasmania. Productivity improves when workers continue to improve their skills throughout their lives. So providing employees in Tasmanian enterprises with opportunities to learn new skills and update existing skills as an integral part of their working lives is vitally important.
WHAT WE NEED TO DO

Tasmania Together provides us with a fresh community vision for 2020 – and challenging targets have been set for education.

To achieve the community’s vision of ‘a prosperous lifestyle based on quality, creativity, and opportunity’, we need more skilled and qualified people at all skill levels, whether nurses, engineers, carpenters, or aged care workers. We also need our small, medium, and larger enterprises, and our public service to be more productive.

More skills, recognised by more qualifications can generate more investment and jobs.

The barriers to achieving the Tasmanian community’s aspirations are our relatively low level of qualifications, and subsequent lower productivity. Improving skills, qualifications, and productivity are a key to achieving our community’s vision.

...a prosperous lifestyle based on quality, creativity and opportunity.

Tasmania Together Vision 2006

Qualifications – More Skilled People

We need to increase the proportion of people with post-school qualifications in Tasmania. The figures in the diagram at left show that we are well behind national levels in this area.

If we provide young people with meaningful goals and qualifications and then connect education and training more clearly with the world of work and further study, we can support all young Tasmanians to start their career in the right way. Then they will be equipped to fill the skills gaps which currently exist and which will increase as the ageing population moves out of the workforce.

Skills Development – Productive Enterprises

We need to support Tasmanian enterprises to build a strong skills base and more capable and productive workplaces.

Employees need opportunities to learn new skills, which enable them to support innovation and new technologies. They also need to update existing skills so they can adapt to new or changed environments.

Access to ongoing learning benefits both the individual employee and their workplace. It will help to improve the productivity of our State. It will ensure that Tasmanians stay right at the front of innovation throughout their working careers.
Section One: **QUALIFICATIONS and SKILLS**

**YOUNG TASMANIANS: WHERE WE ARE NOW**

Tasmanian senior secondary colleges have high levels of expertise in academic study, and an excellent social environment, but limited vocational expertise. The majority of college students do not enter university, and so study where vocational infrastructure is limited.

TAFE Tasmania – on the other hand – has excellent vocational infrastructure, but is limited in the academic and social programs it can provide for students, particularly younger students.

This structure limits attractive pathway options for Tasmanians, and our ability to meet their needs.

**Integrated Delivery**

The colleges are striving to be ‘all things to all people’. They provide for those students who are clear they want to participate in academic learning. Those students complete Years 11 and 12 and then move on to university, and a professional career.

Colleges also provide for those students who want applied learning that will enable them to move into trades or other skilled vocations, and they attempt to respond to those students who do not have a clear direction or motivation and are at risk of dropping out.

**Low Retention and Completion Rates**

There is a strong body of research which tells us that we must do everything that we can to keep Year 10 school leavers in some form of learning. It benefits the young people themselves, their community, and the workforce. Keeping our young people engaged and involved after Year 10 is critically important. It’s an area where a great deal of improvement is needed.

In the graph at left, the ‘Apparent Retention Rate’ is the number of students in Year 12, compared with the number in Year 10 two years before. The first two columns compare apparent retention in Tasmania and Australia. In 2006, the figures were 65% against 76.1%. Nationally, one in every four Year 10 student did not stay until Year 12. Tasmania is 10% below the national average.

However, the third column shows ‘direct retention’ of Tasmanian government school students from Year 10 to Year 12. In 2006, this was 41.1%. There is no comparable data nationally or for other sectors. Therefore, one in every two students did not stay in college for Year 12.

Student completion of a qualification by Year 12 is also lower in Tasmania, at 52% compared to 67% nationally – that’s 15% lower. Our current system is struggling to meet the learning needs of young Tasmanians, and to provide them with meaningful, relevant courses and qualifications, in appropriate environments, that lead to jobs.
Many of our young Tasmanians ‘fall through the cracks’. Then they face a great deal of difficulty in finding their way back into learning, and will often become unemployed and welfare-dependent. The answer is to build a bridge which will take students from Year 10 to Year 11 with a sense of purpose and direction. Then they need to be provided with quality, attractive, and relevant courses, and a support network to keep them there.

The process of bridge-building has started, with the Guaranteeing Futures program and the new Youth Participation in Education and Training Act which becomes law in 2008.

Hopes of Independence

For many young Tasmanians, particularly young men, the end of Year 10 heralds the opportunity to leave school, find a job, and to be economically independent. However, their vision of economic independence is often marred by their lack of skills or qualifications.

Many students do not continue to Year 11, or leave college early, due to skills limitations such as poor literacy and numeracy, disaffection with the system, limited course range or lack of flexibility in how they can learn.

Destination Surveys

We have been working to understand why so many of our young people ‘fall through the cracks’. The Department of Education has been conducting destination surveys that provide an insight into the motivation of early school leavers. The surveys help us to understand why young people leave school early and what happens to them post-school. The analysis of the data concludes that while early leaving is shaped by family background, institutional and organisational factors also have a profound effect.

The surveys have found that early leavers were likely to be lower academic achievers and less likely to be satisfied with school. Almost one in two boys indicated that they left because they did not like school. For many of them this was related to poor progress, as well as lack of interest in the courses. They reinforce the view that if we are to encourage young people to engage in education and training there must be a better range of program options that are inclusive and attractive.

Building a bridge from Year 10 to Year 11

Our highly acclaimed school to work transition program, Guaranteeing Futures, supports students from Years 8 through to 10 to plan their post-school pathway. By Year 10, students can identify the course or career they want to pursue and they can research and plan for how they will achieve their goals.

This innovative program supports students to plan their future, and to start thinking about that future in the very early stages of their adolescence. As such, the program develops an expectation in students that they will either be learning or working in the future, and that they will also need to learn to work; it promotes an attitudinal and cultural shift.

Legislation

The Youth Participation in Education and Training Act will work from a different perspective. It will require all young Tasmanians completing Year 10 to participate in education, training or full-time employment until they have turned 17. It will limit the number of young people who are able to fall into the trap of leaving learning before they secure employment.

This legislated change will work alongside the cultural change instigated by pathway planning in high schools. Together they will bring about a shift in how young people view Years 11 and 12. Instead of seeing it as something extra that they can choose to do without, they will see their first day in Year 11 as the first day on their bridge to their career.
Two Tasmanian post-school institutes will provide courses for students with different career goals. An ‘academy’ will be for students aiming to go to university. A ‘polytechnic’ will be for Years 11 and 12 and mature-age students seeking a career through university articulation or employment, and who prefer practical and applied learning with access to academic courses as required. Both institutes will provide a broad educational experience that, for young Tasmanians, will enable them to meet the requirements of the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE).

Student Centred Alignment

Those students seeking to go to university can do so through an institute of academic studies – an ‘academy’. The vocational aspects of the current college system and of TAFE Tasmania for pre-employment students will be combined to form a new institute, where the emphasis will be on applied education and practical learning – a ‘polytechnic’. The polytechnic will be able to respond effectively to the issues and challenges already outlined.

TAFE Tasmania’s training for employees (not shown below, but discussed later) will be met through a training enterprise.

An Academy

This institute will be for students aiming to go to university. It will have a pre-tertiary focus, and students will be able to develop their capacity for thinking, enterprise, communication, IT, and life skills. They will understand current and emerging careers, and will have a clear sense of where they are going and how they will get there. It will be connected to future careers, particularly in a Tasmanian context.

The academy will be governed with representation from professional bodies, university, the arts, business, industry and parents. It will attract industry and business sponsorship, and scholarship programs will help students, particularly those from rural or remote areas.

A Polytechnic

This institute will be for students who learn best through practical and applied experience and with a high-level use of information and communication technology. It will have courses from certificate to diploma and articulation to higher education. It will integrate education with work to provide students with qualifications that are meaningful to employers.

The polytechnic will also enable students to participate in arts activities, social experiences and campus life. It will build pathways between schools, community, further education, and with current and future workplaces.

The polytechnic will be governed with representation from business, industry and the community, and will attract industry and business sponsorship, and scholarship programs to assist students, particularly those from rural or remote areas.
The High School Model

While transferring senior classes to high schools would, most likely, improve Tasmania’s low retention rate, it is unlikely to fully resolve the issue. It would not give all students an opportunity for high quality, engaging, applied and practical learning. Including the senior years in high school is the most common model in Australia, yet Australia’s retention rates of less than 80% are disappointing by international standards when compared with those around 90% in many countries, including Canada, Germany, Korea, and Singapore. The high school model would not ‘lift the bar’ enough to enable us to meet the skills demands ahead.

The value of an ‘applied learning’ educational approach to meet the learning style of many students has strong recognition. It is evidenced by the strong growth in vocational education and training in schools. However, in order to increase the number of young people who complete the equivalent of twelve years of education and training, we need to provide the expertise and infrastructure to support this way of learning.

We also need to give students flexible course options that connect initial education with work or further study or training. As we have learned from the early leavers in our destination surveys, despite their having crossed the bridge from Year 10 to Year 11, they do not become engaged in courses that are not relevant to their learning needs.

An ‘applied learning’ model can best be achieved through the integration of college education with TAFE vocational expertise. Given the diversity of courses in vocational education, and the infrastructure and expertise required to deliver it to industry standards, it is unlikely that a meaningful program could be successfully sustained across all state high schools. Quality VET requires industry standard equipment, teachers with the skills and industry experience to deliver courses to industry standards, on-the-job learning, and access to flexible pathways.

Where colleges and TAFE Tasmania have been able to work together successfully there have been outstanding outcomes for students, and for industry. The Rosny College construction program, run in conjunction with TAFE Tasmania, has a 93% employment success rate. It genuinely meets the needs of students and industry. Its flexibility, pastoral care, quality general education with literacy and numeracy support, training in an industry context, and its responsiveness to industry are key features that make it a model for ‘polytechnic’ training. It has become a ‘best practice’ model within the construction industry nationally, and one that we can build on in Tasmania.

In countries such as Singapore and New Zealand, where a similar transition from school to work applies, there have been very positive improvements in retention rates and the achievement of qualifications that are meaningful for both students and employers. Supporting entry into a career with the acquisition of a meaningful qualification, with relevant skills training and employability skills in an appropriate mature learning environment, is a successful recipe.

Strategies to Meet Regional Needs

While retaining a critical mass of expertise and infrastructure in the ‘academy’ and ‘polytechnic’ will better assure quality, there is also scope for them to run senior classes in partnership with some high schools. The ‘academy’ in particular, which requires minimal infrastructure, would quality assure full Year 11 programs and Year 12 options. In Year 12, some students may need to transfer to a larger campus for specialist subjects.

Local skills centres, established at district high schools, TAFE centres, and Huon Linc could also offer applied courses, with delivery and assessment quality assured by the ‘polytechnic’.

In both cases, student accommodation would be a high level responsibility for institute boards.
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: WHERE WE ARE NOW

TAFE Tasmania delivers vocational education and training to two different client groups, individual students and enterprises. They often have different priorities and needs. Most individual students look for full-time campus-based training that will qualify them for chosen careers. Many employers, with diverse and specialised needs, seek customised workplace-based training that has minimum disruption for their businesses. The client base of TAFE Tasmania’s 32,000 students is split evenly between career students and enterprise training.

Meeting the needs of these two very different client groups requires very different delivery and support. Teachers of career students are mostly campus and classroom focused, with some flexible delivery. Their working conditions are fairly traditional and predictable.

For a teacher delivering enterprise-based training the world is quite different – they need to respond to enterprise needs where and when they occur. They will often work one on one with an employee or supervisor in a workplace, observing and discussing workplace activities.

Recent industry and research based reports have called for changes to the delivery of workplace skills development. To support industry and mature-age workers, they call for better access to sets of skills, delivered much more flexibly, with better access to industry.

Investment in Training

The level of industry investment in training is also an important element in developing the skills base of Tasmanian enterprises. Australian research clearly shows that business investment in training yields high levels of return for those businesses – enterprise productivity and profitability are directly related to the quantity and quality of training they provide. It also estimates that employers contribute approximately $2.5b to training in Australia. However the national VET system gets only 10% of this and TAFE nationally generates less than 5% of its revenue from industry, with most of it coming from government, and from students.

As shown in the table at right approximately 50% of TAFE Tasmania’s students are employees who attend ‘TAFE under the sponsorship’ of their employer rather than as individuals. However, the delivery model is largely geared to individual student needs, rather than providing the greater flexibility that employers seek. As with the national system, there is only limited employer investment in a delivery model that, for many employers, is too inflexible.

An enterprise based training provider, focused on enterprises and their employees, can deliver training with the flexibility that employers seek and attract more of them to invest in training. Attracting more business investment in the formal training system will mean that more employees can develop skills sets and gain nationally recognised qualifications. More skilled staff can support the development of more productive enterprises.

TAFE Tasmania has achieved outstanding successes over the past nine years and is recognised nationally as a leader in vocational education and training. It has shifted from a traditional internally focused, structured organisation to a more flexible client and workplace focused organisation. It is now stalled, caught in a system and structure that prevents it from rising to the next challenge – to become an organisation of training professionals working with multiple clients, in multiple contexts, in multiple learning sites, blending learning with work.
A training enterprise will offer flexible training with choice for enterprises. Enterprise staff can help train co-workers in their workplace alongside VET trainers. It will encourage industry investment in a training delivery model in which they share ownership and achieve outcomes.

The focus of the training enterprise will be on a working partnership with businesses to develop the skills sets and competencies required for their specific work context. As well as developing technical skills, employability and generic skills in management, finance, and communication and information technology will be available through the training enterprise to integrate with workplace training.

Workplace learning should also incorporate skills acquisition through formal and non-formal learning. This method of delivery and skills recognition is gaining strength in TAFE Tasmania and it will be developed to its full potential in the new training institute.

Funding

The training enterprise will be governed by key members of Tasmanian enterprises and industries. One of the main aims of the board will be to shift away from a high dependence on government funds towards a greater investment in training by businesses.

The funding of some training, such as apprenticeships, is a shared responsibility between governments, industry and individuals. However, training for workforce skills is primarily a responsibility of the enterprise. Enterprises are willing to pay for training if they see the value in it and it meets their needs. Meeting industry demands requires a training provider that is aligned to their needs and that can respond as a business, on businesslike terms.

A training enterprise will have the opportunity to increase skills development and improve productivity by leveraging industry’s investment with government funds. As well as developing, co-ordinating and leading the State’s skills development strategy, the new Skills Tasmania Board will provide high level industry leadership and advice on this issue.
THE DELIVERY STRUCTURE

...a prosperous lifestyle based on quality, creativity and opportunity.
Tasmania Together Vision 2006

We excel at everything we do

QUALIFIED PEOPLE

PRODUCTIVE ENTERPRISES

academy
polytechnic
training enterprise

UNIVERSITY

QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, INVESTMENT, EMPLOYMENT

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

System Outcomes
- Two institutions, aligned to student interests and needs, accountable for increasing retention of young people into Year 12 and for improving qualifications outcomes.
- One training enterprise aligned with industry, accountable as a business enterprise for improving skills and productivity through partnerships with industry.
- A strong system focus through single state-wide institutes, with better alignment to community and business needs, and with increased accountability for outcomes.
- Each of the three organisations will have a purchase agreement. Through it they will be directly responsible and accountable for state-wide, including regional outcomes.

Community
- All school leavers have an informed choice of academic or applied courses.
- More young and mature-age Tasmanians gain qualifications that open up life and work choices for them.
- More young Tasmanians start work with qualifications that industry value.
- There are more qualified people in Tasmania at all levels, both trades and professions.
- The social benefits from having more trained and employed people are realised.

Economy
- Employers can access cost-effective workplace training for their staff.
- More people can undertake training throughout their lives, including at work.
- There are more skilled people to support productive enterprises and the economy.
- The strong skills base in Tasmania attracts greater business investment.
PATHWAYS 2009

Qualifications and Skills Development 2009

IMPLEMENTATION

Project Team

A project team in the Department of Education will implement this initiative, through to ‘start up’ of the three new organisations in January 2009. Its extensive scope of work will include:

• consultation with people in the sector and clients of the organisations;
• communication with everyone who has an interest in the outcomes of the initiative including students, parents, employers, staff, and community and industry groups; and
• specific work tasks including workplace arrangements, legislation, profiles for each of the new organisations and transition arrangements for students and staff. Staff will be represented on these work teams as appropriate.

Communication

There will be regular communication and advice available as the project develops, and there will be many opportunities for people to have their questions answered. These will include formal information sessions in colleges and in TAFE Tasmania, as well as regular information on the Department of Education and TAFE Tasmania websites. As the project develops, there will be further information guides to assist students planning their courses for 2009 and beyond.

Information will be available for staff and for the community on the Department of Education and TAFE Tasmania websites. Question and answer sheets for students and staff are available on the websites. These will be regularly updated with answers to your questions.

If you have another question you can email it to: tomorrow@education.tas.gov.au

Alternatively, you can talk to one of our project team by calling 1800 469 997; and they will arrange for you to receive a response.

For now, you are encouraged to read Section 2: Reasons to Change, for further background on the initiative, and to check the website for forthcoming information sessions.
QUESTIONs AND ANSWERS

Students

Q: We are students at a college or TAFE – how will this initiative affect us?
A: The new organisations will not begin operations until January 2009 and so current students will have completed their courses, as will most full-time TAFE students. Students finishing Year 10 in 2007 will be provided with transition arrangements for 2009. Their course of studies will not be disrupted and they are likely to have more, rather than fewer options.

Q: How will I know what institute to attend?
A: Your pathway planning process from Years 8 to 10 will help you to make the best choice for you. While it is best to make the right choice at the start, you will be able to transfer across from one institute to the other if your interests change.

Q: Why not have Years 7 to 12 high schools?
A: There are many reasons. There is a big investment in college campuses that we can use to advantage. Although retention rates are higher nationally, they are still low by international standards, so we need to develop a structure that provides more success. Better aligning the expertise and infrastructure to the interests of students will encourage more of them to stay in learning. We can provide better regional options, and accommodation choices to enable more students to continue their courses.

Q: Which current colleges will provide academic studies and which will provide applied studies?
A: No decisions have been made on which colleges will specialise in which pathway. These decisions will be made after consultation with the people most directly involved, including the staff and the college community. In some cases, the current campus may accommodate both the academic and applied studies pathways while others may specialise.

Q: Will I have to travel further to get to my course?
A: One of the outcomes of the initiative is to give better access to the courses people wish to take. Given the availability of both college and TAFE campuses, it is not anticipated that there will be more travel. The opportunity for partnerships with high schools will also be developed, particularly for academic studies at district high schools.
Staff

Q: Will this mean staff redundancies?
A: The initiative’s aim is to increase participation and qualifications so we will not need fewer teachers and support staff into the future.

Q: How will the initiative be funded?
A: Due to our changing population demographic we have fewer students enrolling in our compulsory school sector. We can offset this decline in school numbers by the increase in post-school students. The transition costs will be managed internally as was the case with the establishment of TAFE Tasmania in 1998.

Q: What will happen to my college?
A: No decisions have been made as to the role each individual campus will have in this new model. Some may become a campus of the ‘academy’ or of the ‘polytechnic’ while others may have both institutes operating from the campus. The same might apply for some of the TAFE Tasmania facilities though most of them have a specialist role that fits best with either the ‘polytechnic’ or the ‘training enterprise’. Staff will be involved in and informed about this process well in advance of the operational date of January 2009.

A full set of questions and answers will be maintained on the websites.
Section Two: REASONS to CHANGE

TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

1. Calls for Change

Industry and research based reports have called for changes to the delivery of post-school qualifications. They recognise the need to encourage young people to continue learning in order to ensure that they have life, employability and vocational skills that will give them a future with choices. To achieve this, they call for courses to be more relevant and pathways much more accessible. Given the current skills shortages, low productivity, and demographic change, much of their focus is on improving retention rates. However, they also focus on the cost of young people dropping out, of not gaining a qualification, and on their diminished capability to make life choices that will give them independence in the future.

The Business Council of Australia’s (BCA) 2003 report, The Cost of Dropping Out: The economic impact of early school leaving called for an urgent effort to increase the number of young people who complete twelve years of learning. It required, they believed, better organised and flexible options to connect education with work, further study or training.

BCA research indicated that a significant proportion of young people leave the education and training system early because they are disaffected with the limited range of courses and the inflexible way they are offered, and because of poor literacy and numeracy skills.

BCA was disappointed with the level of flexibility between the different sectors and called for more cooperation between schools, vocational education and training, and universities.

In 2003, BCA warned that there would be serious long-term consequences if there was not a greater investment in ‘long-term and sustainable solutions to ensure that we increase the education and training outcomes of Australia’s youth’.


The review identified a lack of coordination between the parts of the system, and a need for a clearer vision so that fewer young people would continue to ‘fall through the cracks’. It proposed a stronger focus on young people rather than institutions where ‘fragmentation and institutional territorialism becomes absurd and unjustified’.

The Victorian Ministerial Review concluded that ‘there will be pressure for change in post compulsory education and training provider structures in the future. There is a need for clearer government policy direction on these provider structures’.

The 2006 Mission Australia: National Survey of Young Australians showed how young Tasmanians differ significantly from their national counterparts. Young Tasmanians, particularly males, seek work rather than study at a relatively young age, for reasons of economic independence. Despite their significantly higher non-participation in the workforce, few of them choose not to work. Unfortunately, their quest for a job without a post-school qualification frustrates their desire for economic independence.

The report showed how full- and part-time work patterns, low retention rates, and a later start to establishing homes of their own, create a complex landscape for young people to navigate. It observed that attempts to respond to these changes have largely tinkered with a system ‘established to meet the needs of the 1970s and 80s based on assumptions of a linear pathway from childhood to adulthood that no longer exists’.

The report concluded that while some young people can navigate this environment with family and community support, it presents very significant challenges for many young people and the current policies are inadequate to meet their needs.

The OECD (2000) noted that transition outcomes are more effective when young people have available to them learning pathways and qualifications that are clearly defined, well organised and open, designed and developed in a lifelong learning perspective, with effective connections to post-school destinations, whether work or further study. Some positive examples of international models are discussed later.

Dr John Spierings of the Dusseldorp Skills Forum also envisages a reshaping of the system, ‘including integration of schools and TAFE colleges, and employability skills developed through relationships between the learning needs of employers and the schooling system’.

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Section Two: REASONS to CHANGE

2. The Value of Applied Vocational Education

The community understands the school to university path and it is an aspiration for many students and their families. However, it is only successful for a minority of students, and colleges have significantly increased their vocational courses in an attempt to better meet the needs of the majority of students.

The National Centre for Vocational Education and Training (NCVER) 2007 Report *Vocational education and training and young people: Last but not least* concluded that vocational education and training (VET) is much more important to young people than is apparent, particularly for those young people who do not proceed on the conventional academic path of 12 years of school followed by university.

For many, VET is an alternative to university; for others, it is an alternative to school. The research estimated that over one-half of school leavers will attend VET in the early years after leaving school. However, the pathway to VET and the support within VET needs to improve if more young people are to gain qualifications.

The report observed that to ‘complete Year 12 and go to university’ is easy to understand, but for many young people pathways involving VET are a lot less straightforward. Likewise, even with good participation rates for young people, completion rates are variable and too few emerge with a middle-level or higher qualification.

Outcomes after training are positive; employment rates increase and large numbers of graduates continue with further study. A high number of graduates (87%) were satisfied with the quality of training and around the same proportion achieved their goals. Their training was also relevant to their work, and most of them received at least one job-related benefit. The report emphasised the value of training and the need to concentrate on qualification completion as well as participation.

The report noted that vocational education and training in schools also increased significantly, from just over 15% in 1996 to just around 50%, providing students with training recognised by industry as an alternative to more academic offerings.

However, those areas closest to traditional academic subjects such as IT, management and commerce dominated regardless of student interest or job opportunities. The more expensive areas such as engineering and related technologies are less frequently available in colleges. Food, hospitality and personal services are popular both in and outside school.

In terms of qualification levels, certificates I and II dominated at school and there are relatively few school students studying at certificate III level, which is more common in the VET system. It reflects a supply model of VET rather than one driven by the demands of either students or the workplace.

In its *Skills for a Nation: a Blueprint for Improving Education and Training 2007 – 2017*, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) recognised that creating the best possible educational institutions and ensuring the best possible education outcomes are critical for raising living standards. It also believes that it is increasingly important for public policy to widen career development choices and to create delivery systems that respond to varying needs of the individual across a lifespan.

It questioned whether the quality of current institutions is adequate in terms of what employers are looking for in new employees; in particular, satisfactory employability skills, high educational and technical proficiency, and an understanding of the requirements of the workplace.

ACCI believes that it is desirable for all students to complete Year 12 with a good general education but that it should not be compulsory. Flexible entry and exit points should ensure that students finish their schooling with the knowledge, skills and personal qualities needed for further education, work and life.

ACCI is concerned that Years 11 and 12 students have access to quality vocational education and education (VET). However, it reflected industry concerns that this is not being achieved.
Section Two: **Reasons to Change**

Quality VET requires industry standard equipment, teachers with the skills and industry experience to deliver courses to industry standards, on-the-job learning, and access to flexible pathways.

The NCVER publication, *TAFE, university or work? The early preferences and choices of students in Years 10, 11 & 12*, investigated the aspirations of school students regarding post-secondary education and work. While there is evidence that ongoing learning is valued for personal and vocational reasons, many students did not find their school motivating or satisfying.

Higher education was the goal of most students and only one-quarter of them were attracted to TAFE. This suggests that many school-leavers are poorly informed and have unrealistic aspirations. Because VET does not have a high profile among them, and TAFE courses do not enjoy the status of degree courses, many young people may be unaware of the opportunities available to them. Consequently, many of them do not make successful transitions to work, with a meaningful qualification.

The NCVER study concludes that it is time to reassess the negative effects of the current model. It contends that lifelong education will be best served by a more flexible spectrum of education and training opportunities. It suggests blurring the boundaries and distinctions between higher education and VET into a more continuous spectrum of education and training opportunities.

### 3. Destination Studies

Tasmania has been conducting destination surveys that provide information on and an insight into the characteristics of early school leavers. They examine the reasons why young people leave school early and what happens to them post-school. The analysis of the data concludes that while early leaving is shaped by family background factors, institutional and organisational factors also have a profound effect. If we are to encourage young people to engage in education and training, there is a need to offer a range of program options that is inclusive and attractive.

The survey of the 6,691 young people in Year 10 in 2001, no longer attending school in Tasmania in 2002, found that the early leavers were likely to be lower academic achievers and less likely to be satisfied with school. Almost one in two boys indicated that they left because they did not like school. For many of them this was related to poor progress, as well as lack of interest in the courses. The early leavers also had a high proportion of those students with poor attendance records and high suspensions at school, reflecting a level of disaffection with their school experience.

Many early school leavers engaged in vocational education and training as an alternative to school, drawing the conclusion that policy needed to focus on providing a range of options across the post-compulsory education and training sectors. Offering a range of pathways suited to differing interests and needs would encourage higher retention.

By 2003, only 43% of the cohort had gone on to Year 12 in government schools, compared with the original 73% enrolled in government schools in 2001. The proportion of the cohort in employment had increased to 9%, compared with 2% in 2002. Those drawing some form of benefit had grown from 4% in 2002 to 10%.

The survey confirmed the concern with Year 11 retention in senior secondary colleges. While 59% of Year 11 leavers were successful in gaining employment or in taking up other education and training, 29% did not, leading them to unemployment and/or dependence on benefits. Almost a third of students who began Year 11 failed to complete the year and to continue on to Year 12.

Those students who undertook a TAFE course as an alternative to senior secondary schooling showed considerable success in going on to a traineeship, an apprenticeship or to work. Nearly 74% of students in a TAFE program were successful in going on to further education, employment or training, including 6% who elected to return to school. Approximately a quarter of leavers who found employment were working in the retail and wholesale industry.
Section Two: **REASONS to CHANGE**

4. Australia – The ACT Senior Secondary Colleges

Unlike other Australian jurisdictions, Tasmania and the ACT have senior secondary colleges for Years 11 and 12. In December 2005, the ACT released a Review of Secondary Colleges that reflected divided community opinion on their future. Many people were committed to the model, but others believed that the colleges needed significant transformation to be effective and relevant in the 21st century. The review strongly endorsed the latter view but it recommended only minor reforms. However, it strongly supported a much closer alignment between the colleges and TAFE.

During the ACT Review, people commented on its timeliness. Demographic trends were impacting negatively on the colleges and there was recognition that the current delivery model needed to be revitalised and renewed in order to meet future challenges.

The review confirmed that key transformations needed to occur; and that colleges needed a much more systemic mode of operation, otherwise their effectiveness would diminish. It concluded that colleges needed to strengthen their capacity to deal with post-compulsory provision, careers, and vocational learning, and to better respond to those at risk of not pursuing a pathway to a meaningful life.

The review believed that the most significant opportunity to improve the quality of educational provision in the senior years was a truly effective relationship between TAFE (Canberra Institute of Technology) and colleges.

It promoted structured arrangements and high level collaboration between the colleges and Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), as an integral feature of provision for students in the post-compulsory years. It recognised that CIT had the capacity and expertise to support outstanding VET provision. It also recommended that campus co-location, shared teaching, program development and shared professional learning should be actively pursued.

The review found that the college culture was dominated by a view from teachers that their role was to offer ‘many opportunities’ but that if ‘students fall through the cracks it’s their fault’. It also observed that the current perceptions about, and practice in, curriculum ‘belonged to another time’.

Continuity of students’ learning from Year 10 to Year 11 needed to improve significantly. The review considered a three year structure, incorporating Year 10, but recommended further work to establish strong foundations for this at a future time. It recommended introducing pathway planning as ‘a prominent feature of future effort to improve the effectiveness’.

The review found a need for a stronger ‘system’ perspective, observing that intense competition for students had been exacerbated in recent years by a decline in the size of the college cohort, and by increased competition from non-government schools.

In proposing a change agenda, the review observed that ‘some deeply held beliefs need to be put to one side if the renewal required was to occur’. It called for the courage and intellectual edge that characterised the genesis of the model to characterise its renewal. For the ACT and its young people, meeting these challenges and seizing these opportunities would be critical if the college model was to fully and effectively meet their educational needs.
5. International Models

Internationally, some of the educationally highest performing countries have post-compulsory school specialist streams for their students, rather than the integrated institutions that dominate in Australia.

**Singapore**'s education system has specialist post-school institutions. Their Thinking Schools, Learning Nation vision aims to develop thinking citizens through a 21st century education system. This has enabled strong growth in participation and qualifications, and education and training is recognised as a key factor in Singapore's economic development.

According to the Singapore Census of Population 2000, the education profile of Singapore residents has improved significantly in the past decade, reflecting the expansion in educational facilities. Over this time, the percentage of residents with no qualification dropped from 31.3% to 19.6%, and the share of those with polytechnic qualifications increased from 11% to 21%.

Singapore's education system aims to provide students with greater flexibility and choice from a range of education institutions and programs that cater to different strengths and interests. After school, most students proceed to a post-secondary institution, a junior college, institute of technical education, or polytechnic.

Students who are academically inclined undertake a two-year pre-university course at a junior college. Those with a preference for applied learning can enrol in a diploma course in a polytechnic. Polytechnic graduates with good grades can go on to further tertiary education at university. Those who do not gain entry to a polytechnic can enrol in a full-time certificate level course at the institute of technical education. Those who do well here can proceed to a polytechnic. There are very high completion rates at all three institutions.

The distribution of the post-school cohort into these choices in 2005 was 29.8% in a junior college pre-university program, 39.8% in a para-professional polytechnic, and 22.1% in a technical institute.

Students who are clearly university-bound, and could do well in a less structured environment, have a junior college education also which offers alternative curricula and qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate.

The polytechnics train middle-level professionals with specific skills for a knowledge-based economy; the graduates are highly sought after by industry. The polytechnics maintain strong ties with industry through joint projects and applied research and development.

The Institute of Technical Education (ITE) is a post-secondary technical institution; its graduates have technical knowledge and skills relevant to industry. The ITE is the national authority for setting skills and certification standards in Singapore. Students also enjoy a rich range of social and co-curricular activities.

Singapore also has a Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system to meet the needs of existing workers. It is an integrated continuing education and training system designed to build industry competencies for adult workers who have widely diverse training needs. It offers a wide range of qualifications from certificate to diploma.

The WSQ allows employees to progress up the skills training ladder and move between the formal education system, lifelong learning and the higher education systems. It facilitates flexible, open and multi-mode delivery systems, and recognises prior learning experiences.

In **New Zealand**, the establishment of a broader ‘tertiary’ sector including universities, institutes of technology and polytechnics has seen the proportion of students going directly from school to tertiary education increase dramatically in the past ten years.

Sixty-six percent more people are now participating in tertiary education than in 1998, largely due to growth in certificate level courses in polytechnics, and school leavers undertaking tertiary study at a degree level. In 2004, New Zealand had the second highest graduation rates across 24 OECD countries with 48.4% of people of graduation age completing a higher tertiary qualification, and 20.1% completing other tertiary qualifications.

Much of the growth is in certificate qualifications, in polytechnics which deliver student focused technical, vocational and professional education. Many students prefer to study in this relevant, innovative and employment focused tertiary environment, rather than school.
In 2004, 80% of students with no formal attainment left school to continue their education in tertiary institutions, with polytechnic certificates providing a way into education for students for whom school was not meeting their needs.

The emphasis in polytechnics is on students and practical learning, with good student support services. They offer programs at all levels, from community interest courses, foundation programs, certificates, and diplomas. Some also deliver the first one or two years of selected university degree programs. Students are encouraged to build from lower qualifications to higher ones.

The positive changes in participation and achievement in tertiary education indicate the extent to which New Zealanders are developing the skills needed for their economy. Their polytechnics are well-regarded by employers and they develop programs to meet the particular needs of local industries and businesses, and the interests of the local community.

Industry training in New Zealand is provided by 40 industry training organisations (ITO), established by industries or groups of industries. Industry training concentrates on workplace learning to deliver the skills enterprises needed to be competitive.

In Finland, students choose between a matriculation and a vocational college after Year 10. According to Statistics Finland, 88% of the students who started upper secondary general school in 2000 had attained a matriculation examination by the end of 2005. During the same period, 70% of the students in vocational education attained a vocational qualification. By the end of 2005, polytechnic degrees were attained by 71% of the students who entered polytechnic education ten-and-a-half years ago. During the same period, 73% of the new students at universities attained a university degree.

In Switzerland, students are able to combine academic and vocational studies and achieve a double qualification, such as apprenticeship and a tertiary diploma. Under this arrangement students attend institutional-based learning two days per week and also undertake work-based learning.

In the USA, career academies integrate academic courses with technical and applied courses around a career. Core maths, English, or science courses are combined with vocational ones to focus on a career theme, such as business and finance, computers and electronics, or health care. Partnerships with local employers strengthen connections with work and provide students with a range of career development and work-based learning opportunities. Students take other elective classes outside the career academy structure.
Section Two: **REASONS to CHANGE**

**WORKPLACE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

1. Training and Industry Productivity

Recent industry and research-based reports have called for changes to the delivery of post-school qualifications, and workplace skills development. To support industry and mature-age workers, they call for better access to skills sets, delivered more flexibly, thus making them more accessible to industry.

The ACCI policy, *Skills for a Nation: a Blueprint for Improving Education and Training 2007 – 2017*, emphasises Australia’s world leadership in employer engagement and leadership with governments and training providers in the vocational education and training (VET) system.

There is an increasing body of research to demonstrate the value of education and training to workplace productivity. The ACCI policy blueprint recognises its ‘great importance’ in improving productivity for business and industry. It contends that while business and industry create jobs, significant productivity gains can be made through increasing the skills base of the workforce.

A 2006 National Training Reform Taskforce report, *Qualifications and the Future Labour Market in Australia* projected an increase by over two million in the number of employed people with qualifications and a decline by 840,000 in the number without qualifications by 2016. Demand for people with vocational qualifications, and particularly at diploma level, is predicted to grow. Increasingly, there will be less demand for unqualified workers.

An NCVER research paper, *Does training pay? Evidence from Australian enterprises* suggested that enterprise productivity and profitability is directly related to the quantity and quality of training they provide. It finds that enterprise returns from training can be exceptionally high, especially for training that is highly specific, rapidly accomplished, and related to new technology or working patterns. Such training pays a return to an enterprise, even if labour turnover is high.

The results from this work provide a solid body of evidence that across a range of sectors, training investments can yield very high levels of returns for firms. However, informal learning and training was regarded by many businesses as superior to formal classroom training, such as that currently provided by TAFE.

Likewise, the ACCI National Employment, Education and Training Survey also shows that TAFE flexibility still remains a key concern, with a need to improve training times and locations.

2. Workforce Skills

Current research proposes a new notion of vocational training. It sees training for the existing workforce moving, more and more, out of institutions. Workforce skills development would incorporate multiple and workplace approaches to skills acquisition.

Australian Industry Group (AiG) research (Skilling the Existing Workforce 2006) into workforce skills development recognised the workplace as an increasingly important learning site. The research contended that skilling the existing workforce requires a workforce skills development approach, rather than through institutional delivery. Workplace learning should incorporate skills acquisition through formal, non-formal and informal learning. This method of delivery and skills recognition is gaining strength in TAFE Tasmania, but development to its full potential is constrained within the present model.

AiG recognises that workforce skills development is primarily a responsibility of enterprises (in terms of the training investment). However, it also views some elements as a shared responsibility between governments, industry and individuals, particularly in public funded training. A Training Tasmania GBE model would provide the opportunity to improve productivity by leveraging industry’s investment with Government funds.
Section Two: REASONS to CHANGE

The ACCI policy, *Skills for a Nation: a Blueprint for Improving Education and Training 2007–2017*, also stresses the need to ‘think outside the square’ in relation to mature-aged workers and how they will be up-skilled in the future. ACCI supports a demand driven system specifically aligned to industry needs.

ACCI points to a high level of engagement and contribution on the part of employers in training for their skills needs, contributing approximately $36.5b to training in Australia.

ACCI seeks a VET system that is more accessible than at present, which meets the needs of mature-aged workers wishing to pursue other occupations or to up-skill while they are still in current employment. They believe that training for existing workers must include relevant industry experience and workplace learning to ensure that relevant technical skills meet current industry needs. They stress that an effort must be made to ensure that individuals do not learn via a fully institutional model.

The ABS report, *Employer Training Expenditure and Practices 2001–2002* (ABS, 2003), indicates that approximately 80% of employers provide training. Of this, approximately 40% provide structured training to their employees and a further 40% provide unstructured training. Based on this ABS data, only about 4% of employers are not engaged in training or do not see it as a need for their business.

The 2007 NCVER Report *Education and training that meet the needs of small business: A systematic review of research* found clear evidence that small businesses are willing to pay for education and training, if they see the value in it and it meets their needs. However, this delivery requires a training provider that is aligned to their needs and can respond as a business, with strategies that focus on their client, rather than self-interest, policy imperatives, or funding initiatives.

Importantly, the report emphasises, small business managers and employees ‘learn through doing’ and much of their learning is focused on current or real issues for them. They also learn from other business people and through critical reflection on their assumptions, knowledge and experiences. They require business-specific training programs, which build on business-to-business interactions.

3. Access to Infrastructure

ACCI highlights infrastructure as an area for better industry and provider partnerships.

The high capital cost of machinery often results in outmoded machinery or techniques in VET. ACCI believes that more innovative practices, including partnering and sharing of resources and greater incentives for private investment, can better respond to industry needs. In addition, third party access to infrastructure on a commercial basis, training in the workplace, and the placement of teachers in industry to familiarise them with current technology would help training providers to better respond to industry needs.
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CONTACT DETAILS

Department of Education
GPO Box 169
Hobart Tasmania 7001 Australia
Telephone: 1800 469 997
Email: tomorrow@education.tas.gov.au
Website: http://tomorrow.education.tas.gov.au