VOCATIONAL EDUCATION and TRAINING for SECONDARY STUDENTS in ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ACT Education and Training Directorate Response to Future Directions
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INTRODUCTION

The ACT Education and Training Directorate (the Directorate) welcomes the opportunity to respond to future directions outlined in the Review of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in ACT Public Schools report. The Directorate appreciates the work of the Centre for International Research on Education Systems (CIRES) at Victoria University and is pleased to agree to all seven future directions.

In the response below, the Directorate notes the critical role of certain key stakeholders, including the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) in implementing these directions. The Directorate is committed to working with stakeholders in the VET sector to ensure secondary students in ACT public schools access high quality training programs and qualifications that are integrated in senior secondary education, valued by employers and recognised by further education providers.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1. Improve clarity and confidence for key stakeholders through collaborative articulation of the goals, vision and purpose of VET for ACT secondary students.

AGREED

The Directorate agrees that a high-achieving and quality-assured VET sector is underpinned by stakeholder confidence in the purpose of training delivery and value of student outcomes.

The Directorate will collaborate with key stakeholders and articulate a clear Statement of Vision and Purpose for VET for secondary students in ACT schools. This Statement will be informed by the key principles of the National VET Framework: Preparing Secondary Students for Work.

The Directorate will work with the Catholic Education Office and Association of Independent Schools to ensure the Statement of Vision and Purpose will inform planning of VET provision for all ACT secondary school students.
2. **Improve collaboration with business, industry and vocational and further education providers, thus building the confidence of employers, students and parents.**

**AGREED**

The Directorate agrees a distinguishing and invaluable feature of VET qualifications is the workplace learning opportunities that bring students into direct contact with the workplace.

Working with employers, industry bodies, CIT, and other private RTOs, the Directorate will identify opportunities to increase collaboration in the secondary school VET sector. Such opportunities include engagement between school networks, employers, CIT and other RTOs in the planning of VET provision that is responsive to local industry and produces outcomes that build stakeholder confidence in VET delivered to secondary students.

Advisory arrangements with employers in the planning of VET will facilitate industry input on the scope of offerings for students, the mode of training and the identification of potential partnerships for Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) and Australian School Based Apprenticeship (ASBA) opportunities. ACT employers have been integral to the Directorate’s work around forecasting industry skills needs and this close relationship with business has led to the development of the Skilled Capital initiative.

Increased collaboration with vocational and further education providers, including CIT and other RTOs, will inform the planning of students’ offerings with consideration to post-school training, employment opportunities and tertiary education pathways and the effective management of RTO operations. Future collaboration will build on existing arrangements where schools have already built strong partnerships with external providers.

3. **Rationalise the number of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to:**
   - implement a network approach to planning and provision
   - reduce costs
   - reduce red tape
   - increase efficiency and effectiveness.

**AGREED**

The Directorate agrees an efficient and effective secondary school VET system is best serviced by a limited number of high quality training providers configured to ensure expertise is centralised, compliance processes are streamlined and duplication is minimised.

The Directorate will transition away from a model of individual school RTOs to a networked approach to VET provision that builds on the existing structure of the four public school networks.
The nine current senior secondary colleges who operate as individual RTOs will amalgamate operations within the school network structure, resulting in a maximum of one public college RTO per school network. The ACT’s nine public college RTOs currently service vocational education and training for secondary students across nineteen public high schools and two specialist high schools. By reducing the number of colleges operating as individual RTOs, the Directorate will deliver increased administrative efficiencies while still enabling students throughout each network to access a broad range of high quality VET programs.

As a first step in progressing this amalgamation, the Tuggeranong Network will be supported to accelerate its proposal to form a single public school RTO, compliant with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015.

The Directorate will approach ASQA to seek the national regulator’s input to this transition process with respect to potential registration and regulatory obligations.

Under a Network-based arrangement, VET provision will be planned to ensure students have access to a broad and meaningful range of VET offerings through training with:

- a public school RTO,
- CIT, or
- a private RTO.

Each school network will develop VET Provision Plans that consider:

- the scope of offerings available for students
- the modes of training delivery
- ASBA and SWL opportunities in partnership with employers
- Delivery sites, staffing arrangements, timetabling and use of facilities
- Alignment of school-based VET with post-school VET pathways.

4. Improve core systems and business processes to ensure and maintain compliance with the ASQA Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015.

AGREED

The Directorate agrees ACT students and employers should have access to high quality training from reputable providers that model effective quality assurance and quality control practices in meeting national training standards.

The Directorate will identify strategies to ensure students have access to training from RTOs that demonstrate effective quality management processes and full compliance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015.
In reducing the number of public school RTOs and transitioning to network provision planning, the Directorate will also facilitate knowledge sharing between CIT and schools to ensure school network RTOs maintain nationally compliant RTO operations. The Directorate will assist schools through the identification of business processes and relative costs for compliant data reporting and certificate issuance, including the imperative to meet the AVETMIS Standard.

The Directorate will liaise with ASQA to ensure the transition to a future configuration of VET provision for secondary students in the ACT is mindful of national regulation and RTO registration requirements.

Planning of VET provision by public school networks will make reference to the quality assurance and quality control business processes in place to maintain RTO compliance. Network VET Provision Plans will include consideration and involvement from employers, CIT and the Directorate.

5. Increase collaboration by working in partnership with CIT to explore, identify and implement strategies that support:
   - maximising access to shared facilities
   - broadened offerings
   - refined scope
   - reduced risk
   - reduced costs.

AGREED

The Directorate agrees employers and students benefit most from an agile public VET system that collaborates on practical issues to capitalise on shared expertise, make best use of public training infrastructure and place student outcomes at the centre of VET delivery.

In developing this system the Directorate recognises that collaboration with CIT will be informed by the new CIT Board in discharging its responsibilities for the effective and efficient management of CIT operations.

The Directorate will seek to draw on the expertise of CIT and other RTOs in transitioning to a more collaborative model of VET provision for secondary students in ACT public schools, including on matters regarding RTO compliance and business processes.

The Directorate will seek advice from CIT on the potential role of CIT in future models of VET provision for secondary students where opportunities for effective collaboration emerge. Such opportunities may include the expansion of industry liaison activities, planning for appropriate breadth and depth of VET offerings across the Territory, and the attraction and retention of a highly capable public VET workforce.
Future advice from CIT will be sought by the Directorate to investigate the possibilities of greater public school student places in publicly funded training at CIT. The Directorate will work with CIT and other RTOs to identify effective systemic and network specific interfaces in Network VET Provision Plans.

6. **Investigate the core system interface with the BSSS related to data processes, course recognition and certification.**

**AGREED**

The Directorate agrees functional and responsive VET provision to secondary students necessitates rigorous core systems that enable integration of VET within senior secondary schooling, compliance with national reporting requirements and reporting of VET data in a transparent and rational manner.

The Directorate will initiate a dialogue with the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies for the purpose of identifying business processes and systems that may be reformed to improve the issuance of VET certificates, the recognition of VET activity in the ACT senior secondary certificate, and the collection and reporting of VET data to meet the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS). The principles of national reform agendas and opportunities for harmonisation with other States and Territories will be considered in this dialogue.

7. **Explore options for the use of resourcing allocations to further enable access to quality provision through:**
   - reviewing existing funding distribution arrangements
   - implementing flexible network provision
   - accessing centralised procurement
   - incentivising preferred policy outcomes.

**AGREED**

The Directorate agrees prudent and diligent resourcing of VET for secondary students is essential to meeting community expectations for quality training, increasing market stability and enabling comprehensive forward planning that encourages industry confidence.

In the implementation of future directions, the Directorate will manage resourcing to ensure the responsiveness of the public VET system to industry demands, and harness opportunities for greater equity and access to VET provision.

Each network model of provision will be designed in collaboration with stakeholders and implemented to capitalise on its priorities and strengths.
The Directorate will be attentive to the service and resourcing needs of users as other reforms are implemented and to the appropriate place of VET funding for public school provision within the entirety of public school resourcing. Where network plans include purchase of external services, these will be procured centrally to improve efficiencies and ensure quality.

In line with ACT training priorities identified through the Skilled Capital initiative, the Directorate will encourage public school students to undertake VET studies in areas of high skills need for the Territory.

The Directorate will work towards adopting a reformed VET funding distribution engineered by good practice principles of transparency, simplicity, and stability with a focus on high quality student outcomes.