School to Work Program
Looking Forward 2006 - 2010
1.1 Key Messages

Over the past 6 years the NSW Government has made a significant investment in the School to Work Program to ensure that our young people are well prepared to face the challenges and opportunities of the future world of work.

This paper provides background and achievements of the program and presents an overview of key plans and actions based on a holistic approach to career development for the next critical phase.

Evidence suggests that many schools have:

- made a very significant contribution to increasing students’ skills and confidence in career and transition planning
- engaged students with the employment related skills required by industry
- appreciated the resource support the program has provided
- begun to display an increased level of confidence in using a whole school management approach to career development
- built structures and processes to support a cultural shift in school delivered career and transition services
- relied on the strategic partnerships developed across Directorates to align the program to other initiatives
- responded to the particular needs of students and the local community
- developed ongoing partnerships with local business/industry and community groups to foster authentic learning experiences for students
- aligned their VET in Schools delivery to a whole school approach to career and transition support for young people.
- demonstrated a willingness to build a stronger foundation for career development earlier than Stages 5 and 6.
The School to Work Program was first announced in 2000 as a $15M government commitment for students in Years 9 -12 in NSW government schools. This commitment was renewed in 2003 and funded for a further $22.1M over 4 years. The program’s core aim has been to support the successful transition of students from school to post-school employment, further education and training.

The Vocational Education in Schools Directorate has exercised a significant policy and operational role through the development of resources, professional learning initiatives and consultancy support through the life of the program.

In 2004 the Program broadened to become a program highly valued and recognised for its impact on young people’s life decisions in a world where the workplace is changing rapidly. To ensure that local issues were effectively addressed the Department’s Regions were placed at the centre of activity, as key drivers of change, to ensure that ongoing successes built on sound local knowledge of student needs and local community and business capability.

The program, based on the following four key result areas, has encouraged students to develop employment related skills and enterprising attributes that are increasingly needed in a range of jobs and careers.

■ Planning transition pathways
■ Exploring career futures
■ Strengthening student outcomes through vocational learning
■ Building networks and connections.
Over the past six years the School to Work Program has provided the foundation for significant cultural change in NSW schools. Employment related skills have been embedded into teaching and learning through the use of the Employment Related Skills Logbook. Curriculum content has been delivered in authentic and simulated learning environments to provide vocational learning experiences for students. Schools have embraced a collective responsibility for student’s career knowledge and understanding. Specialist support has been provided to individual students. Schools have strengthened community, education and business links that provide students with information, experiences and knowledge to make a more informed transition from school.

The future requires an ongoing commitment to change, embracing a whole school approach to career development and the transition needs of young people to ensure that our students are well equipped to meet the challenges of life-long learning and career self management. We are committed to ensuring that our students develop the resilience and flexibility to meet the resilience and flexibility to meet the challenges of the future.

For the future, schools will need to provide students with opportunities that grow their unique talents, develop their enterprising capacities and enable them to make sound career decisions that also take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

1.3 A Cultural Shift
1.4 Latest Achievements

For the first time in 2005, an innovative electronic reporting system enabled principals in 481 schools to submit their School to Work Report on-line. Regions could then view and collate the data electronically for their schools and prepare a regional report. The final state-wide report developed in this process is now available at:

https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/vet_schools

The Employment Related Skills Logbook has been the program’s greatest achievement. More than 400,000 copies of this flagship resource have been distributed to students in over 500 government schools over the past four years.

The 2005 Report has highlighted the following achievements:

- More than 160,000 students in Years 7 – 12 accessed the program.
- Over 119,000 students used their Logbook for career planning, including 58,000 who used it to support their curriculum studies.
- Approximately 40,000 vocational learning booklets were distributed to secondary teachers to integrate the program into teaching and learning across all 8 key learning areas.
- Nearly 4,000 teachers accessed professional development workshops to effectively use these booklets in their classrooms.
- More than 104,000 students accessed their Careers Adviser for individual career counselling:
  - 25% of Year 9 students,
  - 75% of Year 10 students,
  - 60% of Year 11 students,
  - 90% of Year 12 students.
- Up to 80% of school leavers could articulate a career and transition plan.
- Over 85% of students accessed career information online to support their career planning, in particular the myfuture website.
- More than 90% of schools identified that community partners and local events supported their students’ career transitions.
- Schools provided students with access to authentic workplace learning environments:
  - 98% of schools offering work experience,
  - 60% providing access to community-based workplaces,
  - 40% offering access to enterprise learning activities beyond the school.
1.5 The Next Phase

School to Work: 2006 – 2010
Looking Forward

Career development will lay the foundation for young people to be enterprising citizens engaged in life-long learning and positive career transitions. Career development “is the process of managing life, learning and work over the lifespan.” *Australian Blueprint for Career Development (2006)*…p14.

While we have achieved much in providing the best school to work opportunities for our young people, we need to do more. We need to foster and grow career development as a K–12 strategy which builds on and strengthens current achievements in the secondary years of schooling and develops a stronger foundation for career awareness in the earlier years of schooling.

This approach is designed to provide a more holistic, planned strategy based on a developmental approach to student career and transition rather than a ‘just in time’ model.

A new phase of the School to Work Program will emphasise enterprising thinking and improving career and transition outcomes for young people. A holistic career development approach will more closely align to teaching and learning programs and initiatives across the critical transition phases:

- **The Early Years** by encouraging the use of age-appropriate activities and play to explore the structure and function of the working world.
- **The Middle Years** by building solid foundations for good career decision making. This would involve age-appropriate opportunities designed to explore and test career perceptions and encourage student participation in enterprising projects that involve real connections with business and the wider community.
- **15 – 19 Years Olds** would be the focus for the strongest engagement and connection to the program. Effort would centre on comprehensive pathways and career planning designed to equip students to make more successful life decisions and be better prepared to face the challenges and opportunities of the future.
School to Work: Looking Forward

A Developmental Model

This will be a sequential program which will develop student’s self-awareness through strong career foundations leading to independent management of their career development in the post-school years. By exploring realistic career perceptions and strengthening the ability of students to action career decisions and develop self-managing skills, the program will give students a far greater level of connection to the working world.

- **Building Career Foundations**
  - Exploring the world of work through structured activity and play.
    - (Early Years)

- **Developing Career Perceptions**
  - Experiencing and researching work and career perceptions through diverse learning opportunities.
    - (Middle Years)

- **Actioning Career Decisions**
  - Developing informed career and transition plans and taking purposeful action towards a successful transition.
    - (15-19 Year Olds)

- **Successful Career Transition**
  - Transition to employment and/or further education and training, working towards on-going career self-management.
    - (Post-school)
1.6 Key Actions

The Early Years

To make a contribution to a holistic approach to career development in the early years we will encourage the use of play and age-appropriate activities to explore the structure and function of the working world.

We will:

- Make use of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development, in consultation with Early Years teachers to deliver a deliberate strategy that builds young learners’ career awareness.
- Focus on using play, curiosity, unplanned events, routines and responsibility to develop young learners’ resilience and a positive self-image.
- Provide learning opportunities which nurture young learners’ creativity, curiosity and confidence in real life contexts.

The Middle Years

To make a contribution to a holistic approach to career development in the middle years we will build solid foundations for good career decision-making. This will involve providing age-appropriate opportunities to explore and test career perception and encourage student participation in enterprising projects that involve real connections with business and the wider community.

We will:

- Provide real world challenges and opportunities for students to experience and connect to the world of work and develop greater career awareness.
- Develop students enterprising capacities through the promotion and implementation of enterprising projects linked to curriculum outcomes.
- Strengthen the connections and partnerships between the school, local business and the wider community.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers of Years 5-9 to engage students through vocational and enterprise learning, including the use of employment related skills.

15 – 19 Year Olds

To make a contribution to a holistic approach to career development for 15-19 year olds, we will engage and connect them with comprehensive pathways and career planning to better equip them to make successful life decisions and make a successful transition from school.

We will:

- Expand the use of the on-line Student Pathways Survey to enable students to build greater confidence in their career planning and support those students most at risk of leaving school early.
- Support schools to introduce a coordinated career and transition team to redefine and strengthen career development activities and support in schools.
- Strengthen the capacity of Career Advisers to provide high quality support to students to plan for careers in a changing workplace culture.
- Facilitate the introduction of a teacher in a new Transition Adviser role in targeted schools to strengthen transition support for students who are at risk of disengaging from school.
- Increase the capacity of parents/carers to be informed ‘career partners’ to their 15-19 year olds, supporting their career decisions and the management of education and training goals.
- Build and deliver a professional development model which effectively engages classroom teachers and executive in new career development approaches.
- Support the school community to provide students with career role models, mentors and career partners, increasing the number of enterprise and community learning opportunities.
- Expand the use of work-related learning experiences to support students’ career development, personal growth and engagement in learning.
Conclusion

The development of this document and its key directions have been informed by:

**School to Work Planning Initiative: Annual Reports 1999-2005**
These reports can be downloaded on the NSW DET Intranet at: https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/vet_schools/school-to-Work/reports.html

**Our 15 to 19 Year Olds – Opportunities and Choices**
An Education and Training Strategy for 15 to 19 Year Olds in NSW 2006-2009
NSW Department of Education and Training

**The School to Work Program Evaluation Report 2006**
This document is available at: https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/vet_schools/index.html
More information on VET in schools can be found at:
www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools
www.tafensw.edu.au/howex/servlet/Course?Command=GetTvetCourses

Or contact the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate at:
Locked Bag 53  Darlinghurst  NSW 2010