READY FOR WORK PLAN: SCHOOL TO WORK PROGRAM

School to Work Planning Initiative

Program Report 1999-2003

August 2004
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1 Introduction

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. It assisted students in government secondary and central schools to better plan and manage their transition to a range of post-school education, training and employment destinations. Students were supported to develop individual school to work plans through a range of innovative strategies.

In 1999, 78 government schools across NSW were involved in the initial pilot of the school to work planning initiative. Students participating in the pilot were identified as ‘at risk’. The reported benefits of the pilot program, especially in enhancing the self-esteem of ‘at risk’ students, was instrumental in expanding the program to include all secondary and central schools across NSW.

In 2000, the program was expanded to include 317 government secondary and central schools targeting over 14,000 students.

Towards the end of 2000 all NSW government secondary and central schools were invited to apply for funding to either enhance or introduce school to work planning initiatives. A total of 420 government secondary schools, central schools and schools for specific purposes across the 40 school districts applied for and received funding for 2001.

The expansion of the program continued into 2002 with a total of 510 government secondary schools, central schools and schools for specific purposes from all school districts applying for and receiving funding.

In 2003, a total of 537 NSW government secondary schools, central schools and schools for specific purposes across 40 districts received funding.

All schools that applied for and received funding were asked to report on their progress by completing a School to Work Planning Initiative Progress Report. Overall, facilitators reported positively on the implementation of the school to work planning initiative. Recommendations from the School to Work Planning Initiative Progress Reports enabled the development and implementation of innovative strategies reflecting current developments in curriculum and pedagogy.

*The 2003 Annual Report included in this final program report was compiled from the progress reports completed by school-based School to Work co-ordinators. The reports provided both quantitative and qualitative data on the implementation and outcomes of school to work planning initiatives for students and schools.*
The inclusion of quotes by careers advisers and School to Work co-ordinators demonstrates the valued contribution made by the School to Work Program in enhancing student outcomes.

"The School to Work Program provides an excellent opportunity for students, irrespective of academic ability and socio-economic background, to develop work related skills”

Merrylands High School
Graph 1 below shows the significant increase in the level of student participation in school to work planning over the period of the Ready for Work: School to Work Program 1999-2003. Note: The School to Work program was piloted with only 78 schools in 1999.

“For many students the STWP has been a life line that has re-focused their attention on their education and given them a reason to behave and attend. For many students it has given them the opportunity to confirm their vocational interests. For other students it has given them the opportunity to gain employment.”

Plumpton High School
The School to Work Program 1999-2003 had the core aim of supporting the successful transition of young people from school to further education, training and employment.

The School to Work Program supported students through:

- a planning process which developed an understanding of career pathways
- the selection of courses which reflected an understanding of the vocational opportunities and transferable employment related skills courses offer
- increased self-confidence and motivation for life-long learning
- the development of vocational and enterprise skills integrated into teaching and learning across the curriculum
- improved understanding and knowledge of the links between education and training, business and industry and the community

Funds provided to schools, firstly through a district application and approval process and subsequently to all government secondary schools, central schools and schools for specific purposes were used to implement strategies at the local level to support the School to Work planning process. Funds were used by schools for:

- program planning and implementation
- training and development of staff
- clerical and administrative support
- student resources
- student activities, for example, career presentations and workshops, guest speakers, individual student interviews
- relief time for School to Work management committee members, School to Work co-ordinators and teachers
- faculty programming days
- engagement of a School to Work co-ordinator

“We are progressing well with the School to Work Program. This year we utilised funds to release a staff member to oversee the program which was very effective. All Key Learning Areas were involved in planning. Year 10 Authentic Assessment Program was utilised in the School to Work Program. The school has also adopted The Real Game for Year 7.”

Inverell High School

The Vocational Education in Schools Directorate provided on-going support to districts and schools during the life of the Ready for Work Plan: School to Work Program. National and state education policy directions that support vocational learning in the compulsory years of schooling informed and expanded the focus of the program to include the implementation of vocational learning outcomes across the Stage 5 and 6 curricula.
The introduction of the Board of Studies new K-10 Curriculum Framework in NSW which saw the inclusion of Key Competencies and the Work, Employment and Enterprise Cross-Curriculum Content Statements into all Year 7-10 syllabuses strengthened vocational learning as an integral part of the general learning of students.

In 2003 professional development activities funded by the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate and facilitated jointly by the Directorate and the Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate enabled teachers and school executive to develop strategies for the implementation of the School to Work Program across the curriculum at the school level. Reports from schools consistently indicated that the support of the school executive had been instrumental in the successful implementation of the program.

A range of resources, designed to support the School to Work Program, were distributed to schools by the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate. Wide spread consultation with careers advisers, schools, teachers and curriculum consultants informed the development of new resources and the improvement of existing resources.

Schools were appreciative of the resources provided for school to work planning and indicated that future support would be welcome.

Resources that supported the School to Work Program included:

- **School to Work Planning Employment Related Skills Logbook**

  Initial piloted in 1999, the original logbook was extensively revised during 2001 in consultation with careers advisers, teachers, curriculum consultants and vocational education consultants.

  The revised edition was distributed to schools in 2002. The logbook provides a tool for students to record their individual school to work plans, store evidence of their participation, achievements and qualifications and articulate their learning into résumés, job and tertiary studies applications and interviews.

  Since 2002, over 250,000 copies of the logbooks have been distributed to schools for students in Years 9 to 12. An overwhelming amount of positive feedback has been received by the Directorate about the style, content and flexibility of the new logbook. The introduction of the revised logbook was supported by state-wide targeted training for school to work co-ordinators and school executive.
School to Work Planning Employment Related Skills Logbook – Support Supplement

In response to recommendations made by school to work co-ordinators for the need of additional resources to support students with special needs, the Directorate liaised and consulted with curriculum consultants, learning support teachers, principals and district officers to produce a support supplement to the employment related skills logbook.

The School to Work Planning Employment Related Skills Logbook – Support Supplement was developed to assist schools in the implementation of the logbook for students with special needs, including:

- disability
- language background other than English
- low literacy levels
- at risk of leaving school early

“The logbook is an extremely valuable resource, it gives credibility to the program and careers lessons, reinforces the careers curriculum and gives students ‘ownership’ of their future. Progressively implemented over years 9-12 the STW logbook can be a useful tool when applying for jobs & preparing for interviews. It will lead to much better prepared senior students exiting in yr12 and staff & students are committed to the program.”

Sylvania High School

Vocational Learning Key Learning Area (KLA) Booklets

To support the cross-curriculum implementation of vocational learning in NSW, the Directorate developed a set of 8 booklets which link existing curriculum in each of the Key Learning Areas to vocational learning. The booklets have been designed to support teachers in viewing vocational learning as ‘core business’, integrated into everyday teaching and learning.

The booklets provide teachers with examples of the enterprising and employment related skills developed by students in the classroom as well as outlining the credit transfer opportunities available to students between universities and TAFE NSW.

In addition, the booklets provide website addresses that link occupations with a student’s interest in various school subjects. Student activities are provided to enable students to link their learning to vocational outcomes.

“The KLA booklets are very good and have practical tasks that can easily be included in the subject. They provide a good basis for incorporating careers across the curriculum and in making teaching more relevant”

Matraville Sports High School
"The KLA booklets are a welcome resource. They have provided much needed cross-curricular support and allowed for greater understanding of the School to Work Program for all our staff"

Barham High School

- **The Real Game Series**

The Real Game was piloted in ten government high schools across NSW in Term 4, 2002. The Real Game is a career development program which allows students to learn about adult life and work roles in the context of their own career and transition planning. The pilot was very successful and demonstrated the potential value of integrating the Real Game in the broader delivery of school to work planning across the curriculum.

The Directorate has continued to support the use of the Real Game Series as an effective vocational learning implementation tool and in 2003 training was provided for teachers from a variety of teaching backgrounds including English, Maths, Human Society and its Environment as well as careers advisers and support teachers from 38 school districts.

Trained teachers will work collaboratively with vocational education consultants to deliver regionally based training of the Real Game for additional teachers. Implementation of the Real Game Series was expanded and in 2003 a pilot was conducted of The Play Real Game for students in Years 3-4 in 10 government primary schools.

"The Real Game was a tremendous success. Students thoroughly became involved and through the ‘Spin Game’ were able to display their knowledge and new information gained”

Yanco Agricultural High School

- **Promotional video – “Logging on to the Future”**

To support schools promote and communicate the benefits of using the Employment Related Skills Logbook to students, teachers, parents, employers and the wider community, the Directorate produced a short promotional video titled Logging on to the Future. The video was distributed to all secondary schools in 2003.

The video demonstrates to students how using the logbook to document the vocational skills demonstrated while at school can support them in preparing for interviews and in writing applications. The video also includes the variety of uses of the logbook and an employer’s perspective of the benefits of using the logbook to document skills.
School based implementation and storage strategies are included to assist schools in the implementation process.

"The video supporting this booklet is excellent."

Cranebrook High School

- **The Student Guide to Workplace Learning**

The Student Guide to Workplace Learning was distributed to schools in 2003. This resource, developed by the Directorate, provides students with detailed information that supports them in their preparation for workplace learning experiences. It challenges students to explore the world of work and consider future career options while still at school. A range of interactive activities are included that teachers may integrate into their classroom teaching and learning strategies.

- **myfuture.edu.au**

This website is a joint initiative of Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. It provides students and the wider community with a free, high quality on-line career information service. The Vocational Education in Schools Directorate has identified this national website as a key tool that students can access to develop their career development plans. It complements other resources and activities provided through the School to Work Program.

In 2003, the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate provided professional development and training activities to Careers Advisers from 13 districts in the use and management of myfuture.edu.au as an implementation strategy for school to work planning. Vocational education consultants participated in ‘train the trainer’ activities during the annual 2003 Vocational Education in Schools Directorate Workshop. In addition, the Directorate addressed 100 State-wide careers advisers at the 2003 Careers Advisers Association Conference on the use of the website as a career planning tool.

The 2003 School to Work Planning Initiative Progress Reports show that a total of 383 schools across the state used the myfuture.edu.au website as a resource to support school to work planning.

The growth of the School to Work Program over the period 1999-2003 has necessitated the involvement of other staff within the school other than the careers adviser. While annual progress reports indicate that the careers adviser had a significant role in facilitating the implementation of school to work
planning, the formation of school management teams resulted in a more strategic approach to whole school implementation of the School to Work Program.

School management teams typically consist of:
- Careers advisers
- Head teachers
- Principals
- Deputy principals
- VET co-ordinator
- Classroom teacher
- School welfare team
- Support teacher learning difficulties
- Parents/caregivers
- Community agencies

“There has been a whole school focus to incorporate School to Work learning outcomes into relevant aspects of all teaching and learning programs.”

Ku-ring-gai Creative Arts High

“The STWP has been embedded in the School Calendar for 3 years and is advanced in the implementation process. It is well accepted by the school executive and well supported by head teachers who will develop it at their discretion.”

Willoughby Girls High

School to Work Planning Initiative Progress Reports consistently indicated that students benefited through participation in the School to Work Program. Student outcomes identified in the pilot program conducted in 1999 included:
- ability to make more realistic decisions about career plans
- ability to relate classroom skills to the workplace
- improved ability to set career goals
- increased value on school activities
- improved motivation
- enhanced self-esteem

Subsequent School to Work Planning Initiative Progress Reports for the period 2000-2003 have identified the above outcomes in addition to the following:
- increased self-confidence
- improved attendance and retention rates
- improved subject selection choices in Year 11
- increased number of students undertaking VET courses
- improved classroom behaviour and participation
- enhanced understanding of employer expectations
- engagement in workplace learning activities
- planning a transition from school to work
"The school to work program at Vincentia high continues to deliver excellent outcomes for students in their transition from school to work. This is provided by an integrated program that seeks to meet the needs of individual students and maximising opportunities for students to plan for their career possibilities and receive recognition for the skills and competencies they are achieving. The STW program is a co-ordination of several programs and initiatives. The careers program, the VET, student welfare, special needs, jobs pathways, student support program and learning profile project. All these programs have elements that prepare students for the transition from STW and the elements are drawn together by a case management approach."

Vincentia High School

The success of the Ready to Work Plan: School to Work Program 1999-2003 is evident by the growth of the program over the four years. The School to Work Program developed and evolved from a pilot of 78 schools targeting, in the main, students at risk, to a program involving over 165,000 students from over 500 government secondary schools, central schools and schools for specific purposes from across the State.

The program was informed by current trends in national and state education policy and the changing social, global and economic environment. Once the responsibility of the careers adviser, the implementation of the program became the responsibility of each and every teacher and the active involvement of executive staff in school based management teams ensured whole school cross-curricula implementation strategies.

The value of the School to Work Program is clearly demonstrated by the positive comments made by school to work co-ordinators, parents and community groups over the period 1999-2003 through the School to Work Planning Initiative Progress Reports.

"STW planning has taken on many forms across the school. The wide variety of programs and experiences has influenced students from all year groups. A string of activities in Career Education (eg. school cafe) and a cross curricular use of the logbook, supported by the Thinking Skills program (7-12) has incorporated STW planning into many facets of life and into the minds of all students."

Liverpool Girls HS

"Students are taking more interest in their futures and are happily making decisions. Parents are very supportive of the service we are providing, through the STW program, to their children. It’s an exciting program that does make a difference."

Northern Beaches Secondary College Cromer Campus
3.1 Student Participation

The 2003 progress reports submitted by schools indicated that 165,988 students participated in School to Work planning activities in 2003. Graph 2 shows student participation by year and gender group.

"The School to Work Program has really raised the profile of career education within the school. Funding has been paramount to the successful implementation of so many activities that are now highly valued by both students and staff”

Guyra Central School
Schools reported on the numbers of students participating in School to Work activities from identified target groups; students from indigenous backgrounds, students with a Language background other than English (LOTE), students with disabilities and students involved in the Arabic Youth Project (Graph 3). Of these groups, LOTE students were identified as the most represented group. This data was consistent with data collected from previous years.

Graph 3
Participation in School to Work by Target Group
And Year Group in 2003

Note: Some students were identified within more than one target group

“Some funds have been used to continue employment of an aide to work with Aboriginal students on attendance and performance in years 9 & 10 and the transition into productive employment and TAFE options”

Duval High School

“This funding has allowed us to provide a more extensive and intense program for our students with disabilities, resulting in positive work ethics, enhancing their chances of post-school employment”

Holroyd High School
Graph 4 reports on the number of students schools identified as participants in the Stage 5 Work Education and Stage 6 Work Studies courses by year group in 2003. Both courses were predominately delivered to smaller groups of students, although some schools reported that they delivered Work Education to whole cohorts.

"The majority of Year 10 students have been motivated to apply for jobs at the end of Year 10 or continue with their education through the knowledge and skills they have gained through the School to Work initiatives implemented through Work Education"

Bankstown Senior College
3.2 The School to Work management team

The responses provided by schools in their progress reports indicated that while the School to Work Program was predominantly facilitated by the careers adviser, the active involvement of a management team which included head teachers, principals, deputy principals, VET co-ordinators, class teachers, support teachers, the school welfare team, parents and community members was integral to the successful implementation of the program across the whole school. See graph 5.

Graph 5
Personnel Involved in the School to Work School Management Teams in 2003

In the 2003 reports, co-ordinators commented on the improvements made with their program due to the efforts of their School to Work management team. Teams improved in their strength and effectiveness by:

- Meeting at regular intervals
- Involving members of the school executive
- Communicating aims and objectives of the School to Work Program to all members of staff
- Co-ordinating staff development activities
- Spreading the workload amongst staff members so that the responsibility does not lie with one person
- Involving faculty head teachers has improved understanding and delivery across the curriculum.
3.3 Use of resources

Graph 6 represents the number of students in each year group using *The Employment Related Skills Logbook* in schools.

**Graph 6**

**Number of students using the Employment Related Skills Logbook in 2003**

“Students are able to identify skills relevant to the workforce that previously they may not have recognised. The activities involved in the Logbooks combined with other careers activities/tasks give students a good basis from moving from school to work”

Miller Technology High School
The Vocational Education in Schools Directorate developed and supported a number of vocational learning resources for schools to use in their implementation of the School to Work Program. Graph 7 represents the variety of resources most widely used by schools in 2003 to support the program.

Graph 7
Use of Vocational Learning resources in schools in 2003

"The quality of the training for teachers, the skills logbook and the large range of outstanding resources available to schools has been paramount, and indeed, instrumental in supplementing the successful program."

Ballina High School

"STW is valued by all members of the school community. Staff see it as an important part of the school curriculum. All resources are valued by school and staff."

Kurri Kurri High School
3.4 School to Work implementation strategies

Schools reported they were engaging students in *School to Work Planning* using a range of strategies. Graph 8 reflects school based implementation strategies and Graph 9 shows the variety of enterprise and community based strategies.

**Graph 8**

**School based School to Work implementation strategies used**

"The employment of a School to Work Co-ordinator has been an asset to the program. Through her enthusiasm and time allocation, the School to Work Program has been introduced across faculty and the numbers of students participating has increased”

Maclean High School

"The addition of the STW content on the school’s intranet has been very successful. Students are often seen accessing the program on the library computers. A large number of students have used STW to help produce resumes which have accompanied various applications (e.g. job, apprenticeships etc). I have found the program valuable in supporting students with career planning.”

Arthur Phillip High School
“A big step forward was the running of the ABW enterprise education program for all Year 10 – with staff from all faculties involved in planning and as mentors. The week was highly successful and staff were very positive about the cross-curriculum content and skills developed.”

Wade High School

“**The School to Work Program is a method by which Careers Education/Work Education/School and Community participation can be linked. Students are able to recognise this when they compile a portfolio and develop a resume. When School to Work principles are coupled with Work Education and support from outside agencies (e.g. Joblink interviews) students see that they must prepare for leaving school and that there is support to do that.”**

Narromine High School
3.5 Assessing school and student outcomes

Schools reported that the most common methods used for assessing outcomes for both the students and the school included:

- observation of increased student involvement in school to work activities;
- verbal communication between facilitators, students, parents, school staff, employers and the community;
- student retention to senior years;
- surveys from students, parents, employers and community agents;
- assessing the quality of students’ written and verbal workplace communications;
- post school destination surveys;
- assessing the quality of students responses in the *Employment Related Skills Logbook*;
- observation of student attitude and success in courses;
- successful employment outcomes; and
- work experience reports.

3.5.1 Student outcomes

School to Work co-ordinators reported positively on student outcomes (graph 10).
3.5.2 Whole school outcomes

Schools reported a range of positive outcomes as a result of their involvement in the *School to Work Program*. See Graph 11.

**Graph 11**

**Reported School Outcomes in 2003**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced student self-esteem and self-confidence</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved subject selection process</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students involved in more meaningful curriculum</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased numbers accessing VET courses</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved community networking</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-curriculum content implementation</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved team strategies of school personnel</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved student attendance</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved staff understanding of vocational learning across KLAs</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“*Both staff and students gained a better understanding of the importance that school has in improving employer expectations and skills needed for an ever changing workforce.*”

Lisarow High School

“*Programs operating in Year 10 have led to increased retention rates in Year 11 cohorts.*”

Nambucca Heads High School

“*Positive feedback received from employers regarding the quality of resumes, students seeking employment and the detailed skills and competencies folder.*”

Kincumber High School

Greatest Achievements

The School to Work Program has seen unprecedented growth over the period 1999-2003. There has been significant progress and the implementation of innovative strategies has led to the program meeting the individual needs of students. The greatest and most significant achievements over the period 1999-2003 are listed below.

- Students being aware of the decision making processes of career pathways and are willing to consider all options.
- Students taking more interest in their futures and making informed decisions.
- Students better able to make responsible and practical career choices.
- Allowing students to be part of the local community and having the support of local employers.
- Large number of students using the Employment Related Skills Logbook to produce resumes.
- Students realise they have many worthwhile skills.
- Students making the link between skills being developed at school and skills that are valued in the world of work.
- Development of strategies to meet the individual needs of student groups including gifted and talented, students with disabilities, indigenous students and students from a non-English speaking background.
- Enhanced strategies in developing individual profiles for Year 9 and 10 students.
- Release of a revised Employment Related Skills Logbook in 2002
- Electronic delivery of the Employment Related Skills Logbook via the schools intranet has led to students independently accessing and completing logbook pages during lunchbreaks.
- Employment of a dedicated School to Work co-ordinator within the school to implement school to work planning across the whole school.
- Quality professional development and training activities for teachers.
- Enthusiasm for the program shown by teachers from across the curriculum.
- Raising the profile of career education.
- Raising the awareness of the importance of job skills and employment requirements.
• School to Work planning enhancing both teacher and student morale.
• Increased interaction between schools and outside agencies, employers and parents and caregivers.
• Support for School to Work planning from parents.
• Positive feedback from employers on the quality of student resumes and student’s work readiness.
• Staff from all faculties across the school participating in enterprise education programs.
• Linking to youth transition programs such as Links to Learning.
• Formation of School to Work Management Teams including executive staff to oversee whole school implementation of the program.

"School to Work Planning has provided a clearer direction for students to make informed decisions about a desired education pathway in the future – either work or study."

Oberon High School
5. Future Directions – where to from here?

The 2003 NSW Government Budget committed $22.1M to school to work planning over the next four years. This will ensure the effective implementation of School to Work: Creating Future Pathways 2005-2007.

This program recognises that students need to be active in managing their career planning and development throughout their lives to benefit from the challenges and opportunities available in the rapidly changing world they live in. There is a need for students to develop employment related skills and enterprising attributes that can be applied to a range of jobs and careers.

Lifelong learning takes account of the multiple transitions between learning, working and living throughout life. The key to success is setting high expectations and ensuring that students are engaged and exited about learning.

It is proposed that this program continues to be flexible and responsive to ensure that it will meet the needs of all students. The regional structure of the NSW Department of Education and Training provides the basis for more flexible implementation since regions can develop strategic local solutions to suit local circumstances and needs.

Underpinning the School to Work Program is student’s achievement of a range of vocational learning outcomes which will support their successful transition through and beyond school. For the future vocational learning will be an integral part of all curriculum areas, integral to quality teaching and learning and linking curriculum to contextual learning in the community and the workplace.

This Program in NSW is the facilitator for vocational learning. It provides regions, schools, teachers and school leaders with the structure and resource support to ensure students are able to plan and construct their pathways for the future.