The Vocational Education in Schools Directorate would like to acknowledge the work and contribution of Information Technology Directorate and Gail Cummins in the preparation of this report.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 School to Work Program

The NSW Government has made a significant investment in the School to Work Program (STW Program) over the past ten years to ensure that our young people are well prepared to face the challenges and opportunities of the future world of work.

The Vocational Education in Schools Directorate provides strategic direction and operational support to regions in implementing the program, informed by a reporting process from schools and regions.

The Program ensures that regions are at the centre of activity, as key drivers, to ensure that ongoing success is built on sound local knowledge of student needs and local community and business capability.

The Program, based on the following four key result areas, lays the foundation for young people to be enterprising citizens engaged in life-long learning and making positive career transitions. These key result areas are:

- **Planning transition pathways**: supporting students to develop confidence in self-managing their career and transition planning
- **Exploring career futures**: providing students with access to people, opportunities and a variety of media to assist them to process information about work, education and training options
- **Strengthening student outcomes through vocational learning**: supporting teachers to identify and provide a range of opportunities for students to make explicit links to vocational and enterprise learning in all curriculum areas
- **Building networks and connections**: strengthening career, community and workplace learning opportunities for students through strategic connections, partnerships and networks.

This report has been compiled from school and regional reports, completed early in 2012. Across the ten NSW school education regions, 466 schools with a secondary enrolment submitted their report electronically. This process enabled the school reports to be automatically aggregated into a regional report and subsequently into this state report. Graphical representations in this report are derived from the aggregated data from all ten school regions.

1.2 Executive Summary

**Participation**

In 2011, student participation data indicates that the School to Work Program continues to be successful in involving a substantial number of students in career development and transition planning. Both the number of students (155,031) and the proportion of students (56 percent) participating in the Program were close to the figures for 2010. Participation rates for most year levels
across all reporting schools showed only very small variations except for Year 12 where there was a decline. Nevertheless the Year 12 participation remained high at 79 percent.

The share of School to Work participation held by equity groups as a whole increased in 2011, indicating a continuing high level of effort by schools to support career and transition pathways for all students. Each equity group experienced an increase in the number of participating students and an increased share of participation, albeit a small increase. Following a small fall in participation by students with a disability in 2010, there was an increase in participation in 2011.

In contrast to 2010, participation in Board of Studies (BOS) Work Education courses increased by 16 percent in 2011. Students undertaking Work Education courses in Year 7 more than doubled (115 percent increase although off a small base) but the greatest increase in numbers was in Year 10 (20.5 percent.

Participation in Board of Studies Work Studies courses increased in 2011, while participation in Career Education classes remained steady. Participation in Career Education classes fluctuated across year levels with falls in Years 7 and 9 and increases in other years. One region reported a significant increase (some 60 percent on 2010 figures) in the number of Years 11 and 12 students undertaking Career Education classes which was attributed to schools catering for a more diverse student population with the introduction of the new school leaving age.

Key result areas

There were generally positive results in each of the four key result areas in 2011.

In the Planning Transitions Pathways area, schools continued to employ a diverse range of activities and programs to build students’ confidence in self managing their career and transition planning. Regions indicated there is a focus on transition planning for all students with STW programs and activities being tailored to meet the needs of individuals, particularly those in targeted groups.

The use of the Student Pathways Survey (SPS), particularly by Years 9 and 10 students, provided a good foundation for students to begin thinking about their future career aspirations. The Student Pathways Plan (SPP), which was released at the beginning of Term 4, 2011 to compliment the SPS, was well received by schools. The Student Pathways Survey: School Report continued to be accessed by school personnel to analyse student responses to the Student Pathways Survey.

A greater number and a larger proportion of Years 9-12 students were estimated to be able to articulate a career and transition plan than in 2010 and in Years 9 and 10 a greater proportion of students had a written career and transition plan.

In 2011 most regions reported identified groups were included in whole of school programs and activities but provision of individualised assistance to members of identified groups was again highlighted. Initiatives included both personal and educational support as well as career and transition initiatives.

Schools continued to consolidate their responses to the needs of students affected by the new school leaving age. As well as an extension of existing programs, a range of alternative programs and activities have been offered including non-ATAR pathways, additional VET programs, work experience and work studies.

Targeted support was also provided for students from low SES backgrounds with common practices being the provision of direct financial support or the facilitation of access to various forms of financial assistance for these students. Strategies to support the career and transition planning process for regional or rural students also included various forms of financial assistance and the use of flexible learning modes to ensure access to relevant programs and activities.

More schools are adopting an integrated team approach to career and transition planning indicating more widespread recognition of the value of School to Work Program in supporting student
transitions. The legitimacy of career and transition planning and education within schools has been strengthened by the increased involvement of school executive members in Career and Transition (CAT) teams and by the emerging and increasing role taken by Transition Advisers. In some schools there are still issues to be resolved around the respective roles of Careers Advisers and Transition Advisers but in most, these roles are seen as complementary. Overwhelmingly, in those schools with a Transition Adviser, the reaction has been positive, the role is being recognised and incorporated into whole of school planning and management, and attributed outcomes are very promising.

The key result area, **Exploring Career Futures**, is about providing students with access to people, opportunities and a variety of media to assist them to process information about work, education and training options. The continued strong use of information and communications technology indicates recognition by schools of the importance of such technology in career education and transition planning, both for students and teachers.

Despite ongoing technical and student management issues and the need for on-going training, most regions are enthusiastic about the improvement that the Digital Education Revolution (DER) NSW laptop initiative has made in improving student learning, providing access to careers resources, facilitating communication between teachers, students and families, providing new methods of program delivery, and providing access to teacher professional development.

The 2011 data shows an increased provision of authentic learning opportunities which suggests that schools continue to see the value to student transitions of learning in authentic contexts.

Outcomes in the key result area of **Strengthening Student Outcomes through Vocational Learning** were generally positive with an overall increased use of the Employment Related Skills Logbook, progress in incorporating employment related skills (ERS) into Key Learning Areas and a large proportion of schools (89 percent) reporting the use of vocational learning to strengthen outcomes for students. Despite variations in use across regions the increased use of the Logbook is a positive result and begins to reverse the downward trend in use experienced in recent years.

The extent to which Key Learning Area (KLA) teachers are teaching ERS varied considerably between regions and between schools within regions. In most regions there was progress but in several regions ERS are generally still only made explicit in career/transition/work education lessons. Curriculum pressure, lack of time in KLAs and the need for more professional development around ERS and vocational learning generally were identified as limiting wider incorporation in KLAs.

The provision of enterprising learning opportunities remained strong with schools reporting positive outcomes. Schools in some regions have made real progress in aligning their delivery of vocational learning with elements of the Quality Teaching Framework but in others such connections need to be further developed.

In the key result area of **Building Networks and Connections** it is evident that schools have continued their efforts to strengthen existing and foster new strategic connections, partnerships and networks. The returns from these efforts have been continuing opportunities for vocational learning, work experience, work placements and learning in other authentic contexts for a large number of students.

Although a smaller proportion of schools reported embedding community/business partnerships in their school plan, a high proportion continue to see value in such partnerships with many schools participating in multiple community/business linked activities.

In 2011, a high proportion of schools, 96 percent, sought to engage parents, carers, and elders in their child’s career development. Most sought to do this through information sharing activities but there is evidence that some schools have sought to move beyond this to a more active form of engagement.
The continuing commitment of Careers Advisers to the School to Work Program is evidenced by the high proportion accessing professional development to enhance their effectiveness in engaging students in career and transition planning.

Schools have also embraced mentoring with widespread use of mentors for a range of purposes, primarily targeting Years 11 and 12 students and at-risk or disengaged students.

The value of work experience as part of career education and transition planning is recognised by most schools with 98 percent providing work experience for their students.

**Reflections on priorities and achievements**

In 2011 there was a high degree of similarity in the priorities adopted by regions. One common priority was increasing student engagement, primarily through alternative learning experiences and particularly for students staying on at school because of the new school leaving age and at-risk or disengaged students. An associated priority was increasing the availability of alternative programs.

Increasing and strengthening partnerships was also a common intention with the scope of such partnerships including industry, the community, post school employment and training providers, government agencies and other schools.

For most regions developing and strengthening a whole school approach to the STW Program was a priority to be achieved by strengthening Career and Transition (CAT) Teams and embedding vocational learning and employment related skills across the curriculum. Several regions intended to focus on developing employment related skills as one of their priorities.

While priorities and other aspects of the STW Program that proved challenging or elusive varied between regions there were some areas where most regions encountered difficulties. These included engaging students in their career and transition planning, strengthening CAT Teams, embedding vocational learning and employment related skills across the curriculum and encouraging whole school support for the STW Program.

Difficulties were encountered in developing partnerships as considerable time is needed to enlist the participation of potential partners and to set up programs and activities. Issues around information technology, communication, Logbook Online and the Student Pathways Survey were also identified as challenges by some regions.

STW Program priorities and achievements in 2011 that made the most difference varied from region to region but there were some commonalities. In several regions, priorities and aspects of the Program that were challenging were also aspects that made the most difference.

Responses to students affected by the new school leaving age, and at-risk or disengaged students were reported as achievements by several regions. Responses included alternative learning programs, Stage 5 VET, work experience and work readiness opportunities and increased provision of school based apprenticeships and traineeships (SBATs) and TAFE delivered VET (TVET).

Several regions achieved stronger links with industry, the local community, training providers and employers. One region attributed advances in partnerships with business to the work of Partnership Brokers.

The adoption of a whole school approach, including commitment to a CAT Team, and implementation of cross curriculum projects are credited with making a difference in several regions.

Other achievements mentioned by one or two regions included mentoring programs, self-esteem programs, and Boys/Girls Career Seminars. As well, Transition Advisers were seen as making a difference particularly with disengaged and at-risk students.

In most regions, schools are generally satisfied with the regional support they receive, describing it variously as ‘very important’, ‘excellent’, ‘supportive’ and ‘readily available’. Schools appreciated...
regional efforts to provide professional development related to the STW program, associated technology, network meetings and the availability of regional and CAT websites. Regional financial support was identified as an effective form of STW Program support although there were numerous calls for additional funding as well as further professional development, particularly for staff other than Careers Advisers. Support from consultants, STW Coordinators, Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers was also mentioned as being both welcome and effective. One region commented that more regional support is needed.

The directions that regions will pursue in 2012 generally are consistent with their 2011 priorities. Among the common intentions are continuing efforts to increase student retention and engagement and to address the needs of at-risk students and those affected by the new school leaving age.

There were a number of forms of support that most regions would like from State Office. Continued financial support was requested for the STW Program generally, and specifically for vocational learning, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, Stage 5 TAFE delivered VET, CAT Teams, professional development related to the STW Program, and to provide resources in areas of emerging importance related to careers and transition.

There were calls for the dissemination of innovative and best practice, including examples of successful initiatives from other regions, and for on-going support for the use of DER resources in the STW Program, the development of electronic resources to support the teaching of career education, and support for the integration across school communities and school cultures.

Note that schools and regions consistently used the terminology ‘new school leaving age’ in their reporting for 2011 and this has been retained in this report.
2.0 ACTIVITY REPORT

2.1 School Report Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Category</th>
<th>Total schools</th>
<th>Total of schools reporting</th>
<th>Percentage of schools reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSP</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2011 a total of 466 schools reported school to work activities, three more than in 2010. The total number of secondary schools with reporting responsibilities decreased by two, while central schools with reporting responsibilities increased by five and SSP schools increased by 41. The total number and percentage of secondary schools reporting increased, while for central schools and SSP schools both the number and percentage of schools were lower.

2.2 Program Management

Schools use the online STW report to inform the development and annual review of their school management plan.

In 2011, 75 percent of reporting schools, 350 out of 466 schools, used the online STW Program Report to inform the development and annual review of their school management plan.
Schools adopt a whole school management approach to the School to Work Program

In 2011 some 82 percent of reporting schools, 381 out of 466, adopted a whole school management approach to the School to Work Program. This data reflects regional reports indicating that integrated management of the Program through a Career and Transition (CAT) Team approach is more widespread. One region reported that even in schools without formal CAT teams, Regional Vocational Education Consultants had identified activities consistent with CAT team activities.

Schools Career and Transition Teams

There were increases in the involvement of most membership categories in supporting a whole school management approach to student careers and transition. In all reporting schools, careers advisers are now supported by at least one executive member. Some 56 additional schools reported the involvement of an executive teacher, and 78 additional schools reported the involvement of a careers adviser. Twenty additional schools included a transition adviser on their team and 5 additional schools included parents. Eight fewer schools included students. The increases are consistent with the overall increased use of a team approach to student career and transition management reported earlier.
2.3 Student Participation

All students

In 2011 a total of 155,031 students in New South Wales government schools were reported to have participated in initiatives and activities under the auspices of the School to Work (STW) Program, almost the same number as participated in 2010 (155,117). Each year level except Year 11 and Year 12 had a higher number of participating students than in 2010. Year 10 and Year 11 had the highest increases with 616 and 671 additional participants respectively.

The participation rate across reporting schools for the Years 7-12 cohort was 56 percent, slightly lower than the 57 percent recorded in 2010. Participation rates for most year levels across all reporting schools showed only very small variations except for Year 12. For Year 12 the number of participating students fell by 1,270 or 4.2 percent and the participation rate declined from 83 percent to slightly over 79 percent.

The main effort of the School to Work Program centres on Stage 5 and Stage 6 students. For Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10) there were 77,326 participating students which was 76.5 percent of Stage 5 enrolments in reporting schools, on par with 2010. In Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12) there were 62,519 participating students, a participation rate of slightly less than 79 percent. In both stages the participation rate was slightly less than in 2010 (77 percent for Stage 5 and 80 percent for Stage 6).

Some regions have identified areas where participation has increased and only one region reported observing a fall in participation. Regions generally did not address reasons for the changes to enrolment or School to Work participation. Several regions reported increases in Years 7-9 STW Program participation which is reflected in the data with increases of one and two percent in these year levels. Two regions specifically referred to efforts to promote career education in the earlier year levels. One region reported that an anticipated increase in students completing Board of Studies Work Education and Work Studies did not occur but two other regions drew attention to increased interest in these areas as a response to the raised school leaving age. Another noted the apparent fall in the overall participation rate despite an increase in the number of whole school STW initiatives.
Equity group participation in the School to Work Program

Equity group overview

The total share of School to Work Program participation held by Indigenous students, students with a disability and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) in 2011 was 41 percent, one percent higher than in 2010. Each equity group experienced an increase in the number of participating students and an increased share of participation, albeit a small increase.

Indigenous students

Participation by Indigenous students in the School to Work Program has showed a gradual increase in successive years. In 2011 Indigenous young people made up 6.2 percent (9,592 students) of all School to Work Program participants in Years 7-12 compared with 6 percent (9,368 students) in 2010 and 5.3 percent (8,542 students) in 2009. Years 7 and 8 recorded the highest increases in participating students: 248 and 146 respectively. Participating numbers fell slightly in Years 9, 11 and 12: 85, 87 and 27 respectively. Overall there was an increase of 224 in participating student numbers.

In Stages 5 and 6 in 2011, participating Indigenous students made up 5.4 percent of reported Years 9-12 STW Program participants. In Stage 4 Indigenous students represented 13.5 percent of total Stage 4 STW participation, up from 11 percent in 2010. Year 7 had the highest participation rate (14.4 percent, up from 11 percent in 2010), followed by Year 8 (12.7 percent, up from 11.1 percent).

Two regions noted the need to continue to promote the STW Program to Indigenous students.

Students with a disability

In 2011 students with a disability made up 4.6 percent (7,096 students) of all reported School to Work Program participants in Years 7-12 (155,031 students), compared with 4.1 percent in 2010. Participating students with a disability made up 4.2 percent of all reported Stage 5 and Stage 6 STW Program participants in 2011, up from 3.8 percent in 2010. Their share of Program participation in each year level from Year 7 to Year 12 increased compared to 2010 with students with a disability in Year 8 gaining an additional 1.4 percent share of Year 8 STW Program participation. The largest increase in the number of participating students with a disability was in Year 10, with an increase of 322 students or 18.3 percent, followed by Year 11 with an increase of 173 students or 14.5 percent.

Students with a language background other than English

In 2011, as in previous years, students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) constituted the largest equity group participating in the School to Work Program. The 46,197
participating LBOTE students made up 29.8 percent of total STW Program participation in Years 7-12, up slightly from 29.4 percent in 2010. Increased numbers of participating LBOTE students were reported in all year levels except Year 7 and Year 12 which had falls of 152 and 521 respectively. Year 9 had the largest increase in participating LBOTE students (645) but Y10 continued to have the most number of such students (12,587).

In 2011, LBOTE students represented 29.2 percent of all Stage 5 and Stage 6 STW Program participants, up from 28.6 percent in 2010. Of Stages 5 and 6, each year level registered an increase in LBOTE students' share of STW Program participation except for Year 12 which registered a 5.1 percent decrease. In Stages 5 and 6, Year 11 and Year 12 had the highest proportions of LBOTE STW Program participation (31.9 and 32.1 percent respectively). Both year levels in Stage 4 experienced a fall in share of participation resulting in the total share for Stage 4 students declining from 36.7 to 35.2 percent.

**Student participation in Board of Studies courses**

**Student participation in BOS Work Education Syllabus**

The data in the above graph shows that a total of 7,160 students in Years 7-10 were reported to have participated in Board of Studies (BOS) Work Education courses in 2011. This represents 7.7 percent of all reported Years 7-10 STW Program participants compared with 6.8 percent in 2010. Students undertaking Work Education courses in Year 7 in 2011 more than doubled (115 percent increase although off a small base) but the greatest increase in numbers was in Year 10 where there was an increase of 692 students (20.5 percent). Overall there was a 16 percent increase in Work Education participants.

**Student participation in BOS Work Studies Syllabus**
The data in the above graph shows that a total of 2,593 Year 11 and 12 students were reported to have participated in the Work Studies course in 2011. This represents 4.2 percent of all reported Year 11 and Year 12 STW Program participants compared to 3.1 percent in 2010. Student numbers in both Year 11 and Year 12 increased by 497 and 128 respectively resulting in an increase in Work Studies participants of close to 32 percent.

**Student participation in BOS Work and Community Life Syllabus**

![Student Participation in BOS Work & the Community Life Skills Syllabus](image)

The Stage 6 Life Skills courses stress the application of knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes to a range of environments that will be accessed by students with special education needs. The number of students participating in Work and the Community Life Skills initiatives in 2011 was 1,249 which represented 2.0 percent of all reported Years 11 and 12 STW Program participants.

**Student participation in Career Education classes**

![Student Participation in Career Education classes](image)

The total number of students reported as participating in Career Education classes in 2011 was 74,102 or 48 percent of all reported STW Program participants, the same as in 2010. Participation fluctuated across year levels with falls in Years 7 and 9 and increases in other years. Stage 5 (Year 9 and Year 10), which is the principle focus of Career Education classes, had 57,328 participants in 2011, slightly fewer than in 2010. This represented 74 percent of reported Stage 5 STW Program participants, down from 76 percent in 2010, and 77.4 percent of Years 7-12 Career Education class participation, also down slightly from 78 percent in 2010.

There were 4,416 Stage 4 (Year 7 and Year 8) participants in 2011, which was 293 fewer than in 2010, equating to a fall of 6.2 percent. Stage 4 Career Education participants represented 29.1 percent of total reported Stage 4 STW Program participation in 2011 compared to 31.5 percent in 2010 and 6 percent of total reported Career Education participation compared to 6.3 percent in 2010.
One region reported a significant increase (some 60 percent on 2010 figures) in the number of Years 11 and 12 students undertaking career education classes which was attributed to schools catering for a more diverse student population with the introduction of the new school leaving age. Another reported an increase of 538 students involved in Career Education courses in Years 7 to 9.
2.4 Planning Transition Pathways

Using the DEC online Student Pathways Survey Plan to improve student career development programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Pathways Survey</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of regions participating in the survey in 2011</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools report using the Student Pathways Survey in 2011 to support students to develop a personal career and transition plan</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools report using the Student Pathways Survey Plan (available Term 4) in 2011 to support student to develop a personal career and transition plan</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of students accessing the Student Pathways Survey in 2011</td>
<td>15,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of students accessing the Student Pathways Survey Plan (available Term 4) in 2011</td>
<td>1498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of schools identified through student participation in 2011</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year groups accessing Student Pathways Survey in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Group</th>
<th>No. Participating Student Pathways Survey</th>
<th>No. Participating Student Pathways Survey Plan (available Term 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>5,331</td>
<td>686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>8,152</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>1,947</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Student Pathways Survey (SPS) was used by 15,932 students from Years 9 to 12, in schools representing all 10 regions during 2011. The majority of students accessing the SPS were from Years 9 and 10 indicating that the Survey provides a good foundation for students to begin thinking about their future career aspirations.

The Student Pathways Plan (SPP) was released at the beginning of Term 4, 2011 and 1,498 students across 81 schools accessed the SPP. The SPP was well received by schools as it complimented the Student Pathways Survey and encouraged students to begin the process of career planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Pathways Survey: School Report</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of schools accessing the Student Pathways Survey: School Report in 2011</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total school visits to the Student Pathways Survey: School Report in 2011</td>
<td>1071</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Student Pathways Survey: School Report was accessed by school personnel in 446 schools indicating that there is an interest by schools in analysing student responses to the Student Pathways Survey. Schools can access both past and present data which may explain the greater number of schools accessing data compared to schools with students completing the Student Pathways Survey during 2011.

The figures also indicate that school personnel are visiting the Student Pathways Survey: School Report more than once or a number of personnel from the one school are visiting the Report. These
figures indicate that there is significant interest by school personnel in the Student Pathways Survey: School Report.

Students’ articulation of a career and transition plan
Percentage of students who can articulate a career and transition plan

The above chart shows judgements about the capacity of Years 9-12 students in reporting schools to articulate a career and transition plan. In 2011 a larger number of Years 9-12 enrolments were estimated to be able to articulate a career and transition plan than in 2010. Reporting schools estimated that 69 percent of these students can articulate a career and transition plan, up from 65.5 percent in 2010.

For each year level from years 9 to 12 in 2011 a larger number of students were estimated to be able to articulate a career and transition plan than in 2010. The largest increase in the number of enrolled students able to articulate a career and transition plan occurred in Year 10 with 3,126 additional students representing an 8.6 percent increase. Year 12 had the largest proportion of students able to articulate a plan. The number estimated to be able to articulate a plan in Year 12 exceeded the reported number of Year 12 STW participants.

Students who have a written career and transition plan
Percentage of students who have written a career and transition plan

It was estimated that 90,579 students or 50 percent of Years 9-12 enrolments in reporting schools had a written career and transition plan, up from 49 percent in 2010.
Years 9 and 10 showed increases in the estimated number of students with a written career and transition plan while in Years 11 and 12 the number remained much the same as in 2010. Year 10 had the highest number of students estimated to have a written plan (31,205) while Year 12 had the largest proportion of students with written plans (69 percent) followed by Year 10 (62 percent).

### Supporting student career and transition planning

#### School approaches to developing a personal career and transition plan

The above graph shows the wide range of approaches used to support students develop a personal career and transition plan in 2011. The usage pattern for different approaches has changed to a degree, possibly because a number of additional options were included in the survey question. Career counselling and workplace learning remain the most popular forms of support followed by access to electronic career planners and explicit lessons/activities on career and transition planning. This year is the first time the latter has been reported on separately in this question.

Forms of support, for this purpose, used by fewer schools in 2011 include the Employment Related Skills Logbook online (93 fewer schools), interviews with teachers (56 fewer schools), the Student Pathways Survey (26 fewer schools) and the Real Game series (21 fewer schools).

The use of the Student Pathways Survey Plan, which only became available in Term 4, 2011, may account for the decline in use of some other forms of support. Other than the Student Pathways Survey Plan, the Real Game Series was used by the least number of schools (96, down from 117 in 2010). Schools continued to use multiple approaches and much of the support was individualised.
Supporting students to document their personal career and transition planning

School approaches supporting students to document personal career and transition planning

The above graph shows the approaches used to support students to document their personal career and transition planning in 2011. This is the first year this particular question has been included in the survey. *Myfuture* and personal learning plans were the approaches used by the most number of schools, followed by the Employment Related Skills Logbook and the Board of Studies Work Education/Work Studies classes. The Student Pathways Survey Plan, introduced in Term 4, 2011, was used by 115 schools.

Supporting the career & transition confidence of students in identified groups with innovative, specific or tailored strategies

Students with a disability

Schools have again reported a wide range of in-school and out-of-school strategies and programs to build the career and transition confidence of students with a disability. There is an emphasis on personal structured support for students and the provision of support in partnership with external agencies such as specialised disability employment agencies, TAFE and partnership brokers. Strategies and programs include:

- personalised career and transition planning including the development of personalised learning plans, individual training plans and individual transition plans with the support of Transition Advisers, parents, students, TAFE personnel, employment agency personnel and other relevant personnel, participation in career expos targeting people with a disability, Specialist Vocational Education and Training (SVET), and TAFE-delivered Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Access courses
- building work related skills and confidence through real work opportunities provided through supported work experience including in-school work experience and workplace learning, workplace mentoring, work readiness programs/activities, job coaching, community visits, volunteering, and travel training
- developing life skills, personal development programs and activities and contextualised learning
disability support – this includes hearing and vision support; close liaison with families, disabilities agencies and community access groups; specialist support including that from the Regional Disability Consultant, Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA), Support Teacher Transition (STT) and Learning Support Teams.

One region commented that schools in the region had embraced the STW Program as a means of building the career and transition confidence of students with a disability. Another reported that most schools, with regional support, provide specific career planning and transition activities for these students.

Students from backgrounds where English is not their first language

Schools offer programs which are inclusive of all students but they also offer programs and activities that specifically target LBOTE students. Specific programs and activities mentioned by regions for 2011 are generally the same as in 2010 and include:

- special English language assistance, for example, through ESL teachers and consultants and programs such as HSC Fundamental English, and stronger networks with TAFE providing support for students learning English as a second language
- access to specialist services, for example, interpreter and translator services for translation of documents, interpreters for excursions, presentations and parent information sessions; STLA support in classes; International Student Advisers; mentoring programs such as Plan-it-Youth, Big Brother/Big Sister and ASPIRE, and culturally specific liaison officers such as a Multicultural Pacific Islander Liaison Officer
- LBOTE specific provision, for example, LBOTE subject selection afternoon, specific modules in school subjects, the Ready Arrive Work (RAW) program, Refugee Transition Program, Refugee Assistance Scheme
- individualised assistance, for example, case management, extra assistance for work readiness; guided access to work experience and subject selection, individual transition assistance, personal one on one interviews; tutorial support; job coaching; intensive English literacy classes
- liaison with and inclusion of parents, for example, involving parents in the development of individual learning plans, involving parents through the use of interpreters and community forums, parent information sessions.

The involvement of students in multicultural and culturally specific activities was mentioned by several regions after appearing not to have been a particular focus in 2010.

One region where the majority of students are from a language background other than English commented that most school programs are designed for LBOTE students while two other regions with very few LBOTE students reported that such students are supported on an individual basis. One region reported the development of innovative programs to address the career and further study needs of North African refugee students and their families.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

For Indigenous students in 2011 the strategies and activities to build career and transition confidence were much the same as those reported in 2010. Most regions reported Indigenous students being included in whole of school programs and activities but a range of targeted assistance was also provided that addressed career and transition, cultural identity, personal development and social welfare areas.

The development of Individual Learning Plans, Individual Training Plans and Transition Plans for Indigenous students was a feature in most regional reports. There was also an emphasis on work related programs and activities and there was again strong involvement of Indigenous teachers,
specialists, and support agencies including Indigenous employment, educational, cultural, health and welfare organisations.

Some of the specific programs and activities reported in 2011 were:

- preparation for the world of work, work readiness activities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) oriented careers markets and expos, career classes, interview training, job coaching, mentoring, School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships and the Lighthouse Program
- use of Aboriginal support staff such as Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers and Aboriginal Education Officers
- use of targeted programs such as the Norta Norta Program that funds schools to provide learning assistance including tutorial assistance, Girri Girri which is a sports academy for Indigenous students, Feeling Deadly Not Shame workshops which are personal development programs that focus on promoting cultural identity and the individual's role within the community, targeted Aboriginal art programs, Indigenous sport programs such as AFL SportsReady, and leadership programs such as the Young Mob Leaders program
- Indigenous cultural activities such as community days and cultural camps.

One region reported supporting Aboriginal Education Officers to gain an increased awareness of career development theory and practice to raise their confidence in working with Careers Advisers to assist Aboriginal students. Another reported that staff had completed ATSI specific professional learning.

**Students living in regional or rural areas**

Strategies and programs to build the career and transition confidence of students living in regional and rural areas were reported for the first time this year. Generally the career and transition activities and programs offered to these students are similar to those offered to other students such as career expos, work experience programs, School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, student mentor programs and industry visits. There is a focus, however, on enabling or increasing access to such activities and programs. This includes providing or facilitating access to funding for travel, scholarships for study in metropolitan or regional centres, and living away from home allowance. One region commented that rural schools are very aware of the need to maximise opportunities for students to attend non-rural events in metropolitan and larger regional centres.

Schools also reported the use of flexible learning modes and multi-media initiatives to facilitate access to courses, particularly TVET courses. The Sydney Distance Education High School, for example, uses a blended learning approach that involves both electronic and paper delivery which allows self-paced learning.

**Students who stay at school because of the changed school leaving age**

Schools have continued to focus on work related strategies and programs to address the needs of young people staying on at school as a result of the new school leaving age. Most regions report a broadening of the curriculum to include alternative options such as non ATAR courses, Stage 5 and 6 VET and TVET, increased access to SBATs, Board of Studies Work Studies classes, Applied English and Applied Maths.

Several regions mentioned an increased use of outside agencies to deliver alternative learning programs, student support and assistance with work experience. Those mentioned include Youth Connections, ASPIRE, ABCN Aspirations, Ostara and Ontrack Employment. Flexible timetabling was also a response introduced by schools in one region.

There was an increased emphasis on career and transition planning activities and one region reported that the majority of schools had employed a Transition Adviser. Several regions report
Schools engaging with the NSW Department of Education and Communities' Links to Learning program.

The overall approach by schools is summed up in the following statement by one region:

> The most successful models have been where the broadened curriculum is supported by stronger links with industry and community agencies and integrates a student support function into the structural arrangements for the program.

**Students from low socio-economic backgrounds**

Schools offer basically the same suite of STW programs and activities to students from low socio-economic backgrounds as they do to other students but additional programs are offered that address the particular needs of these students. While career and transition related activities are reported by all regions, programs and activities to build self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience, support personal development, foster aspirations and provide motivation feature in many regions. A feature of 2011 regional reports is the various forms of financial assistance provided by schools to students from low socio-economic backgrounds. This includes providing financial assistance for school excursions, career expos and other activities, providing information and help to access scholarships, student loans, university equity programs such as the in2Uni program, government housing scholarships, HELP and FEE-HELP, and seeking out or promoting no or low cost options such subsidised training opportunities. Partnerships with other schools, TAFE and universities in programs to build student and parent awareness and personal aspirations are also mentioned by several regions.

**Students in Other Identified Groups**

Other identified groups reported on by schools generally included Gifted and Talented Students (GATS), gender specific, refugees, at-risk student and remedial programs. Strategies and programs used with these students in 2011 were similar to those in 2010. One region commented that:

> There is a focus across all schools to meet individual student needs, whatever they may be and whatever that may require.

GATS programs generally had an academic orientation (accelerated programs, enrichment programs and summer schools with universities, encouragement to participate in specialised industry programs, for example Honeywell Engineering and Siemens Science school, tertiary information days), or a leadership element (executive shadowing). Activities focussing on communication and presentation skills (public speaking, debating) were not as prominent as in 2010 and there was little reporting of competitive programs such as World Skills or the Solar Boat Challenge in 2011.

Gender specific programs often served the multiple purposes of building self-esteem and confidence, providing life skills, developing work related skills and knowledge and building work experience. One region reported that:

> Schools are proactively increasing gender aspirations in obtaining qualifications such as First Aid and OH&S from outside training providers.

Some of the gender specific programs mentioned included the University Girls Choices Summer School, CHASE, a TAFE initiative to increase employability skills, ‘Women in Engineering’ and ‘Girls with a Purpose’ workshops. Specifically mentioned for boys were vegetable garden projects and Construction industry mentoring.

There was less reporting on programs for at-risk students but those mentioned included Attitude and Motivation for at-risk Year 7 students, Men’s Shed for at-risk boys, Rock and Water for disengaged boys.
Transition Advisers in schools

Almost half (45 percent) of schools reported having a Transition Adviser. In over a third of schools (36 percent) the Transition Adviser position has been incorporated into the school as a recognised role. In a number of regions Transition Advisers are active in a large number of schools while in others the schools are reported to be ‘in the initial stages of engaging and utilising the Transition Adviser model’. Lack of staffing resources is the main reason given by schools for not having a Transition Adviser. One region reported:

*Unfortunately these positions are school funded and most schools find it very difficult to support this vital position. If all schools were funded for a position the impact would be profound.*

Several regions report that the Transition Adviser’s role is integral to the operation of Career and Transition (CAT) teams and whole of school planning. Some regions report that there are issues around the respective roles of Careers Advisers and Transition Advisers but in others, they are seen as complementary roles and in many schools Careers Advisers have taken on the role of Transition Adviser as well. A number of regions also report that school executive members have taken on the Transition Adviser role, with one commenting that this was one of the most successful models.

Transition Advisers have generally had a very positive impact in schools with most regions enthusiastic in their comments. Typical comments include:

*TA has made a positive, significant and valuable impact.*

*Transition Advisers have had a significant impact on student outcomes.*

*All schools in the region that have a Transition Adviser report the position is extremely valuable.*

Outcomes attributed to Transition Advisers include more effective liaison and coordination with outside agencies, additional and stronger community links, increased student attendance, engagement and retention in programs, improvements in student confidence and employability and wider school and community awareness of the work of Transition Advisers. Transition Advisers are also said to have helped to focus career programming and professional learning for all staff, dramatically enhanced support for students, and influenced the acceptance of transition programs and strategies as core business within the school. Collegial sharing of the Transition Adviser between senior and junior campuses is also said to be producing good results in student transitions from junior to senior school.
Summary of Planning Transition Pathways in 2011

Planning transition pathways is a key result area for the School to Work Program. All regions advised that schools were providing a broad range of strategies, programs and support structures to assist students in planning transition pathways and developing career confidence.

Regions have indicated there is a focus on transition planning for all students with STW programs and activities being tailored to meet the needs of individuals, particularly those in targeted groups.

The quantitative data from regions indicates generally positive results for 2011. The majority of students accessing the Student Pathways Survey (SPS) are from Years 9 and 10 indicating that the survey provides a good foundation for students to begin thinking about their future career aspirations. The Student Pathways Plan (SPP), released at the beginning of Term 4, 2011, was well received by schools as it complimented the Student Pathways Survey and encouraged students to begin the process of career planning.

The number of times the Student Pathways Survey: School Report was accessed indicates an interest by schools in analysing student responses to the SPS.

A greater number and a larger proportion of Years 9-12 students were estimated to be able to articulate a career and transition plan than in 2010 and in Years 9 and 10 a greater proportion of students had a written career and transition plan. A wide range of approaches continued to be used to support students to both develop a personal career and transition plan and to document their personal career and transition planning.

In 2011 most regions reported identified groups were included in whole of school programs and activities but provision of individualised assistance to members of identified groups was again highlighted. Initiatives included both personal and educational support as well as career and transition initiatives.

The number of students with a disability, with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and from a Language Background Other Than English and their share of STW participation increased with each group experiencing a small increase in the number and share of participating students.

Schools continued to consolidate their responses to the needs of students affected by the new school leaving age. As well as an extension of existing programs a range of alternative programs and activities have been offered including non-ATAR pathways, additional VET programs, work experience and work studies.

Targeted support was also provided for students from low SES backgrounds. Direct financial support or facilitation of access to various forms of financial assistance for these students featured in most regional reports. Strategies to support the career and transition planning process for regional or rural students were reported separately for the first time this year. Particularly mentioned were various forms of financial assistance and the use of flexible learning modes to ensure access to relevant programs and activities.

There is evidence that more schools are adopting an integrated team approach to career and transition planning. The legitimacy of career and transition planning and education within schools has been strengthened by the increased involvement of school executive members in CAT teams and by the emerging and increasing role taken by Transition Advisers. In most schools the respective roles of Careers Advisers and Transition Advisers are seen as complementary. A reported impediment to the greater use of Transition Advisers by schools was school staffing resources. Overwhelmingly, in those schools with a Transition Adviser, the reaction has been positive, the role is being recognised and incorporated into whole of school planning and management, and attributed outcomes are very promising.
2.5 Exploring Career Futures

Students accessing electronic career information to support their pathways planning

The above data provides a picture of electronic career resources which students were supported to use in 2011 to access career information for their pathways planning. The data shows schools support students in the use of multiple websites. Overall, the career information website usage pattern was much the same as in 2010. The myfuture website, Job Guide and tertiary institutions continued to be the most popular resources although use of Job Guide fell slightly (15 fewer schools). Use of Ozjac also fell slightly (13 fewer schools) while use of the Careers Advisory Service (CAS) website and industry specific websites increased slightly (15 and 13 more schools respectively). Slightly less than four percent of schools reported no supported use of career websites, down from five percent in 2010.

Teachers accessing electronic career resources to support students in their pathways planning

The above data provides a picture of electronic career resources which students were supported to use in 2011 to access career information for their pathways planning. The data shows schools support students in the use of multiple websites. Overall, the career information website usage pattern was much the same as in 2010. The myfuture website, Job Guide and tertiary institutions continued to be the most popular resources although use of Job Guide fell slightly (15 fewer schools). Use of Ozjac also fell slightly (13 fewer schools) while use of the Careers Advisory Service (CAS) website and industry specific websites increased slightly (15 and 13 more schools respectively). Slightly less than four percent of schools reported no supported use of career websites, down from five percent in 2010.
The use of electronic technology to support pathways planning has been embraced by many schools. The above data provides information about access by teachers and Careers Advisers to electronic resources to support students’ career and transition planning. In 2011 several additional resources were reported on separately for the first time. These include the Vocational Learning Intranet site, Other Employment Related Skills Resources, KLA across the curriculum and National Career Development Week.

The data shows that teachers and careers advisers made considerable use of such resources in 2011. The myfuture website continued to be the most popular resource. Some resources appear to have been less used in 2011 than previously, for example, the Vocational Education in Schools website (21 fewer schools) and the ReCaP website (27 fewer schools). As a single website ReCAP was the least used with 25 percent of schools reporting teachers used this resource.

**Electronic tools teachers/careers advisers are using to support the School to Work program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electronic tools teachers/careers advisers are using to support the School to Work Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video Conferencing</td>
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<td>Interactive Whiteboards</td>
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<td>Moodle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wikis</td>
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<td>Blogs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student DEC email</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</table>

The above data provides a picture of electronic tools which teachers used to support the Schools to Work Program in 2011. This is the first year this information has been reported on separately. Use of interactive whiteboards is widespread being used by 86 percent of reporting schools. Student DEC email was also a popular tool.

**Use of DER NSW laptops to support cross-curricula career communication, career education, and/or career services in schools**

Regions generally reported using the DER NSW laptops in similar ways. These include:

- accessing and researching careers resources and information such as schooltowork.com, myfuture website, university, TAFE, UAC and industry specific websites
- accessing Moodle for careers assignments, work experience documentation and other career and transition related purposes
- accessing interactive and multi-media content for lessons and career path planning delivery
- communicating and distributing information to students, other teachers and parents via email, newsletters
- accessing Student Pathways Survey/Plan and other online surveys
- accessing Logbook Online
• producing letters, resumes, electronic portfolios and other related documentation
• researching post school career and training options, particularly in career classes.

Comments by regions are positive about the use of the laptops. There is said to be a significant increase in access to career and transition resources enabled by the laptops. They have also facilitated and increased communication between students and teachers and been used for teacher professional development. One region commented that:

DER student and teacher laptops have had a positive impact on the actual learning that takes place in and out of the classroom.

Professional development accessed by teachers in schools to support laptop use in the delivery of career education, and/or career services

In 2011 the extent of professional development undertaken by teachers to support laptop use in the delivery of career education and/or career services varied between regions. One region reported little professional development had been undertaken that was particularly relevant to career education or transition planning but another commented on an increasing trend to provide support to teachers across the school to use laptops to access career and transition resources.

In regions where staff development had been undertaken it varied from generic training on the use of laptops to training for specific career-related purposes. Training delivery also varied. Regional Careers Advisers conferences and workshops were mentioned frequently as providing valuable training and assistance in utilising the laptops for career and transition purposes. Regional ICT workshops were also mentioned as providing training on generic laptop tools and resources. Specific areas in which training was undertaken include

• Moodle training
• access to and use of career resources websites such as myfuture website, Job Guide and Ozjac
• Student Pathways Survey and logbook online training
• video conferencing
• use of smart boards
• e- Me
• blogs and wikis.

Support required for schools to maximise the use of laptops in students’ career exploration, career education and career and transition planning

Requirements to maximise the use of laptops in students’ career exploration, career education and career and transition planning are quite varied. Some are common across regions while others are region specific. Requirements generally relate to technical issues, student management issues, IT support, generic laptop training, and specific purpose training and support and include:

• more time allocated for formal professional development
• more time allocated for teachers to develop lessons that incorporate the use of laptops
• ongoing training in generic laptop and software use for Careers Advisers and teachers
• ongoing training for KLA teachers in use of laptops to incorporate career exploration and transition planning in their teaching areas
• ongoing training related to specific career activities such as accessing careers websites, use of Student Pathways Survey and accessing Logbook Online
• ongoing training in Moodle, wikis and blogs for Careers Advisers
• expanded networks, faster and more reliable access and faster laptops
• IT support for troubleshooting technical problems
• support with accessibility issues for students with disabilities
• STW folder and careers links pre-loaded on laptops when issued to students.

Several regions again reported difficulties created by students forgetting to bring laptops to school, forgetting to charge them, forgetting passwords or presenting in class with broken laptops. One region suggested the use of incentives to address these problems.

**Schools providing authentic learning opportunities including work-based and community-based learning.**

![Schools providing authentic learning opportunities](image)

A range of authentic learning opportunities for students was provided by schools in 2011 with all of the listed forms of learning being offered by an increased number of schools.

Workplace learning was provided by 99 percent of reporting schools, with only six schools not involved. It was the most used method of authentic learning, followed by volunteering and community based work, used by 85 percent and 75 percent of schools respectively. There has been a steady increase in the use of volunteering and community based work with significant gains since 2009 when they were used by 66 percent and 68 percent of schools respectively. One region commented that:

*The increased use of community based work and volunteering in schools as authentic learning opportunities has been enhanced by the role of the Regional Volunteer Coordinator.*

Service learning is not as widely used in comparison but the proportion of schools using this method increased to 21 percent, up from 20 percent in 2010 and 12 percent in 2009.

**Summary of Exploring Career Futures**

The key result area, **Exploring Career Futures**, is about providing students with access to people, opportunities and a variety of media to assist them to process information about work, education and training options. Regional reports acknowledge the importance of information and communications technology in career education and transition planning, both for students and teachers. Electronic resources are important career and transition planning tools and during 2011 use of the internet and a range of career related websites by students, teachers and Careers Advisers remained strong.
Despite ongoing technical and student management issues, most regional reports are positive in acknowledging the improvement that the DER NSW laptop initiative has made in increasing student learning, providing access to careers resources, facilitating communication between teachers, students and families, providing new methods of program delivery, and providing access to teacher professional development. As one region reported:

*DER laptop use is significant. Students are creating electronic portfolios; where possible all work is sent and submitted electronically; accessing online resources/researching career information, emailing resumes, storing e-portfolios, utilising career interest tools; accessing the Student Pathway Survey; Logbook Online, completing classroom log sheets, using online Job Guide.*

Regional reports also recognise the need for ongoing training, particularly for Careers Advisers, in order to maximise use of the laptops.

The 2011 data shows that each of the listed forms of authentic learning is being offered by an increasing number of schools which suggests that schools continue to see the value of learning in authentic contexts. Almost all reporting schools are engaged in providing an authentic experience for their students through workplace learning.
2.6 Strengthening Student Outcomes through Vocational Learning

Schools using the Employment Related Skills Logbook

The Employment Related Skills Logbook is a major resource for the School to Work Program that supports the student planning process. It can be accessed online or in hard copy. In 2011, 62,282 students were reported to have used the logbook for career and transition planning across the six secondary years, an increase of 9,189 students or 17 percent. This was 22 percent of enrolments in reporting schools compared to 19 percent in 2010 and begins to reverse the decline in use seen in previous years.

Stage 5 continues to be the major focus Stage for use of the logbook for career and transition planning. In 2011, 41,787 Stage 5 students were reported to have used the logbook for this purpose, which was 54 percent of Stage 5 STW participants and 41 percent of Stage 5 enrolments in reporting schools, up from 47 percent and 36 percent respectively in 2010.

In Stage 6, a total of 19,514 students was reported as using the Logbook in 2011 for career and transition planning, which was 31 percent of Stage 6 STW participants and 25 percent of Stage 6 enrolments in reporting schools, up from 26 percent and 21 percent respectively in 2010.
KLA teachers teaching employment related skills and supporting students to articulate their ability in these skills

The extent to which KLA teachers are teaching employment related skills (ERS) and supporting students to articulate their ability in these skills varied considerably between regions and between schools within regions. One region reported:

*The range of responses is varied from ‘all KLAs have School to Work outcomes embedded’ to ‘they are not doing this explicitly’.*

A few regions reported that all KLAs have incorporated the teaching of ERS into their curriculums, or that schools are explicitly teaching these skills within their curriculum. ERS are said to be emphasised in authentic assessments and interviews and included in student reports. In one region teachers are using project based learning to develop ERS.

Other regions that report that ERS are not being taught explicitly in KLAs also comment that these skills are ‘generally still only made explicit in career/transition/work education lessons’ or that schools rely on VET teachers and careers advisers to focus on this area. Other schools rely on ERS being acquired through a range of workplace learning opportunities including work experience and VET work placement.

Curriculum pressure and lack of time in KLAs are given as reasons for not including ERS in KLAs. One region has reported the need for more professional learning to raise awareness of ERS in all curriculum areas and to equip KLA teachers to deliver and report these skills. Careers Advisers are said to be providing support to KLAs and providing professional development to staff on ERS. In one region schools are beginning to use *e-ME*, a new interactive online careers resource.

**Teachers integrating vocational learning into their teaching**

**Number of schools integrating vocational learning into teaching**

A large proportion of schools, 89 percent, report that teachers integrate vocational learning into their teaching. Vocational learning in the classroom includes:

- employment related skill development
- authentic learning experiences and processes drawing on the professions, trades, service sectors and the creative industries
- curriculum and syllabus links to the world of work (eg work, employment and enterprise cross curriculum content)
- curriculum activities involving community, business, TAFE or University
- underpinning career-related research.
One region reported that vocational learning had dramatically increased in schools in the region and another that there had been a noticeable increase in delivery of vocational learning across whole school core business.

Among the array of examples of integrated vocational learning, the most commonly reported include:

- vocational and careers related classes or lines in Stage 5 and 6, for example Work Education and Work Studies
- authentic learning opportunities through work experience, community service and volunteering
- increased availability of School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs)
- student participation in World Skills competition, the Real Game, Australian Business Week and similar activities
- student visits to industry/business and industry/business visits to schools including from industries directly related to KLAs
- enterprise projects such as school cafes, school magazines, gardening projects
- trade or work-related training in the classroom, for example, Town Planner in Geography, Plumber in Maths, Designing a Business Plan in Commerce.

Schools giving students opportunities in enterprising learning initiatives

![Chart showing the percentage of schools providing opportunities in enterprising learning initiatives]

Close to three quarters of all reporting schools provided opportunities for enterprising learning in 2011. Enterprising learning is where learners use initiative, resourcefulness and other enterprising skills in the way they learn. They use initiative, innovation and industry to create something of value, and valued by others. It often involves identifying a real issue or gap and working out a new way to address that issue or gap. It requires taking responsibility; getting involved through first hand real life experience; working cooperatively with others; producing a workable solution; and reflection.

Enterprising learning can be undertaken as part of an external or school developed enterprising learning program, or as a student developed initiative.

An extensive array of examples of enterprising learning opportunities were reported, many of which were school or region specific. Many are locally developed activities while others are national and even international activities. Many of the learning activities are ‘packaged’ and provided or facilitated by external agencies and resources, such as Australian Business Week and the ASX Share Market game. Some are part of the curriculum and others are provided as extra curricula activities.

Activities generally fall into a number of categories such as small business enterprises, environmental enterprises, fund-raising and community service, competitive challenges, personal development, leadership development and specific occupation or trade related activities although many activities serve more than one purpose. Volunteering is mentioned frequently with activities likely to be
community service oriented. Featuring more prominently in 2011 are initiatives aimed at developing personal financial management skills. An innovative initiative in one region is the Independent Living projects that foster life skills by developing skills and strategies to address issues associated with everyday living such as budgeting for food/living costs, housing and buying online.

Examples of enterprising learning initiatives include:

Small businesses

- setting up and running school or community cafes, production and sale of music CDs, school vegetable gardens, catering, market days

Fund-raising and community service

- volunteering, painting Mission Australia bins, Social Justice Community volunteering

Environmentally oriented activities

- recycling programs, environmental rejuvenation project, kitchen gardens, sustainable water systems

Competitive, leadership development, business learning and personal development type activities

- Premiers Challenge, Australian Business Week, Young Achievers Australia, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, The Real Game, World Skills competition, Solar Car Challenge, ASX share market game, Engineering Science Challenge, ruMAD? (Are you making a difference?)

Work or trade-related training

- Plumber in Maths, Step Out bricklaying program, film making, school radio station.

Financial management

- Independent Living projects, YMCA Money Savvy day,

The outcomes reported from Enterprising Learning initiatives include the development of business skills such as business plan preparation and stock management, retail skills, financial skills such as budgeting and money management, marketing and research skills, leadership, communication and interpersonal, skills, working in teams, problem analysis and problem solving, self-confidence, job seeking skills, industry specific skills, personal financial management and life skills.

### Schools giving students the opportunity to participate in the Real Game Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student numbers by year group</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Make it Real Game</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>190</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Real Game</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>1067</td>
<td>2485</td>
<td>3142</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>184</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Be Real Game</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>767</td>
<td>1726</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Get Real Game</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Game Digital edition</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schools continued to provide the Real Game series in 2011 but the number and proportion of students participating in the series was generally low. In Stage 4, 703 or 7.7 percent of Stage 4 STW participants took part in The Make it Real Game, slightly up from 7.5 percent in 2010.

The Real Game component had the most number of participants with 8,037 participants across all reporting schools which represented 5.2 percent of Years 7-12 STW participants, down from 5.8 percent in 2010. There were falls of 500 and 553 in the number of The Real Game participants in Years 9 and 10, although 59 schools provided the digital edition of The Real Game for Y9 students and 259 provided it for Year 10 students. The number of Years 11 and 12 students participating in The Get Real Game also fell significantly but again may have been offset by schools providing access to the digital edition.

Quality Teaching in Vocational Learning

Number of schools explicitly drawing on the Quality Teaching Framework in their delivery of vocational learning

This year is the first year in which schools have reported on the extent and ways in which teachers draw on the Quality Teaching Framework in their delivery of vocational learning. In some regions the Quality Teaching Framework (QTF) is said to be embedded in all teaching and learning programs and is thus integral to the delivery of vocational learning.
Links are made in a number of regions to the quality learning environment dimension of the QTF, particularly the student engagement, student direction and student self-regulation elements which have been addressed through authentic learning opportunities such as work experience placements and volunteering, participation in competitive programs, leadership development, business learning and personal development type activities, and enterprising learning initiatives.

Reference is also made by two regions to initiatives involving metalanguage, an element of the Intellectual Quality dimension. In one, teachers are said to address the Metalanguage explicit to the identified employability skills in chosen career paths. In the other, in one school, the English faculty rewrote a Year 9 unit called *Persuasive Language* linking employment related skills to student outcomes.

In a number of regions, while schools have reported on various vocational learning initiatives, these generally have not been linked to the various elements of the Quality Teaching Framework. One region observed that explicit connections with the Quality Teaching Framework need to be further developed.

### Summary of Strengthening Student Outcomes through Vocational Learning

**Strengthening Student Outcomes through Vocational Learning** is a key result area for the School to Work Program. Initiatives in this area support teachers in identifying and providing a range of opportunities for students to make explicit links to vocational and enterprise learning in all curriculum areas. Overall the outcomes in this area were positive with an increased use of the Employment Related Skills Logbook, progress in incorporating employment related skills into Key Learning Areas (KLAs), and a large proportion of schools (89 percent) reporting the use of vocational learning to strengthen outcomes for students.

Use of the Employment Related Skills Logbook varied from region to region with one region reporting a decrease in users from nearly 4000 to around 560 students. Despite this there was an overall increase of 17 percent in the use of the Logbook across all year levels. This is a positive result and begins to reverse the downward trend in use experienced in recent years.

The extent to which KLA teachers are teaching employment related skills (ERS) also varied considerably between regions and between schools within regions. In most regions there was progress but in several regions ERS are generally still only made explicit in career/transition/work education lessons. Curriculum pressure, lack of time in KLAs and the need for more professional development around ERS and vocational learning generally were identified as limiting wider incorporation in KLAs.

The provision of enterprising learning opportunities remained strong with schools reporting positive outcomes that included the development of business skills such as business plan preparation and stock management, retail skills, financial skills such as budgeting and money management, marketing and research skills, leadership, communication and interpersonal skills, working in teams, problem analysis and problem solving, self-confidence, job seeking skills, industry specific skills, personal financial management and life skills.

This year is the first year in which schools have reported on the extent and ways in which teachers draw on the Quality Teaching Framework in their delivery of vocational learning. While schools in some regions have made explicit connections with the Quality Teaching Framework, regional reports generally suggest that such connections need to be further developed in many schools.
2.7 Building Networks and Connections

Schools developing community/business partnerships

The above chart indicates that, under the umbrella of the School to Work Program, a high proportion of schools continue to see value in community/business partnerships with 88 percent of schools reporting that community/business partnerships have been embedded in strategic planning processes, although this is down from 93 percent in 2010.

All regions mentioned a variety of local businesses and state-wide or Australia-wide organisations with which they have partnership arrangements. Mentoring, workplace learning opportunities, volunteering opportunities, post-school employment, job seeking skills through mock interviews, identification of possible career paths, and school based apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities are common examples of the opportunities provided through partnerships. Some partnerships are ad hoc while others are ongoing and in some cases are governed by a Memorandum of Understanding. One region reported that:

*Partnerships within the community are an integral aspect for the outcomes sought by schools.*

Community linked activities that support student career and transition planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community linked activities that have supported student career and transition planning</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guest speakers</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry visits</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Expos</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise activities</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to Learning Program</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Learning Programs</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above graph points to the range of community linked initiatives implemented in 2011 that supported student career and transition planning. The data indicate that schools participated in multiple community linked activities. There was an increased involvement by schools in all activities except alternative learning programs where there was a small downward variation.

The pattern of involvement by schools in the various initiatives was much the same as in 2010. Guest speakers and Career Expos remain the two most popular activities with 92 percent of reporting schools using these activities.

**School Business Community Partnership brokered activities or programs in regions that have supported student career and transition planning**

This question was not well understood by the majority of schools. It was unclear which initiatives had been brokered solely by the DEEWR-funded Partnership Brokers and verification was outside the scope of this report.

**Parents being informed about how they can support their child's career development and transition planning**

**Percentage of schools actively engaging parents, carers and elders in their role to support their child’s career development**

![Bar Chart]

The School to Work Program, since its inception, has sought to promote parent understanding about how they can support their child’s career development and transition planning. In 2011, a high proportion of schools, 96 percent, sought to engage parents, carers, and elders in their child’s career development. Much of the effort is directed towards information sharing. As one region reported:

> Some schools have more comprehensive strategies for parent engagement and participation whilst others have focused on informing parents.

Information sharing activities include websites, emails, newsletters, parent information sessions, subject selection evenings, parent/elder/carer morning teas, careers expos, industry forums, participation in excursions, and Moodle access. More targeted activities involving individual students/parents include parent/teacher interviews with class teachers and/or Careers Adviser, individual subject selection interviews, phone contact, individual transition planning, participation in excursions and Moodle access. Several regions report targeted activities for identified groups such as LBOTE, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with a disability.

Efforts to involve parents/carers/elders that go beyond information sharing include involvement in organising work placement/work experience, parents being trained as career mentors and parents...
being involved in planning days. One region reports that parent partnerships have been a focus in 2011 and that in 2012 the region will be implementing the Parents as Career and Transition Support (PACTS) program.

**Opportunities provided to parents/carers, elders and/or community members to be involved in career and transition support for their child**

The above graph quantifies some of the opportunities provided by schools to parents to engage in and support their children’s career and transition. In 2011, the pattern of use of the various activities remained the same as in 2010 with parent interviews, used by 97 percent of schools, being most popular followed by newsletters (91 percent) and Careers Adviser access (86 percent). Involving parents in the Student Pathways Survey, inviting them to careers expos and to industry forums were strategies used by between 26 and 30 more schools than in 2010.

**Mentors being available to students**

**Percentage of schools where mentoring support is increasingly being made available to support students’ career and transition planning**

The above chart indicates the proportion of schools where mentoring support is increasingly available to support students’ career and transition planning. This is the first year this has been separately reported. Regions report schools using a variety of mentors for a range of purposes. Teacher mentors
are frequently mentioned, with a number of regions reporting the use of teacher mentors with Years 11 and 12 students and one region indicating the practice had been extended to Years 9 and 10 students. Schools in some regions have also trained Career and Transition Advisers, school executive members and year advisers as mentors.

Mentoring arrangements for at-risk students were also used frequently, as were peer mentoring and various business mentoring programs such as *Women in Business* and industry specific mentoring. Other targeted mentoring included Indigenous mentoring. Areas to which mentoring has been directed include development of resumes, subject selection, careers research, preparation of university and scholarship applications, progress and future directions.

**Schools providing careers advisers with access to professional development**

The above chart shows that local professional learning networks was the preferred option for Careers Advisers seeking professional learning in 2011 with 89 percent of reporting schools indicating Careers Advisers had accessed local networks. Almost as many schools, 87 percent, reported participation in regional professional learning networks. Around 49 percent of reporting schools had Careers Advisers participating in State, regional and local professional learning networks, up from 48 percent in 2010. Around 5 percent of reporting schools indicated that Careers Advisers did not access local, regional, state or national professional learning networks in 2011.

**Schools implementing workplace learning to support student’s educational experience**

**Percentage of schools that provide work experience**
A very high percentage of reporting schools, 98 percent, provide work experience for their students. Work experience, in various forms, is generally provided for targeted students in Years 9-12 but several regions report that work experience is provided for any student aged 15 or over on request. Students commonly targeted include Year 10, students at-risk, students in alternative programs, and students with a disability. Work experience is also provided as part of Work Education and Work Studies courses and for VET framework students.

Work experience is provided in various ways including block release (usually for Year 10 and in some schools this is mandatory), periodic or weekly release. Block release is the most popular arrangement for work experience.

### Summary of Building Networks and Connections

**Building Networks and Connections** is a key result area for the School to Work Program. It is evident from the data and regional reports that in 2011 schools have continued their efforts to strengthen existing and foster new strategic connections, partnerships and networks. The returns from these efforts have been continuing opportunities for vocational learning, work experience, work placements and learning in other authentic contexts for a large number of students.

Although a smaller proportion of schools reported embedding community/business partnerships in their school plan, a high proportion continue to see value in community/business partnerships with data showing that many schools participated in multiple community/business linked activities.

In 2011, a high proportion of schools, 96 percent, sought to engage parents, carers, and elders in their child’s career development. Most sought to do this through information sharing activities but there is evidence that some schools have sought to move beyond this to a more active form of engagement.

The commitment of Careers Advisers to the School to Work Program is evidenced by the high proportion accessing professional development to enhance their effectiveness in engaging students in career and transition planning.

Schools have also embraced mentoring with widespread use of mentors for a range of purposes. School staff including teachers, Careers and Transition Advisers, year advisers and school executive members are being trained as mentors. Use of outside agencies and programs is also commonly reported. Years 11 and 12 students in many regions are allocated teacher mentors. Mentoring arrangements for at-risk students and peer mentoring are also common.
A very high percentage of reporting schools, 98 percent, provide work experience for their students. While several regions report that work experience is provided for any student aged 15 or over on request, students generally targeted include those in Year 10, students at-risk, students in alternative programs and students with a disability. Work experience is also provided as part of Work Education and Work Studies courses.
2.8 Region Specific

The School to Work Program is delivered in a flexible manner to ensure that regions meet the needs of students in their unique localities. Regions set key strategic outcomes within the framework of School to Work. This section enables regions to collect extra data that aligns with their priorities for 2011.

Hunter/Central Coast

The questions posed to schools by the Hunter/Central Coast region were:

a) What impact has your Career and Transition (CAT) Team had in your school this year?

b) What professional learning opportunities could support the ongoing operations or continuous improvement of your school’s Career and Transition Team?

Region comment: In general all CAT Teams have added value with positive outcomes for students in Hunter/Central Coast schools. The programs and focus in schools have been varied and school specific. It is also very apparent that all schools require ongoing professional development and support for their CAT teams from region, as well as professional learning in the use of technology.

Illawarra/South East

The questions posed to schools by the Illawarra/South East region were:

a) How has STW been able to address student engagement in your school?

b) Briefly describe a specific whole school program that has addressed student engagement issue(s) in your school.

Region comment: The focus in our region is for STW to provide a framework for schools to address student engagement by initiating relevant and engaging learning opportunities which both develop and strengthen student outcomes. In 2011 this has been very successful. Schools have embraced the concept and implemented very innovative programs.

New England

The questions posed to schools by the New England region were:

a) Describe how your school’s career and transition team members (Careers Advisers, Transition Advisers, STW Coordinators, School Executive members) are adapting their career and transition support advice to students to reflect the changing industry sector opportunities at a local, regional, and national scale. (For example, as explored at the New England Region 2011 Careers Advisers Conference: the current regional employment pathways in Agriculture and Mining)

b) In what capacity has your school liaised in 2011 with employers and industry organisations to learn about future labour demands and skills shortages across industry sectors?

Region comment: The Regional Careers Conference proved to be highly valuable in providing knowledge of both regional and national Mining and Agricultural sectors, identifying transferrable skills, trades and required infrastructure in providing students with further career and real work opportunities. Schools are identifying trends through the use of industry mentors, Careers Advisers, Transition Advisers, SBATs, local government and training providers.

North Coast

The question posed to schools by the North Coast region was:

a) During 2011, in which of the following areas has your School reviewed current practice, planned innovations or implemented new practices to better meet the transition needs of Stage 5 students
to further education, training or employment? (Areas listed were Curriculum structures (timetables etc), Curriculum Options – VET, Curriculum Options - other than VET, Workplace Learning, Student support initiatives (eg mentoring), Career education, with response options being Reviewed, Planned or Implemented).

Region comment: Response data supports perceptions that schools are actively reviewing, revising and implementing new approaches to cater for the engagement and attainment needs of students.

Northern Sydney

The questions posed to schools by the Northern Sydney region were:

a) Explain how one of your NSR STW funded projects in 2011 embeds vocational and enterprise learning in the context of the Quality Teaching Framework.

b) How does the project provide opportunities for contextual learning in at least one KLA, or within the School Careers program?

Region comment: Embedded vocational and enterprise learning opportunities have been provided for Northern Sydney region students through links with the local business communities. This has enhanced the connectedness and engagement of learning as outlined in the Quality Teaching Framework. The Lifesaving Program is engaging and fosters a learning environment that supports the development of deep knowledge and understanding.

Riverina

The questions posed to schools by the Riverina region were:

a) What professional learning opportunities could support the enhancement and continuous improvement of your school's Career and Transition activities?

b) How does your school use the STW program to support student engagement and attainment, particularly for students affected by the new school leaving age?

Region comment: Careers Advisers are requesting much more in-school support for STW and careers. There is still a disconnection between careers teacher’s role and the STW program. Most Careers Advisers do not accept that they are primarily responsible for STW outcomes. Most Careers Advisers see VET as the prime focus of regional support and are seeking more regional support for careers focussed activity including newsletters, training of Careers Advisers in myfuture.

South Western Sydney

The questions posed to schools by the South Western Sydney region were:

a) Please outline any impediments to implementing your School to Work program/plan?

b) South Western Sydney region provides support for School to Work programs through provision of the Regional STW Coordinator, Vocational Education Consultants and STW specific funding. What additional support would assist you to enhance the School to Work outcomes for your students?

Region comment: Many schools reported that the level of regional support was sufficient and often invaluable. Ongoing funding was requested. Some impediments include maintaining staff interest, motivation and enthusiasm across KLAs: time constraints; cost of relief; availability of a trained Careers Adviser and literacy levels of some student bodies which require considerable support and additional time.

Sydney

The questions posed to schools by the Sydney region were:
a) How is a focus on work, enterprise and employability skills embedded (and maintained) in the
teaching and learning programs at your school?

b) How does your school use the STW program to support student engagement and attainment,
particularly for students affected by the new school leaving age?

Region comment: Through curriculum delivery, staff awareness of Logbook Online, ERS etc.
Emphasised through school plan. Through career and transition classes and activities. VET
Programs, newsletter. A couple of schools mentioned a ‘flexible, whole school approach to STW and
student involvement in expos etc. Resume writing embedded in English.

Western NSW
The questions posed to schools by the Western NSW region were:

a) During 2011, in which of the following areas has your school reviewed current practice, planned
innovations or implemented new practices to better meet the transition needs of Stage 5 students to
further education, training or employment?

b) How has STW been able to address student engagement in your school?

Region comment: It is encouraging to read the comments from schools about the engagement that
STW programs provide for their students. It is also encouraging to read the variety of programs and
the innovative methods employed by schools to provide these outcomes for their students. It would be
great to be in a position to provide more support both financially and in person for these schools to
increase the outcome.

Western Sydney
The questions posed to schools by the Western Sydney region were:

a) Has your school engaged in the region’s ‘Planning my Future’ model to adopt management
strategies that address the outcomes of State educational policy such as engagement and retention?
If Yes, please give 2 managerial strategies that have changed across your school. (eg greater cross
KLA involvement in decision making).

b) Have the region’s strategic changes in reflecting Office of Schools priorities and STW KRAs made
a difference to your school’s management of STW programs? Please explain your response.

c) Please reflect on the last few years of STW initiatives and programs run in your school. Please
outline how one (1) of these initiatives has changed and/or developed in light of program
management and the development of student outcomes.

Region comment: Western Sydney region has been working towards aligning the outcomes of the
STW program with State educational priorities. As this is the first report since this alignment further
evidence will need to be collected. The focus on Planning My Future has provided a scaffold on which
schools can reaffirm their programs that connect to the STW program.
### 3.0 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

#### 3.1 Reflection on Highlights and Achievements

How effectively are the following outcomes occurring in your schools?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>True</th>
<th>Mostly true</th>
<th>About halfway true</th>
<th>Slightly true</th>
<th>Not at all true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>227</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Students are actively being supported to learn how to document and manage their career and transition planning.

A large majority of schools (82 percent) believe this statement is true or mostly true which is the same as in 2010. However there were significantly more schools (50) in 2011 that said this statement was true, an increase of 28 percent. Less than 2 percent say it is not true at all. This is a positive result and a solid foundation for further achievements in the Planning transition pathways key result area of the STW Program. For a significant number of schools (16 percent), the statement is only slightly or about halfway true. This suggests that in nearly 18 percent of responding schools, the same proportion as in 2010, there may be some students in need of active support in learning how to document and manage their career and transition planning.

b) Students are trained to locate and use career information.

Slightly over 60 percent of responding schools believe this statement is true, up from 54 percent in 2010. A further 25 percent say it is mostly true and slightly fewer than 3 percent say it is not at all true. For 12 percent of schools the statement is slightly or about half way true. This suggests that at least some students in 15 percent of responding schools may not yet be receiving training to locate and use career information.

c) Curriculum delivery in our school provides a range of vocational learning opportunities for students.

Close to 59 percent of responding schools indicate this statement is true, slightly down from 62
percent in 2010 but the number and proportion of schools indicating the statement was true or mostly true remained the same as in 2010. This provides a solid foundation for further achievements in the Strengthening student outcomes through vocational learning key result area of the STW Program. Nevertheless, for nearly 15 percent of schools the statement is only slightly or about halfway true, indicating that continuing effort is needed to embed vocational learning and vocational learning opportunities in all curriculum delivery.

d) The school believes that vocational learning is contributing to improved student engagement.

Some 65 percent or more than two thirds of responding schools (slightly up from 64 percent in 2010) believe that vocational learning is contributing to improved student engagement with a further 25 percent (the same as in 2010) believing this statement is mostly true. A further 9 percent of schools believe it is slightly or about halfway true. This statement has the strongest agreement at the ‘true’ level of all statements in this section. Such strong agreement is a sound basis for further achievement in the Strengthening student outcomes through vocational learning key result area of the STW Program.

e) Schools are supporting students to build and maintain a range of networks to support their career planning.

Some 88 percent of responding schools (up from 82 percent in 2010) indicate this statement is true or mostly true with a 42 percent increase in schools saying this statement is true. The remaining 12 percent (down from 17 percent in 2010) indicate it is only slightly or about half true suggesting there may be some students without adequate support in building and maintaining networks to support their career planning.

Regional Key Priorities for the School to Work Program in 2011

What were the top 4 priorities for the School to Work (STW) Program in your region in 2011?

Regions were asked to nominate their top four priorities for the School to Work (STW) Program in 2011. A number of the priorities identified were common across the regions. Facilitating successful transitions from school to work or further education through various strategies and programs was an overriding theme.

A priority mentioned by most regions was increasing student engagement, primarily through alternative learning experiences and particularly for students staying on at school because of the new school leaving age, at-risk students and disengaged students. A concomitant priority was to increase promotion of and provision for alternative programs.

Increasing and strengthening partnerships was also a common intention with the scope of such partnerships including industry, the community, post school employment and training providers, government agencies and other schools.

For most regions developing and strengthening a whole school approach to the STW Program was a priority to be achieved by strengthening Career and Transition (CAT) Teams and embedding vocational learning and employment related skills across the curriculum. Several regions intended to focus on developing employability skills as one of their priorities.
Supporting Careers Advisers through workshops and training including myfuture was a priority for the Riverina region, along with the intention of introducing the Real Game series into primary schools and developing regional careers Moodle.

Western Sydney region saw the need to focus on strengthening strategic alignment between the STW Program and the Office of Schools priority areas as well as with new school leaving age programs being offered in schools. Sustainability of regionally subsidised Career and Transition programs and provision of conferences showcasing the STW Program and Office of Schools priority areas were also priorities for this region.

**Regional Comments**

**Hunter/Central Coast**

The Hunter/Central Coast region’s priorities include:

- responding to the new school leaving age and associated problems
- student engagement & alternative programs for at-risk students
- strengthening the role of the Career and Transition (CAT) team in the school
- increasing vocational learning opportunities for students
- mentoring programs
- strengthening and increasing industry and community links
- increasing the use of the Student Pathways Survey and Plan
- stronger support for students with disabilities.

**Illawarra and South East**

The Illawarra and South East region’s priorities include:

- increasing engagement through alternative learning experiences
- strengthening partnerships with other providers, agencies and schools to cater for more diverse student needs
- promoting and making provision for alternative pathways
- developing whole school approaches to student engagement through STW.

**New England**

The New England region’s priorities include:

- strengthening partnerships with post school employment and training providers whilst also increasing access and uptake of students obtaining qualifications
- engaging the whole school in providing individual vocational learning opportunities for all students and embedding delivery in whole school curriculum.

**North Coast**

The North Coast region’s priorities include:

- a focus on employability and work readiness
- Career and Transition teams within and across schools.

**Northern Sydney**

The Northern Sydney region’s priorities include:

- student engagement
- preparing students for the transition from school to work
- development of community partnerships
- development of employability skills.
Riverina
The Riverina region’s priorities include:

- support for Careers Advisers with workshops and training including myfuture
- introducing the Real Game series into primary schools
- developing and supporting a regional careers moodle
- facilitating workshops/in school visits to support vocational learning across the curriculum.

South Western Sydney
The South Western Sydney region’s priorities include:

- promoting careers as a whole school initiative through cross curriculum implementation
- continuing to introduce programs which will engage students, especially meeting the needs of students staying at school due to the new school leaving age
- Individual Learning Plans for all school leavers and indigenous students
- implement ongoing work ready programs to enhance student employability skills and lifelong learning.

Sydney
The Sydney region’s priorities include:

- building on established programs enhancing students' capacity to self-manage their transitions
- establishing processes through which STW is recognised as a component of whole school planning
- further developing students' capacity to identify skills and capabilities which relate to future goals and options
- developing better links with the community
- incorporating technology-based resources in career plan.

Western NSW

- Schools have reported a large variety of priorities across the region reflecting the extremely large and diverse region in which our students live. Regardless of the methods employed, all schools have strived to further develop and strengthen partnerships, provide greater involvement for students through extensive work experience programs and enhance career exploration within their schools.

Western Sydney
The Western Sydney region’s priorities include:

- strengthening strategic alignment between STW KRAs and the Office of Schools Priorities evidenced in schools planning
- sustainability of regionally subsidised Career and Transition programs
- strategic alignment of STW program with NSLA programs being offered in schools
- provision of conferences that showcase STW and Office of Schools priority areas.
Regional Key Priorities that have proved challenging or elusive

Which priority has proved the most challenging or elusive?

Priorities and other aspects of the STW Program that proved challenging or elusive varied between regions although there were areas where most regions experienced difficulties. A common difficulty was engaging students in their career and transition planning with, for example, one region having difficulty increasing the number of students attending Career Expos, another being unable to use the results of Student Pathways Survey because students did not complete it, another having difficulty in increasing participation in alternative learning programs and yet another reporting that further developing students' capacity to identify skills and capabilities which relate to future goals and options was a challenge.

For the South Western Sydney region effectively meeting the needs of those students who have returned to Year 11 and 12 because of the new school leaving age but who do not have real academic aspirations was challenging but regional personnel and forums had greatly assisted in exploring and accessing alternative programs.

Several regions reported difficulty in their efforts to strengthen Career and Transition (CAT) Teams, embed vocational learning and employment related skills across the curriculum and encourage whole school support for the STW Program. Staff turnover was reported by the Hunter/Central Coast region as a particular problem for CAT Teams while traditional teaching practices were said by another region to be a challenge to greater incorporation of employment related skills and vocational learning into all KLA.

There were difficulties encountered by schools in developing partnerships with considerable time needed to set up programs and to liaise with employers and guest speakers. Getting business people to accept interviewing requests had been difficult for one region.

Issues around information technology, communication, Logbook Online and the Student Pathways Survey were also identified as challenges by some regions.

Regional Comments

Hunter/Central Coast

Challenging priorities in the Hunter/Central Coast region included:

- continuing improvements and support for Career and Transition teams with change of staff
- increasing school based apprenticeships and traineeships
- improving communication
- using the results of Student Pathways Survey because students did not complete it
- business people accepting interviewing requests
- increasing numbers of students attending Career Expos
- Professional Learning with limited funds
- reliable laptops - maintenance and use by students in all classes.

Illawarra and South East

Challenging priorities in the Illawarra and South East region included:

- increasing engagement through alternative learning experiences
- some schools find it difficult to break with tradition and allow creativity and flexibility in their planning and implementation.

New England

Challenging priorities in the New England region included:
• inequitable access for at-risk students who are in need of alternative opportunities to achieve qualifications but are unable to participate due to in-school behaviour breaches
• re-structuring of whole school curriculum to embed vocational learning and the uptake of teacher delivery using STW resources
• the ability to empower and engage students in productive career path planning.

North Coast
A challenging priority in the North Coast region was:

• Career and Transition teams

Northern Sydney
A challenging priority in the North Coast region was:

• working with community partnerships - the time taken to set up programs and liaise with employers and guest speakers is considerable. On a number of occasions schools expended a significant amount of effort to set up programs that did not eventuate as employers became unavailable.

Riverina
Challenging priorities in the Riverina region included:

• whole school approach to vocational learning as an integral part of each teachers role
• Employment Related Skills (ERS) within KLAs as ERS are not a focus area within KLAs
• the integration of pathways planning via on line Student Pathways Survey
• use of Logbook Online.

South Western Sydney
A challenging priority in the South Western Sydney region was:

• effectively meeting the needs of those students who have returned to Year 11 and 12 because of the new school leaving age but who do not have real academic aspirations - exploring and accessing alternative programs for these students is challenging but has been greatly assisted by regional personnel and forums.

Sydney
A challenging priority in the Sydney region was:

• further developing students' capacity to identify skills and capabilities which relate to future goals and options.

Western NSW
Challenging priorities in the Western NSW region included:

• engaging students, encouraging holistic, full school support, overcoming IT issues, communication issues and the general issues many small communities face with limited employment/industries, isolation and large distances - the challenges have proved as diverse as the region and the schools within it.

Western Sydney
A challenging priority in the Western Sydney region was:

• the provision of conferences – this has been the most difficult - the vision for these conferences was too comprehensive and involved too many regional teams.
Regional STW priorities/achievements that have made the most difference for schools

What STW priorities/achievements in 2011 have made the most difference in your region?

STW Program priorities and achievements in 2011 that made the most difference varied from region to region but there were some commonalities. In several regions, priorities and aspects of the Program that were challenging were also aspects that made the most difference.

Responses to students affected by the new school leaving age and at-risk or disengaged students were reported as achievements by several regions. Responses included alternative learning programs, Stage 5 VET; work experience and work readiness opportunities and increased provision of SBATs and TVET. The North Coast region reported that refocusing STW on employability and work readiness was a regional priority that made a difference.

Several regions achieved stronger links with industry, the local community, training providers and employers, with one region attributing advances in partnerships with business to the work of Partnership Brokers. One region commented that:

_There seems a focus on accessing the resources and services of outside agencies and partners to provide broad curriculum options/programs for at-risk students._

Greater parent involvement was reported as an achievement in the Hunter/Central Coast region. The adoption of a whole school approach including commitment to a Career and Transition Team and implementation of cross curriculum projects are credited with making a difference in several regions. A link with the Quality Teaching Framework is also cited by the Northern Sydney region.

Other achievements mentioned by one or two regions included mentoring programs, self-esteem programs, and Boys/Girls Career Seminars. As well, Transition Advisers were seen as making a difference particularly with disengaged and at-risk students.

Regional Comments

**Hunter/Central Coast**
- a whole school approach with commitment to a Career and Transition (CAT) Team
- communication at CAT meetings
- alternative learning programs in response to new school leaving age
- engaging students
- work experience and work readiness
- one on one counselling is very beneficial with Careers Adviser, Transition Adviser
- stronger links with industry and local community
- involvement and engagement with most staff and greater parent involvement.

**Illawarra and South East**
- being able to develop some successful pilots within some schools so others are able to see that it can be achieved - now schools have found the positive impact on student learning and engagement they are keen to pursue this important shift in 21st century teaching and learning.

**New England**
- embracing STW initiatives
- mentor programs
- achievement of qualifications through short course programs etc. which has seen students’ enthusiasm in customising career directions once they reach the school leaving age.
North Coast

- refocusing STW on employability and work readiness as a regional priority
- refocusing schools to accept that STW funding will be allocated to big picture activity and not on a school allocation model.

Northern Sydney

- Mentoring
- career education, work experience and self-esteem programs as well as specific programs that address disengagement and develop work related skills for students
- cross-curriculum action based projects that are embedded into teacher programming and link to quality teaching
- *Links to Learning* Program for Stage 5 disengaged students
- Stage 5 VET and an increased take up of school based apprenticeship program.

Riverina

- Greater need for vocational learning as a consequence of the new school leaving age has meant that schools are actively seeking other options including school based apprenticeships and TVET.

South Western Sydney

- All School to Work events have been a great success and a direct outcome of this was raising student awareness which has led to a smoother subject selection period for Year 10. The provision of a Transition Adviser to assist with disengaged and students at-risk. Introduction of early commencement courses and Work Education classes.

Sydney

- Schools report prioritising a wide variety of programs to meeting the needs of individual students. There seems a focus on accessing the resources and services of outside agencies and partners to provide broad curriculum options/programs for at-risk students. Sydney region supported schools to reflect on the place of STW in their school and school plan as a basis for 2012 planning.

Western NSW

- Again the achievements are as diverse as the schools, students and communities. It is encouraging to read the comments from schools about what has worked for them and the strategies they employ to meet the targets they set. The common thread from all comments is the need for ongoing development of STW programs and the fantastic and varied outcomes they achieve.

Western Sydney

- opportunities with alternate learning programs
- initiatives that support the students affected by the new school leaving age
- the Boys/Girls Career Seminars
- Career Search continues to be a good regional program
- advancements in partnerships with business through work done with the Partnership Brokers across the region
- the adaptation of the role of Transition Adviser in *Planning My Future* schools.
Effectiveness of regional support of schools in 2011

What feedback or advice do your schools have regarding the effectiveness of regional support for the School to Work Program?

Regions report that schools are generally satisfied with the regional support they receive, describing it variously as ‘very important’, ‘excellent’, ‘supportive’ and ‘readily available’. One region commented that more regional support is needed. Examples of positive comments include:

Schools are very appreciative of the regional support and praise the efforts of the regional team.

The regional support for School to Work has been excellent. Our VET consultants provide regular in-servicing and are always supportive when contacted. They are a major link for the dissemination of information and the gaining of knowledge.

Schools particularly appreciated regional efforts to provide professional development related to the STW program, associated technology, network meetings and the availability of regional and Career and Transition websites. Regional financial support was identified as an effective form of STW Program support although there were numerous calls for additional funding as well as for further professional development, particularly for staff other than Careers Advisers. Support from consultants and STW Coordinators was also mentioned as being both welcome and effective. The support from Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers was appreciated and described by one region as ‘essential if students are to make a successful transition from school to work or training’.

Regional Comments

Hunter/Central Coast

- School to Work funding is vital for us to maintain quality programs. Need more in-servicing to assist with technology focus for STW. The Career and Transition website is helpful and needs to be maintained. Continued support from Youth Connections and expanded support from our Partnership Brokers is essential if students are to make a successful transition from school to work or training. Ongoing professional learning days.

Illawarra and South East

- Ongoing funding is necessary. Providing ongoing professional development to support schools to continually provide innovative programs. Regional support very important.

New England

- To achieve whole school STW objectives school executive need to be mobilised and KLA teachers need more assistance in mapping STW outcomes and strategies. Regional support is always available and effective through well organised network meetings, support and training days.

North Coast

- Still struggling with the idea that they should get their small budget allocation ... that often becomes the careers budget.

Northern Sydney

- The Regional support for School to Work has been excellent. Our VET consultants provide regular in-servicing and are always supportive when contacted. They are a major link for the dissemination of information and the gaining of knowledge. The programs funded through the School to Work program have been most worthwhile.
Riverina

- More support from regional people is required. It may be that each regional vocational education consultant has to take on the role of supporting the Careers Advisers/STW coordinators within their particular schools.

South Western Sydney

- Effective support includes the SWS region website and continued professional learning for STW funding. The majority of schools were positive in their praise for ongoing, comprehensive and readily accessible regional support from consultants and the STW Regional Coordinator.

Sydney

- Schools are very appreciative of the regional support and praise the efforts of the regional team. Additional funding is requested. Assistance in providing STW professional learning for staff (other than Careers Advisers or Transition Advisers) is requested.

Western NSW

- The comments indicate schools are generally happy with the support they receive. With the workload of regional vocational education consultants increasing every day, and the budget remaining quite stagnant it is quite difficult to provide the level of support required across such a large and diverse setting to ensure all schools receive specific support.

Western Sydney

- Continue or increase the funding available to schools - a common comment on which it will be difficult to take action. Overall schools are happy but many would like further support - the form of this support needs to be investigated. More networking opportunities for schools organised by region.

3.2 Directions for 2012

Key directions in region’s approach to the career and transition of students in 2012

What are two key directions of your regional management approach to the career and transition of students in 2012?

Regions identified a range of directions that they intend to pursue as part of their regional management approach to students’ careers and transitions in 2012 but there were number of common themes such as increasing student retention and engagement and addressing the needs of at-risk students and those affected by the new school leaving age. Programs and strategies to achieve these ends include:

- increasing provision of effective alternative and flexible learning options such as Stage 5 school delivered VET and non ATAR HSC
- increasing and strengthening links with the community and partnerships with business and industry
- facilitating and encouraging the adoption of whole school approaches to students’ career and transition education and planning including through incorporating employment related skills and vocational learning in KLAs, strengthening the role of Career and Transition Teams and embedding the role of Transition Advisers in schools.

Some key directions identified are region specific, for example, the North Coast region intends to implement an Employability Skills Education Strategy and to focus on increasing retention in targeted
schools while Western Sydney will reinvigorate the Planning My Future program. Also in the North Coast region school based apprenticeships and traineeships provision is to be increased as a transition pathway for a much larger and broader cohort of students.

**Regional Comments**

**Hunter/Central Coast**
- Most schools will continue to identify at-risk students and provide effective alternative programs and support for them which involves maintaining what they are presently doing. Many schools want to maintain the role of the Career and Transition team as a whole school approach. Improving links within the community to give all students a better transition from school to work. STW and employment related skills strategies across all key learning areas.

**Illawarra and South East**
- Continue to create flexible curriculum options for all our students. Move the middle to the top.

**New England**
- Expand cross curriculum delivery and uptake of STW initiatives. Consolidate the use of mentors, roles of careers adviser and transition team. Increase student acquisition of qualifications leading to post school employment.

**North Coast**
- Implementation of an Employability Skills Education Strategy in ten schools. Thirteen targeted schools supported to increase retention. Fostering student aspirations for further education and/or training. Increasing school based apprenticeships and traineeships as a transition pathway for a much larger and broader cohort of students and increasing support for those students in planning towards, and implementing, that pathway.

**Northern Sydney**
- Provide opportunities to improve students’ well-being and engagement in a range of differentiated curriculum and action-based learning programs. Development and use of electronic careers resources including the use of e-ME. Promote and encourage schools to implement Work Education and Work Studies courses. Introduce Stage 5 school delivered VET.
- Promote alternate pathways for students.

**Riverina**
- On-going support in schools at a local level rather than a regional one. Visit each school at least once per semester as matter of course by at least one regional vocational education consultant to discuss STW priorities and future support.

**South Western Sydney**
- Embed the role of the Transition Adviser in the school to ensure all leavers have a clear career plan and individualised learning path. Introduction and implementation of non ATAR based HSC for students as well as implementing the Work Studies program to enable students to become more independent in making choices in their careers.

**Sydney**
- Continue to support school based personnel to build whole school approaches to STW. Embedding STW in Curriculum (pilot Stage 4 KLAs resources developed in 2011), develop Stage 5 resources for KLAs. Provision of continued and current professional learning and sharing practices and ideas.
Western NSW

- The region will focus on all aspects of STW and strive to provide the appropriate support for all schools. Schools have reported different priorities however the common theme of these priorities is student engagement with relevant quality programs and a holistic approach through staff development and support.

Western Sydney

- Schools would like more programs, opportunities and/or initiatives for new school leaving age affected students.
- Regionally: Reinvigorate the Planning My Future program. More direct support for the STW planning in schools management plans. We will be expanding WOW (Worlds of Work) in 2012 as the pilot was very successful along with supporting other key regional initiatives.

Support priorities for regions in 2012

What future support would your region request from the state?

There were a number of forms of support that most regions would like from the State Office. Continued financial support was requested for the STW Program generally, and specifically for vocational learning, School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, Stage 5 TAFE delivered VET, CAT Teams, professional development related to the STW Program, and to provide resources in areas of emerging importance related to careers and transition.

Most regions were not specific about the type of professional development needed but areas identified included updating teachers on new initiatives, workshops on STW initiatives for school executives/regional officers and an online training package for new careers teachers.

There were also calls for the dissemination of innovative and best practice, including examples of successful initiatives from other regions, and for on-going support for the use of DER resources in the STW Program, the development of electronic resources to support the teaching of career education, and support for the integration across school communities and school cultures.

Regional Comments

Hunter/Central Coast

- Continue financial support for STW (Career and Transition teams) programs. Continue stage 5 TVET programs. On-going support for laptop use in career education. Funded professional development activities. Continue models of best practice. Update training for teachers on new initiatives. Provide resources in areas of emerging importance related to careers and transition.

Illawarra and South East

- Funding, resources and strategies.

New England

- Workshops on STW initiatives for school executives/regional officers and increased funding support for vocational learning, school based apprenticeships and traineeships and STW program.

North Coast

- Nothing specific. Looking forward to the work readiness model and investigating how we might be able to integrate it in to ESES activity in schools.
Northern Sydney

- Development of electronic resources to support the teaching of career education. Increase in STW funding in order for schools to operate programs that support the transition of students to the workplace. Increase in Stage 5 TAFE delivered VET funding.

Riverina

- Ongoing financial support of the STW program. Collect good practice exemplars of Careers and STW practice on a STW website. Online training package for new careers teachers.

South Western Sydney

- Continued financial support. Ongoing Professional Learning for Careers and Transition Advisers. Continued support from Regional STW Coordinator.

Sydney

- Schools request increased funding, continuing professional learning opportunities to stay abreast of best practice in STW and integration of STW across school communities and school cultures.

Western NSW

- The common message from schools is financial and in person support. The region’s STW budget has remained fairly constant for years and whilst constant is better than decrease it hardly meets the demands of an ever changing environment with extremely diverse industries, communities and people trying to develop innovative worthwhile programs to support students across an area larger than some countries.

Western Sydney

- Perhaps a common store of presentations that regions are utilising for the STW projects across the state. Examples of successful initiatives from other regions. I find State staff very helpful, professional and always ready to provide assistance and support where possible. Thanks!