This summary identifies key trends and opportunities arising from the data produced through the Department’s 2007 on-line School to Work Report. The 2007 state report draws directly on data provided by schools that is automatically aggregated to provide ten regional reports and then a state report.

Regions may wish to consider this executive summary along with the full state report, their regional report and the Directorate’s Regional Snapshot: Vocational Education in 2007 which provides useful contacts and related information and websites.

The full State Report indicates the enormous breadth and reach of the School to Work (STW) Program and contains perceptive comments from regions.

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION (2.1)
486 schools reported on their STW activity in 2007. 94% of secondary schools responded which is an impressive achievement by regions.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION (2.2)
- 160,440 students participated in initiatives or activities under the umbrella of the STW Program.
- The main focus of the STW Program is Stage 5 and Stage 6 students which was reflected in the participation of 84,309 and 61,800 students respectively.
- School reporting indicated a three per cent increase in participation by Year 9 students and a four percent reduction in Year 10 participation.
- At two key transition points, 96 per cent of Year 10 in responding schools and 84 per cent of Year 12 in responding schools were participating in the STW Program. This equated to 82 per cent of the Stage 5-6 cohort.
- Participation varied from region to region with two regions noting an increase in Year 10-12 participation and two regions noting a decline in Year 10-12 participation.
- Schools reported that participation remained stable for various equity groups and regions commented on the demonstrated capacity of the School to Work program to support identified groups of students.
  - Indigenous students represented four per cent of participants from Years 9-12 from the responding schools with the highest participation in Year 9 with 5.6 per cent participation. This was consistent with participation rates in 2006. At least two regions commented on their goal to do more through STW to support Aboriginal students for example, through linking Personalised Learning Plans and STW activities.
  - Most regions commented on the expanding range of career and transition activities developed to specifically support students with a disability and students with Language Backgrounds Other Than English.
- Work Education participation was steady in Year 9 but appeared to dip significantly in both Year 10 and in Years 7-8. The decline may be attributed to the explicit reference in the 2007 online report to the Board of Studies Work Education course. Data in previous years may have also captured generic work education activities.
- By contrast, reported participation in Stage 6 Work Studies saw a 19 per cent increase in 2007 over the previous year. This goes some way to arresting the declining participation of around 22 percent in the previous two years. Anecdotal evidence indicates that Work Studies is being rediscovered by a growing number of

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1 Responding schools include secondary comprehensive schools, central schools, junior and senior campuses, selective schools, schools for special purposes (SSPs), hospital schools, behaviour schools and juvenile justice schools.
schools as an effective means for enhancing student engagement and complementing VET delivery in the senior years.

- Career education classes remain a significant feature of School to Work programs but for the first time, aggregated data from responding schools indicated an overall decline across the state in participation in these important classes and in every year. The biggest fall (6 per cent) was in Year 10 and the lowest fall (0.5 per cent) was in Year 12. The importance of providing high quality, purposeful career education cannot be overstated as a key component of a quality School to Work Program that includes not just planning transition pathways but also exploring the expanding - and sometimes overwhelming - range of options for student career futures.

**PLANNING TRANSITION PATHWAYS (2.3)**

*Supporting students to gain confidence in self managing their career and taking steps to plan their transition through and from school is one of four vital elements of an effective School to Work Program.*

- All ten regions are now using the Department’s ground breaking Student Pathways Survey that provides live student data about individual student confidence in planning their career, their intentions regarding staying on at school and their employment aspirations. 160 schools reported using the survey in 2007 with 134 schools indicating use of the survey for career counselling. However, given that approximately two thirds of responding schools have yet to engage with the survey, many students and school executive are missing out, the latter on the chance to see how effectively the survey – representing a powerful form of student voice – and the related School Report, can help inform their whole school planning particularly in terms of strategies to retain and engage students including through career development and transition planning. Regions’ examples of how schools are using the survey are indicated on page 13 of the Report.

- The comment from one region provides cause for reflection:
  - *Schools do not appear to have a good understanding of their role in building student career and transition confidence. They appear to believe that by broadening the experiences of students, they (the students) will find their own confidence in transition planning.*

- In 2007, judgements by responding schools resulted in a view that slightly more participating students were able to articulate a career and transition plan than in the previous year. Percentages were up approximately two per cent for Years 9 and 10; remained stable for Year 11 and increased by four percent so that overall, 94 per cent of Year 12 students were judged by schools to be able to articulate a career and transition plan. In effect, 85 per cent of students participating in STW activities from Years 9-12 were thought to be able to articulate a plan. This represents closer to 70 per cent of the entire Year 9-12 cohort.

- One concern arising is that some 30 per cent of students in the Year 9-12 cohort may not be able to articulate a career and transition plan. For students in Year 9, often just starting to be involved in School to Work activities, it appears that the number able to articulate a career and transition plan, while greater than in 2006, is approximately 37 per cent of participating students. Given that some students may well be at risk of leaving school early (and the Student Pathways Survey can assist in identifying the quantum of these students), more effort may need to be directed to supporting more students in Year 9 in this area. An alternate view is that perhaps the 37 per cent represents many of those that might be at risk of leaving school early.

- In terms of students having a written career and transition plan, the aggregated data shows that 53 per cent of the Year 9-12 cohort or 64 per cent of the participating students had a written plan. This rises to a combined judgement that approximately 86 per cent of participating Year 12s have a documented plan. This compares to 94 per cent of the same group being able to articulate a plan in Year 12. Three regions
are focussing on a career and transition plan for all students while another is focussing on a plan for all 15 year olds. Before long, there is likely to be quite a disparate array of approaches in and across regions. A concerted effort by all regions to increase the proportion of students in Years 9-12 with written evidence of their career and transition planning, for example, through Logbook Online or the Employment Related Skills Logbook offers a way forward for consideration.

EXPLORING CAREER FUTURES (2.4)

If students are going to plan optimally for a smooth individual transition through and from school, they need the best and latest information about work, education and training options. ‘Moving towards a whole school approach to career development’ was the theme for the School to Work reporting in 2007.

- There was significant use of electronic careers resources with over 90 per cent of responding schools using myfuture, the national career information resource for all Australians.
- There was increasing use of email distribution lists to students.
- While there was generally increasing confidence of students in accessing career support services and managing their transition from school, approximately one third of schools indicated this was only half way true or only slightly true or not true at all. It is a matter of concern that some students might fall behind students in other schools that are purposefully supporting students to become more confident at managing their career and transition.
- Approximately 60 per cent of schools indicated that it was true or mostly true that career development for students was delivered as a whole school approach. For a further 23 per cent this was half way true. This represents a significant shift in approach over time. However, at the end of 2007, responding schools were indicating that close to one fifth of schools had made little if any progress towards implementing a whole school approach to career development which had been encouraged strongly in the 2006 School to Work Evaluation report. A commitment to provide students with the best opportunities to plan for and realise their own individual pathway and help them identify what success looks like for each student is central to engaging students and is also a compelling reason to adopt a whole school approach to career development for all students.

STRENGTHENING STUDENT OUTCOMES THROUGH VOCATIONAL LEARNING (2.5)

The STW Program encourages all teachers to engage students in purposefully developing their employment related skills in each Key learning Area (KLA) and to ensure students experience authentic industry and professional perspectives and activities as an integral part of the quality teaching and learning in the KLA syllabus areas.

- 112, 662 students used the Employment Related Skills Logbook across Years 7-12 and there was increasing use of the new Logbook Online that can be used separately or together with the hardcopy version of the logbook.
- This represented a slight decline from previous years but saw an increase in usage in Year 9 and use extended to students in Stage 4.
- Use of the logbook to generate resumes and CVs increased by 7 per cent.
- While over 10,000 teachers used the logbook to support career development through their curriculum delivery, especially in Technology and Applied Science (TAS) and English, teacher participation in professional development to support vocational learning in Key Learning Areas was down across all KLAs except TAS in 2007 and warrants renewed emphasis in 2008-09. This need is supported by regional reports that embedding vocational learning in the curriculum was a ‘work in progress’ and much more was still to be done. It was also supported by the need to expand on the 53 per cent of reporting schools that indicated that it was true or mostly true that the whole school community was familiar with employment related skills. This work will be crucial in strengthening a whole school approach to career development mentioned earlier in this report.
• 98 per cent of responding schools provided opportunities for work experience with an increase in emphasis on using the opportunity to support career decision making and building networks and connections for the future.
• 2007 saw an increase in reporting of enterprise learning activities: from 200 in 2005 to 247 in 2006 and 284 in 2007. There was also a rise in the number of community based projects and class projects with an enterprise learning focus.
• Volunteering remained significant and was indicated by 314 of the responding schools.
• Interest in The Real Game Series continues with participation from over 11,600 students in both 2006 and 2007 across Years 7-12 but with a shift to increased in participation in Year 7 and in Years 11-12.

BUILDING NETWORKS AND CONNECTIONS (2.6)
This includes strengthening career, community and workplace learning opportunities for students through strategic connections, partnerships and networks. It should also extend to supporting students to purposefully start building their own personal networks and connections with a view to their future learning, employment and careers.

• Almost 88 per cent of responding schools have community/business partnerships embedded in their school’s strategic planning processes.
• 74 per cent of responding schools indicated it was true or mostly true that LCPs were increasing school access to current career information, trends and opportunities.
• More schools were involved in careers expos – up from 408 to 450 schools.
• Very strong and varied connections are being made with the local community to support student transitions.
• There is increased recognition of the vital role of parents in student career development which is moving from seeing parents as passive recipients of information to a recognition by one region that there needs to be work done to involve parents in a more interactive approach.
• 2007 saw a reported increase in student confidence in having the knowledge and skills to build and maintain personal and peer networks to support their career planning but with significant scope to improve on this - approximately 38 per cent of responding schools indicated this was only halfway true or slightly true if true at all.

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS ACROSS REGIONS (3.0)
• Shared commitment and responsibility
  o Sustained, and increasingly shared commitment
  o Willingness of Careers Advisers and KLA teachers and school teams to undertake professional development to more effectively engage students in career and transition planning.
• Partnerships
  o Constructive and stable partnerships
  o Strengthening relationships with Local Community Partnerships
  o Increased take up of school based apprenticeships and traineeships.
• Enterprise activities
  o Providing authentic contexts for learning involving key partnerships with community, business and other organisations
  o Helping to build student confidence in managing their career and transition planning.