

2 December 2003

Report of the

LEADERS IN CAREERS FORUM

Managed by the
Transitions Branch,
Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training

On behalf of the
Australian Education Systems Officials Committee

Canberra
19-20 August, 2003

Summary Introduction

The Leaders in Careers forum was an important step forward in developing understanding and building relationships between industry, business and schools.

The forum was distinguished by the high level of enthusiastic contribution from and interaction between participants. This was coupled with the strong belief amongst participants that the success and wellbeing of young people engaged in making effective transitions from formal school education to the wider world of work beyond, is of major importance to Australia's economic development.

Background papers to the forum provided a platform for debate and discussion of ideas about future action. Senator Tierney's keynote address, on behalf of the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Brendan Nelson MP, provided a contextual framework for the day and provided challenges for consideration during the course of the forum's discussions.

Participants displayed a common understanding and purpose in terms of wanting to improve the delivery of career education in schools, and enthusiasm to build partnerships across the various sectors to work together to address the issues impacting on this agenda. Ongoing commitment to the Leaders in Careers agenda was demonstrated through strong participant numbers volunteering to be involved in future activities and becoming champions for these issues in their various contexts.

Strategies and actions for taking the Leaders in Careers agenda forward were developed through small group workshops. Some of these ideas require testing against current activities and need to be explored to determine whether they are feasible. However, these ideas indicate the level of participant interest and engagement and ongoing commitment to pursue future activities.

In brief, the forum was a positive and constructive beginning to a continuing process to build and strengthen partnerships between industry, business, schools and the career sector. The challenge now is to maintain the momentum of the Leaders in Careers forum through engaging a wider range of State/Territory and local stakeholders in the process, with the aim of improving the delivery of career education for all school students.

1. PURPOSE

The *Leaders in Careers* forum aimed to bring together a group of identified leaders from industry, business and the school and careers sector to develop strategies for schools and industry to work together to ensure that all students have access to a comprehensive range of career materials (including materials on careers in areas of skills shortages) to make well-informed decisions about future career directions.

The intended key outcomes sought from the national forum were:

- The creation of a strong cohort of school Principals, career experts and industry leaders who can act as ambassadors and promoters of the case for high quality career education for all young people; and
- The development of a set of strategies, with a particular focus on promoting careers in areas of skills shortages, to support the effective implementation of career education and services in schools.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE FORUM

The importance of career education and information in assisting young people make a successful transition from school to further education, training and employment has been highlighted in various reports and agreements in recent years, including in the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* (1999), the *New Framework for Vocational Education in Schools* (2000), the *Footprints to the Future* (2001) report of the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce; and through the Ministerial commitment *Stepping Forward: Improving Pathways for all Young People* (2002).

These reports recognise that the effective delivery of career education in schools from an early age is vital to assisting young people to identify employment pathways and thus make appropriate subject choices whilst at school, as well as in making decisions about their future education and training. Many schools do not employ either a full-time or part-time career educator.

Career education gives young people an opportunity to explore their individual strengths and abilities and how these relate to their career aspirations and goals. In turn, this assists young people make better education and training choices whilst at school and after, and ultimately to increase their chances of having satisfying and ongoing employment.

Issues

Delivery issues: There have been increasing efforts by all school jurisdictions to improve the extent and quality of career education and information available to school students over the last decade. However, there remain concerns and criticisms that the delivery of career education in Australian schools is often ad hoc and is largely dependent on the enthusiasm, commitment and skills of individuals.

Industry skills shortages: Career education in schools can play an important role in addressing the skills shortages currently being experienced by various Australian industries, by raising young people's awareness of these occupations, and their positive employment prospects upon completion of identified education/training requirements.

As part of arrangements under the National Industry Skills Initiative (NISI), a number of industries received Commonwealth funding to develop modern career materials (eg CD-

ROMs and websites) to promote occupations within their sectors as viable and interesting career options. While the materials have been distributed to schools and other key areas, anecdotal evidence gathered by industry indicates:

- the materials may not be reaching target audiences in schools, and
- information about tertiary options and training is invariably given priority over VET material.

Cooperation: Industries are keen to convey the message that they have a strong commitment to recruit into their sectors. They want to find ways of ensuring these materials are being effectively used in schools and to convey that the materials have credibility as they are industry-developed. Further, peak industry bodies have expressed their desire to become more involved with schools, school Principals and parents.

Management

Within this context, the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee (AESOC) granted funding to the Transitions Branch of DEST to conduct the Leaders in Careers project.

A reference group, chaired by DEST, was established to guide the directions of the forum, and included representatives from the Taskforce on Transition from School (TST); the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA); the Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA); the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI); and the Australian Industry Group (AIG).

Mr David McRae was engaged to facilitate the forum, supported by Mr Mike Rowland.

Participants

One of the roles of the reference group was to nominate potential participants. In an effort to restrict numbers to enable free flowing discussion and generation of ideas, nominations were considered by the Department which, in consultation with the reference group, developed a final list of people who were invited to the forum. Participants included representatives from industry, business, the career sector, a national parents' body and the Government, Independent and Catholic Secondary School sectors. (The list of participants with contact details is at [Attachment One](#).)

3 THE PROGRAM

The forum's programme was developed through preparatory discussions between DEST personnel, the reference group and the facilitators. The intentions were to frame a structure which would provide rich ground for the forum discussions and encourage a high level of participant interaction and contribution, but also to develop strategies and ideas for action and commitment to progressing these. (The programme structure is at [Attachment Two](#).)

4. PROCEEDINGS

The forum was preceded with a dinner on 19 August where a lively presentation from Mark McCrindle on the interests and tendencies of 'Generation Y' young people generated considerable discussion. The evening also provided an opportunity for participants to make new contacts and for informal interaction between the various sectors.

The forum opened with a welcome from Dr Jeff Harmer, Secretary of DEST, who introduced Senator Tierney, the representative of the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Brendan Nelson MP. Senator Tierney's address provided a contextual framework for the day and provided challenges for consideration during the course of the forum's discussions. (Notes from Senator Tierney's address are at [Attachment Three](#)).

This was followed by guided conversations with four participants from diverse contexts, who spoke of their roles and recent experiences.

Guided Conversations

Geoff Bloom, Rural Skills Australia

Mr Bloom noted that the recent drought has caused a net loss of about 80,000 jobs in the rural sector and the need to draw young people back to work in this sector as the recovery proceeds. Many of the members of his association have had little continuing formal involvement with education and training processes, but their understanding of its importance was clear.

He described Rural Skills Australia's recent success with *Rural Skills, Rural Futures* also known as *ONTrack*, a career information resource which consisted of a CD ROM and a booklet. 8000 copies were distributed to schools. Part of the distribution strategy included the employment of promotional officers who visited schools to demonstrate the CD ROM and promote the resources to teachers. This resource was well-received with many young people now considering a career in the rural industry. Mr Bloom acknowledged that schools have limited resources and business people are busy. He identified one of the key factors in the positive reception of *ONTrack* was the use of promotional officers to assist teachers understand and use the resource.

Terry Brient, President of the Tasmanian Principals Association,

Mr Brient described his organisation (the newly consolidated Tasmanian Principals' Association) and some of its functions, including its role in liaising with government on a wide spectrum of issues. He emphasised that schools varied enormously, partly because of the differences in their background contexts. 'Going to a new school is like going to another country. What works in one setting does not necessarily work in another.' He saw the Principal's role as akin to that of a person spinning a large series of plates on rods, moving at some pace from one to another keeping the various plates (read 'functions') all balanced and in motion. That is one reason, he suggested, for the difficulty in new initiatives gaining an entry and, what the sponsors of these initiatives feel to be, appropriate attention.

Michael Fischer, Restaurant & Caterers Australia

Mr Fischer is a restaurateur. He explained that this was what he always wanted to do, and described his history (at the William Angus Institute) at an early stage of the development of training processes in this industry. Over his career he has seen enormous advances in this regard. Almost every TAFE College makes provision in this area and the sorts of access issues which existed forty years ago are no longer present. A far more professional approach is evident today, both within the industry and in the training provision which supports it. He spoke most enthusiastically about his contact with young trainees and the enormous contribution they make to his enterprise despite the discipline and hard work entailed. That contact allows him to assess trainees' potential and their attitude to all aspects of the work, both glamorous and considerably less so.

Janet Kossy, Career Adviser from Wiley Park Girls High School

Ms Kossy described her work as a full-time career advisor at a large girls' secondary school in western Sydney. (NSW has funded a career adviser in every school. Approaches in other States to the delivery of career education in schools vary considerably.) Ms Kossy saw her work as a wide-ranging process, of which information provision was only one dimension. She works mainly with students in Years 9 to 11 and described a characteristic week. She takes classes of Years 9 and 10 students for five hours a week and does a good deal of one-to-one career counselling. Interviews with all or most Year 12 students, varying considerably in intensity and duration (but about 100 students for about 20 mins each), occur after their trial exams.

She also described her work in helping her students to participate in summer schools which provide taster VET courses in a wide range of fields. This entails considerable liaison and organisation. She maintains a very large resource collection but noted that her students seldom look at VET materials at their own instigation and the difficulty of getting her students to take broad perspectives about prospective careers.

Ms Kossy receives about 50 new pieces of information each week. Her order of priority was information from the NSW Department of Education & Training, then material from local TAFE colleges, and then industry-specific information unless there was a strong local flavour. She also receives a great deal of what she deems to be junk mail among this welter of new information.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Arrangements

Small groups then discussed key strengths and weaknesses of career education operations. Recurrent themes were:

- The importance of encouraging young people to think about career choices and pathways whilst at school, and of finding effective ways to achieve this. Some participants suggested that primary students should be considered in addition to secondary students.
- Developing and sustaining effective school career education programmes in a crowded curricular environment. This includes ensuring that there are either designated career teachers, or teachers with designated responsibility for career education in schools.
- Providing quality training and standards for career advisers working in school settings.
- Recognition of the role of career education as part of lifelong learning in today's society where most people will have multiple occupations.
- Communicating the importance and value of all types of work to young people, parents, schools and teachers to assist in breaking-down stereotypes and biases towards occupations with negative images and encouraging consideration of these as options.
- Meeting supply and demand needs for particular skills and experience, especially in industries or occupations experiencing skills shortages.
- The need to share information and language across sectors so that there is a common understanding of each others' requirements, expectations etc.
- Creating effective partnerships among all stakeholders including industry, business, schools, career advisers, parents and community groups with the aim of increasing their involvement in the delivery of career education.
- Including parents as a key element of the communication process, in terms of both receiving and sharing information, for career and work education.

- The importance of building individual pathways from formal education to work, directly or via participation in vocational education and training (VET) and/or other forms of tertiary education.
- The need to communicate to industry changes that are occurring in education with the introduction of vocational streams. As small businesses form a large proportion of Australian business, they have an important role in providing work placements to students undertaking VET in School subjects. However, they are largely unaware of what VET in School is and the role they are being asked to play. Further, these initiatives can have a significant impact on the limited time and profit margins small business often operate within.

Small Group workshops

In the afternoon, small groups workshopped strategies and actions for improving career education delivery. The small group topics were: Communication, (student) Experience, and Structures. The strategies and actions identified by the groups are listed under the 'Outcomes' section below. It should be noted that these strategies and actions were the work of small groups and did not necessarily reflect the views of all participants. Further, some of the strategies and actions require testing against current activities and need to be explored to determine whether they are feasible.

Closing

A large number of participants responded to the request to act as 'champions' of the Leaders in Careers agenda in their own school/work/community environment. Ms Shelagh Whittleston concluded the day by thanking participants for their work, contributions and a high level of engagement in the forum.

5. OUTCOMES

On the topic of INFORMATION PROVISION

A. ISSUE: Opening up channels of communication.

A key issue highlighted by the forum is the lack of coordination of available career information. Industry is concerned that their information does not reach target audiences in schools. Related to this, many career teachers do not have the time to sort through and effectively use the large amounts of information they receive on a daily basis. Further, career related information sent to Principals is not always forwarded to career teachers. A systematic and effective distribution system is needed which takes into account school and industry needs for disseminating and receiving information. Existing mechanisms for disseminating information with established avenues into schools should be utilised.

Objective:

To provide meaningful, comprehensive and relevant information to market segments.

Strategies:

- A.1 Encourage business and industry groups to contact schools about career information matters through the school career advisers' professional organisations.

Actions:

- Distribute relevant contact details for all State and Territory career education groups associated with the Career Industry Council of Australia to forum delegates.

- Collect, disseminate and promote exemplars of 'good process' related to information provision through this means.

B. ISSUE: Providing information to students (and by implication to others who influence career choices)

Related to the first issue was the need to provide comprehensive information to students and others who influence young people's career choices. The various options and resources for providing information need to be explored. A guide to good practice in the development and dissemination of career information was suggested. The guide would need to cover the most effective means for conveying information (eg face to face, print, electronic mediums) to target groups (students, teachers, parents etc) as well as how the material should be presented. Such a guide would need to be accessible to all business/industry groups and others engaged in producing career information.

Objective:

To make information available and desirable in order to encourage its effective use.

Strategies:

- B.1 Develop an on-line clearinghouse linked to the website <myfuture> which would list existing career education products and services so as to prevent duplication. The clearinghouse would also provide guidance on developing and distributing new career education materials.
- B.2 Evaluate existing career advice and transition resources (for students, parents, teachers and employers) and confirm their applicability.
- B.3 Develop an e-mail list through which industry representatives can respond to queries from students and their parents.
- B.4 Establish partnerships between schools and community organisations, such as service clubs and parent groups, for schools to use these organisations as a resource for the provision of local career/industry information for their students.
- B.5 Encourage parents, industry and employers to engage in an 'information distribution network' through, for example:
 - talking to schools, formal parent and community groups, service clubs etc;
 - using the network of Local Community Partnerships, established through the former Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP), as focal points for local community and regional action for the purposes of fostering career education, and brokering and sustaining local education/business/industry partnerships.
- B.6 Identify and develop industry/business ambassadors to raise awareness about their particular industry/occupation to school groups, teachers, parents and community groups.
- B.7 Develop a resource package for employers to assist in raising awareness of the types of occupations within their industry and the pathways to these.
- B.8 Coordinate the collection and analysis of current student destination information to raise awareness among education personnel of student destinations, and to encourage a higher level of local analysis and consequent action.

On the topic of STUDENT WORK/CAREER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

C. ISSUE: The 'attractiveness' (or lack of) of various employment options.

A key issue identified by the forum was the perceived attractiveness of various employment options. Negative perceptions about many occupations and industries are often unjustified as they have changed considerably over the last few decades. Further, there are new industries, technologies and

pathways which many career teachers, parents and others who influence young people's choices are largely unaware.

Objective:

Alter the net media experience of the community about the nature of particular industries and the employment opportunities available.

Strategies:

- C.1 The Commonwealth and industry associations to work together and build on existing marketing programmes to target areas of skills shortage.
- C.2 Collect, collate and distribute information to career teachers about areas of skills shortage and likely prospects for employment.
- C.3 Identify champions or ambassadors for particular issues (also see B.6) which can promote their industry/occupation and breakdown negative perceptions and stereotypes.
- C.4 Provide meaningful, clear information to employers explaining VET in School programmes, the benefits of these programmes for industry and employers' role in providing placements for young people under these programmes.

Action:

In a joint forum statement, outline the main decisions and insights from the Leaders in Careers forum. The statement can be circulated via a range of mechanisms including:

- ASPA newsletter and networks;
- Newsletters and networks of the Catholic and Independent school sectors;
- Industry newsletters such as those generated by ACCI and AIG;
- The Australian Careers Service (ACS) newsletter;
- The APAPDC network;
- The national parents' bodies.

D. ISSUE: Young people make negative decisions in relation to particular occupations at an early age.

The forum acknowledged the importance of exposing young people from an early age, to different occupations and work environments to raise awareness and consideration of different career options and breakdown negative stereotypes about particular industries/occupations. The concept of encouraging career education to be an integral part of schooling from early education was discussed. Industry experience was also seen as an important tool to assist teachers in providing students with industry information.

Objective:

Develop/maintain an open-minded attitude among young people of all ages, as well as among those who influence them, towards various options for work and further education.

Strategies:

- D.1 Industry to develop ways of coordinating/facilitating employer involvement at the local level in programmes of student/teacher industry visits, industry guest speakers and school work experience programs, in conjunction with relevant State/Territory programmes.
- D.2 Encourage schools, including pre-school, primary and secondary, to actively participate in local programmes of industry visits, guest speakers and school work experience programs (see D.1); and to also use parents and community groups as career information resources.
- D.3 Encourage local industry/business (particularly those with negative images) to support school initiatives such as in D.2, by providing speakers, mentors etc.

- D.4 Industry associations (through ACCI and AIG) to develop policies and programmes for providing appropriate information about their industry.
- D.5 Encourage Principals to invite industry/business representatives to their functions (and vice versa) so as to build relationships and awareness of each other's functions and activities.
- D.6 Encourage the development of support structures for providing teacher industry experience, and opportunities for business/industry to add value to classroom learning (a number of different models for this are in place or under development in NSW, Victoria and ACT).

Action:

In a joint forum statement, outline the main decisions and insights from the Leaders in Careers forum (also see action under C).

E. ISSUE: What should be experienced in terms of student work experience? By whom? By when? Who should provide the experience?

The forum acknowledged that many young people get work exposure from part-time jobs, Structured Workplace Learning placements and other VET in School programmes. Although some form of work exposure is important for all young people, formal school-based work experience should not be essential for all students but be more carefully targeted. Given this, the forum saw a need to revisit blanket work experience programmes to approaches which target particular groups of students or individuals.

Objective:

Relate work experience to the concepts of being employable and moving into employment

Strategies:

- E.1 Reconsider the nature and targeting of work experience, with a view to establishing:
- a common understanding by both employers and educators of the outcomes of work experience;
 - a common language that is universally acceptable;
 - a common protocol for the what, when, how and why and outcomes of work experience; and
 - an opportunity to list and report around workplace experience in a simplified, common and relevant way (as a demonstration of employability skills).

(NB: The MCEETYA Transition from Schools Taskforce and the Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council have several projects investigating what makes a quality work placement and a simulated work placement.)

- E.2 Develop a resource document for employers indicating the desired structure and outcomes of work experience.

On the topic of EFFECTIVE STRUCTURES

F. ISSUE: Using local networks as a medium to increase the effectiveness of career education.

The forum discussed the need to facilitate the development of local stakeholder partnerships which build on, rather than recreate, existing structures. The network of Local Community Partnerships (developed under the former ECEF) was seen as a possible vehicle to achieve this. They could act as focal points for local community and regional action for the purposes of fostering career education and brokering and sustaining local/education/business/industry partnerships.

Possible stakeholders include:

- schools – public and private;
- Industry associations, Chambers of Commerce, individuals and informal groups;
- agencies such as Centrelink, Group Training providers, New Apprenticeship Centres; TAFE Colleges and universities;
- parents; and
- the general community.

Strategies

- F.2 Develop and support business/education partnerships (such as the network of Local Community Partnerships; Local Learning and Employment Networks in Victoria; and Industry/Education Advisory Committees in NSW).
- F.1 Encourage Local Community Partnerships to undertake an environmental scan to identify stakeholders in their local area, their interests, and any work which had occurred to this point.
- F.3 Promote, encourage and support the implementation of the Framework for Career and Transition Services through local networks.
- F.4 Facilitate further forums to enable a wider range of education and business/industry representatives to interact, discuss their issues and develop effective strategies.

7. GOING FORWARD

This forum provided a fertile set of ideas, strategies and actions which outline the way forward for business, industry, schools and the career sector to work together to improve the delivery of career education in schools. The strategies and actions identified by the forum have been further developed and articulated in an Action Plan (refer [Attachment Four](#)).

One of the key activities identified in the Action Plan, is the facilitation of further forums at the State/Territory level to encourage the engagement of local stakeholders in the agenda. The engagement of local stakeholders in building relationships and working together to develop local strategies is crucial if the momentum from the forum is to be carried forward and there is to be any change effected in regard to improving the delivery of career education in schools.

Attachment One:
List of Participants

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**Attachment Two:
Forum Program**

Tuesday 19th August

Dinner & presentation (Mark McCrindle)

Wednesday 20th August

8:30 am Registrations

8:45 am Welcome

9:00-10:00 am Address: Senator Tierney

(working morning tea to be available from end of Minister's session)

Facilitator

10:00-10:30 am Practice - Guided conversations of experiences.

10:30-11:30 am Challenges

- Key strengths and weaknesses of career education operations.

11:30-12:30 The Core Issue

- How do we work together: essentials, elements and priorities

12:30-1:15 pm Lunch (opportunity to view career materials)

1:15-3:45 pm Solutions

- Objectives
- Strategies – short and long-term
- Actions
- Timeframes
- Reporting framework

3:45 pm Review of progress

4:00 pm Close

Attachment Three:**Notes from Senator Tierney's Address**

Dr Harmer, representatives from schools, business, industry, the career sector and government.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you here today and to welcome you to this *Leaders in Careers* forum. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this region, the Ngunnawal people.

The *Leaders in Careers* forum is an exciting and collaborative initiative which brings together for the first time, representatives from industry, schools and the career sector, to discuss the delivery of career education in schools.

Changes in school populations and participation rates

First of all I would like to draw on some statistics about changes in school populations and participation rates.

In 1950, the school population was 1.2 million and 6% of 17 year olds participated in school. By 1975 enrolments had reached 2.9 million with 30% of 17 year olds participating in school. By 2002, school enrolments had topped 3.3 million with 60.3% of 17-year-olds participating in school. It is also important to note that in 1999 18.9% of 17-year-olds undertook 'further study' such as Vocational Education and Training.

Not only do these figures highlight the different environment that young people live in today compared to previous generations, they also highlight young people's high level of participation in education today. Why are there so many young people participating in education? Because unlike previous generations, they simply cannot leave school at an early age and get a job. They need qualifications, training and experience. Career education in schools has a vital role in ensuring young people are able to make informed choices about subjects and education streams that will ultimately assist them in obtaining long-term and satisfying employment.

Cultural change

Career education has an important role in our schools to inform and empower young people to actively take control of their lives through appropriate subject choices linked to career pathways, be they through vocational education and training options, alternative TAFE courses or university. Ultimately, the information young people receive and the choices they make will impact on the rest of their lives. That is why it is so important that young people have access to information on the full range of options and pathways that are available to them, not just those offered through universities.

Universities do have an invaluable role in assisting many young people to achieve their potential through attainment of tertiary qualifications. However, only around 38% of young people enter university and around 14% of those drop out or switch courses after their first year of study. Further, not all young people aspire to a professional career accessed via a university qualification. This highlights the need for all options to be made equally available to young people, without a bias towards one particular education or training stream post school.

Compared to 30 years ago there are now far more opportunities and choices available through vocational education and training, for young women and men and those already in

the labour force. In 2002, there were more than 185,000 students participating in VET in Schools programmes in Australia. Further, there are currently more than 391,000 New Apprentices in training in over 500 occupations throughout the country.

However, the excellent career opportunities associated with vocational education and training are still not widely recognised. The challenge for governments, industry and schools is to make sure that our current and future labour forces both appreciate and pursue skills development and learning.

It is important that students, parents and teachers value the vocational education and training alternatives and see them as vital, interesting and rewarding. Recent reports¹ indicate that VET is still seen as a second class option by many parents and teachers. For example, some parents and teachers advise students to opt for university, even when this does not suit the young person's aspirations or abilities. This apparently negative image of VET contrasts with the high level of satisfaction among those attending TAFE and the statistical evidence that trade and higher VET qualifications lead to good outcomes. However, views about VET among young people are changing, with vocational options increasingly being seen by them as a positive pathway.

Such examples emphasise the need for cultural change in the approach of many schools to career education. The Commonwealth recognises the need for a culture where young people, as well as their parents receive very strong messages about the benefits of going to TAFE, doing an apprenticeship, or other forms of vocational education and training. Under the National Framework for Career and Transition Services, recently endorsed by the Australian and all State and Territory governments, it is acknowledged that there may be a need for 'changing the culture of schools and their perception of their role in supporting transitions'.

Both industry and our schools systems have an important role to play in getting these messages across. These messages and linkages are not just a matter of developing an awareness of the benefits of taking up education and training. Just as importantly the messages must encourage and guide young people in particular to look widely at what they might pursue and to choose what is right for them.

Building Partnerships

An important focus of today is on partnership building - moving forward together to develop real, achievable strategies to facilitate cultural change in the way that both schools and industry think and operate in preparing materials and delivering these careers messages in schools. This can only be achieved by working together.

As economic change continues to impact on job types and skills, teachers and parents frequently do not have access to all of the information - including about the variety of career opportunities - that is now available. For example, in the 1950s being a car mechanic meant being a 'grease monkey'. Today vocational education courses for the motor vehicle industry and mechanics include several dozen varieties of skill VET courses, from design and technology to electronics.

¹ ANTA (2003) National Strategy for VET 2004-2010 Report of focus group research prepared by Quay Connection, The Research Forum and Albany Consulting for ANTA December 2002

James, R (2000) TAFE, university or work? The early preferences and choices of students in Years 10, 11 and 12. Leabrook SA: NCVET.

Teese, R (2000) Six paradoxes in the relationship of young people to VET. Paper presented to the VETNET Work 2000 Biennial Conference, Melbourne, November 2000

Industry in particular is in a position to support, recognise and reward the skills they require. Skills shortages are an ongoing concern to industry, particularly in the traditional trades like engineering, electrotechnology and building and construction, and in rural industries. While there are many reasons for shortages, it is imperative for the ongoing health of our economy, and citizens' well being that they are recognised and addressed. One response involves the Commonwealth working with industry to identify and address strategies to meet industry's skill needs now and into the future, through the National Industry Skills Initiative or NISI.

I acknowledge that large numbers of young people are participating in VET in School options across Australia. However, approximately 50% of all student enrolments in VET in Schools programmes in 2002 were located in four areas: Tourism and Hospitality, Computing, Business and Clerical, and General Education and Training. This is down from 60% in 2001. Further, student participation in School Based New Apprenticeships indicates that approximately 75% of students are employed in four industry areas: Sales and Personal Services, Tourism and Hospitality, Business and Clerical and Primary Industry.

I ask industry: how many opportunities do you provide for VET in Schools in areas of skills shortages? How many opportunities do you provide for Structured Workplace Learning or School Based New Apprenticeships in areas of skills shortages?

Industry Action Plans developed by specific industries under NISI, have all highlighted a common need for improved industry career information in order to attract people, especially school students and other young people, to these industries. Industry and business need to take the initiative and be more active in involving schools in the development of career material and their distribution strategies, to ensure that the career materials end up with their target audience, young people in school.

There have been a number of good practice examples in this regard, such as the rural industry's highly successful OnTrack CD ROM. The industry has managed to attract many young people to consider a career in the rural sector, following the launch of OnTrack. As part of the OnTrack campaign, rural industry promotional officers visited schools to introduce and demonstrate the product to teachers and students.

Perhaps you need to do a lot more 'thinking outside the square' in terms of addressing areas of skills shortages. There are opportunities and benefits for industry in working with schools, not just in the development and dissemination of career products. For example, industry recruitment strategies could be better linked to VET in school graduates. This would encourage industry participation in VET in school programmes to ensure graduates had the best possible training and experience and were attractive employment options to industry.

Likewise schools need to provide opportunities for business and industry interaction with their school and be responsive to industry needs. There are some outstanding examples of schools involving industry in their career education programme.

One such example is in Alice Springs where three Government high schools jointly receive Career and Transition pilot funding to facilitate young people's transitions within and beyond schooling. This has created linkages between school, students, families and the community (including JPP providers, JPET providers, the Chamber of Commerce, Job Network Providers, employers and Government bodies).

Under the pilot, links between schools, industry and community agencies have been strengthened, resulting in greater collaboration between community partners. This is evidenced by the establishment of a strategic plan for the Alice Springs Workplace Learning Community for a community-based approach in terms of work placements, job vacancies, school-based apprenticeships, etc. Further, strong links have been made with a local project to

improve Indigenous employment rates in the town, with the aim of providing more seamless transitions for Indigenous school leavers.

However, all schools need to take up this challenge. Through interaction with industry schools will improve their own knowledge of careers and pathways for young people, and help to ensure a comprehensive range of information on available options, pathways and careers is made available to all students.

I ask schools, how many of you invite industry participation in your school? How many of your teachers have had industry experiences either through formal programmes or informal exposure?

I also ask industry, how often do you provide teachers with the opportunity to engage with industry?

Looking forward

I challenge you today to think about how industry, business and schools can better work together. You are challenged to come up with achievable strategies which schools, business and industry can implement to improve the provision of information for all young people at school.

This forum is an important step in improving the delivery of career education in schools. There are challenges but I know that the dedication and commitment from you, as individuals and as organisations, will be equal to the task.

We as Government have facilitated this forum enabling industry, business and schools to come together for the first time. We as Government support the development of a range of career education services and initiatives. It is now up to you to build partnerships, find ways to improve the delivery of career education in schools and to work together on strategies to deliver cultural change.

I look forward to hearing about the outcomes achieved by this forum and to the continuation of the great work being undertaken on a number of fronts which is making a positive difference to the lives and futures of young Australians. I wish you all a very successful and enjoyable forum.

**Attachment Four:
Leaders in Careers Forum - Action Plan**

Objectives	Strategies	Actions	Agencies with Key Responsibility	Timeframe
<p>A. To raise the awareness of schools, career teachers, parents, industry, small business and the wider community of the forum and its outcomes, and encourage their ownership/engagement in progressing forum actions.</p>	<p>A.1 Facilitate further forums at the State/Territory level to encourage the engagement of local stakeholders and enable a wider range of education and business/industry representatives to interact.</p>	<p>A.1.1 The Reference group to facilitate a Leaders in Careers forum in each State/Territory with the aim of engaging local stakeholders (such as local employers and industry, school principals, career teachers, parents, Local Community Partnerships, State Government agencies) in improving the delivery of career education in schools.</p> <p>A.1.2 DEST to seek AESOC agreement to use the remaining Leaders in Careers funds to fund future activities such as providing a nominal contribution to the State/Territory based forums.</p> <p>A.1.3 DEST to draft a one-page brochure outlining the respective roles and possible activities for industry, schools and parents/community to be actively involved in improving career education. The brochure would be further developed by the first State/Territory forum.</p>	<p>Reference Group</p> <p>DEST</p> <p>DEST, 1st State/Territory forum</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>November 2003</p> <p>By 1st State/Territory forum</p>
	<p>A.2 At the State/Territory based forums, issue a forum Statement, which identifies the main decisions and insights from the Leaders in Careers forums, and outlines the way forward for industry and schools to work together to improve school career education activities.</p>	<p>A.2.1 DEST to draft a generic Statement identifying the main decisions and insights of the forum and circulate this to the Reference Group and forum delegates for comment.</p> <p>A.2.2 Circulate the Statement via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newsletters and networks of ASPA, and the Catholic and Independent school principal associations; - State/Territory education jurisdictions; - Industry newsletters such as those generated by ACCI and AIG; - The Australian Careers Service (ACS) newsletter; - The APAPDC network; 	<p>DEST, Reference Group, forum delegates</p> <p>DEST, State/Territory forum delegates</p>	<p>Issued after each State/Territory forum</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The national parents' bodies; - Other avenues as appropriate. 		
<p>B. To open up communication channels between schools, business and industry in order to improve the provision of meaningful, comprehensive and relevant career information.</p>	<p>B.1 Encourage business and industry to use dissemination mechanisms which are effective in reaching school career advisers, to ensure career info/ resources reaches target audiences.</p>	<p>B.1.1 Distribute contact details for all State & Territory career adviser associations to forum delegates.</p>	<p>Mike Geeves/ DEST</p>	<p>Actioned</p>
		<p>B.1.2 Encourage industry and business to use established mechanisms for reaching school career advisers and target audiences - such as the ACS newsletter, email distribution lists and newsletter mail-outs of the State/Territory career associations etc - when disseminating career resources to schools</p>	<p>Local Community Partnerships, ACCI/AIG State based organisations</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>B.1.3 The Reference Group to investigate alternative mechanisms for distributing information to schools through the Local Community Partnerships and ACCI/AIG State based organisations.</p>	<p>Reference Group</p>	<p>July 2004</p>
		<p>B.1.4 Through the State/Territory forums (refer A.1.1), collect 'good process' examples of the provision of career education information in schools and promote these through the State/ Territory career adviser professional associations.</p>	<p>ACCI/AIG, ASPA & equivalents, CICA, State/Territory career associations</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>C. To provide desirable, effective and user-friendly career information to students and others who influence their career choices, through strengthening school/parent/ industry/business/community partnerships.</p>	<p>C.1 Strengthen local school/parent/ industry/business/community partnerships so that schools and young people can draw on these groups as career education resources.</p>	<p>C.1.1 Industry to develop ways of coordinating/ facilitating local employer involvement in programmes of student/teacher industry visits, industry guest speakers and school work experience programs, in conjunction with relevant State/Territory programmes.</p>	<p>ACCI/AIG</p>	<p>March 2004 - ongoing</p>
		<p>C.1.2 Encourage schools, including pre-school, primary and secondary, to actively participate in local programmes of industry visits, guest speakers and school work experience programmes (refer C.1.1), and to also use parents as a career information resource.</p>	<p>ASPA & equivalents</p>	<p>March 2004 – ongoing</p>

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		<p>C.1.3 Encourage local industry/business to support local programmes of industry visits, guest speakers and school work experience programmes (refer C.1.1) by providing speakers, mentors, work experience placements.</p> <p>C.1.4 Encourage principals to invite industry/ business representatives to appropriate functions (and vice versa) so as to build relationships and awareness of each other's functions and activities.</p> <p>C.1.5 Identify and develop industry/business ambassadors (such as Apprentice of the Year or other finalists, other young role models) to talk to school groups about their particular industry/experiences.</p> <p>C.1.6 Use Local Community Partnerships, as points of contact and 'brokers' of information between business/industry and schools. Encourage each cluster to undertake an environmental scan to identify local stakeholders, their interests, and any work which had occurred to this point.</p>	<p>ACCI/AIG</p> <p>ASPA & equivalents</p> <p>ACCI/AIG, ASPA & equivalents</p> <p>Local Community Partnerships, DEST</p>	<p>March 2004 - ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2004-ongoing</p>
	<p>C.2 Assist employers to understand their role in VET in school programmes, and encourage them to actively participate in these programmes as well as to act as ambassadors for their industry/ business.</p>	<p>C.2.1 Investigate funding sources to develop a resource package for employers to use when presenting to schools, career forums, parent meetings, community groups etc. The package would assist employers to raise awareness of the types of occupations and pathways within their industry/business. (Potential funding sources include the Strategic Intervention Programme).</p> <p>C.2.2 Provide meaningful, clear information to employers explaining VET in School programmes, the benefits of these programmes for industry and employers' role in providing placements for young people under these programmes</p>	<p>ACCI, AIG, NFF, BCA, DEST</p> <p>DEST, ACCI/AIG</p>	<p>December 2003</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>E. To monitor work being undertaken to clarify the role of work experience in context of other programmes which include work placements.</p> <p>The forum identified that with the availability of VET in Schools, School Based New Apprenticeships & Structured Workplace Learning, there is a need to review the role, nature and targeting of work experience.</p>	<p>E.1 Take note of activities of MCEETYA and other bodies which include consideration of the role of work experience in context of other programmes (such as Structured Workplace Learning, VET in Schools, School Based New Apprenticeships) which provide work placements; and participate in related research activities where appropriate.</p>	<p>I.1 Develop a resource guide for employers outlining the desired structure and outcomes of work experience (refer C.2.1).</p> <p>E.1.2 Include work experience as an agenda item at the State/Territory forums (refer A.1.1).</p> <p>E.1.3 Ensure the role of work experience in developing young people's skills and knowledge is considered as a component of any pilots of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development.</p>	<p>ACCI, AIG, DEST, Reference Group</p> <p>Reference Group</p> <p>DEST</p>	<p>July 2004</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>July 2004</p>
<p>F. To promote and support the implementation of the Framework for Career and Transition Services.</p>	<p>F.1 Promote and support the implementation of the Framework for Career and Transition Services which has been agreed to by Commonwealth and State Ministers.</p>	<p>F.1.1 DEST to provide a copy of the Framework for Career and Transition Services to Local Community Partnerships, ASPA & equivalents, ACCI /AIG, CICA, the National Parents body, etc en encourage them to promote it via their respective networks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASPA newsletter and networks; - Newsletters and networks of the Catholic and Independent school sectors; - Industry newsletters such as those generated by ACCI and AIG; - Australian Careers Service (ACS) newsletter; - The APAPDC network; - National parents' bodies; - LLENS in Victoria; - NSW Industry/Education Advisory Committees. 	<p>DEST</p>	<p>December 2003</p>