

# Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA) Conference April 2003

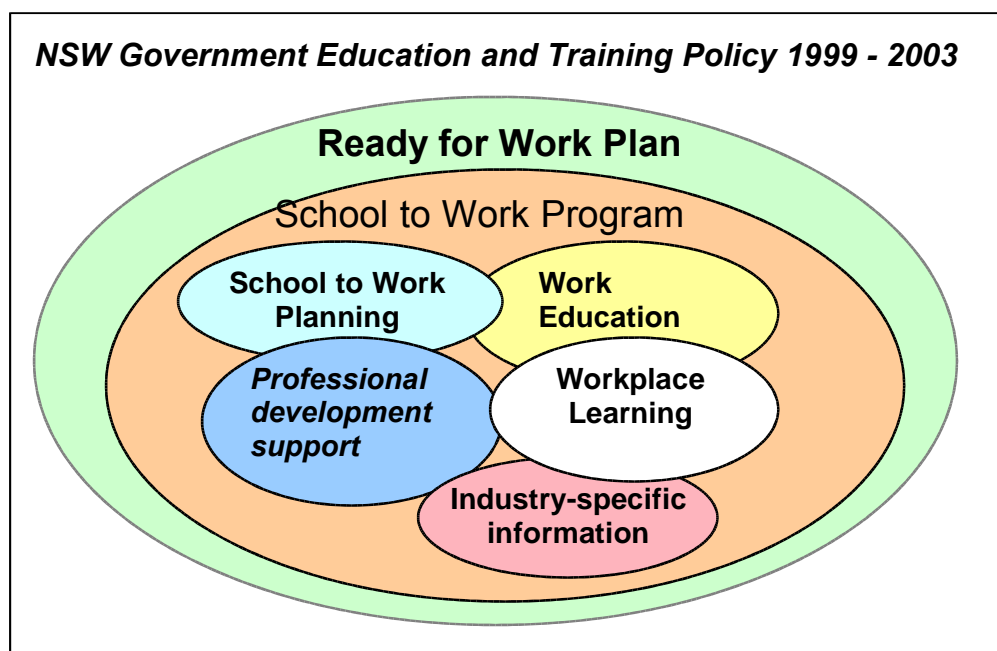
## Vocational Learning: Everyone's Business....

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Current national and state education policy directions support the view that before leaving school, students should have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment and career options and pathways to further education, training, employment and life-long learning.

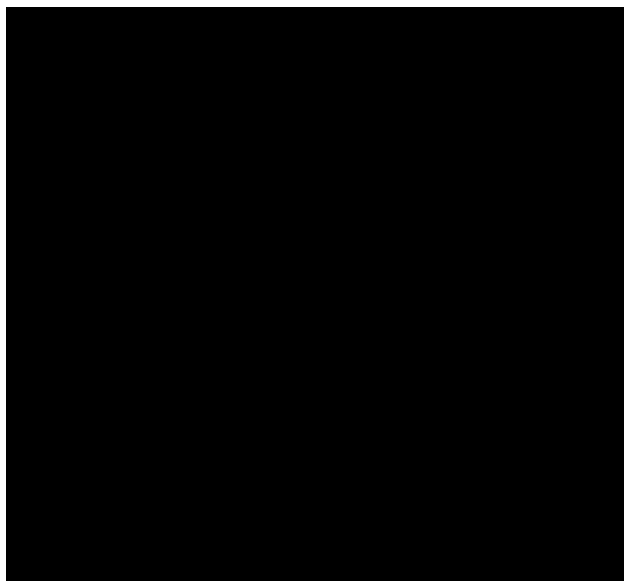
The *Ready for Work Plan: School to Work Program* was a government election commitment for 1999 – 2003. Over this period the NSW government committed \$21.5M to support the *School to Work Program* for NSW government secondary schools. This program aimed to equip students with the skills, understandings and attributes that will enable them to better manage their transition from school.

The NSW Government's *Education and Training Policy 1999-2003* covered the wide range of programs and initiatives that its name implies. It applied to areas well beyond schools including traineeships and apprenticeships, TAFE, industry planning, VET in Schools as well as the general education delivered through schools as part of the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate. The *School to Work Program* sits firmly within this policy.



## **School to Work Program Implementation strategies**

The *School to Work Program* comprises five elements which together provide co-ordinated and integrated support to government school students to manage their transitions from school to a range of post-school options:



### **1. School to Work Planning**

School to work planning is a process which assists young people in NSW government schools to understand and take a more focused approach to planning and managing their pathways from school to further education, training and employment. Through a range of strategies, including the use of the *School to Work Planning Employment Related Skills Logbook*, students have developed individual action plans and documented their acquisition of work related skills.

### **2. Work Education**

A 100-hour Work Education course for Stage 5 (Years 9-10) was piloted in selected NSW government schools in 1998-2000. The Board of Studies then gave approval for any school in NSW to implement this course while the current course is reviewed, and a new 200 hour Stage 4/5 Board Developed Work Education course is developed for implementation from 2005.

### **3. Workplace Learning**

Local initiatives to better prepare young people to participate in workplace learning programs have been supported in each of the 40 NSW Department of Education and Training school districts. Each district has developed an implementation plan to support the provision of quality workplace learning programs in schools. These programs support the work readiness of students and assist employers to manage student work placement.

The Workplace Learning Handbook was developed and is currently being updated to provide schools and TAFE NSW colleges with policies and procedures to support the implementation of workplace learning programs for school students. Employer, Parent and Student Guides to Workplace Learning have also been distributed to schools and TAFE colleges.

### **4. Industry specific career information**

Multimedia resources providing information about career and training opportunities in the Retail, Hospitality, Engineering, Automotive, Arts and Electrotechnology industries and in Small Business have been developed and distributed to schools. These resources have been developed in close consultation with industry. A CD-ROM to support careers in the Sport and Recreation industry is currently under development.

Funding support has been provided for the organisation of industry specific careers expos. Resources including teacher and student handbooks have also been developed and distributed to better support students attending these interactive events to link their participation to school to work planning.

### 5. Professional development support for careers advisers

To support the implementation of the *School to Work Program*, training workshops and a web site have been provided to ensure professional development support to careers advisers and other teachers implementing this program.

## Participation in the *School to Work Program*

### Where have we been?

NSW	1999 Initial pilot	2000	2001	2002	2003 - anticipated
Target group	Pilot schools	ALL govt schools invited to apply	ALL govt schools invited to apply	ALL govt schools invited to apply	ALL govt schools expected to participate
Number of schools	78 schools volunteered	317 secondary and central schools participated	420 secondary, central & SSP schools participated	510 secondary, central & SSP schools participated	All schools with secondary enrolment
Students participation	Students "at risk"	14,000 students involved	Over 42,000 students involved	Over 130,000 students involved	Over 160,000 students anticipated

In 1999, 78 government high schools across NSW volunteered to participate in a pilot of school to work planning, targeting support for students who were 'at risk' of not completing Year 10 and/or 'at risk' of disengaging with school or further education and training. By 2000 this number had grown to 317 secondary and central schools targeting over 14,000 students. This represented approximately 7% of the total enrolment for students in Years 9 – 12.

For 2001, 420 secondary and central schools and schools for specific purposes (SSPs) applied for funding to either introduce school to work planning for the first time or to expand their existing school to work planning initiatives.

In October 2001 all schools that had received funding were asked to complete a progress report on their implementation of the *School to Work Program*. A total of 407 reports (97%) were returned. The 2001 *School to Work Planning Annual Report*

1 was compiled from the quantitative and qualitative data provided, reporting on the implementation and outcomes of the program for students and schools.

Schools reported that over 50,000 students in Years 9 to 12 were involved, with a strong focus on developing individual school to work plans. The report also indicated positive benefits of the program in raising awareness of transition pathways, workplace responsibilities and opportunities. Teachers reported that students who had developed individual school to work plans gained an increased knowledge of the workplace and employment skills and that self esteem was enhanced, particularly for 'at risk' students.

Other benefits for students reported were:

- Improved job seeking skills
- A greater understanding of workplace communications for employment
- Improved attendance at school
- More appropriate selection of courses for stage 6
- Increased enrolment in VET courses for the Higher School Certificate

The report also identified that school to work planning was implemented in a range of ways, including:

- A whole school approach, with a focus on a whole cohort
- A focus on a special target group
- Cross curriculum delivery approach involving multiple faculties
- Stand alone programs such as Work Education
- A combination of these models.

Schools reported on the establishment of school management teams which included careers advisers, VET coordinators, senior executive, head teachers and welfare staff, to support the effective and coordinated implementation of the program. Schools indicated that they were appreciative of the resources provided for school to work planning initiatives. Funds were mainly used for planning and implementation, training of staff, clerical support, purchase of resources and a range of special activities for students.

Schools also reported on the issues and barriers associated with implementation of the program. These related to isolation, availability of time, staff resistance to change, the crowded curriculum, restraints on cross curriculum delivery, storage of logbooks and staff changes.

Recommendations identified in the 2001 report have been actively addressed in 2002 and continue to drive the enhancement of the program in 2003. The recommendations were grouped as:

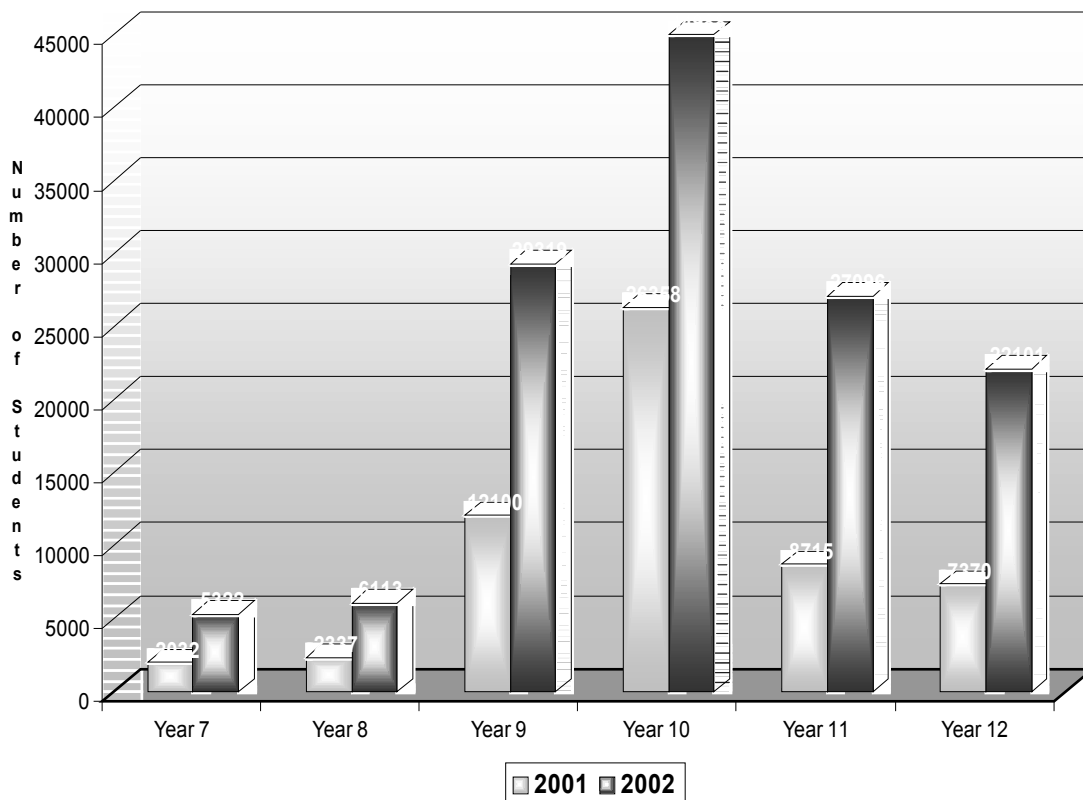
- Isolation issues for some schools
- Numbers and targeting of students participating in the program
- Linking Board of Studies directions with school to work planning
- Use of logbooks
- Further promotion and support of the program

In 2002, the emphasis of the *School to Work Program* expanded to a focus on implementation across the stage 5 and 6 curriculum. This is in response to national

and state directions in vocational learning, supported strongly in NSW by the integration of key outcomes in new syllabuses from the Board of Studies K–10 Curriculum Framework and the *Work, Employment and Enterprise* Cross-Curriculum Content Statements. The cross-curriculum focus is reflected in the *Employment Related Skills Logbook* and was supported through the training provided across the forty NSW school districts for careers advisers and executive staff responsible for curriculum implementation as well as online support through the *School to Work* website (<http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/schooltowork>).

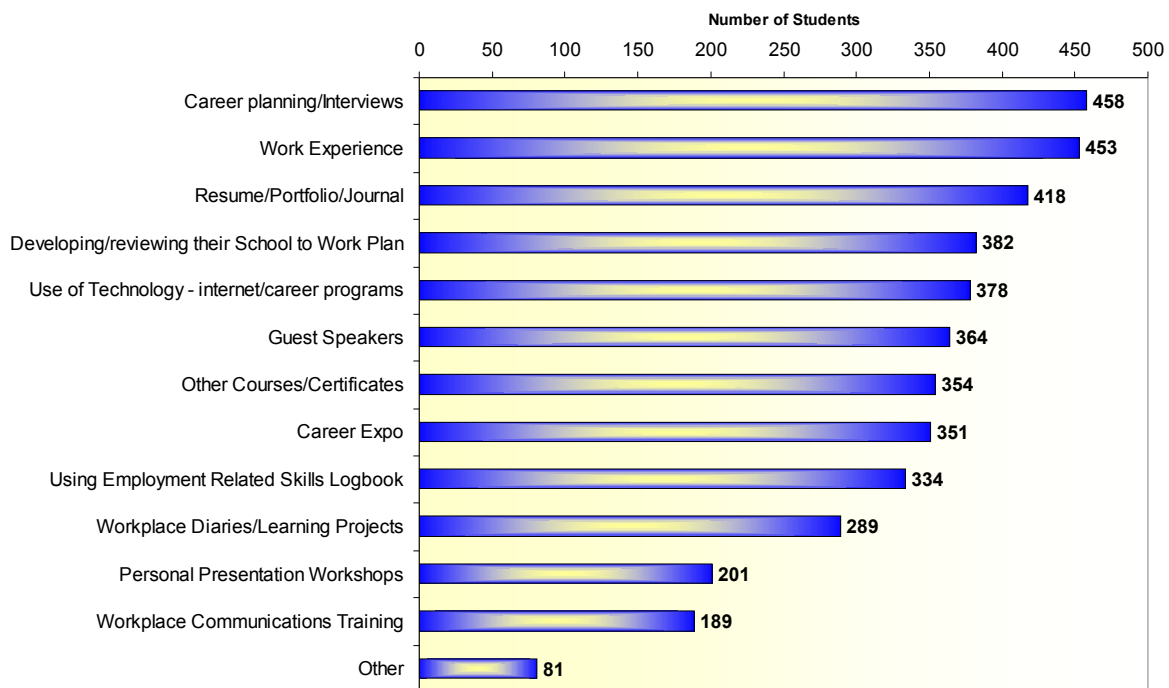
In 2002 over 500 schools with a secondary enrolment received funds to support the implementation of the *School to Work Program*, involving 135,000 students in Years 7 –12, representing approximately 67% of the total enrolment across these year groups. However for year 10 this represents 85% of the total cohort. An annual report on the program will also be developed for 2002 from data collected via a similar school progress report from 505 schools (99%). Early collation of this data, as indicated in graph 1, shows continuing growth of student participation in the program across NSW.

**Graph 1: Student participation in the School to Work Program 2001/2002**



As reported in graph 2, a high number of schools have confirmed student participation in a diversity of activities which contribute to school to work planning. It is clear that career planning interviews, work experience and the use of journals, diaries and logbooks are an integral part of student learning for this program.

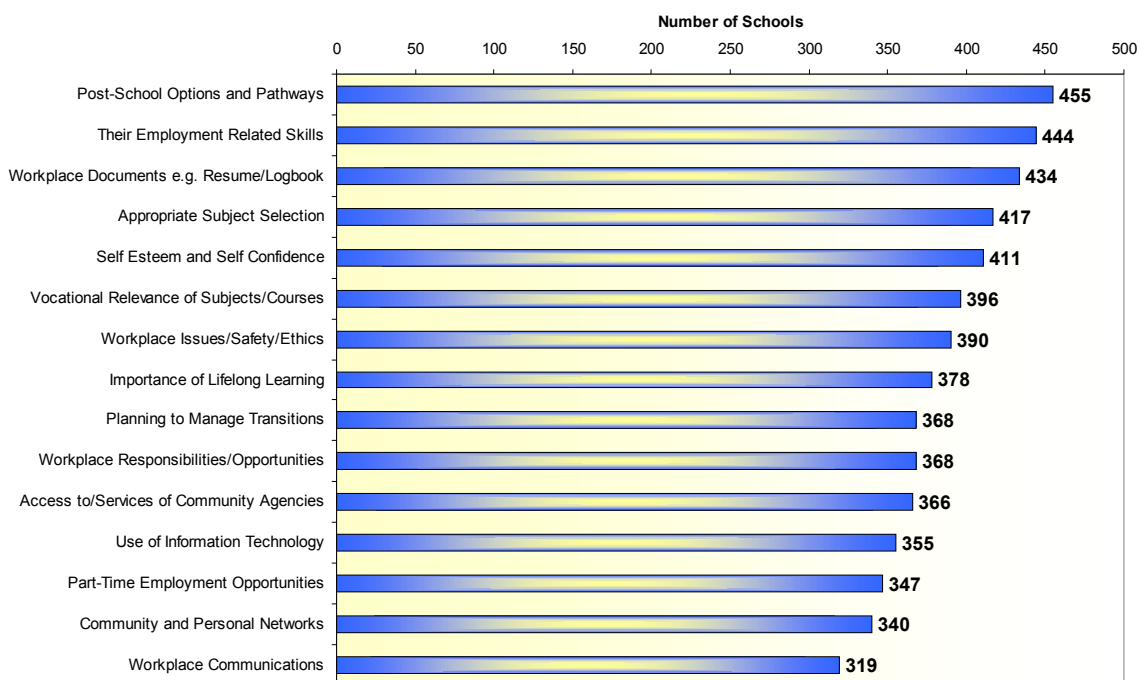
**Graph 2: Number of schools reporting student activities in school to work planning**



Graph 3 indicates the high level and diversity of student outcomes reported by schools and achieved through student engagement with school to work planning activities, particularly in their use of the employment related skills logbook.

**Graph 3: Numbers of schools reporting student outcomes in school to work planning**

Students have developed knowledge, skills and attitudes about:



## **What did the schools and teachers say about school to work planning in 2002?**

- *“Students had a better idea of what to choose when it came to subject selection.”*
- *“School to Work is an excellent initiative which the students have really taken on board and enjoy.”*
- *“The production of a resume was highly appreciated as it is a tangible result which students can use immediately.”*
- *“STW is now being viewed as an important component of the school structure.”*
- *“This funding has allowed us to provide a more extensive and intensive program for our students with disabilities, resulting in positive work ethics enhancing their chances of post school employment.”*
- *“Students felt a sense of achievement when gaining certificates – they realised a connection between school and work.”*
- *“The profile of STWP in the school has increased. There is an increased awareness amongst students of the need to plan their move from school to work and the importance the school places on it.”*
- *“Students understanding of the importance of decision making, subject selection and VET courses has been greatly improved.”*

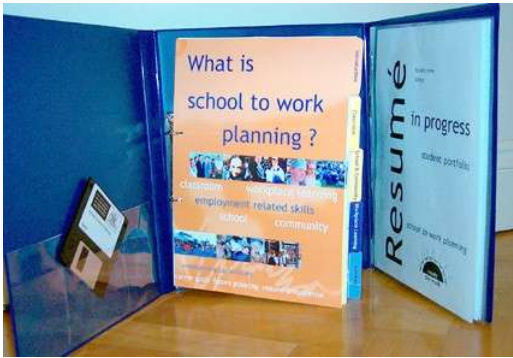
## **The success story of the *Employment Related Skills Logbook***

The logbook is a central element of the *School to Work Program*. The new style logbook was developed as a means of enhancing students’ understanding of the employment related skills they are developing at school and in the community throughout their schooling years. The logbook also provides a tool for students to record their individual school to work plans, store evidence of their major achievements and articulate their learning into resumes.

In 2002 more than 120,000 copies of the logbook were sent to over 500 central and high schools and schools for specific purposes.

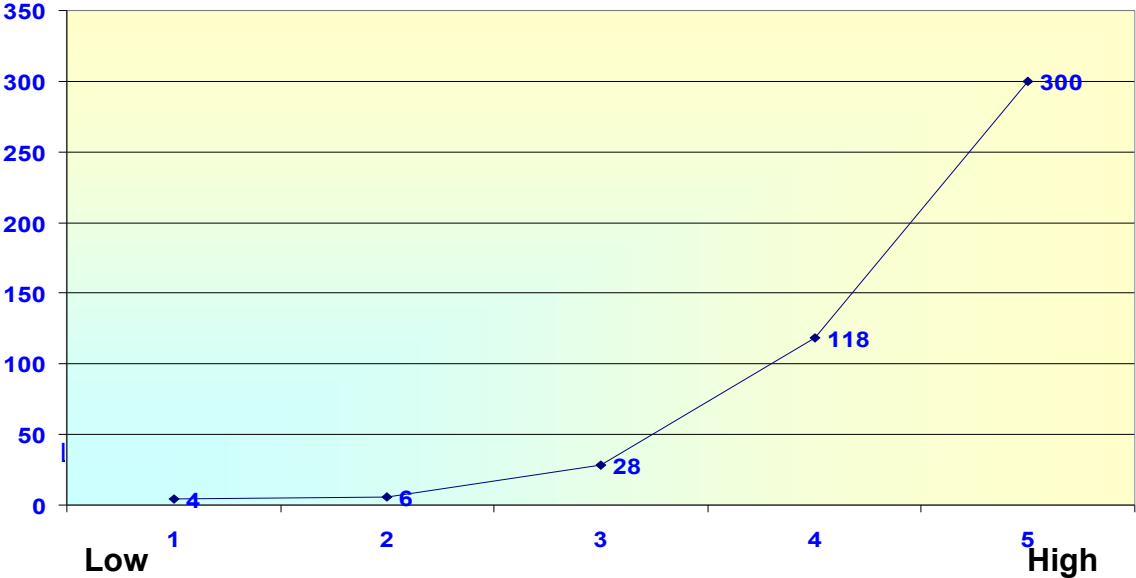
Throughout 2002 the VET in Schools Directorate received an unprecedented amount of positive feedback from schools about the style and flexibility of the new logbook. There has been a consistent demand for more copies by schools. As a result, an additional 100,000 have been produced for 2003 and are currently being distributed to schools.

Additional resources to support students, teachers and parents/caregivers to effectively use the student logbook when working with specific groups of students have been produced for distribution to schools from the beginning of 2003.



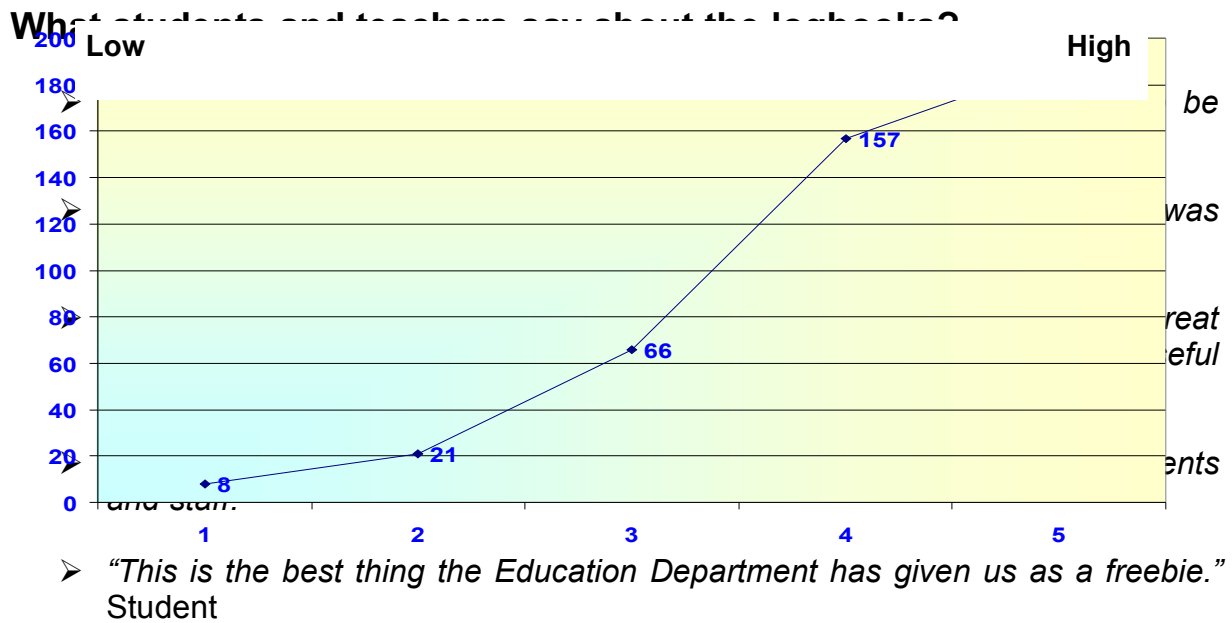
Data provided by 2002 progress reports from schools:

Graph 4: Physical Appearance of the logbook – rating by numbers of schools



Graph 5: Student Acceptance of the logbook – rating by numbers of school





### Professional Development Support for the School to Work Program

The following table demonstrates the implementation strategy used to support careers advisers, school executive, principals and teachers to implement this program over the last four years.

#### TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

School to Work Program	Stage 1 Training 2000	Stage 2 Training 2001	Stage 3 Training 2002	Stage 4 Training 2003
<b>Focus</b>	Awareness of STW Planning	Whole cohort approach	Cross curriculum approach	Sustainability and consolidation of cross curriculum approach
<b>Training Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Introduce STW planning processes and resources</li> <li>❖ Address by successful pilot school</li> <li>❖ Technology training of participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Info strategy to schools</li> <li>❖ Training Career Advisers and executive staff</li> <li>❖ Address by successful pilot school</li> <li>❖ Technology training of participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ VET in Schools – big picture</li> <li>❖ School success stories</li> <li>❖ Introduce new logbook</li> <li>❖ School planning for implementation</li> <li>❖ Technology training of participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Changing workplace -relationship with employability skills</li> <li>❖ Facilitation by executive</li> <li>❖ Develop operational implementation plans</li> <li>❖ Introduce cross curricula resources</li> <li>❖ District support teams</li> </ul>

<b>Intended Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Familiarisation with Govt policy and DET response</li> <li>❖ Careers adviser skilled to assist students to develop STW plans</li> <li>❖ Greater support for students with identified career planning needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Shift school culture</li> <li>❖ Strengthen community partnerships</li> <li>❖ Whole cohorts of students targeted for individual career planning</li> <li>❖ Careers adviser and exec equipped with skills and resources to manage change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Students identify work related skills for successful transitions</li> <li>❖ Schools undertake audit of vocational learning outcomes in curriculum</li> <li>❖ Teachers recognize vocational learning outcomes are embedded into curriculum delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Whole district plan to support STW</li> <li>❖ Executive skilled to self manage the school's STW program</li> <li>❖ Improved understanding and knowledge of the links between education and training, business industry and community</li> </ul>
<b>Key Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ District VET Consultants</li> <li>❖ District facilitator from pilot schools</li> <li>❖ State consultants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ District VET Consultants</li> <li>❖ School based teams</li> <li>❖ State consultants</li> <li>❖ STW teacher resource</li> <li>❖ logbook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ District VET Consultants</li> <li>❖ State Consultants (VET in Schools Directorate)</li> <li>❖ Facilitator-best practice</li> <li>❖ New logbook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ SEO2s</li> <li>❖ District VET consultants</li> <li>❖ VET in Schools staff</li> <li>❖ School executive</li> <li>❖ Industry representation</li> <li>❖ Cross curriculum resources &amp; logbook</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ No. of careers advisers trained</li> <li>❖ Evaluations inform Stage 2 training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Number of schools targeting whole cohorts</li> <li>❖ Whole school plans</li> <li>❖ Evaluations inform Stage 3 training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Level of executive representation</li> <li>❖ Whole school plans</li> <li>❖ Evaluations inform Stage 4 training</li> </ul>	Term 2 training will provide evaluations to inform future support.
<b>Technology support initiatives</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Develop test website</li> <li>❖ Site directory and structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Maintenance and expansion of website</li> </ul>	Migration of STW website onto VET in Schools Directorate server

The strategy clearly demonstrates a growth in the program from awareness raising, to whole cohort involvement (rather than just students designated as 'at risk'), to a cross curriculum approach consistent with the national and state directions in supporting vocational learning.

## Where to from here?

In 2003 the *School to Work Program* will continue to support the preparation of students in Years 9 - 12 for career pathways. This preparation, in the context of vocational learning, includes the development of employment related skills developed through an extensive range of work-related learning experiences and opportunities provided across all curriculum areas.

National and state policy directions support vocational learning as integral to the general learning of students in the compulsory years of schooling. This is clearly described in the MCEETYA, Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework (2001) definition for vocational learning:

*“Vocational learning is general learning that has a vocational perspective. It includes elements such as general employability skills, enterprise education, career education and community and work-based learning. All students should experience vocational learning at each year level throughout their schooling.”*

This paper has clearly identified the consistency of this definition to the outcomes of the *NSW School to Work Program*, consolidated by the key directions of the NSW Board of Studies in the development of the *K–10 Curriculum Framework* and subsequent new syllabuses due for implementation from 2004. As previously described, it supports a cross curriculum approach to vocational and enterprise learning through the implementation of the *Work, Employment and Enterprise* cross-curriculum content statement which syllabus writers are required to incorporate into all Year 7 – 10 syllabuses. Hence vocational learning becomes ‘everyone’s business’.

In 2003 all government schools in NSW with a secondary enrolment will receive:

- Multiple copies of the employment related skills logbook distributed free of charge to government school students.
- A support supplement version of the logbook to assist students with special needs.
- Vocational learning booklets for teachers in all Key Learning Areas.
- A case studies support booklet for Principals.
- Access to professional development support.

The vocational learning booklets, distributed to all secondary teachers in NSW, will provide an unprecedented set of resources to support teachers in the implementation of vocational learning in NSW across all curriculum areas. They are designed to support teachers to see vocational learning as ‘core business’ integrated into everyday teaching and learning.

The *School to Work* program will continue to support vocational education, training and

- a planning process
- the selection of opportunities
- increased self-reliance
- the development of skills and learning
- improved understanding of training, business



The current and increasing focus on vocational and enterprise learning as an integral syllabus component across all curriculum areas will ensure young people can view their learning as relevant and lifelong, to be articulated into career and life skills for

the future. It provides an opportunity to develop a new approach to career advisory and transition support services for students for the future, while continuing to provide access to suitably qualified people to support them to make key decisions about jobs, courses and career paths, including access to information systems and careers advice which is informed by current labour market trends.

NSW is also well placed to provide strengthened industry/education partnerships to support the workplace learning needs of young people for the future. This will be achieved by further supporting employers to provide more diverse, structured and focused workplace learning opportunities across the full range of government, business and industry, including areas covered by the HSC industry curriculum framework courses.

However to embed vocational learning in schools as “everyone’s business” for the future, some significant challenges need to be overcome.

- vocational learning needs to be embedded in the learning culture and practice of education institutions and communities
- vocational learning needs to be recognised and valued by all educators
- Educators, employers and the community need to work as collaborative partners to support vocational learning in schools
- Through teacher training, teachers need to be well prepared and equipped to support students in their pursuit of lifelong learning skills and career success
- Professional development that enhances existing teachers’ and leaders’ skills to manage and develop vocational learning needs to be strengthened
- Government and school authorities need to accept responsibility for the provision of adequate funding and support

These challenges provide sufficient scope for future initiatives to build on this program and prepare students for lifelong learning and career success. The *School to Work Program* in NSW is the facilitator for vocational learning. It not only provides careers advisers, but all teachers and school leaders, with the structure and resource support to ensure students are well prepared for the future.

#### **References:**

1. **NSW Department of Education and Training** 2002, Ready for Work Plan: School to Work Program, School to Work Planning Initiative Annual Report 2001, VET in Schools Directorate.
2. **Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)** 2001, Vocational Education and Training in Schools Framework