

Case Studies of Good Practice

This report was commissioned by the then Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Work Exposure and Work Placement Programs in Schools involving Group Training Organisations

MAY 2014

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**Introduction**

In October 2012, Group Training Australia was commissioned by the then Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to undertake a project to identify the characteristics of good practice in facilitating work placements for school students, based on the work group training organisations (GTOs) do with schools and students in Years 9-10 and Years 11-12.

The aim of the project was to learn from the experience of GTOs in order to develop good practice work placement principles for VET in Schools (VETiS). Group Training Australia was asked to:

* undertake a series of twenty case studies highlighting a variety of different work placement and work exposure approaches (with different industries, locations and target groups); and
* develop ‘good practice principles’ for work exposure and work placement.

In October 2012, GTOs involved in working with schools were asked to complete a survey to gather initial data on the type of involvement they have with schools. The data collected built on an earlier survey conducted by GTA National in July 2011. GTOs were also invited to nominate to be part of case study research

Twenty good practice programs were selected from across a mix of locations, industries and types of programs. A team of researchers were engaged to interview each of the twenty good practice GTOs along with some of the schools they work with to put together the case studies.

This report contains the 20 case studies and within them a range of different programs which group training organisations were involved in implementing in 2012 and early in 2013 in conjunction with schools. Twelve months later the programs delivered by some organisations have changed, or their emphasis altered, to reflect the continuous improvement process arising from the evaluation of implementation, revised funding arrangements or changed local needs.

In many cases the examples provided in these case studies reflect many or all of the ‘good practice’ principles identified in this project. However, the matrix overleaf indicates particular highlights which reflect the good practice principles identified in this project.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Case study | 1.Information provided | 2.Collaborative arrangements established based on trust | 3.Decision making structures and processes | 4.Employers -a prominent role | 5.Employer networks & matching | 6.Parents are involved | 7.Learning is structured and relevant | 8.Classroom work is aligned to the workplace | 9.Diverse learning planned | 10.Employer participation is publicly recognised | 11.Continuous monitoring in place |
| 1.Group Training Northern Territory (GTNT) |  | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 2.WorkCo Group Training – Victoria |  | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |
| 3.WestVic Group Training – Victoria |  | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |
| 4.GAGAL – Gladstone, Queensland |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |
| 5.MIGAS – Queensland | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6.Work and Training - Tasmania |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| 7.MRAEL – Queensland |  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |
| 8.Apprenticeships Queensland |  |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9.HVTC Northern Rivers, NSW | ✓ |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1Apprenticeships Plus – Victoria |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  | ✓ |
| 11.Group Training Employment (GTE) – SA |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 12.PEER VEET – SA |  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
| 13.MPA Skills – WA |  |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  | ✓ |
| 14.Hospitality Group Training – WA |  | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  | ✓ |  |
| 15.Group Training South West – WA | ✓ |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16.SMYL – WA |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 17.RITE – Queensland |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18.Australian Industry Group – Vic, NSW and SA | ✓ |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| 19.Hospitality Training Network – NSW | ✓ |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  | ✓ |  |
| 20.Apprenticeships Group Australia - Vic |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**1 Group Training Northern Territory - NT**

*Group Training Northern Territory (GTNT) has played a pivotal role in many of the school to `work transition arrangements in place across the Northern Territory for over a decade, providing a strong industry perspective within Work Exposure programs for Years 9-10 and Work Placement programs at Years 11-12. In particular, the Workready program, coordinated by GTNT, has played a key role in assisting Year 9-12 students come to grips with making their career choice and providing them with the skills they need to enter the workforce.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *collaborative arrangements based on trust;*
* *employers having a prominent role;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable careful matching of students and workplaces - particularly the role of industry in the selection of students to enter the program;*
* *parents/guardians are involved throughout the program – and their critical role in the case of Indigenous students;*
* *learning is structured and relevant through contact with real work;*
* *classroom work is aligned to the workplace.*

**1 The Profile of Group Training Northern Territory**

GTNT has been operating for over 20 years, is the largest GTO in the Northern Territory, has offices in Darwin and Alice Springs, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek and a presence in a range of remote Indigenous communities. In 2012 it employed over 500 apprentices and trainees across a broad range of occupations through relationships it has with approximately 150 host employers.

As an umbrella organisation GTNT provides employment and training services through a number of divisions – Apprenticeships Plus (the GTO arm); Training Plus (the RTO arm); Australian Apprenticeships NT (the Australian Apprenticeship Centre arm); Indigenous Services; and School2WorkDivision. In addition, GTNT has established the GTNT Foundation, a non-profit organisation which provides opportunities to enhance vocational employment, education, and training in the Northern Territory through the investment of GTNT reserves.

The organisation has a significant role within the Northern Territory economy where the labour market has continued to experience significant growth in recent years. Whilst this growth has contributed to widespread labour and skill shortages, particularly in trades, it has also provided significant employment opportunities for young people.

**2 Working with schools**

***An extensive record***

For over a decade GTNT has been involved in assisting young people in their transition from school to work through a range of events, sponsorship arrangements and longer term employment and training programs which provide pathways within the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) for senior secondary school students. The GTNT leadership has been passionate about school to work initiatives, school based apprenticeships/traineeships and creating opportunities for Indigenous young people.

***A range of activities***

GTNT is regularly involved in the Try-a-Trade programs and Career Expos which supplement the Year 10 curriculum subject; the Personal Learning Plan and career education programs provided within middle and senior schools to help students in Years 9-10 to make choices about their preferred career. Though delivered annually, these events tend to be a ‘one-off’.

In 2012 they included five Try-a-Trade days in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs targeted to Year 9 students to give them the opportunity to ‘have a go’ at various skill and trade occupations through a ‘hands on’ experience (as a consortium member in conjunction with Charles Darwin University, Australian Apprenticeships NT and the Department of Business). Additionally, GTNT participated in Career Expos in Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin in 2012 and Parent-Student Information Nights. GTNT participates in these events to provide the opportunity for school students to gain more information and experience about occupations available, particularly the trades. GTNT also sponsors School Awards, providing VET awards at 12 schools across the Northern Territory.

Building on this base GTNT is heavily involved in the provision of pathways for senior secondary school students. It negotiates with host employers to provide School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (or SBATs, as they are known in the Territory) for school students and is funded by the Northern Territory government to arrange for the delivery of the Workready program by brokering arrangements with industry, RTOs and schools.

There are also other VET pathways for school students in the Northern Territory – principally the VET in Schools program involving 1041 students in 2011, delivered mostly by Charles Darwin University, as the principal RTO in the Territory, or by schools with the scope to deliver.

1. **Workready – a key program for school students**

The Workready Program is a school to work transition program that aims to assist and encourage Year 10, 11 and 12 school students to prepare them for ‘becoming a worker’ through a structured Vocational Education and Training (VET) program that leads to School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, and hopefully, to an ongoing apprenticeship or traineeship. The program began in 2000 in two Alice Springs schools and was expanded to involve more schools (including two in Darwin) through funding provided through the GTNT Foundation from 2002. Since 2007 the Workready program has been significantly funded by the Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS) and then further expanded in 2010 to be ‘Territory wide’ as part of the Northern Territory Government Strategy *Every Child, Every Day Action Plan 2010-2012*.

To ‘make Workready work’, GTNT has been funded by the Northern Territory Government to act as the broker for the program, arranging for the various aspects to be developed, delivered (in some cases by GTNT and in others through sub-contracted arrangements), quality assured and evaluated. It is organized through a partnership arrangement coordinated by GTNT and involving government and non-government schools, Charles Darwin University (CDU) and other RTOs, YouthWorX NT, the St John Ambulance, Indigenous organizations and the 150+ host employers which GTNT regularly works with to employ and train apprentices and trainees.

In Semester 2, 2012, 675 students in Years 10, 11 and 12 were enrolled in these programs in twenty-two schools across the Territory, including 467 in the eleven urban high schools in the greater Darwin region and 208 in eleven regional and remote schools in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, in West Arnhem (at Jabiru and Gunbalanya) and at schools on Groote Eylandt. The program has had considerable success in providing a popular pathway for Indigenous students within the NTCET. 250 of the 675 students were Indigenous – 25% of all students in Darwin and 63% in the bush.

*‘Without Workready many Indigenous students would have dropped out of reaching this achievable NTCET target. Schools in regional and remote areas are seeing their Indigenous students become the first Indigenous students of the school to receive an NTCET. The program has also acted as a re-engagement program for students who were deemed at risk.’* (GTNT, *End of Year Report – 2012*, page 1)

In order to register in the program and to gain the qualification provided students must have a general understanding of different careers available and basic knowledge about workplaces, researched potential jobs or career pathways they may be interested in, have already developed basic communication and computer skills and have completed a Personal Learning Plan or a similar program in Year 10 through a classroom based program delivered by teachers at school.

Once interviewed and enrolled in the Workready program students undertake a variety of activities to help prepare them for ‘becoming a worker’, before they undertake a work placement or take on a School Based Apprenticeship/Traineeship.

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| **The Workready program**  In addition to undertaking Year 11 or 12 subjects at school for a minimum of two days per week these activities may include:   * industry specific VET training for one or two days per week; * a WorkreadyWork placement with a host employer for one to three days per week for a period of time, depending upon availability;   **plus**   * CHC10108 Certificate 1 in Work Preparation (Community Services) – drawn from the Community Services Training Package, which is delivered by GTNT and provides credits (15 points) towards the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET); * White Card (WH&S) Training, delivered by Advanced Training International in Darwin and CDU in regional and remote schools where applicable; * the Strengthening Strengths Program for Indigenous students, a non-accredited pre-employment program, delivered by GTNT in 7 of the 11 regional and remote schools; and * HLTFA301C Apply First Aid – a two day course delivered by St John Ambulance Australia. |

***The Certificate I in Work Preparation***

Undertaking the Certificate 1 in Work Preparation involves 4 days of face to face training with assessment activities completed during the training. As the program provides specific training for employment all participants must present for classes dressed as if they were going to a job interview. The four days focus on ‘becoming a worker’ and include:

|  |  |  |
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| **Day** | **Skills & Knowledge** | **Content** |
| 1, 2, 3 (am) | Preparing for work | * identifying and applying industry information * demonstrating commitment to values and philosophies underpinning work in the sector * identifying future career opportunities * working in a team |
| 3 (pm) | Communication skills | * identifying workplace communication procedures * communicating in the workplace * drafting written information |
| 4 | Working safely in the workplace | * working safely in the workplace; * employer and employee WHS responsibilities * identifying and reporting hazards * understanding and following safety procedures |

***Strengthening Strengths***

118 students in 7 regional and remote schools accessed the Strengthening Strengths program in 2012, a program to assist Indigenous students who have a limited understanding of the world of work or the expectations of employers and fellow workers. In some instances the program has been used where students performed poorly in their training programs and did not achieve competency in the timeframe allotted and where attendance has been poor or spasmodic.

This is a unique 3 day program inclusive of Indigenous knowledge and understanding within the content design, workshop development, delivery and methodology. This is usually the first training offered to Indigenous students enrolled in the Workready program, allowing them to learn new skills, build resilience and become confident in a world that may be unfamiliar to their thinking. It can complement the Certificate I program above.

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| **The Strengthening Strengths program focuses on:**   * the world of work; * employer and workplace expectations; * how to make the change from unemployment to work; * self – their reality, strengths and weaknesses and life aspirations; * appropriate communication and interpersonal skills; and * choices and informed decision-making for their life. |

Alongside this program GTNT has also developed partnership arrangements with parents and extended families and communities to:

* create informal and culturally sensitive venues/forums (e.g. community BBQs);
* involve Indigenous workers in the program and consultations with the community;
* provide a cultural awareness program, such as the Strengthening Strengths program, to ensure Indigenous students are aware of employer expectations about employee behavior in the workplace, prior to a work placement or SBAT, taking place;
* assist employers to better understand aboriginal culture is essential i.e. help them to become more “Indigenous work friendly”.

***The work placement***

The Workready program prepares students for post school options and choices. It refers to a wide variety of activities that are designed to:

* develop in students the attitudes and skills to participate in both paid and unpaid work;
* increase students' understanding of the current and future labour market; and
* their understanding of the dynamic nature of work.

The training provided within Workready builds on the Personal Learning Plan undertaken within schools and other activities aimed at exposing young people to career choices, e.g,Try a Trade and the Career Expos held across the NT. The suite of programs offered within the Workready Program provides students with the skills to become a worker with their first move into the routine of day to day work being via a work placement. Workplace learning often forms part of the Workready school curriculum through subjects such as Workplace Practices, Community Studies or Integrated Learning. The need to undertake work placement is often critical in achieving NTCET credits for many Workready students. Supported placements enable students to spend a planned period of time – up to 3 days per week − in the workplace, gaining practical experience, assisting their career choices and building their industry skills.

Workplace learning is available to students in Years 10,11 and 12 and students are generally placed in an industry of their choice, reflecting the type of work they plan to do after completing their studies. For some students workplace learning is their very first experience of the workplace while others have done many hours of paid work in their part-time jobs.

All Darwin students in the program, who apply for a work experience placement are soon placed in industry once they have completed the necessary WHS training. In the Darwin area, YouthWorX NT is sub-contracted by GTNT to organise the placements. YouthWorX NT is the project arm of the NT Industry Training Bureau Inc. It is a not-for-profit association working in collaboration with young people, schools and business, to create partnerships and equity through career development opportunities for all Territorians.

Workready work placements are a partnership between YouthWorX, GTNT, employers, students and their parents or carers. Both YouthWorX and GTNT seek the input and approval of all parties in the arrangement of placements, with every party agreeing to certain roles and responsibilities.

YouthWorX has an extensive industry database and they liaise with employers prior to the placement and during the placement; to ensure that the students are reaching program goals and school subject outcomes. 311 students attended a work placement in 2012, 20% of these are in Year 10; 57% in Year 11; and 23% in Year 12.

A Workready work placement ensures that students spend a period of time as voluntary workers in a relevant workplace. Employers supervise the students as they practise and extend the specific industry skills they have learned in their course work. During their work placement, students work towards gaining specific industry competencies. They are often assessed by their teachers (if combined with school subjects) in consultation with the host employer and, in some cases, a qualified workplace assessor. Students achieving competency receive an industry-specific VET qualification that is recognised throughout Australia.

Workready students are able to:

* observe a variety of work being done;
* undertake supervised work appropriate to their skill level;
* ask questions about the workplace;
* gain general skills related to being at work;
* learn how enterprises work and how to be enterprising;
* complete course assignments relevant to the industry or workplace;
* find out about training and employment opportunities; and
* fine-tune their career aspirations and career and transition planning.

Often Workready students who have completed successful work placements are offered a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship. Anecdotal evidence concludes that employers are highly impressed at the students’ well-developed “Employability Skills” which were formed in the “Becoming a Worker” training activities and displayed in the work placement. Workready SBATs have a sound completion rate and often progress from the SBAT into a full-time Apprenticeship/Traineeship post school.

‘*Engaging young people through valuable and meaningful work experience is vital if we are to inspire the people we need for the future, today’.* Owner/Operator Redline Autos, Winnellie, Darwin; 2012.

For students undertaking a VET in Schools course, the NTDECS employed Industry Engagement Officers (IEOs) undertake the work placement facilitation role in some instances in the Darwin area; in Central Australia this role is fully undertaken by the IEOs.

Schools have a key role in aspects of the preparation of students for work placement with the post placement process for students being largely handled by the schools and the post placement process with employers undertaken by YouthWorX in the Darwin region. The Northern Territory DECS’ *Every child every day* policy provides guidelines for the support required in the post placement follow up.

Once a student has undertaken an element of the Workready program to prepare them for work and chosen their preferred career path, GTNT assists them to source and gain a School Based Apprenticeship/Traineeship.

***Outcomes***

The outcomes of the program are impressive, given the range of students enrolled in the Workready program.

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| **Of the 675 students enrolled in 2012:**   * 323 commenced and 240 completed the Certificate 1 in Work Preparation - a 74% completion rate; * 309 completed the St John First Aid Certificate; * 110 of the 467 enrolled in the greater Darwin region completed their White Card; * 122 of the 168 School Based Apprentices or Trainees were enrolled in the Workready program across the NT, 97 in Darwin. |

**4 Examples of the Workready program in schools**

The Workready program operates differently in the Darwin area, around central Australia and in regional and remote areas.

Taminmin High School, a government school in the Darwin region, is a school of 1100 students – 550 of which are senior school students in Years 11-12. It has the largest enrolment of Workready students in the Territory (108). Approximately 20% of the students were enrolled in four classes provided for the Workready program in 2012 - 84 in Year 11 and 24 in Year 12. In the program operating at the school, students undertake general school subjects for 2 days per week; 1 day per week in a Certificate I or II VET program in Automotive, Construction, Engineering, Hospitality or Rural Operations; and 2 days undertaking the Workready program. Work placements are organised in a 2 week block on completion of the program and repeated approximately 5-7 weeks later. The work placements are organised both by YouthWorX and by the IEOs.

At Good Shepherd Lutheran College, a non-government school, all students undertake a Try-a-Trade or Try-a-Uni program at CDU in Darwin in Year 9 and in Year 10 all 200 students undertake a work experience program, augmented by attendance at Career Expos. Each Thursday, Year 10 students participate in either a Certificate 1 program within an industry area or Art/Drama classes. Trade teachers are employed by the school for these Thursday classes. They also work on Tuesday and Wednesdays with Year 11-12 students involved in the VET in Schools and Workready programs. Twenty-six students Year 11-12 students were enrolled in the program organised by GTNT in 2012 with most of the work placements for these students being organised through YouthWorX. There is a strong flow of students from the Workready program into a SBAT with 9 SBATs completing their qualification in 2012.

In both cases the key role of GTNT in driving this initiative was acknowledged as was their critical role in brokering arrangements to deliver a program which reflected a strong industry perspective.

*We couldn’t do it without them.* *I would like to sincerely thank you and GTNT staff for delivering the ‘Becoming a Worker’ course last year. It was extremely valuable to both the school and individual students. We would love to be able to continue this partnership in the future. Thanks again and regards (*Lesley Bannan*,* Assistant Principal*,* Senior Years Curriculum*,* Taminmin College 2012)

Implementation arrangements vary not only between schools but also for individual students. Discussions with the Partnership Broker program in Alice Springs, coordinated by GTNT, and responsible for organising the Workready program in schools in Central Australia, indicate differences across the north and south of the Territory and in remote communities.

In the north, YouthWorX takes a term by term approach to organising work placements, placing students for 1, 2 or 3 days per week to enable the young person to get some authentic exposure to the world of work, depending on circumstances and the availability of placements. The YouthWorX coordinator noted that for those students who were unsure about what they want to do, a minimum 2 days per week for a minimum 3 weeks is required to give them any real experience with an industry. In the Alice Springs/Tennant Creek secondary schools the organisation of work placements is organised by the DECS employed IEOs.

Finally, working in remote communities presents a range of other issues which require a flexible approach to implementing the Workready program in order to address issues associated with poor student attendance, low student numbers at senior year level, low literacy and numeracy, limited employment opportunities, lower than required levels of parent/guardian and community support, and limited school experience in providing vocational pathways for students.

1. **Critical success factors**

GTNT reported in their *End of Year Report – 2012* to the NT Department of Education & Children Services that the record number of 675 enrolments in 2012 represented a 41% growth over the 411 enrolments for the same period in 2011, that the Workready program has the potential to grow by a further 150 enrolments in 2013 and that five new schools have committed to join the program. Indications that the number of SBATs available for 2013 will also increase were reported.

***Significant government funding - once a program for some; increasingly a program for all***

Looking back, GTNT provided the leadership required to get the Workready program ‘off the ground’ with funding provided through the GTNT Foundation. As the outcomes achieved became clearer to schools and to industry the demand for places to be available for more students increased. The Northern Territory government decision to bankroll the Workready program from 2007+ has enabled industry to continue in their key ‘up-front’ leadership role and to build a program which helps a large number of young people across the Territory.

The next step is for this program, or one building on this program, to be delivered as a mainstream educational pathway within all secondary schools in the Northern Territory, drawing on the leadership and expertise able to be provided by an industry organization such at GTNT.

In the months preceding the development of this case study the Northern Territory Government released their *Employment Strategy 2012-2015* which announced that a new program *– Gearing Up –* is to be established that ‘*will provide specific training and support in major trades to be run in urban secondary schools. It will provide a clear pathway for a student seeking a job or a school-based apprenticeship in a major trade. It will link students directly to industry and their future career.’* That has now progressed to a program called JobSkills NT program.

Seven factors have been critical to the success of this GTNT-driven program venture and the steady increase in enrolments.

***Meeting a need and achieving outcomes***

Firstly, this structured pathway has clearly been meeting a need across the Northern Territory and been attractive to two student target groups:

* Year 11-12 students wishing to undertake their senior secondary schooling (NTCET) in a mixed mode involving traditional school subjects, VET and work as a School-Based Apprentice or Trainee, with the aim of then moving directly into the workforce;

as well as

* students in Year 10 who have disengaged from schooling or who are ‘at risk’ of disengaging. 20% of Workready students are in Year 10.

The program has in place an evaluation and monitoring system to provide quantitative and qualitative measures of achievement and the basis for continuous improvement.

***A clear pathway to School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships***

The program has provided a strong basis for many outcomes within the NTCET, the chief of which relates to providing a pathway which enables a flow of students from the Workready program into School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

*‘Independent evaluation studies undertaken back in 2008 by GTNT revealed that up to 90% of SBAT participants in the GTNT Workready Program reported very high levels of satisfaction. More recent surveys have confirmed ongoing high levels of satisfaction amongst participants.’ (*Steve Fuller, GTNT School 2 Work Manager, *Increasing SBAT Participation within the Workready Program (Oct 2012),* page 11*.)*

***The program in Years 11-12 builds on activity in Years 9-10***

GTNT uses its involvement with students attending Try-a-Trade days or Career Expos in Year 9-10, or with those enrolled in the Workready program in Year 10, to assist them in their choice of an appropriate VET in Schools or Workready program in Years 11-12 if they’re inclined to go in that direction. This might include undertaking further research on the area chosen or a work placement which helps a student’s understanding of their suitability to become an electrician, when they should really be considering a building trade, or advising students about the subjects they need to take in Year 11 if they intend going into a certain trade or even family of trades.

***Industry support and leadership***

Industry has taken the lead - by implementing a program which has had input from key industry players with meaningful industry experience to give a ‘reality test’ to student expectations in moving into the workplace and through delivery by staff with a deep practical knowledge and understanding of work places.

***A rigorous selection process which engages parents/guardians as well as students***

Structured into the selection process to join the Workready program area series of interviews with school coordinators and parents/guardians, as well as with students. This has been essential in establishing an understanding of the program requirements and ascertaining levels of commitment. The Workready Program has often been seen as an area to place students with particular schooling issues. In order to raise the profile of Workready; student screening has taken place to ensure students are aware of the outcomes of the program and industry expectations. Students are expected to identify a plan to employment or further training in order to become a Workready applicant and this process has been critical also in engaging Indigenous students, complemented by GTNT’s partnership arrangements with parents and extended families and communities, essential ingredients for the successful education of Indigenous young people.

***Employer feedback***

In some cases employers provide feedback to schools about what they are looking for in potential workers and this can have a ‘washback’ effect on the school curriculum. For example, employers indicating that the students need to be able to do more complex workplace numeracy; in these cases the school can encourage the relevant students to enrol in the harder maths subjects. Schools have, as a result of feedback, worked on contextualising their literacy and numeracy content to provide experience with authentic workplace documents, e.g. using workplace forms, incident report forms or workplace health and safety texts in literacy classes.

***Strong Partnerships***

GTNT’s role in the Workready program and SBATs, as well as their other activities with schools, has always been premised on partnership arrangements involving external organizations and utilizing various internal ‘arms’ within its own organization, such as the AAC and the RTO. Few, if any, activities are able to be delivered by GTNT alone.

The benefits in these partnerships are that they provide a ‘five star win’:

* for young people, their families and communities - given the choice available in Years 10-12 to undertake a learning and employment pathway in the NTCET beyond the traditional academic;
* for schools – a pathway which helps them to retain their students and enable successful outcomes via the completion of NTCET and VET qualifications;
* for local employers - a recruitment tool to grow their workforce and tackle skill shortages;
* for GTNT - the SBAT pathway provides a potential recruitment ‘funnel’ into longer term apprenticeship arrangements and income streams with host employers; and
* for the Territory Government – to assist in meeting the targets set within the COAG Agreement.

But it has taken a decade for these strong partnerships to develop and to reach the current position where large numbers are involved. It takes time to build the trust and knowledge base of any partnership.

**2 WorkCo Group Training - Victoria**

*WorkCo provides a strong example of an organisation facilitating partnerships with schools and employers that provide younger students in a regional location with Work Exposure experiences developing a broad understanding of the range of jobs available within an industry and some of the skills required leading to employment in these sectors. A program with primary school students is highlighted*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *collaborative arrangements based on trust;*
* *employers having a prominent role - particularly organising for employers to be involved who can provide activities for students that reinforce knowledge and skills acquired at school;*
* *learning is structured and relevant through contact with real work;*
* *classroom work is aligned to the workplace – particularly in assisting students to develop language, literacy and numeracy skills that are generally related to the world of work.*

**1 The profile of WorkCo**

WorkCo is a not for profit organisation established in Horsham in 1986 to provide apprenticeship services across the Wimmera region. The organisation has diversified from its original base of Group Training to now encompass a Recruitment and Labour Hire service; a Registered Training Organisation, and membership of a consortium providing AAC services in the north of Victoria. It provides group training services from offices in Horsham, Donald, Ararat and Ballarat. Since 2005, they have also leased the Longerenong College (a 1070 hectare agricultural training facility) that is used as a base by the WorkCo RTO to deliver vocational training.

At the beginning of 2013, WorkCo employed approximately 300 apprentices and trainees, including 40 School-based Apprentices and employs 81 full time effective staff.

WorkCo was part of a consortium (with Horsham College - a local secondary school - and the University of Ballarat) that successfully developed a Trade Training Centre proposal for schools in the region. WorkCo provides training services for school students in Agriculture and Engineering at its Longerenong Trade Training Centre campus, while the consortium partners cover other trades at different locations. Their Trade Training Centre opened in 2010, and Workco currently has 22 school students enrolled in VET agriculture, and 55 school students in VET engineering.

In 2011, 2012 and 2013 WorkCo was selected as a finalist in the category of Victorian Employer Award for Apprentice Development at the Victorian Training Awards.

**2 Working with Schools**

The primary focus of the work with schools is with students in Years 11and 12, but careers assistance and Work Exposure is also provided to students in Years 9 and 10, and there is also a two layer vocational program for students in primary school.

WorkCo staff estimate that they actively work with more than 200 school students at any one time. WorkCo’s partnership work with schools is ultimately focussed on recruitment of students under School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, as this is the business activity that attracts funding.

However, support for schools and students extends to also providing career talks, organising and participating in career expos and Try a Trade industry taster programs, and organising industry visits for interested schools. Group Training Field Officers also assist school students providing mock employment interviews, and work with careers teachers across the school network.

This unfunded activity is based on the premise that these forms of support and career information are likely to lead to improved apprenticeship recruitment and vocational training that will more effectively meet the needs of the local economy and employers.

WorkCo has adopted a Life Long Learning Model that is based on a three phase development approach which progresses from

* Discovery, then to
* Aspiration, then to
* Fulfilment.

Students in primary school and the early years of secondary school are considered to be in ‘Discovery’ mode. As students make choices from Years 9 and 10, they develop ‘Aspiration’ as they commence VET in Schools and VCAL programs, School-based Apprenticeships or Pre-apprenticeship programs. Ultimately, as they enter the workforce or train as full-time apprentices and trainees they enter the ‘Fulfilment’ phase of further education, higher skilling and personal and social development.

WorkCo recruits and places students into workplaces in a wide range of industries. Any industries experiencing skills shortages are contacted for School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship placements, as the local labour market is thin, diverse and spread across a wide area. Consequently, placement opportunities are sourced from all available industries, despite the fact that WorkCo provides vocational training in Engineering and Agriculture through the Trade Training Centre at Longerenong.

Six apprenticeship Field Officers employed by WorkCo work across nineteen secondary schools (each Field Officer working with 2-3 schools in the region) with a focus on promoting VET pathways, apprenticeships and traineeships. The Field Officers provide generic career support and employment preparation work with mainstream students. This includes offering career advice, assistance preparing resumes and job applications, interview preparation and information about the local job market. However, for disengaged and at risk school students WorkCo provides more focussed and intensive support.

Four Youth Development Officers have been employed to work across the twelve selected secondary schools in the region, but with a specific focus on students aged 13 – 19 who are at risk of disengaging from school. These four Youth Development Officers, based in Horsham and in Ararat, are partly funded by the Commonwealth Government’s Youth Connections Program, and partly funded by WorkCo itself to provide additional support to students and schools. These staff work with fewer students than the Apprenticeship Field Officers, but provide them with more intensive support.

In the past the WorkCo career centre has also provided a Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) service (both initial assessment and case management) to interested schools on a fee for service basis. Managed Individual Pathways is a State Government initiative to assist young people aged 15 to 19 to develop pathways to achieving their career goals. WorkCo Youth Career Centre Counsellors assist students to map their personal pathway to the future, through providing initial assessments; group information sessions and individual follow-up, case management and development of a pathway plan. Ongoing case management is provided where a student is disengaged from school, and includes a more specific focus on referrals to appropriate agency and work experience assistance.

**3 The Program**

***Work Exposure programs for primary school students***

WorkCo provides students in Years 4, 5 and 6 at local primary schools with a customised work exposure program.

The first component of their work exposure strategy is the self-titled ‘**Primary Vocational Education and Careers Program**’ which aims to increase the literacy and numeracy skills of students and reduce future attrition rates by exposing students to a vocational education curriculum.

This program is being delivered at Horsham Primary School – Rasmussen Campus (which was selected as a partnering school due to issues of relative student disadvantage). The primary school campus is located in a predominately low socio-economic area of Horsham, and 27% of school enrolments are of Koorie background. Many students are living in single parent homes, with many of these parents being second or third generation unemployed.

Each term the Horsham Primary Program is giving 25-30 students in Years 5 and 6 practical experience in one of the technical and trade-based areas:

* Building and Construction;
* Engineering Trades;
* Automotive;
* Agriculture, Horticulture & Land Management;
* Service Industries (inc: Food Production); and
* Business, Information and Communication Technology.

The exploratory program has been modelled on the Danish Ministry of Education’s ‘*Retention in Vocational Educationand Training – A Best Practice Study*’ and the curriculum prepared in line with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) **(**See Attachment).

The learning approach is project driven, with students completing an applied task in each stream such as making fishing rod holders; making egg flips or fixing faults in electronic circuits. The ‘hands-on’ activities for each trade are linked back to general literacy and numeracy in the students’ other classes.

The program is conducted each Wednesday in 60 minutes sessions for 7 weeks per module. The school reports a strong improvement in levels of attendance on those Wednesdays when the course is being delivered.

WorkCo RTO trainers deliver the engineering and the automotive streams of the Primary Vocational Program with curriculum drawn from the National Training Package. The delivery of the other trade streams are outsourced to other external groups such as host employers, retired tradespeople and current apprentices to conduct.

As a result, the Primary Vocational Education and Careers Program provides primary school students with practical experiences in technical and trade based areas utilising the knowledge and skills of retired tradespeople and current apprentices.

In addition to improved school attendance reported by teaching staff, students at Horsham Primary School are improving their written and verbal communication skills, and demonstrating improved social skills, teamwork and cooperative relationships. Outcome data available for the Primary School Program provides clear evidence of positive outcomes (including in literacy and numeracy and in writing outcomes) demonstrated in On Demand testing and in school newsletter weekly reports.

***Primary School Work Exposure program – the second element***

WorkCo’s second partnership with primary schools relating to the delivery of Work Exposure programs is their **Try A Trade Expo for Primary Students**.

Organised, resourced and hosted by WorkCo for the past four years, the Expo is located in one of the local primary schools. Students from primary schools around the region within a 100km radius are taken by bus to the campus in school groups over the course of a day, with an additional ‘twilight session’ between 3.30-7.00pm attracting more students and their families.

Attended by 350 primary schools students from across the region in 2012, students participate in four 20 minute small group sessions on:

* Engineering;
* Agriculture;
* Food Production Manufacturing;
* Automotive; and

then have a further 40 minutes allocated in the ‘Trades Hall’ where they can select from more than 20 other trade occupations.

These interactive trade displays of more than 20 occupations are staffed by local tradespeople and trainers, WorkCo apprentices and trainees, volunteers, and more than 40 VCAL students in Years 11 and 12 from Horsham College (which contributes to their VCAL study assessment).

The VCAL students from Horsham College work with WorkCo staff to first plan, and then host, the annual Try a Trade event.

***Involvement in Work Placement***

Work Placement in the Wimmera region is coordinated by two of the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) that hold the contract for the Structured Workplace Learning Coordination program. These are the Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN and the Central Grampians LLEN.

WorkCo had previously provided Work Placement for students under the former Jobs Pathways Program (JPP) before this program was discontinued. With the LLEN funded by the Commonwealth to provide regional coordination of Work Placement in partnership with schools, WorkCo works cooperatively to support placement activity in the region and to minimise potential employer confusion between placement activity and employment under apprenticeship arrangements.

WorkCo also provides generic ‘trial periods’ in the workplace (usually of one or two weeks duration) for potential apprentices and trainees. This approach is sometimes applied both for School Based Apprentices and Trainees and for full-time apprentices. The trial periods usually involve payment (unlike work experience), and provide an opportunity for the individual and the host employer to assess the suitability of the employment opportunity.

If the ‘trial placement’ proves suitable, then the usual model is for the students to soon roll over into a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship. This ‘trial placement’ strategy is estimated to be applied in around 10% of cases with students seeking a School Based Apprenticeship, but in the case of the ‘at risk’ cohort, labour hire is used more frequently as a trial period, and is often of a longer duration of two or three weeks.

**4 The views of parents, students and employers**

***Employers***

Local employers value the expertise and experience of WorkCo staff in working with school students, understanding their capacities and matching them to appropriate workplaces.

A retailer of agricultural machinery employing more than 100 staff has been involved in WorkCo’s Work Exposure and Work Placement activities with schools for more than 4 years. He says that there is great value in having a Group Training Organisation like WorkCo involved due to their knowledge of how to communicate with and motivate younger people.

‘*There is enormous value in workplace exposure in providing early insight into how private enterprise operates and the practicalities of processes and interaction with and expectations of consumers, suppliers and other stakeholders.’*… he says.

A small engineering sector employer participates in providing both Work Exposure and Work Placement experience for students, as well as employing School Based Apprentices. The employer thinks the value of Work Exposure activity for students is in…’*the practical real life experiences they gain in areas such as problem solving; working in a team environment, and time management.’*  He sees the value that WorkCo involvement brings to these programs is their understanding of students that enables them to actively support both employer and young person.

Another employer in the Manufacturing sector in Horsham has been offering School Based Apprenticeships through WorkCo for more than 5 years. The company finds great value in working in partnership with WorkCo (with whom they have an excellent working relationship) and are interested in continuing to be involved to ‘promote careers within our industry’.

An engineering hydraulics business with around 20 employees is involved in a range of Work Exposure and Work Placement activities with schools through WorkCo Group Training. The employer offers on the job training across several areas. The involvement of WorkCo in developing students’ understanding of work also enables the employer to assess the potential of students for a potential apprenticeship.

***Parents***

The parent of a Year 11 student at Goroke P-12 College who is currently enrolled in a School Based Apprenticeship having previously completed short term work experience thinks that learning about work directly from an employer is extremely valuable, as:

…’*hands-on experience is more valuable than classroom scenarios. Learning to communicate with employers from the beginning of the working years is a valuable experience.’*

Another parent of a Year 12 student at Donald High School also thinks it extremely valuable to learn about work directly from employers. Their son has undertaken short-term work experience and was mentored by an employer prior to commencing a School Based Apprenticeship.

‘*He enjoys the work but also looks forward to attending school 2 days a week to catch up with buddies while still learning basic life skill*s.’

***Students***

The Year 11 student at Goroke P-12 College placed in a School-based Apprenticeship says that ‘*in a workplace you get to experience the real thing where as in a school situation you don’t get to experience what it is really like.’* Being mentored by an adult in the workplace is an extremely valuable part of the School Based Apprenticeship, in his experience.

Another Year 11 female student at Warracknabeal Secondary College has been involved in WorkCo’s Work Exposure programs, including Work Readiness training, and learning how to apply for a job. Now employed under a School Based Apprenticeship, she sees particular value in learning about work directly from involvement of employers.

‘*Often students don’t give their undivided attention at school, but if you bring someone who has hands on knowledge in the workplace the students pay more attention. Young people need to engage with the education practices that are being put in front of them. They are more likely to do this if they can undertake hands on experience themselves*.’

This view is echoed by a Year 12 student attending Horsham College. He has previously participated in the full range of Work Exposure activities supported by WorkCo, and rates nearly all of them as ‘very useful’. The particular benefit of having an employer organisation involved in providing Work Exposure activity, in his opinion, is that they tend to provide more ‘hands on’ learning situations.

1. **Critical success factors**

* *A strong relationship between WorkCo staff and schools developed over a long period* – based on a capacity to provide schools with generic career support as well as specific employment preparation training.
* *A full range of support services made available to schools* – providing a mix of fee for service and no cost programs including Pathways Planning services, general career advice and support, and case management for disengaged students – that creates a profile for WorkCo in schools.
* *A commitment to providing Work Exposure for younger students within a conceptual framework emphasising vocational exploration -* which encompasses:
  + providing primary school students with practical applied project tasks for completion
  + providing hands-on learning linked to literacy and numeracy skills development
  + providing role models through involving host employers, retired tradespeople and current apprentices to deliver the applied learning program
  + developing a broad range of options available to primary school students to explore (including a school specific program and a Trade Expo for primary school students across the region)
  + linking Work Exposure in a range of occupations to entry pathways into VETiS courses available within the region.

**Attachment –The Primary Vocational Education and Careers Program**

The six entryways have been linked with the current Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) courses which are being taught in Year 10 in secondary schools in the Wimmera and Southern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) region. Students participate weekly in practical hands on classes in the six identified entryways, to learn basic skills in trade areas. By giving students experience in different vocational education programs, it will assist them to make more informed choices about future education and careers. Each class will be tailored to the different age groups in primary schools. These classes will meet many of the criteria for students learning outcomes, based on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) curriculum areas:

* Thinking Processes: Creativity;
* Personal Learning: Management Personal Learning, The Individual Learner;
* Interpersonal Development: Building Personal Relationships;
* Design, Creativity and Technology: Investing and Designing, Producing, Analysing and Evaluating.

***Learning Outcomes of Students (Curriculum VELS)***

The Primary Vocational Education and Careers program uses an integrated curriculum model to assist schools to effectively implement the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). The VELS strands, domains and dimensions listed below are incorporated into the program through six ‘entryways’. At the completion of each entryway, students present their work to parents in a learning portfolio.

**VELS Strands, Domain and Dimensions**

* **Physical, Personal and Social Learning** - Interpersonal Development - working in teams;
* **Discipline Based Learning** - The Arts - creating and making; English- reading, writing, listening and speaking;
* **Mathematics** – Measurement; Chance and Data; Working Mathematically; Science - science at work;
* **Interdisciplinary Learning** – Design, Creativity and Technology; Investigating and Designing; Producing; Analysing and Evaluating; Information and Communications; and
* **Technology** - ICT for Creating, ICT for communicating, Thinking Processes– Reasoning - processing and inquiry; Creativity; Reflection - evaluation and metacognition.

VELS strands are incorporated into each of the projects students undertake, however the dimensions and domains chosen for each project depend on the nature of the project. All the VELS Domain and Dimensions listed above are covered during the course of the program.

**3 WestVic Staffing Solutions - Victoria**

*WestVic Staffing Solutions coordinates Structured Workplace Learning placements for students in Years 11 and 12 in the south west of Victoria, is active in providing Work Exposure activity for students across 25 secondary schools in the region, and has a longstanding track record and profile in the region supporting both schools and employers. In particular, eight WestVic Field Officers are each actively engaged in working with several schools, providing pastoral care and coaching to students. WestVic has an established network of employers through their apprenticeship services, and well established long term relationship with regional schools.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *collaborative arrangements based on trust;*
* *employers having a prominent role;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable combined feedback from employers on placements, student engagement with GTO Field staff in schools, and the capacity to assist schools to select appropriate students for placement;*
* *learning is structured and relevant through contact with real work;*
* *classroom work is aligned to the workplace;*
* *diverse learning is planned, particularly in assisting schools in providing structured and practical hands-on learning and communication with a range of employers and employees.*

**1 The profile of WestVic**

WestVic Staffing Solutions has operated from Warrnambool in Victoria’s Western District since 1984. This Group Training Organisation also has offices across the major Western District population centres of Colac, Hamilton, Portland and Camperdown. WestVic is the major GTO in the Western District, employing over 400 apprentices, trainees and School Based Apprentices and Trainees and with 66 staff. The organisation is also a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and a Jobs Services Australia (JSA) provider.

In 2010 WestVic was awarded a Workplace Learning Coordinators contract through the Victorian Government to oversee and coordinate work placements from the Hamilton and Portland offices. In late 2012, WestVic had in excess of 100 placement vacancies in Hamilton and Portland identified under the program.

**2 Working with schools**

A policy of active engagement with all secondary schools in the district is based on a belief within WestVic that the long-term benefit of engagement with schools leads to improved School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship recruitment and ultimately to an improved flow of full time apprenticeships and traineeships.

WestVic works with 25 secondary schools (from both the public and Catholic sectors) across the Western District. The scope of their interaction with schools encompasses School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, Structured Workplace Learning placements, work experience placements, training in employment preparation, and support for career advice in schools.

***Trust and knowledge base built over time***

WestVic has been working in partnership with local schools for a long period (in excess of 15 years) and they are seen as a reliable and trustworthy partner by school staff. The stability of both GTO and school staff in a regional location has created a strong relationship between most schools and the GTO.

***Staff with time, passion and experience***

The WestVic Field Officers are enthusiastic about working with school students. They report that their work in schools is, in many ways, the most enjoyable aspect of their role (even though it only comprises about 10% of their time and does not directly generate funding for the RTO). WestVic has a regular presence in the schools. Most of the eight Field Officers report that they are in all their schools on at least a weekly basis, and they are responsive to school requests for assistance.

As a result, school staff (particularly the careers teachers) use the GTO Field Officers as a generic career resource. As an example, WestVic staff attend regional careers school network meetings on a regular basis.

***Career Planning***

WestVic delivers the Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) program for two schools on a fee for service basis (Bayview College in Portland and Bainbridge College in Hamilton). Under MIPs in Victoria, each student in Years 10, 11 and 12 develops and maintains an individual pathway plan based on their career aspirations. Most schools manage MIPs internally. However, for these two schools WestVic employ specialist staff to deliver the MIPs program who provide career planning for students in Years 9-11 one day per week.

***Structured Workplace Learning***

In Portland and Hamilton WestVic coordinate the Structured Workplace Learning program contract for the Glenelg Southern Grampians area within the Western District. The Victorian Structured Workplace Learning Coordinators program identifies, facilitates and coordinates Workplace Learning placements for young people aged 15 to 19. The program finds placements (in 2012, there were 73 under work experience, 92 under Structured Workplace Learning and 80 under School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships) and also aims to improve the alignment between VET in Schools programs and local industry needs, but does not involve working with individual students. The contract to deliver this program runs from 2010 until December 2013.

WestVic is able to bring their extensive existing employer networks to the coordination of Structured Workplace Learning, as well as a sound understanding of the alignment of workplace training to VET in Schools. While the coordination contract outlines the need for communication with students to occur through the school and does not permit direct engagement with students in Structured Workplace Learning, the Field Officers employed by WestVic are able to offer schools and students support and assistance, where requested, both in selecting students for placement, and in providing general support.

***Work Exposure***

While the MIPs and the Structured Workplace Learning Coordinators Program assist only some of the region and schools within that area, WestVic supports all 25 schools in the delivery of career development, job application training, resume preparation, interview techniques and mock interview sessions from Year 9 onwards.

The eight GTO Field Staff conduct mock interview and job application training for many Year 10 students and also train students in Year 11 or Year 12 in some of the schools. For some schools they also engage a few host employers to participate in mock interview training for students alongside the WestVic GTO Field staff.

The core of WestVic’s work with schools is in signing up and supporting students in School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships. There were 144 School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships through WestVic in 2011-12.

However, in addition the Field Staff also identify Workplace Learning placement options for students in those industries in which local employers do not recruit students under School-based Apprenticeships due to the employment costs involved. In the local labour market, Structured Work Placements suit some industries, while School-based Apprenticeships suit others, and the GTO staff provide both options for schools and students according to their needs. As an example, the Community Services sector generally takes students through Structured Work Placements, while traditional trades such as Automotive utilise School-based Apprenticeships.

***Strong community profile and industry network***

As a Group Training Organisation, WestVic has developed an extensive industry network in the region placing apprentices and trainees with host employers. There has also been careful development of a supportive profile in the schools. For example, WestVic sponsors an annual VET Excellence award of $250 for each school that the school can utilise as it thinks fit to recognise and reward excellence in VET achievement.

**3 The program**

***Work Readiness Training***

WestVic provides a Work Readiness training program for Year 10 students in most of the 25 secondary schools in the region. The program is provided on the request of school staff and is delivered at no charge. The majority of local schools regularly utilize the program.

Schools determine whether to use the Work Readiness program for students in Year 10 or Year 11. A few schools use the program for every student in Year 10 (e.g. at Brauer College and Warnambool College) while others provide WestVic’s Work Readiness to some classes, but not to all.

The flexible program consists of between 3 and 5 sessions using powerpoint presentations, and concludes with students participating in mock job interviews.

Depending on time availability and student requirements WestVic staff deliver between 3 and 5 sessions for Year 10 classes. Sessions include:

* resume preparation;
* application letter writing;
* interview techniques; and
* job interview checklist.

The mock job interviews for students in Year 10 are conducted by WestVic, but are sometimes also supplemented by the participation of some local host employers who also volunteer their time to join WestVic in interviewing students at the workplace. Students are required to submit written applications for interview in response to simulated job advertisements prepared by WestVic.

There are also materials prepared on Successful Application Letter Writing and on Job Interview Checklists.

***Evidence of positive outcomes***

The benefit of WestVic’s provision of job application training working in partnership with the school is reportedly evident in the subsequent actual applications for positions submitted by students. GTO Field Officers provide feedback to careers teachers that job applications submitted by students who have received job application training from WestVic staff, ‘*are of a much higher standard*’ than from students who have received no comparable training.

WestVic staff then meet with the students in group sessions and one-to-one discussions to identify the kind of placement opportunity in which they are interested. If a student seeks a workplace-based opportunity, WestVic arranges a one to two week work experience opportunity with an employer (often during the September school holiday period) as a trial.

‘*We rarely sign up a student to a School Based Apprenticeship Traineeship or put them into Structured Workplace Learning placement if they have not already had some experience with that employer.’ (*Group Training Operations Manager)

***Linking initiatives across Years 9 & 10 and Years 11 & 12.***

A key strategy WestVic uses in working with students from these Western District schools is the systematic linking of work exposure and work placement programs to create skills pathways. For example, some Structured Workplace Learning placements are used as a stepping-stone to a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship. WestVic staff also use work experience in Year 10 as a stepping-stone and trial period precursor to either a Structured Workplacement or a School-based Apprenticeship.

***Driven by student needs***

The first focus of the Group Training Organisation is on student need and aspiration. This is then matched to opportunities with employers. Work placement is not driven by industry and placement vacancies, but by the needs of school and their students. Suitable workplace based opportunities are found once the interests and aptitudes of students have been determined.

***Mutual flexibility of program partners***

Both parties demonstrate reasonable flexibility in their organisational arrangements. Most of the schools are reasonably flexible about their release arrangements, even though this can place pressure on the curriculum. School staff report that ‘….*WestVic will come in and do anything that we want them to do….’*

**4 Examples in schools**

Warnambool College is a 7-12 government school with an enrolment of approximately 1000 students. Their careers teacher indicates that the school uses the WestVic Work Readiness program …’*as an adjunct to what the schools already do around employment preparation, but it’s good for WestVic to come into the school to talk to students, because it has a different impact on the students. They regard them as credible because they are employers*.’

This school uses the GTO every year for their Year 10 class.

‘*They focus on the needs of the student first and then link them to an appropriate employer*.’ *(*Careers teacher)

Cobden Technical School is a much smaller regional 7-12 school with an enrolment of approximately 380 students. The careers teacher at Cobden has only three periods of week allocated to careers, so access to WestVic staff to enhance the school’s resources he sees as…’*invaluable*’.

The Cobden careers teacher uses WestVic staff to conduct work readiness training for all Year 10 students (which usually numbers around 60 students). They are also used for Year 11 students to provide job interview training through mock interviews in the final term. Tertiary institutions conduct interviews for potentially tertiary bound students while WestVic provides work readiness training for those students interested in employment pathways.

The RTO arm of WestVic Staffing Solutions also auspices the Certificate II in Construction training to Brauer College in Warrnambool and to Cobden Technical School enabling them to deliver VET training within the school environment viably and without the compliance infrastructure requirements. The organization has also ventured into the metropolitan market through a School-based Traineeship in Warehousing at Certificate II level which links at risk and special needs students with vocational and personal skills development in the context of a social enterprise.

**5 The views of parents, students and employers**

***Employers***

A large employer of a health industry organization based in Warrnambool provides local school students with work experience, work placements, and School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships through WestVic. This employer sees value in WestVic providing access to students ready for an apprenticeship, and ‘*assisting students to develop skills in a practical environment’*.

The partnership with WestVic ‘*works well for both parties’*, according to the employer, particularly in the capacity of the Group Training Organisation to facilitate placements that range from short-term work experience through to the employment of apprentices and trainees. For this employer, this range of placement activity provides a clear pathway for students into the health industry and their organization.

A small automotive business also provides a wide range of exposure and placement options through WestVic to local schools. The owner says that ‘*working with the GTO has been very beneficial. Support from WestVic in all aspects has been critical in the process*.’ He supports placements of two full weeks or a one day a week placement over a prolonged period, and says that he is involved in order to access ‘work ready’ students and to assist students develop skills in a practical environment.

***Parents***

The parents of a Year 10 student in a local Catholic College report that their child has been very positive and informative about the value of their work exposure experience accessed through WestVic. They think that learning about work and employment directly from employers is highly valuable.

‘*It’s better to learn straight from the employer rather than through school as my child can experience all the complications and joys that the workplace offers, getting first-hand exact information off the employer.’*

Another parent of a Year 10 student from a different school is also very positive about the value of visits to workplaces and training in how to apply for a job and in interview skills for their child. It’s … ‘*always far better learning in a practical environment. (*It is)…*pretty hard to simulate real life work situations in a classroom.’* They report that their child is more interested in a career and better prepared for work as a result, and is also completing their schoolwork more frequently.

Parents also appreciate the capacity of a Group Training Organisation such as WestVic to …’*ensure that the employers are vetted for their ethics and integrity relating to placement programs (*and this*) should be continued’,* according to a parent of a student in Year 12 at Warrnambool College who is engaged in work placement as part of VET and work readiness programs.

‘*The placement at a workplace benefits my child by seeing the hands-on application of the trade*.

***Students***

A female Year 10 student at a regional college has undertaken a range of work exposure activities facilitated by WestVic, including learning skills in how to apply for a job, making employer visits, participating in career education programs, and short term work experience. She sees great benefit in learning about work and employment directly from an employer, in part because there is nothing like ‘hands on’ experience.

‘*You get to know them and learn what they expect*.’

Another young student indicates that the strategy of WestVic linking a Year 10 Work Placement to a subsequent School-based Apprenticeship provided her with a clear pathway.

*‘I completed a week at the racing stables in Year 10 and learned many new and key skills needed for my apprenticeship this year.’*

She thinks that learning about work from an employer is the best way. She found the work placement that she did as part of the work readiness program highly valuable. The school will only have a brief overview of a job compared to the employer who will know ‘all the nooks and crannies.’

**6. Critical Success Factors**

* *Strong community profile and presence in local schools.* WestVic actively links the network of 25 schools they work with to their extensive network of host employers.
* *Long-term and stable relationships between the GTO and schools in the region.* Developed over 15 years, Field Staff have a regular presence in all secondary schools, and in many are used by schools as a careers information resource.
* *Capacity to offer schools a full range of work exposure and placement options and support.* The options include career advice, pathways planning programs, training for work application, work experience and Structured Workplace Learning placements, and School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships*.*
* *Responsive to student needs.* A focus on identification of student needs and aspirations guides decisions on the most appropriate form of work exposure or placement to offer students, based on the flexible suite of options available to WestVic.
* *Linking Work Exposure and Work Placement activities to create pathways to skills development and employment.* WestVic offers students preparation activity to develop their capacity to transition to employment.
* *Development of documentation and resources to assist students gain access to placement opportunities.* Employment preparation and application training designed for Year 10 students by WestVic provides a flexible program that can be customized to the needs of particular schools and students. This is delivered at no cost to schools.

**4 GAGAL – Gladstone, Queensland**

GAGAL is a pioneer of school-based apprenticeships, being involved in this work for over 25 years. The massive recent economic growth in the Gladstone region prompted GAGAL to look at ways of engaging with schools earlier to prepare students for work in local industry. GAGAL has implemented a number of customised school-based programs in direct response to industry and community need, including programs with primary schools in Years 4-7 and with disadvantaged students. These programs have had remarkable success in setting students on the path to work. The programs have demonstrated added benefits in increasing engagement of students in their school work and boosting NAPLAN results.

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *employers having a prominent role, particularly in the programs for primary school students and in the period prior to and during the Work Placement;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable the application to enrol/screening process in Year 10 leading into a Year 11 pre-trade program;*
* *learning is structured and relevant through contact with real work;*
* *classroom work is aligned to the workplace, including undertaking WHS courses;*
* *diverse learning is planned, particularly in:*
  + *a range of practical and stimulating activities involving real tasks, hands-on learning and dialogue with a range of employers and employees;*
  + *assisting students to develop language, literacy and numeracy skills that are generally related to the world of work;*

1 The profile of GAGAL

GAGAL has been operating throughout Central Queensland for more than 27 years. During this time it has assisted over 2,500 apprentices and trainees into trades and professions. The company currently employs 256 apprentices. GAGAL’s main office is located in Gladstone but it now also has offices in Biloela and Rockhampton.

The Gladstone region has a long history of schools and industry working closely together. Due to the region’s strong mining and resource industry presence trade careers have an unusually high status. Massive investment in the region in recent years led to concerns that there would not be enough local skilled labour to meet industry demand. Employers were also concerned that many school leavers did not have the necessary levels of literacy and numeracy to take up the jobs that were available.

GAGAL recognised the need to provide a long-term pipeline of apprentices for Gladstone industry. This meant ramping up connections with schools and drawing in interest from students below years 11 and 12. GAGAL had at its disposal, a healthy network of local host employers, who trusted their GTO, and wanted to support local young people. This network appreciated GAGAL’s commitment to continue to work with secondary students but also understood the need to intervene earlier; to develop “future proofing” initiatives in local primary schools, particularly for under-achieving and/or “at risk” students.

GAGAL’s committed employer network, combined with its strong community profile and its expertise in providing learning and employment to young people provide the right ingredients for running its successful school-based programs.

GAGAL currently delivers three key programs in schools:

* the Pre-Trade program targeting Years 11 and 12 who are actively pursuing a career in the construction or engineering trades.
* Youth Support Coordinators targeting youth at risk in Years 8 to 12
* Youth Pathways Coordinators targeting youth at risk in Years 10 and 11

Until 2012 it ran an additional three programs:

* the GIVE (Get Into Vocational Education) program targeting Years 4 to 7 students, providing workshop and classroom learning with the objective of improving literacy, numeracy, social skills and confidence
* the Yesterday Today Tomorrow program targeting disengaged students in Years 8 to 10 by providing workshop and classroom learning to improve behaviour, employability, literacy and numeracy
* the Get Set for Work program – an eight week employability skills program targeting Years 10 to 12 students at risk of disengaging.

The focus of this case study is the Pre-Trade and the GIVE programs. Both these programs provide valuable lessons for VET in Schools.

2 Integrating work placements with school work

The GAGAL Pre-Trade Program introduces students in Years 11 and 12 to the engineering or construction trades. The program has been in operation since 2004 and 80% of the program participants transition into a full time or school-based apprenticeship.

The real-life industry experience, delivered through well-designed work placements is critical to the program’s success. At the completion of the program students receive a Certificate II in Engineering or a Certificate I in Construction from TAFE along with a Certificate II in Self-awareness and Development, a Construction White Card and various safety skills training courses from GAGAL. The VET Certificates contribute to the students’ Queensland Certificate of Education points.

Students are encouraged to apply for the Pre-Trade program in Year 10 for delivery during their senior years. To be accepted, students must undergo an assessment of their aptitude, attitude and enthusiasm for the chosen trade. Successful students attend the program for 2 full years or until they obtain either a school based or full time apprenticeship. The schedule is as follows:

* three days a week at school
* one day a week in TAFE undertaking Certificate I in Construction or a Certificate II in Engineering
* in Term 1, one day a week at GAGAL completing White Card training and various other occupational health and safety courses, as well as a Certificate I in Self-awareness and Development for the first year and a Certificate II in Self Awareness and Development in their second year.
* in Terms 2, 3 & 4, one day a week on work placement to put the learning into use in the workplace.

This structure allows the GAGAL coordinator to develop a rapport with the students and get to know them during term 1, well before they go on work placement. When they know the student well, GAGAL staff can ensure they are matching the right student with the right host employer.

GAGAL has over 20 host employers that assist each year in providing work placements. Employers are asked to provide a safe working environment, adequate supervision of the students, to sign daily attendance and training books, to complete assessments of the students’ performance each term and, importantly, to have a positive attitude towards the Pre-Trade students.

Work placement hosts often use the Pre-Trade program to trial students that they are considering employing. Once students complete their course, some are employed by GAGAL in apprenticeships, and some are directly employed by employers.

Over 250 students have participated in the Pre-Trade program and 200 have transitioned into apprenticeships. In 2012 there were 55 enrolments in the program in Gladstone, Rockhampton and Biloela and GAGAL placed 16 of its Pre-Trade graduates into full-time apprenticeships. A small number of students withdrew from the program. GAGAL does not encourage students to remain in the program if their goals change but instead assists them in transitioning either back into full-time schooling or into another program that might better meet their needs.

3 Implementation in schools

The schools involved in the Pre-Trade program indicate that students and their parents are fully engaged. Schools have indicated that the Pre Trades program has taught them to intervene earlier and meet the challenge of low literacy and numeracy. One Principal noted that:

*‘We’re finding more and more students are wanting to combine off-site learning with their school work … particularly those students who want to transition into a trade after school. It gives them the opportunity to combine both of those together.’* – School Principal.

Schools have noted that the structure of the program helps students focus both on their studies and their careers:

*‘The self-awareness certificate run by GAGAL helps give that focus to their goals*.’ - School Principal.

The fact that the learning is in the workplace and guidance comes from a genuine tradesperson is important according to teachers:

*‘You can tell them until you’re blue in the face, but until they experience it themselves, they don’t take it in.*’ – Teacher.

The students involved said it really has improved their motivation to learn:

*‘It gives you something to achieve and it helps you achieve what you want*.’ – Student.

*‘Before I joined pre-trade, I didn’t really like school, wasn’t very involved, but after I found something actually help me get into something good that made me want to achieve my marks in my schooling went up.’* – Student.

*‘It helps you explore a lot more about jobs and other opportunities*.’ – Student.

Parents have noted an increase in engagement and achievement by their children:

*‘It was the best thing that ever happened. He started bringing home ‘A’s’ on his report card from school. He’d never brought home ‘A’s’. And there were no absences whatsoever.’* – Parent.

The opportunity to have contact with ‘real employers’ was seen as an invaluable opportunity by parents:

*‘The opportunity to work in a 'work' environment with older mentors with similar aspirations at their age. It’s invaluable*.’ – Parent.

*‘I believe that the child having the information directly from an employer takes it a bit more seriously*.’ – Parent.

Employers appreciate the fact that students that do the Pre-Trade program get to experience a range of trades within an industry and know what they’re getting into before they sign up to apprenticeship:

*‘It definitely gives the guys the chance to see what the trade’s all about and if it’s what they really want in their career, if it’s something they want to pursue.’ –* Employer.

4 Engaging students early in applied learning

The GAGAL GIVE program is designed for primary school students. It combines literacy, numeracy and science teaching as part of a trade’s experience. The program grew out of GAGAL’s experience in delivering the *What‘s My Trade* program, which was GAGAL’s version of Try-a-Trade. GIVE is based on the premise that if you can interest students in trade skills as young as Year 4, then you will have them actively engaged to Year 10 and beyond.

With the GIVE program, teachers and GTO ‘tradies’ work together, so students can participate in hands-on, practical and trade inspired projects which are authentic, yet deliberately constructed as rich tasks; in that they provide opportunities for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The classroom and workshop curricula are designed around everyday problems and experience s of the student. The teacher and ‘tradie’ work as one, appreciating the thinking and valuing the traditions of each other.

GIVE units run for one term. Trainers from GAGAL go to the school each week to work with the students on theoretical ideas. Then, later in the week the students come into GAGAL workshops to apply the theoretical ideas in a hands-on, practical way. The types of ‘problems’ the students solve, provide another way of looking at underlying maths, literacy and/or physics concepts, as well as providing key employability skills such as team-work. Each year level has a different theme. Projects have included:

* designing and building billy carts (Year 7 – Engineering);
* cookery and catering projects (Year 6 – Hospitality);
* growing and selling plants and food (Year 5 – Horticulture and Agriculture); and
* construction of wooden toys and furniture (Year 4 – Construction and Safety).

GIVE has had a significant impact upon student motivation and engagement towards learning with increased attendance and general improvements in behaviour. Independent evaluation of the program by Queensland University of Technology reveals that this program has generated remarkable and evidenced outcomes for students. A comparison of results pre and post participation in the program indicates that the GIVE program has significantly impacted student’s literacy and numeracy skills, accelerating many students beyond the national minimum standards in NAPLAN tests. The GIVE program has been recognised by Education Queensland as a Showcase 2012 State Finalist for the Middle Phase of Learning.

5 Implementation in schools

A major outcome of the program has been the creation of integrated curriculum to be used at school five days a week. The curriculum focuses the core English, maths and science lessons on the trades experiences which are presented by the GAGAL personnel.

GAGAL has said that its work in primary schools has taught them the true and deep meaning of partnership. Schools cannot do the VET teaching alone, but the VET trainers also have a lot to learn from teachers. The projects have become a true vehicle for learning. The former CEO of GAGAL says that:

*‘this team teaching approach can offer a package of fun that sneaks up to become powerful learning.’*

Gladstone Central State School implemented the first pilot program for GIVE. The school principal at Gladstone Central noticed a positive change in the students that undertook the GIVE pilot:

‘*Not only have I seen remarkable improvements in their grades and attendance, the students are showing more confidence and their ability to articulate what they are learning at GAGAL is blowing me away.*’ – Principal.

Teachers also reported that the students loved the program:

*‘Every week they’re asking, are we going to GAGAL.*’ – Teacher.

The value of the program according to teachers was that it made Maths and English learning relevant for the students and had a positive impact on their learning:

*‘It was a hands-on thing for them, they could see why they needed the maths. I definitely saw a benefit with their maths, with their spatial concepts as well… the terminology the kids were starting to use, not only in maths but in their writing as well. It was fantastic. They could see now why it was important to learn their spelling, why they had to write proper sentences.’* – Teacher.

In 2011, the GIVE program was delivered to Year 4 students at Woorabinda State School, located in an Aboriginal community west of Gladstone. One GAGAL Trainer, in reflecting on the impact of various GIVE projects undertaken with Woorabinda State School, noted that students had grown in confidence, cheerfulness and self-esteem. He also said that their ability to concentrate, receive instructions and act responsibility had improved, and that conversations with students held as part of the project, had broadened students views of potential careers.

For teachers at Woorabinda State School, a fringe benefit of the program was that it has become a real incentive for the students to attend school during the week so they can participate in the GIVE program on Fridays. Improvements in attitude were also noted:

*‘the program is exceptional! The students in Year 4 have a brighter outlook on their future’* – Teacher.

These improvements were also noticed by Woorabinda parents who reported improvements in students’ attitudes to school work, confidence and taking pride in their accomplishments. This sense of pride is backed up by student comments. Year 4 students interviewed about what they enjoy most about the GIVE program, overwhelmingly said being able to build a real project themselves and take it home at the end of the session.

**6 Critical success factors**

***Pre-trade program***

* Dedicated Coordinator - The appointment by GAGAL of a dedicated coordinator for the Pre Trade program was a key step in maintaining the collaboration, and bringing together all the components and contributions to the program
* Program structure - The structure of the program allows the GAGAL coordinator to get to know the students over several months, prior to a work placement. This understanding of the student on a personal level helps the coordinator match the student to a suitable employer.
* Mentoring and pastoral care - Minimising the fall-out rate is a high priority under the program and by mentoring and supporting students throughout the course GAGAL has been able to ensure that the fall out rate is low. The pastoral care provided by GAGAL is particularly important for the lower performing students.
* Involvement of TAFE - The use of TAFE as the RTO provides credibility. Employers welcome the foundation knowledge students receive through this trusted institution, particularly the training around safety issues. This complements the role which the GTO provides in ensuring that the workplaces into which students are placed are safe and stay safe.
* Recognised qualifications - The competencies students receive at TAFE in the Pre-Trade program are recognised in future apprenticeships. Completing these competencies gives the students a feeling that they are working positively towards their future goals, while continuing to develop literacy and numeracy skills at school
* Screening and pre-selection - Pre-selection of students to ensure that those that undertake the program have a genuine desire to pursue a trade-based career. This step is critical to maintaining a high completion rate and rate of transition to apprenticeships.
* Supplementary maths training - Students aiming for a trades pathway are often advised to undertake a pre-vocational maths subject which is not rigorous enough to provide the numeracy levels required for a Certificate II trade pathway qualification. GAGAL requires the Pre-Trade students to undertake a free, online maths program, which has proved motivating for students and successfully increased their skills.

GIVE program

* Integrated, hands-on learning – practical, project based activities which are integrated into the curriculum is critical to achieving literacy and numeracy improvements.
* Learning away from school - Taking students outside the school environment is motivating for students.
* Substantial and ongoing programs - The fact that the GIVE program runs for a whole term and then is followed up each year, it is not just a one-off experience.
* Ongoing review - The consistent review and quality improvement of school to work programs. GIVE evolved as an extended and improved version of ‘What’s my Trade’, which was a rich learning version of ‘Try a Trade’.
* Different voices - A ‘down to earth’ approach conducted by a tradesperson transcends some of the barriers with students that conventional teaching cannot.
* Teachers and trainers working together - Both groups of practitioners benefit professionally from working together – teachers learn about the skills of being a tradesperson, and trainers/tradespeople learn about teaching young children.
* Teachers’ learning - Teachers learning alongside students, breaks down barriers and has a powerful, positive impact on teacher/student relationships.
* Funding - Funding provided through the Rio Tinto Community Fund supported the project.

**5 MIGAS - Queensland**

MIGAS chooses to work with schools which have a demonstrated commitment to vocational education and training and motivated VET Coordinators. MIGAS field officers develop strong relationships with VET Coordinators to deliver customised work preparation activities from Year 10. Interested and hard working Year 11 and 12 students are offered the opportunity to be employed as a MIGAS School-Based Trainee in one of the engineering, mechanical and electrical trades. MIGAS offers 2-year traineeships rather than 3-year apprenticeships to school students so that they can complete a full qualification before they leave school.

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *comprehensive information is provided, particularly to parents;*
* *employers having a prominent role, particularly in assisting students with making choices about their careers and once done, in extensive employer networks which enable:*
  + *the preparation of students, careful selection and matching with employers and arranging for the mentoring/coaching of students;*
  + *the preparation of students and monitoring of their progress ensuring that the nature of the placements can be sufficient to demonstrate competencies*
* *parents/guardians are involved throughout the program;*
* *employer participation being publicly recognised;*
* *continuous monitoring mechanisms are in place – particularly in providing comprehensive reporting on progress to parents regularly.*

1 The profile of MIGAS

MIGAS is a large Group Training Organisation with over 60 staff in offices across the country, from Mackay to Melbourne and Perth. MIGAS employs in excess of 700 apprentices and trainees and has completed many thousands of apprentices since it was established in 1988.

The core belief of the company is “Making a difference”. MIGAS has a strong focus on providing mentoring and emotional support for young people to set them on the path to successful careers.

MIGAS’s work with schools is focussed in South East Queensland rather than across all offices. This is because Queensland has a much stronger focus on school-based apprenticeships and traineeships and the Brisbane office is large enough to integrate this stream of activity into its work. Currently, two field officers spend a total of about a day a week on school-based activities.

MIGAS Brisbane has developed strong relationships with a few specialised schools that have a particular focus on the trades. But until recently any other work within schools, was somewhat ad hoc. MIGAS had always participated in school expos and trade evenings and made connections with local schools from time to time when school-based apprenticeship vacancies became available. However, systematic work with schools was a largely undeveloped area of work.

In 2010, the Brisbane office started to get serious about building relationships with schools; seeing this work as part of a longer-term business prospect, as well as an opportunity to help the youth in the region access sustainable career pathways. MIGAS recognised that when young people engage with trade training early, they are much more likely to complete their contracts of training, setting them on the way to a successful career.

2 Working with schools - Investing time in preparation

To begin with MIGAS chose one region to be the focus of their school-based activities. Six of the twenty-five secondary schools on the Sunshine Coast were handpicked on the basis of the school’s reputation for taking a strong interest in post-school pathways and the presence of a high performing, motivated VET coordinator.

A Field Officer visits each of the six schools every month and talks to students, teachers and parents about vocational education pathways. She spends time with students one-on-one and in small groups, having conversations about expectations in workplaces and opportunities available through traineeship pathways. She also talks to classes and makes presentations at parades/assemblies to stimulate interest.

MIGAS Field Officers prepare students for the traineeship pathway by giving them activities to do that teach them about tasks required at work as well as allowing them to demonstrate commitment to the traineeship pathway, for example preparing a resume, sending an email to an employer about why they want a traineeship and obtaining references. Whenever possible, the Field Officer takes students out of the classroom to provide a relaxed environment for more informal conversations. A local football club is often used as a meeting place. An important message that MIGAS Field Officers convey is that a traineeship is not a ‘free ride’ or something to do to get out of school. The traineeship students must be prepared to stay at school until Year 12 to complete the traineeship. MIGAS makes sure the students know they need to work hard to demonstrate their commitment to the job on offer, so the student’s appreciate the opportunity and put in 100% effort.

MIGAS negotiates with a local RTO to deliver the 2-year traineeship in a way that fits in with school timetables (ie it is usually delivered during school holidays). MIGAS ensures that only MIGAS School-Based Trainees are enrolled in the course. In this way, the delivery can be designed to suit a younger cohort and the MIGAS trainees are not distracted by students that have not been through the same level of preparation and commitment-building.

In the year since the program got underway, the numbers of School-Based Trainees on the Sunshine Coast have tripled. MIGAS is constantly fielding calls from other schools in the region ringing up wanting to be involved in the program.

3 Implementation in schools

Chancellor State College is one of the MIGAS partner schools. Chancellor works with a number of GTOs who facilitate traineeships for its students in different industry areas. The College has an active VET Coordinator who is a former GTO field officer so she knows the VET and employer landscape well.

MIGAS visits Chancellor State College on a fortnightly basis. The program at Chancellor works as follows:

* the VET Coordinator promotes opportunities for trade careers amongst students and parents;
* a group of students who are interested, nominate to participate in a program with MIGAS;
* a MIGAS Field Officer works with the group of interested students preparing them for an engineering traineeship. The field officer provides advice about the industries in the area and the pros and cons of trades careers, she assists with preparing resumes, carries out mock interviews and asks the students to undertake various small projects for homework. Parents are encouraged to attend sessions or get in touch with MIGAS to find out more about the opportunities available through the program;
* the MIGAS Field Officer returns to the school to work with the same group of students every fortnight over several weeks. She also introduces the students to other Field Officers within MIGAS to ensure that several people in the company are familiar with the students and keep them in mind for traineeships that become available;
* when students are ready for employment, MIGAS will actively market the students to host employers. When a host employer agrees to take on a student, MIGAS employs the students under a Training Contract;
* MIGAS then negotiates the off-the-job training with a local RTO and monitors implementation of the Training Plan and completion of the modules;
* at the end of every month the MIGAS Field Officers email the school VET Coordinator to provide updates on how students are going in their on and off the job training.

Chancellor State College says the arrangement works well from their point of view:

‘They provide up-to-date information to the students and are a good resource.’

MIGAS also employs a number of students from the Australian Industry Trade College on the Gold Coast. The Trade College provides Years 11 and 12 school education, but the focus is on preparing students for industry. Students spend more than half the time in industry and the curriculum is focussed on what students need to know in the workplace.

The Principal of the College says that MIGAS takes a long-term view of their involvement with schools and he sees the relationship as a ‘win-win’. He explained:

‘It’s symbiosis – good for them and good for us. Our apprentices don’t cost MIGAS anything and are well prepared, and screened. MIGAS takes on several apprentices at once and ensure they complete. And that’s good for our statistics.’

Students who have participated in the MIGAS program said they feel happier at school, more motivated, get into trouble less at school, and complete class work and homework more often. They are also more interested in trade careers and more confident about applying for a job as a result of the program.

Parents have also noticed increased motivation and are happy that their children get a ‘head start’ on their career:

*‘I was so pleased he was able to do his school based traineeship as it would give him a head start in his career once he left school, other than uni. He is more motivated now and has changed his life around*.’ – Parent

*‘I think every child should be given the opportunity to do a traineeship through school as schooling itself does not prepare them for a job or career.’* - Parent

4 Critical success factors

The following aspects of the MIGAS model are critical to their success in working with schools:

* Using a 2-year traineeship rather than a 3-year apprenticeship. With a traineeship, less commitment is required from students, which makes it a more attractive option. Students are still able to get a qualification which articulates into an apprenticeship. MIGAS has found that students that start their apprenticeship with a school-based traineeship are highly likely to continue post-school.
* Celebrating School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships. MIGAS celebrates the achievements of its students and the commitment of host employers through annual training awards. The goodwill and motivation generated through this event cannot be underestimated.
* A committed school principal. The principal has a vital role in determining how the program is perceived in schools by teachers, students and parents. If a principal provides a balanced view of the different pathways available and does not set up VET as being inferior to a university pathway, students are much more likely to take up the opportunities available.
* Rigorous on-the-job monitoring. MIGAS works with employers to undertake a performance assessment at the end of every placement. This helps in ascertaining where the student is at, not just in terms of technical skills, but also if there are any gaps in employability skills.
* Strong relationships with VET coordinators. VET coordinators are key to negotiating access to students in schools and garnering support from students, parents and teachers for the program. MIGAS works hard to ensure these relationships are solid and the expectations of both parties met. Regular verbal communication is important.
* Involving parents. MIGAS ensures parents are involved throughout the process and welcome discussions with parents about the traineeships pathway. They proactively make links with parents and have informal phone conversations with parents to keep them informed on their child’s progress.
* Student screening process. MIGAS ensures that only committed students are given the opportunity to access the traineeship. This sets it up as a prestigious pathway that students need to work hard for. They screen students to assess their commitment through regular informal conversations over a period of time.
* Rapport with young people. MIGAS Field Officers love working with young people and know how to develop a rapport. The open relationships cultivated by Field Officers helps in the screening, matching and mentoring processes.
* Customised off-the-job training. MIGAS ensures the off-the-job training is specifically targeted to MIGAS recruits who have all demonstrated a certain level of commitment to the program. MIGAS believes it is important that the off-the-job training is not open to other students, outside the program, to ensure delivery is targeted to well-prepared, committed students.

**6 Work and Training - Tasmania**

*20 years of continuous collaboration between this generalist GTO - Work and Training - and a set of public and private schools and colleges located across Tasmania has created what they define as a ‘partnership bond’. Mutual respect and clearly understood expectations of each other enables a diverse range of activity to occur in Years 9 – 12. The activity is based upon the idea that school students get ‘real life stuff’ by engaging with employers and the workplace through placements, career talks, Try-a-Trade activity and industry visits. The wellbeing and progress/transitions of young people are paramount, yet closely followed by the careful measurement of the benefits to the GTO and schools.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *collaborative arrangements are established based on trust, through joint planning and review exercises involving the GTO and schools;*
* *decision making structures and processes are clear to all partners, particularly in the consistency of contact and clarity of roles and in the partners sharing risks;*
* *learning is structured and relevant through contact with real work, particularly:*
  + *to assist with addressing the needs of students with low literacy and numeracy levels; and*
  + *ensuring that the nature of the placements can be sufficient to demonstrate competencies*
* *diverse learning opportunities are planned, particularly those related to providing real tasks, hands-on learning and dialogue;*
* *continuous monitoring mechanisms are in place, in the close monitoring of placements.*

**1 The profile of Work and Training**

Work and Training is a Tasmanian GTO with three functional offices in Hobart (South), Launceston (North) and Ulverstone (Northwest). It was established 25 years ago, and currently employs about 300 apprentices/trainees across a wide range of occupational areas, including automotive, business, construction, engineering, hospitality, IT and Community Services. Work and Training supports a network of more than 100 host employers, mainly small and medium sized enterprises from both the private and public sectors. In addition to the GTO function, Work and Training is also a RTO.

**2 Work with schools**

For nearly 20 years, Work and Training has collaborated with schools across the three major population clusters of Tasmania (South, North and Northwest), providing assistance to students in Years 9 – 10 at Tasmanian secondary schools and in the Year 11 – 12 Colleges. Work and Training initially made such a commitment, because it sought to promote its services and job opportunities to school leavers. Over time, the GTO has developed a close working relationship with a number of schools with both parties feeling that they have created a “partnership bond” which motivates the GTO and schools to help each other and support the career development and transitions of the young people.

Motivation is now not only about “the recruitment pipeline,” but it is also about “not letting down” partner schools, thereby maintaining the kind of trust and mutual respect achieved. Work and Training feels that it has steadily built a reputation as a “consistent, high quality and effective partner” with schools and colleges. This sustains a very favourable public reputation and profile of Work and Training in the community. This is “good for business”.

Rather than stretching their resources by creating more programs, Work and Training holds firm to the strategy of doing what they do, with quality. This has resulted in ‘best practice’, evidenced by awards it has received through:

* the National Training Awards;
* the GTO Remote Service Delivery Traineeship Program;
* School-based Traineeships.

Work and Training believe they are well positioned to innovate and ‘step-up a gear’ in their school partnering - to stretch their current provision of services to meet the needs of more remote and/or low SES schools and to work in locations that are less likely to provide significant numbers of ‘work ready’ students for employers. However, the senior leadership team is also clear about the need to address the economics of their work with schools. Their view is that they cannot afford for their investment in managers and fieldworkers building and sustaining relationships with schools to be simply a charitable exercise – it must generate an economic return to the GTO. This is currently the case. However, expansion without consideration of the need for an economic return, may result in this activity being unviable.

The workload and responsibility for making school partnerships within Work and Training is placed in the hands of the key Field Officers and office managers. The “Head of Operations” is the supporter/overseer of school development, and she has in the last few years led a couple of forums where school practice is both reviewed and then planning the future ‘visioned’. An update on School – GTO activity is a permanent agenda item at the GTO’s staff meetings.

**3 The school program in detail**

Work and Training collaborates with more than 20 public and private schools and colleges across Tasmania in years 9-12. Programs implemented include:

***In Years 9 – 10***

* career talks and information about apprenticeships and what is required for 1,000+ young people;
* assistance to Career Expos;
* mock interviews;
* Try-a-Trade;
* group work activities focussed on attainment and transition issues; and
* increasing number of Year 10 VET students (enrolled in Year 7 – 10 schools) seeking work placement and additional support, especially in the North.

***In Years 11 – 12***

* School -Based Traineeships (12 at present);
* assistance to find Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) placements for senior college students undertaking VET, usually of 2 weeks duration; and
* career insights into pathways and employer expectations for VET students – targeted sessions with VET classes.

***Across Years 9 – 12***

Work and Training developed and marketed a Facebook page for young people and partners (industry, school teachers and students) where there are ‘chat’ facilities and stored information on pathways and career stories.

**4 Implementation in Schools and Stakeholder Perspectives**

The following summary and perspectives were provided by school students, school staff and employers through in-depth interviews.

***Students’ perspectives***

What Makes a Good Employer?

A flexible and friendly approach – ‘*flexible about helping you combine your work and learning, and if/when you need to do other really important things*.’

Patience – ‘*when you are new, show you things and don’t get “grumpy” when you try to do something new or ask for help*.’

Colleagues need to be friendly – ‘*treat you with respect (treat you like you are one of them). The workmates should be good teachers too.’*

What can the GTO/School do to help the Host Employer Deliver the Goods:

Build a good relationship between the school and employer – ‘*my work supervisor came with me to meet my teacher and help me choose my Year 12 subjects*.’ –partners together in my learning.

*‘Keep visiting me and the workplace’* – build the relationships and check on safety matters.

*‘Offer special support in a ‘non-embarrassing’ way – like Work and Training did this with some ‘catch-up’ maths tutoring. The personalised one-on-one was great, private and ‘no embarrassment’. It was something that really helped my career plan*.’

What Should Happen in Years 9 – 10?

*‘Help us learn outside the classroom – in the workplace.’*

*‘Help us find out the relevance between our studies and work. Help to connect the two.’*

*‘We need more than one chance of work experience different places/people so we can decide what direction to take. Maybe shorter stays and visits, rather than a week or more in the one place.’*

*‘Career days are good, especially when you get to talk to people who are in work about their work and career – more one-on-one or small groups talking, rather than a speaker in front of a class. The idea of forming teams, researching careers stuff and presenting to each other is a great idea.’*

*‘Personal learning and pathway plans were OK – we just worked on one piece of paper and that was that – could be much better, if it was followed up by guidance about Year 11/12 subjects selection and if they pushed you to think about options, not just what you pick because you think it is easy.’*

*‘I like the idea of thinking about what my opinion is of work and its place in my life now, and when I am 40, especially if you could do it in pairs and with an employer*.’

The Year 11 – 12 Placement

*‘Be careful about too long; ‘after 2 weeks, get me out of here’ when I quickly learnt it wasn’t what I thought or wanted (that was good by the way).’*

*‘So let us taste again and then if right, stay longer.’*

*‘It is really good when you can put the theory into practice*.’

***The Schools’ Perspective***

Four schools and the leader of the Tasmanian Career Pathway program (Guaranteeing Futures) participated in a 3 hour consultation. Two employees of Work and Training also attended. The following perspectives were provided:

On our collaboration with Work and Training

*‘There has been a consistent and good relationship over 10 Years; our working together is about the future of the student; it is student centred and valuable. The passion and commitment of staff from the GTO and schools is excellent.’*

Critical Success Factors in Partnering

*‘A reliable and consistent contact person and if changed, an effective handover of responsibility (on both sides).’*

*‘Each partner being good at what they do – competent and passionate, about the world of work and pathways.’*

*‘Good if the benefits generated and the actual contributions made, are both ways – we schools take Work and Training trainees on placement, and they come and do careers stuff with our students.’*

*‘Energy, passion, knowledge of the people giving our kids ‘real life’ stuff – being accountable to what is real and transparent – not sensationalised, exaggerated. Also the dedication of time to reflect and review progress – for the student/trainee and us.’*

Ideas about Work Exposure (Years 9 – 10)

*‘Work Exposure as a term is helpful in distinguishing it from Work Experience, as long as it does not limit flexibility – we will need some placements in Years 9 – 10, and we will need some work exposure in Years 11 – 12. Not all kids have made up their mind by the age of 16 We will need the “nurturing placement” for some Year 9-10 students to simply keep them in learning.’*

*‘Be careful that Work Exposure and experience is “sold” as a lead-up to pathways – we don’t want to reinforce the present idea (still evident in rural Tasmania) that Year 10 is the end of school and learning.’*

*‘Work Exposure must be about building/broadening aspirations and horizons.’*

*‘30 – 40% of our Year 9-10 students are already doing casual paid work. This can be used as a base to explore futures, taste various options and learn about careers.’*

5 Critical Success Factors

***Joint planning and review***

The following success factors were identified in a 2008 Work and Training/School Review Workshop involving the GTO and schools. Whilst held 5 years ago both the GTO and schools felt these remain constant:

* a shared vision – benefits for young people, schools, GTO understood by our staff and the school contact person.
* strong relationships
* enjoy working together and have been doing do for a long time– often living in the same community
* mutual respect
* valued trust in each other’s competence and care about the young people’s wellbeing. *We are known by schools as a GTO that is competent and caring.* This enables schools to more confidently refer their graduating or current (SBT) students to Work and Training.

*‘All thinking as if we are parents and treat the young people as we would want our children treated.’*

* ability to respond to requests for assistance – prompt and effective responses.
* deep understanding of young people and recognition of the fact that students are individuals.
* feature young people in the delivery of the partnership.
* monitor impact – close records are kept of the number of students that are referred by schools to Work and Training and over time, many of these become significant feeder schools or colleges for Work and Training. This helps Work and Training to target their investment.

The challenge for the GTO is to build a reputation that leads to more schools making contact, yet when this happens, the GTO cannot respond altogether positively, unless that school is a potential feeder school and therefore offering a return on the investment.

*‘Providing a quality service to those we work with whilst keeping a lid on the expectations of all schools is important*.’

*E****ngaging our apprentices/trainees as ambassadors***

At the very heart of Work and Training School partnership activities is the notion of involving their current and past young apprentices/trainees in their delivery in schools. Whether the ‘ambassador’ is there in person, or their case study is placed in front of student via a video or pamphlet, young people play a key role in engaging, even inspiring students in career conversations, WHS and pathway information sessions, as well as in general career talks about the trades.

Schools delight in the stories of their past graduates being featured and presented to their current students.

*Taking on special projects*

Whilst many of the mainstream programs outlined are internally resourced by the GTO, Work and training has regularly undertaken additional tasks with schools, funded by the Tasmanian government or via fee for service arrangements. Examples include:

* Remote Service Delivery Traineeship Program – Work and Training won a contract to promote/provide School-Based Traineeships for Indigenous Australians in administration and outdoor education within outer and remote schools in Tasmania;
* RTO ‘fee for service’ courses in schools – these have principally included programs in the Hospitality industry area such as ‘meet, seat and greet’, responsible use of alcohol and espresso basics.

***Addressing literacy and numeracy***

Addressing literacy and numeracy issues is critical to the successful transition of young people into the workplace, particularly for some low SES students. Two pertinent examples of activity in this area driven by Work and Training are worthy of note.

Firstly, the workplace examples provided by Work and Training and its host employer partners involved with schools have been extremely useful in contextualising the language, literacy and numeracy skills taught at school.

Secondly, Work and Training managed a special project at the Jordan River Learning Federation for a Department of Education funded/GTA Tasmania sponsored literacy and numeracy program. Focussed in Bridgewater, a very low SES area, with a number of troubled students exhibiting erratic attendance and low attainment, a program was developed to not only boost the literacy and numeracy of young people, but also their motivation to learn and “present” to employers and other adults. These targeted young people had both already demonstrated that they had a work ethic and an interest/aptitude for the trades.

Although designed to be a ‘literacy and numeracy’ program, the pilot, undertaken in November – December 2012, was presented to six Year 9-10 targeted students as a career/transition/pathway initiative that would enable them to transition to a VET program in Year 11-12 at the local Trade Training Centre. The literacy and numeracy program was presented in this way because:

* it was believed to be a better strategy to avoid drawing attention to low literacy and numeracy levels;
* one on one tutoring was felt to be a more appropriate delivery strategy for these learners to avoid the possible distraction of peers in a classroom or group setting;
* motivation to learn was enhanced by contextualising the literacy and numeracy skills learnt, e.g. take a trade pathway; develop hobbies; acquire a junior angler fishing certificate, and/or personal information card (proof of age to get to the cinema cheaper). Hence the Careers/Pathways/Trade title of the special project;
* the tutors were seen as coming from industry, and not seen as a teacher (even though both men were qualified teachers). They were seen as GTO staff, not school staff. This gave them credibility as careers “teachers” in the eyes of the targeted students. ‘*We represent 1,000 employers across Tasmania*’ was the message.

***Sustainability and Possible Replication***

The school partnering by Work and Training has already proven itself to be sustainable. Over 20 Years, through ‘boom and bust’, they have been able to maintain their relationships with a group of core feeder schools and make a range of contributions. Letters of thanks/praise are kept in a file as evidence of the strong community profile.

The recording of data on their apprentices/trainees and their feeder schools and colleges shows that the investment is sustainable i.e. it generates business for the GTO.

There is a strong foundation for replication and expansion, based on the experience and record of delivering the current program arrangements. Longstanding staff members, who have been with Work and Training for 12 – 20 years, who know the schools well and are trusted would be able to provide the core for future partnerships.

**7 MRAEL - Queensland**

*MRAEL is a large organisation which originated in Mackay 29 years ago and now has a strong presence throughout Queensland and the Northern Territory. Operating as a Group Training Organisation, Australian Apprenticeships Centre, Registered Training Organisation and Senior Vocational Trade College, MRAEL facilitates a range of programs in schools, including a highly successful work experience program for students in high schools across a number of MRAEL’s operating regions. Known as MRSILS (initially derived from the Mackay Region School Industry Links initiative), the program has arranged over 3,000 work placements in the Mackay region alone. The program allows students to experience working in the ‘real world’ in their preferred field or industry. The secret to the success of the program is two-fold: the collaborative relationship between MRAEL staff and school-based VET Coordinators and the organisation’s extensive network of trusted employers.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *collaborative arrangements are established based on trust – resulting in close working relationships with VET Coordinators in schools;*
* *decision making structures and processes are clear to all partners eg through MOU arrangements developed with schools and with the Trade Training Centre to guide roles, responsibilities and practices within the partnership;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable careful matching of students and workplaces - particularly through work placenment application and selection processes and pre- and post-placement interviews;*
* *classroom work is aligned with the workplace, with programs integrated into schools and students well-prepared for placements in industry;*
* *employer participation is publicly recognised;*

**1 The profile of MRAEL**

MRAEL Group has over 29 years’ experience in employing, managing and training apprentices. It has 17 branches spread throughout Queensland and the Northern Territory, including offices in small towns such as Emerald and Kingaroy and large cities including Brisbane and the Gold Coast. While it now works across all industry sectors, the organisation’s origins are in the manufacturing and engineering industries.

MRAEL places strong emphasis on its reputation and standing in the community, particularly in regional areas. They are committed to community partnerships and open communication channels; this focus is reflected in the organisation’s motto, ‘*The people people’*.

**2 Working with schools**

MRAEL has been offering school-based apprenticeships and traineeships for many years. It also offers some specific school-based programs such as the TALENT Program for Engineering Trades in the Wide Bay region. The TALENT program is a partnership between MRAEL, Wide Bay TAFE, local industry and numerous high schools and colleges. TALENT offers a blend of work placement, training and education in the engineering and manufacturing sectors. During Years 11 and 12, successful applicants of the TALENT program undertake a school-based traineeship through MRAEL plus work placement and training towards a Certificate II in Engineering while continuing with their schooling to achieve their Queensland Certificate of Education at the end of Year 12. Students study on the school holidays and undertake work placements with a variety of engineering and manufacturing companies over two years so they receive a “well rounded” knowledge and understanding of what the engineering and manufacturing sector can offer.

Another key school-based program offered by MRAEL is a mentoring program, known as the MRAEL Advisors Program. This program promotes trade and apprenticeship careers to students at regional schools across Queensland. MRAEL provides school leavers with an opportunity to learn about the range of vocational careers and pathways available, particularly in specific skills shortage occupations in traditional trades and emerging industries. MRAEL Advisors provide assistance for individuals to choose the most appropriate apprenticeship pathway, as well as additional support and resources to individuals requiring assistance with transitioning from school to the workforce. The Advisors attend career expos, school subject selection nights and other relevant promotional events, as well as facilitate information sessions for parents, students and potential employers. The Advisors Program project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Industry through the Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring Package.

Along with the TALENT program and the Advisors program, MRAEL runs an extensive work experience program, which is the focus of the rest of this case study. The program, known as MRSILS, matches students with the right employer, based on career interests and other preferences. MRAEL facilitates all work experience agreements and paperwork, promotes feedback and follows up with students interested in further opportunities, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

**3 Linking students with local industry**

The MRSILS program services almost all the schools in the Mackay region. Only two have elected not to be involved because they are strongly focussed on University entrance. Generally, all students in Years 10 – 12 undertake a MRSILS work experience placement. Younger students are sometimes referred to MRSILS if the teachers believe they would benefit from time spent out of the classroom in a workplace.

The program is large, and growing:

*‘It is fantastic to see the requests for placements across the region grow from 2,550 last year to 3,070 this year. We are very grateful and thankful for the employers who have opened up their workplaces to allow the local students to prepare for the realities of work*’ – MRSILS Coordinator.

Students usually either undertake a block placement for one to two weeks or spend a day a week for 6 or 12 months in the workplace. Students from the Mackay Engineering Trade Training Centre, however, undertake regular one or two week placements several times a year arranged through MRSILS. The MRSILS program places students in any field where there is some form of local industry including business, hospitality, retail, trades, and a wide variety of professions.

MRAEL has a wide-ranging network of employers who are willing to provide work placements. Most are now well-experienced in structuring a quality placement. MRAEL supports employers by advising what is expected of them; helping arrange an induction and setting up a plan for the duration of the placement. MRAEL also collects feedback from employers and pursues interest from both employers and students in further work placement opportunities. With the tight labour market in Central Queensland, employers are usually keen to be involved with the MRSILS program. They see it as an opportunity to ‘try before you buy’.

Before beginning work with a school, MRAEL negotiates a service agreement that outlines which party is responsible for what obligations. This is an important step in the process because it provides clarity around roles and responsibilities and is a point of reference in case any issues arise.

The school then asks the students to fill out a form, which MRAEL has developed, to advise of their placement preferences. The form lists 36 occupational areas but provides space for others. The form also collects details such as preferred days to work, whether the student has a White Card, if they’re seeking an apprenticeship/traineeship, what kind of transport options they have available etc. The VET Coordinator works with the students on filling out this form to ensure they have thought through all their options.

Upon receiving the forms, the MRAEL Work Experience Placement Officers work closely with the school VET Coordinator on matching students to appropriate employers. The two are in regular communication checking how the students’ personalities, skills, interests, strengths and limitations can be best accommodated to ensure the most productive experience for both student and employer. MRAEL also place students with special needs and will work closely with the special needs teachers to make an appropriate match and ensure any workplace adjustments are made.

To help students prepare for the work placement, the schools involved deliver a Certificate I in Work Education. The students are also required to arrange a ‘pre-placement’ interview with the employer prior to the placement. If at any time after the interview the employer wishes to withdraw from the process, they can.

MRAEL arranges work experience agreements between the student, their parent/guardian, the employer and the principal and organises all the necessary paperwork, which covers the students on work sites under Education Queensland’s insurance policies. The hours and days of work experience can be arranged to suit each business.

MRAEL promotes employer feedback throughout the placement. Specially designed forms are used which can be included in a students’ portfolio for when they leave school or in a student’s resume when applying for an apprenticeship/traineeship. MRAEL also works with students and the VET coordinator to identify any further opportunities or pathways they might want to pursue post-placement.

Some of the students take up apprenticeships with MRAEL after the work placement, but the majority of students do not.

Students pay a $35 fee for the placement and MRAEL estimates that this probably covers about 40% of MRSILS operations, the rest of the costs are covered by the organisation. MRAEL says while the cost-benefit isn’t immediately obvious, community work with schools is invaluable for brand recognition and to enable the organisation to assist students in entering vocational pathways.

MRAEL, together with the schools involved in MRSILS, run an awards program to celebrate the achievements of high-performing MRSILS students and employers. Employers can nominate students and students can nominate employers. The winners are honoured at an annual ceremony, which brings together all MRSILS schools.

MRAEL also runs regular forums with the MRSILS schools to coordinate timing of placements and work through any issues with the program, ensuring continuous improvement.

**4 Examples of implementation in schools**

The MRSILS program has been operating successfully at Mackay State High School since 2010. Every student at the school has the opportunity to do a placement. The school VET Coordinator says she is in constant communication with MRAEL to ensure the program works smoothly and it has fantastic results for the students:

*‘All the students look forward to the hands-on experience. They learn social skills, mix with adults, loads of great things.’*

Particularly good results have come from involving the Indigenous students at the school in the program. MRAEL matches the Indigenous students with employers who have shown a special interest in employing Indigenous people.

*‘It gets them engaged in learning and provides a stepping-stone to work.’*

The VET Coordinator says if it were not for MRAEL, the only students doing the placements would be those who had chosen a VET pathway in Year 11.

*‘A work placement program would be very difficult to do if it wasn’t for MRAEL. The schools just don’t have the resources and networks to do it. It would take a school a very long time to build those connections with employers.’*

The MRSILS program is also offered at the Mackay Engineering College. This Trade Training Centre works with five high schools in the district and has 145 students enrolled in Engineering Certificates. All students undertake 6-week work placements.

A recent agreement between MRAEL and the Mackay Engineering College means a MRAEL staff member is on-site at the Trade Training Centre for two days a week. Being on-site means that MRAEL can be the first contact for students about work placement.

The Principal of the College says MRAEL’s involvement is beneficial because they already have the employer contacts for placing students.

*‘Schools involved with MRSILS place a high value on what the work placement experience can teach students about life skills.*

*There is a perception that the only purpose of work experience is sampling career choices, but there’s much more to the ‘work experience education’ than that. It compels the students to develop strategies to deal with issues like - How do I get to work? How do I communicate with adults? How can I manage work life and my social life? It challenges students to persevere and realise that work is ‘every day’ -* *there are things they don't like doing that just have to be done’* – School VET Director.

Employers also appreciate the program, particularly having a GTO to facilitate the placements and to ‘put the pieces together’:

*‘Placing a student in a real work environment allows them to make a more informed decision when it comes time to choose a career.’*

*‘With the everyday demands on business and timeline constraints I believe it is important to have a training organisation in place to make all the pieces come* *together for the benefit of the student and the business together’* – Employer.

**5 Critical success factors**

* Large employer network to draw from. MRAEL has approximately 4,500 employers in their database allowing a wide range of options for students.
* Close working relationship with VET Coordinators. MRAEL work experience placement officers and school VET Coordinators work cooperatively and closely to ensure students interests, skills, strengths and limitations are taken into account in the matching process.
* Integration in schools. The MRSILS program is well integrated into the schools and provides opportunities to all students, not just those aiming for a VET pathway – it is part of the annual school calendar and forms part of the SET (Senior Education and Training) planning process undertaken at the end of Year 10.
* Student preparation. Prior to undertaking the work placement, all students are required to complete a Certificate I in Work Education which ensures students are well-prepared for the placement and know what the expectations are in the workplace.
* Celebrating success. MRAEL’s awards program celebrates the commitment of employers and performance of students involved in the MRSILS program.
* Stakeholder forums. MRAEL hosts regular forums involving all schools participating in the MRSILS program. The forums offer an opportunity to work collaboratively on improving design and implementation and to coordinate the program.

**8 Apprenticeships Queensland**

*Apprenticeships Queensland (AQ) is a well-established, community-based GTO that has been operating in the Ipswich area for almost 30 years. AQ runs a work placement program with a number of schools in the region. Through their extensive networks, AQ can access a wide variety of workplaces to find the best match for the students. AQ takes a long-term view about its work in local schools. The staff know that the 15 year old students they introduce to trade careers are likely to be their host employers in the future, and eventually provide employment opportunities to a new crop of young people.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *decision making structures and processes are clear to all partners, with MOUs ;*
* *employers having a prominent role, with the GTO providing a one-stop-shop service;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable careful matching of students and workplaces - particularly the role of the GTO in the selection of students to enter the work placement program, during implementation and in providing feedback to the students and the school.*

**1 The profile of Apprenticeships Queensland**

Apprenticeships Queensland (AQ) has been in operation in the Ipswich area for about 27 years. It is a not-for-profit, community based group training organisation, employing about 300 apprentices and trainees and 18 staff. AQ has been working with schools in the region for eight years. It currently has agreements to provide work placements for eight local schools, but it also has ongoing relationships with 19 other schools.

Apprenticeships Queensland takes a long-term view around its work with schools. They understand that if they invest in preparing young people for the workforce through providing quality work placements and other information and advice, the students are more likely to be interested in pursuing a school-based traineeship or apprenticeship. And those students that begin their apprenticeships at school are much more likely to transition to a full-time apprenticeship after school, with minimal support. Their records show that 95% of the apprenticeships that are begun at school are successfully completed by students. This completion rate is much higher than for apprentices that begin their contract of training after they have finished school.

AQ also understands that eventually many of their students will become host employers in the region. As a long established community organisation, AQ has found that the relationships they set up with young people can last for a very long time, and contribute to a cycle of employment in the region.

*‘Our relationships with these students last many years, long past when they finish Year 12’* - AQ Marketing and Communications Officer.

AQ’s strong relationships with local employers are critical to their success. Because there is only a limited pool of employers in the region, they carefully nurture these relationships. Every employer is treated as a potential host for their apprentices and trainees.

*‘We’ve also got a reason to keep industry happy – we need them for hosts. So we need to get it right for both sides’* – AQ Marketing and Communications Officer.

**2 Working with schools**

Apprenticeships Queensland has MOUs with ten schools in the Ipswich and Lockyer Valley region to provide work placements for students in Years 10, 11 and 12. It uses its large network of employers to find places for about 500 students each year. The central management of work experience for schools in the region through AQ means that there is a much larger pool of employers to draw on, than if schools were approaching local businesses separately. This provides more flexibility for students, more options for employers and improves the likelihood of a good match. AQ also provides follow-up services.

Most schools (or their students) pay between $20 and $25 per placement. While this does not cover the full cost of undertaking the work placement task, AQ gets the additional benefit of exposing work placement students and employers to opportunities available through School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships. AQ have noticed that employers do not want to commit to hosting or employing an apprentice straight away, they prefer to test students out through a work placement and if it is successful, they may sign up.

The MOUs with the schools define the boundaries of the work placement task. The MOU includes details such as:

* roles and responsibilities of each party including the GTO’s responsibilities in working with employers and other brokers to facilitate the work placements and the school’s responsibilities in supporting students;
* fees per placement and how many placements will be provided for each student.

The MOUs are signed by the school principal and the General Manager of AQ. Sometimes other parties are involved in the MOU, such as industry engagement bodies like Construction Skills Queensland, or the local Australian Apprenticeships Centre.

The program operates slightly differently in each school, but the general process is as follows:

* the VET Coordinator in each school sends requests to AQ for work placements or students apply directly online;
* AQ interviews the students to ascertain what subjects they are doing, what their interests and aspirations are, what their capabilities are and limitations might be (eg transport);
* AQ matches the student to an appropriate employer and takes care of associated paperwork;
* students might undertake a block placement for one week, or they might spend one to two days per week at the workplace, for one or two terms, depending on the structure of the program in the school;
* AQ contacts employers at the beginning of the placement and once or twice during the placement to check on the student and trouble-shoot any issues between the employer and the student;
* AQ provides feedback to schools about the placement;
* AQ follows up with students during and after the work placement to ascertain whether they are interested in and/or ready to apply for a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. Students who are interested in this pathway may need to undertake further work placements in different industries or with different employers before they are signed up. AQ will facilitate these additional placements. AQ will not employ students as apprentices or trainees until they are sure of their choice of pathway and ‘work ready’.

AQ also follows up with each employer to get feedback on the performance of the student and check if they are interested in becoming a host employer or a direct employer of the student.

Schools need to be flexible to accommodate the work placement program within their timetables. Both AQ and the schools interviewed agree that while timetabling presents challenges, it is something they strive to overcome. The schools see work placement as an important opportunity for their students and will do whatever they can to make it possible.

Along with the work placement program, AQ is involved in a range of other activities with schools and school students. AQ employs 39 students in the region through school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. It is also involved in activities that expose students to various opportunities available in trade careers, including stalls at careers days and presentations to students and parents. AQ is a regular participant in a ‘trade circle’. This is an initiative of the local partnerships broker where a number of GTOs and other employers come into schools to meet students who might be interested in an apprenticeship and discuss what they would require from an employee.

AQ also works with the BEST (Bringing Employers and Schools Together) Committee, another network hosted by the local partnership broker. BEST meets once a month and aims to promote the benefits of employing or offering work placements to young people in the Lockyer Valley region.

**3 Examples of implementation in schools**

Laidley High School has 630 students, about half of whom are involved in VET programs. Laidley is a small rural town in a low socio-economic area west of Brisbane. Neither the students nor the school can afford to pay for a work placement program. However, AQ, along with a number of other GTOs, work with the school in other ways. They contribute to the school’s ‘trade circle’ and career days to promote apprenticeship pathways. AQ also employs a number of the school’s school-based apprentices. The school is strongly focussed on transition to employment, given the high levels of unemployment in the region, and values what AQ can do to support smooth transitions.

*‘It works really well for those Year 12s that have no clear pathways.*

*They’ve got more contacts further afield than we do.*

*It’s important to have someone talking to the kids and the employers to solve issues and keep the kid there, doing the right thing’* – Head of Department, VET, Laidley State High School.

AQ says that because they prioritise their reputation and relationships with employers, and know what the local industry wants, they are in a strong position to provide transition services to schools and students at Laidley High.

Laidley State High School foresees an increased role in their school for facilitators, like GTOs, with the advent of entitlement-based funding.

*‘Someone will need to source the best and cheapest RTO for the kids. It will be a big job’* - Head of Department, VET, Laidley State High School

St Edmund’s College in Ipswich is one of AQ’s work placement schools. St Edmund’s is an all-boys school with about 940 enrolments. The school has a Trade Training Centre attached. 44% of students are involved in VET in one form or another and about a third of the students in Years 11 and 12 undertake structured workplace learning for a day or two a week.

The school is very proud of its VET program. It has built the program up over many years and invested a considerable amount in systems and processes to support VET activities. VET is considered a flagship program for the school. The Principal is highly supportive of the program and this message gets out to the students and the wider school community.

In the past St Edmunds managed work placements for the students in-house, but as the program has grown they have found it more cost effective and logistically easier to outsource this task to a GTO, particularly because the GTO is dealing with local employers on a daily basis.

*‘It’s easier for them because they have the contact book’* – VET Coordinator, St Edmund’s College

A key success factor in the partnership between St Edmund’s and AQ has been the development of a detailed MOU between the school, AQ, relevant Australian Apprenticeships Centres and Construction Skills Queensland. The MOU details the roles and responsibilities of each party and while the document does not drive the relationship, it is a useful accountability tool and is referred to particularly when situations are complex, for example when a student gains an apprenticeship and there are a range of different subsidies involved.

The St Edmund’s VET Coordinator says that while the MOU is important, it is also essential to have an open working relationship between the school’s VET Coordinator and the relevant GTO Field Officer. He meets with his AQ field officer on a weekly basis to talk through any issues that have arisen and devise a plan for the week ahead. The meetings are held on-site at the school to allow the field officer to also touch base with any of the students on issues that arise with their work placement.

*‘You’ve got to have a single point of contact – not a team, not a committee’* – VET Coordinator, St Edmund’s College

Having a VET Coordinator with a strong industry and VET background has also proved useful at St Edmund’s. The VET Coordinator speaks the language of industry and is a strong advocate of the value of VET within the school’s student and teaching bodies.

**4 Critical success factors**

* Attention to the matching process – having a central employer pool to draw on makes it easier to put the right student with the right employer. AQ also spends time understanding the aspirations and interests of students before placing them with employers
* Providing a one-stop-shop service – AQ can manage the whole process on behalf of schools from the work experience stage through to the monitoring of a school-based apprenticeship, including finding the placements, completing the paperwork, handling IR issues, liaising with Australian Apprenticeships Centres and the RTOs, monitoring of the on-the-job training and the pastoral care and mentoring of students. Most schools do not have the resources or networks to do all this on their own.
* Linking school-based VET programs with work placements – AQ works with schools to make sure that the VET programs they run are relevant to the placements the students have. In this way the placements reinforce classroom learning and vice-versa, preparing students for the real world of work.
* Formalised partnerships – The documentation of roles and responsibilities in an MOU provides a point of reference and a level of accountability for all parties involved in each school’s VET activities.
* Strong professional relationships – Honest, open relationships between the GTO and the schools, and regular scheduled meetings, ensures that issues are addressed as they arise.
* School support – AQ have found that programs work best in those schools that value VET and prioritise work placements in the curriculum. Schools that are able to be flexible in their timetables open up more opportunities for their students.

**9 HVTC (Hunter Valley Group Training) Northern Rivers - NSW**

*HVTC Northern Rivers (formerly Northern Rivers Group Training) has developed a strong community profile over 25 years of operation and has the capacity to draw on a network of committed employers developed through placement of apprentices and trainees in the workplace. Employers report that Northern Rivers staff provides them with a strong service in selecting appropriate students for available opportunities in the workplace.*

*Staff who are committed to the opportunities afforded students by school-based apprenticeships have gained the trust of schools as a result of the GTO staff providing expert support to students whilst they are in the workplace. The GTO staff have also demonstrated the capacity to train students for, and place them in, a safe workplace environment.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *comprehensive information is provided not only to students and employers but also to parents, to explain the requirenments in the workplace, so that students can be supported;*
* *employers having a prominent role* organise for employers to be involved who can provide activities in the workplace which enable skills learnt to be reinforced with practical experience*;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable* careful selection and matching of students with employers, and preparation for placement through training on expectations in the workplace, OHS and arranging orientation interviews with the employer

**1 GTO Profile**

HVTC (Hunter Valley Training Company) commenced operation in 1981, with its headquarters in Maitland NSW. Hunter Valley is also an RTO delivering nationally accredited training programs in Maitland.

HVTC Northern Rivers operates as one of ten regional GTOs operating as Group Training arms of the Hunter Valley Training Company in NSW. It was founded in 1988, servicing the north coast region of NSW based around Lismore and covering Tweed Heads on the Queensland border to Iluka and Byron Bay.

HVTC Northern Rivers specialises in traditional trades such as automotive mechanic, carpentry, plumbing and electrical, as well as traineeships in business administration, community services, education support, hospitality, general construction, laboratory operations and retail.

HVTC Northern Rivers is by far the most active of the ten Hunter Valley Training regional GTOs in NSW in working with schools. The main focus in their partnership with schools in the region is on school-based apprenticeships and traineeships (SBAT). Northern Rivers contributes 50% of the total SBATs employed by Hunter Valley Training Company (equalling the combined total of the other nine Hunter Valley GTOs). This is due in particular to the commitment and drive of its local managers and Field Officers who are highly motivated to promote this pathway to both students and to local employers.

There were 28 School-based Apprentices employed through HVTC Northern Rivers as of January 2013. (That figure, 12 months later, has now increased to 31).

Due to the nature of the regional labour market around the coast of northern NSW, there is no particular emphasis placed on any specific industries. An offer of a placement from an employer in any industry is promoted to local schools and their students. Staff also focus on reverse marketing students who show a genuine interest and willingness to learn to host employers.

**2 Working with Schools**

One of the GTO Field Officers at Northern Rivers has developed a particular focus on promoting the school-based apprenticeship pathway, and spends up to 20% of her time working in local secondary schools, covering the Byron Bay to Tweed Heads area. However, while the main focus is on School Based Apprenticeships, the GTO also provides some support to secondary students around Work Exposure activity. HVTC Northern Rivers works with many regional schools including Banora Point, Richmond River, Alstonville, Lismore Kadina and Casino High Schools, Trinity Catholic College and Woodlawn College.

***Work Exposure***

There is little contact with students while they are still in Year 9, but from Year 10 onwards there are a variety of Work Exposure activities available for schools that are supported by Field Officers. Schools invite HVTC Northern Rivers Field Officers (as well as from other GTOs) to attend school Careers Information sessions, and to speak to students on an individual basis. Some of the presentations on careers and school-based apprenticeships for students are conducted as group or class presentations; in other schools as one-on-one discussions with students, depending on the approach requested by the school.

HVTC Northern Rivers GTO also provides students in Year 10 (and upwards) with a document of about five pages on how to prepare and present for a job interview, which is provided as a resource at Career Expos. GTO staff attend these North Coast Career Expos for students in Years 9 and 10 (organised by a local promoter who charges the GTO to participate).

The GTO also participates in Try a Trade (which is organised by the local TAFE). Up until 2011, the parent company, Hunter Valley Training Company, was a major sponsor at the annual event, but has since decided to only participate as an exhibitor.

***Linking work experience to apprenticeship pathways***

Work experience is a requirement for all Year 10 students in NSW secondary schools in the second half of the year. Where possible, the Northern Rivers GTO Field Officer negotiates with the schools and individual students to use work experience in Year 10 as a pathway into a School-based Apprenticeship if they are so interested. For example, a student wanting to become an ambulance officer was helped to obtain relevant work experience for a week in an Aged Care facility.

In promoting school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, the GTO Field Officer is mainly driven by student interest in particular industry areas and occupations. No industry in the region is large enough to enable the GTO to specialise in promotion and recruitment for one, or even a few, industries or occupations.

Following discussion with students, the Field Officer contacts potential host employers for placement opportunities in response to a student’s expressed interest in that field. In these instances, the GTO is able to work directly with the student and the school to identify and secure an appropriate apprenticeship placement.

However, if the process is reversed, and a School-based Apprenticeship opportunity is independently identified by the Group Training Organisation without a particular student already having expressed interest, then the vacancy must be broadcast to all schools in the region via the Regional Office of the Department of Education and Communities.

‘G*enerally I am driven by student interest to seek a specific School-based Apprenticeship opportunity. But occasionally I go to employers and market the general concept of Group Training of all kinds of apprenticeships (including SBATs). If a vacancy is identified as a result, this is communicated to the NSW Department’s Regional SBAT coordinator who advises careers teachers in all the region’s schools about the opportunity’ –* Field Officer*.*

**3 Implementation in a school – an example**

Banora Point High School, which is located close to Tweed Heads and the Queensland border, has 500 students enrolled in Years 7-12.

The school uses HVTC Northern Rivers to place students into School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships. There has recently been strong growth in the numbers of Banora students commencing SBATs. Where there were only three at the beginning of 2012, twelve months later there were approximately 15 SBAT students, largely due to the active promotion of this pathway by a combination of the HVTC Field Officer and the school’s Careers Teacher.

The school has relied on the Northern Rivers GTO Field Officer to develop and expand the SBAT option, particularly over the past 12 months. According to the Careers Teacher within the school, HVTC Northern Rivers has been responsive and prompt in their dealings with the school and the students, making it very easy for the Careers Teacher and other staff within the school.

***Integrated coordination***

Staff at Banora High find it particularly beneficial that they have one contact person from the GTO that can assist them work through the complexities involved in placing a student into a School-based Apprenticeship. The Careers Teacher notes that….*’it’s good working with one person from the GTO*’. This contrasts with her experience with a few other students placed in school-based apprenticeships within the school that do not involve the GTO. These other apprentices are directly employed, and as a result, the school must negotiate with various Training Providers and manage the support of students in the workplace.

‘*The ‘one stop shop’ aspect of working with Northern Rivers has been wonderful*’ - Careers Teacher.

***Preparation and support***

The Field Officer from HVTC Northern Rivers prepares the students for a ‘trial day’ before they commence their school-based apprenticeship. This preparation takes the form of individual discussion and coaching of the student. The Field Officer from Northern Rivers also prepares students for the school-based apprenticeship (either in the GTO office or online) with training in Work Health and Safety and harassment.

***Work placements***

Banora High School also has 70 students undertaking work placement through the TAFE delivered VET for school student arrangements (TVET). These placements are done in a five day block either early or late in the school year. They are TAFE-organised, and the school has no direct involvement. HVTC Northern Rivers also has no role in this work placement activity.

TVET courses require a specified number of unpaid hours in the workplace. Work placement is compulsory in all industry curriculum framework courses (business services, construction, hospitality, entertainment, information technology, metals and engineering, primary industries, retail and tourism) as well as electro-technology courses. TVET work placement is usually organised by the relevant TAFE work placement coordinators.

There is little preparation going on within the school for students who go on TVET work placements, with the whole process disconnected from school programs and planning. TAFE and an agency called Connect have the responsibility and the carriage of the placement processes.

The school is more actively involved in arranging the placements for ‘school delivered VET courses.’

**4 The views of schools, students and employers**

***Students***

Three students at Banora High School undertaking a school-based apprenticeship are very positive about the impact that going into the workplace has for them. In particular, the value of directly meeting employers both shows the students ‘*what is out there*’ and also leads to them thinking more about the future and ‘*taking the next step’* towards employment.

‘*It also makes you want to come to school more than you did before’.*

‘*I think I understand things more because I can see the application and why we are doing things in school*’ - Students.

Going into the workplace on a regular basis breaks up the week for the students as well; so that they are more likely to look forward to their time both at school and in work. They also report that the fact that they are gaining workplace experience changes teachers’ attitudes towards them to some extent ‘*when they find out you are in the workplace*’.

As far as the students were aware, the main preparation for commencing the school-based apprenticeship was the ‘trial day’ that the HVTC Northern Rivers Field Officer organised before they commenced their School-based Apprenticeship, as well as the encouragement and support they received both before and after their employment commenced. They were also positive about the training in Work Health and Safety and harassment they had received through the Group Training Organisation.

***Employers***

The strategy adopted by HVTC Northern Rivers of linking work experience as part of a trial to provide an entry point into a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship is strongly supported by host employers, such as Southern Auto Panel Beating and Spray Painting.

Local small business employers think a trial period of anywhere between one day up to a week prior to an SBAT is ‘a good thing.’

Another local business that builds and repairs Caravans and Motor Homes, usually accepts students on a one day trial to assess their suitability for a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. The owner thinks that a week would be more than enough to tell whether a student will be productive enough for an SBAT. As he sees it, it’s the role of Northern Rivers GTO to find the right student for the placement, which they do pretty well.

*‘We don’t take other work placements or work experience, because we are just too busy.’*

Sometimes students find their own work experience, and as a result decide that they would like to work in a particular industry. The HVTC Northern Rivers Field Officer then negotiates with an appropriate employer to find an SBAT in that industry. But in other cases, the work experience is used to trial a student who is already seeking an SBAT.

General work experience that is not linked to an SBAT has not worked out so well from local employers’ point of view. The students are considered to have few skills and it’s seen as a waste of the employer’s time. ‘*It’s like babysitting for a day’* says one automotive employer. He no longer makes work experience available, but is strongly supportive of SBATs, because ‘*the students are accountable’*, and also because they are ‘*learning straight away’*.

The owner of the local business that builds and repairs Caravans and Motor Homes has engaged several school-based apprentices through HVTC Northern Rivers. He reports that he was not keen on hiring apprentices of any type due to problems going back some years, but that the Field Officer from HVTC Northern Rivers had talked him into trialling school students in an apprenticeship approximately 18 months ago. He is now an enthusiastic supporter, hiring students both in Office Administration and in the Coach and Body Building trades.

Local employers report that engagement with the parents of students in their workplace is ‘*pretty important as well’*. The parents come in to the workshop with the students, so employers ‘*get to know them pretty quickly’*. These employers depend on the HVTC Northern Rivers Field Officer, who makes sure that the parents understand what a school-based apprenticeship entails and that it can enable the student to get to the workplace. The Field Officer meets with parents where possible, or else makes sure through phone contact that they have a sound understanding of the roles and requirements of all parties.

**5 Critical success factors**

* *Creating vocational pathways for students -* linking work experience placements for Year 10 students to school based apprenticeships and traineeships in Years 11 and 12.
* *Active promotion to student of workplace based learning opportunities –* in partnership with careers teachers, assisting students potentially interested in workplace based learning identify opportunities.
* *Provision of a ‘one stop shop’ service to both schools and employers –* assisting school staff to identify, prepare and place students, while simultaneously providing employers with students matched to their requirements and given preparatory training in Workplace Health and Safety.
* *Ensuring parents are informed on the employers’ requirements of the students in the workplace – HVTC* Northern Rivers staff assist employers and students through contacting parents to explain the requirements in the workplace, so that students can be appropriately supported.

**10 APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services - Victoria**

*APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services provides an example of a Year 11 and 12 program with an industry specific approach (automotive technician training) based on a strong partnership between a major employer and a Group Training Organisation that promotes careers within the automotive industry.*

*In particular, APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services actively works to select suitable students for the automotive industry and arranges for them to participate in a selection process that includes a trial at the workplace. This GTO plays a key role in identification of students for the program, conducting pre-placement interviews, and arranging preliminary work placements with the employer to help identify student capabilities and aspirations.*

*Both APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services and the major automotive employer work together to brief parents on the program to ensure that they are provided with comprehensive information to maximise support for students.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *decision making structures and processes are clear to all partners, featuring strong collaboration with a major industry employer and consistent contact with targeted schools, and ensuring that employers understand their commitments, roles and work safety requirements;*
* *extensive employer networks with the GTO playing a key role in conjunction with school staff in the selection of students for the placement, and in the preparation of students and monitoring of their progress ensuring that the nature of the placements can be sufficient to demonstrate competencies;*
* *parents/guardians are involved throughout the program, not only in the provision of comprehensive information about their School-based Apprenticeship and Traineeship program (in partnership with the employer) but also where the employer of the student is involved in sessions with parents;*
* *continuous monitoring mechanisms are in place, particularly for monitoring students in the workplace to ensure that they are being trained and supported appropriately..*

**1 The profile of APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services**

APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services is a Group Training Organisation based in the Melbourne suburb of Northcote. It is a not-for-profit company that was formed in 1982 by three Local Government Authorities -Darebin, Moreland and Yarra- in the inner north of Melbourne. These three local governments continue to comprise the core of the APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services Board of Governance.

The primary focus of APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services has been to serve the local communities, providing training and apprenticeship opportunities to the people of northern Melbourne, and particularly to young people.

One of the largest GTOs in Victoria, APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services employs 550 apprentices and trainees. Approximately 45% of these are apprentices working in traditional trades such as Automotive, Horticulture and Engineering. The other 55%,is comprised of trainees working predominantly in the areas of Business Administration, Education Support, and Health & Community Services. APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services employs approximately 35 effective full-time staff.

APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services has in excess of 260 host employer clients across more than 50 vocations, including working with Aged Care residential facilities and local government, to provide an increasing range of employment services to meet the demands of an ageing population.

**2 Working with Schools**

APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services has a strong ongoing relationship with approximately 20 secondary schools in Melbourne’s northern suburbs. They have been operating in partnership in the inner north of Melbourne over several decades, creating a strong and confident relationship and level of trust.

The CEO of APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services maintains that engagement with schools is ethically and commercially important. This reflects the focus of the three local governments on the Board that a primary focus for the organisation is to promote skills and opportunities for young people in the region.

The main engagement with northern region schools is in the promotion and employment of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services was supporting more than 40 School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships in December 2012, about one third of which were in the automotive industry and hosted by one large regional employer. This has risen to more than 50 in January 2014.

***Alliance with a major automotive franchise***

Promoting opportunities for careers in the Automotive industry is strongly supported by a key regional automotive employer that understands and promotes a recruitment pathway from work experience, through the use of work placement, to School-based Apprenticeships and eventually full-time employment in the industry.

Access to an employer with the will and capacity to employ a strategic approach to career promotion within the automotive industry enables APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services to concentrate on providing particular support and promotion to schools that deliver an automotive VET stream.

***Value placed on school completion***

Both the GTO and employer are proactive in trying to engage with parents as a means of maximising support for the students while they are in the workplace, as well as when they are at school. The focus of the school, GTO and host employer is consistent in the emphasis on the need for school completion, as well as on gaining workplace experience.

APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services also works in partnership with the local provider of Structured Workplace Learning coordinated services, in this case Kangan TAFE and the Local Learning and Employment Network (the HWLLEN), to provide sufficient work placements, particularly in the industry sectors in which the GTO has an extensive network of host employers (such as automotive, engineering and horticulture).

***Work Exposure activity***

This GTO also provides support to school students in Years 10, 11 and 12 by participating in a range of Work Exposure activities, such as Career Expos and Try a Trade programs (supporting region-wide activities as well as smaller events at particular schools).

GTO staff are also among a range of employers who assist the LLEN in providing annual mock interviews for Years 10, 11 and 12 students. Organised by the Hume Whittlesea LLEN and the Inner Northern LLEN, these mock interviews are conducted at local facilities and utilise local employers to provide experience for senior secondary students.

As well as supporting such region-wide job preparation activity organised by other agencies, APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services also provide more than 50 career talks to student in classes in Years 11 and 12 each year. Topics include employment, the trades, and careers in different industries.

Some schools also utilise weekly employment vacancy lists circulated by APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services to careers staff within schools in order to access employment opportunities for their students.

***Focus on an applied learning pathway***

Victorian schools can deliver a Vocational Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) for students (generally in Years 11 and 12), which can either be at a Foundation, Intermediate, or Senior Level. The Certificate provides specialised skills relating to specific industries whilst also enhancing literacy, numeracy and employability skills. Staff from APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services support students enrolled in VCAL classes through presentations, information on careers in the trades, and assistance with employment preparation.

When a student in Year 11 or 12 seeks a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship, the APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services staff conduct a simulated interview with the candidate before meeting with a prospective host employer. In some instances they will also provide assistance on the preparation of a resume if staff determine that the young person needs additional training.

In promoting school-based apprenticeships to schools, the GTO has a particular focus on entry to the automotive trade. One major automotive host employer provides both school-based and full-time apprenticeships in partnership with APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services. The employer and GTO jointly make presentations to school students about the opportunities in the trade, and promote the school-based apprenticeship pathway.

**3 The Automotive program**

***Automotive industry placement***

Automotive is one of three traditional trades in which APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services have a strong focus for both full-time and School-Based Apprenticeships. The GTO employs a Field Officer with a specific focus on automotive industry apprenticeships. He estimates that he spends around 25% of his working week in schools developing relationships with students and staff, and supporting school-based apprenticeship activity, while also maintaining his responsibility for full-time Automotive apprentice recruitment and support.

He works closely with the four secondary schools in the northern suburbs that deliver automotive programs as part of their VET syllabus, and also maintains contact with other government and catholic schools in the region that do not deliver Automotive classes themselves. His key school contacts include the teachers of VET Automotive studies, VCAL coordinators; careers teachers; and VET coordinators at these schools.

Promotion of, and recruitment for school-based apprenticeships in the Automotive industry, is the primary goal of the APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services partnership with schools and host employers.

***GTO partnership with host automotive employer***

The host employer that provides placements and apprenticeships for students is Bayford Motors, a large automotive dealer and service centre in the north and east of Melbourne with nine franchise locations. The Apprenticeship Coordinator at this employer has a strong and clear commitment to active promotion of career opportunities in the Automotive industry to secondary school students, and to linking Work Placement opportunities to School-Based Apprenticeships, and ultimately full-time employment in the industry.

Bayford Motors are a large employer of Automotive Technician apprentices. In early February 2013, they had 16 School-based Apprentices from nine secondary schools employed at six locations across the north and the CBD. The host employer expected that a further five students would commence in the next few weeks. Altogether there were more than 50 apprentices (full-time and school-based) employed at Bayford Motors in January 2013.

The Training Coordinator and ‘Apprentice Master’ for Bayford Motors for the past 12 years has a wide range of experience in automotive training across a number of companies. He says that Bayford Motors partners with the APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services because they believe that the student needs someone independent to look after their interests. Without the GTO, as an employer *we would have all the responsibility for four years.* If there are problems or difficulties after the student commences, then the school and the GTO handle the issues.

***Joint promotion of automotive careers***

The APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services Field Officer, in partnership with the Training Coordinator at Bayford Motors, begins serious engagement with school students from Year 10 onwards. The GTO’s Automotive Field Officer makes visits to the schools accompanied by the host employer’s Training and Apprenticeship Coordinator. The purpose of these initial visits is to promote the opportunities in Automotive employment to groups of students and interested individuals. The GTO Automotive Field Officer and the Training Manager of Bayford Motors effectively operate as a team in promoting career paths in Automotive to school students.

***Creating pathways by linking placement to employment***

A key strategy used by the GTO and the host employer is linking the use of Work Placements in Year 10 as a trial and entry point to school-based apprenticeships with Bayford Motors as an Automotive Technician. Work experience in Year 10 is used as a first step for students interested in commencing a school-based apprenticeship in Automotive when the student commences Year 11.

The host employer doesn’t require prospective School-based Apprentices to have previously done a placement to consider them for employment, but thinks it is a very useful way of helping both parties to make an informed decision.

*‘An Automotive Technician is now a highly technical trade, and in the opinion of the employer, some students are not able to meet the required standard no matter how much they may want to do so’* – Host employer.

***Employer use of work placements***

The Bayford Motors Training Coordinator does not favour the use of work placements on one day each week. He believes that there is not enough continuity for students to become part of the work team or become confident in their relationship with employer and workmates.

To assist local schools, the company does still take some school students on work placement one day a week for a six month period, but actively tries to discourage schools from using this approach. According to the Training Coordinator, these are usually Year 10 students participating.

*‘It usually doesn’t lead to anything. I prefer more intensive exposure where the student becomes part of the team, relaxes and gets a greater sense of continuity. That’s hard to do one day a week*.’

He thinks that two weeks in a block prepares students better and enables an informed judgement to be made about their suitability for an apprenticeship (either full time or as an SBAT).

*‘One week is a waste of time*. *The students are still too tense in the workplace when it’s only one week.’*

Some of the schools accommodate this through arranging a one week placement during term time and then leaving the student to do another week during the school holiday period.

Two weeks of work placement is enough for this employer.

*‘All we are seeking is a decision about whether the students is capable enough and wants to work in the trade*.’

The employer considers that a two week placement provides sufficient exposure for both parties to make an informed decision about prospective employment. The placement is not seen as a skills development exercise, since it is not long enough to achieve that.

Year 10 provides the best opportunity for such placements, according to the Training Coordinator.

*‘In Year 9, students are too immature and there is not enough continuity between a placement and being able to commence a School-based Apprenticeship.’*

During these two weeks in the workplace (during which they are generally given tasks as if they were already an apprentice) the Bayford Motors training coordinator makes a judgement about whether the students are keen enough and have the aptitude suitable for a school-based apprenticeship in the Automotive industry.

Both the APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services Field Officer and this host employer place a strong emphasis on students recruited into the Automotive industry completing their Year 12. This is important for the students’ career prospects, and also provides them with a qualification should the school-based apprenticeship program not be completed for any reason.

***Importance of engaging with parents***

The GTO Field Officer and the host employer place a strong priority on ensuring that the student is well supported both at school and on the job. In this, they are very clear about the need to engage parents so that they are well informed about what a school-based apprenticeship means for their child. The Bayford Motors Training Coordinator contacts each parent and invites them to the workplace for a meeting to discuss the prospect of combining school and employment. For the minority that cannot attend, a follow-up phone call is made to discuss the same issues.

**4 The views of schools, parents and students**

***School views***

Peter Lalor Vocational College is one of four secondary colleges in the region that provides VET automotive studies. Peter Lalor is a senior school vocational college that has enrolments in Years 10, 11 and 12. There are currently 90 students enrolled across the three years, and all students are enrolled in various levels of the Vocational Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Year 10 students are enrolled in Foundation VCAL, Year 11 are enrolled in Intermediate VCAL, and Year 12 in Senior VCAL.

All enrolled students attend school three days a week, attend VET classes one day a week (in a range of locations at different schools across the region), and do work placement on the other day (either as a VET placement or under a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship). VET programs have high status in this school as the entire student population is enrolled in applied learning.

All students enrolled in VCAL must do a work placement as part of their VET studies within the VCAL program, so there is high demand for work placement in the relevant vocational streams. The school finds meeting the placement requirements for Year 10 students particularly difficult to achieve due to the students’ relative lack of experience.

**Automotive studies at Peter Lalor**

Peter Lalor College provides VET Automotive classes for students in Years 11 and 12. There are relatively few School-based Apprenticeship placements at the school (and these are mainly in automotive through Bayford Motors) while the great majority of students need to source work placements from the beginning of each year.

The school’s Careers Teacher and the VET Coordinator indicate that the school mainly uses the Regional Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) Coordinator to help find the 90 work placements required (The LLEN at RMIT partners with Kangan TAFE as the contracted SWL coordinator for schools in this region), but uses APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services as the source of the required automotive industry placements.

The School’s VET Coordinator notes that:

*‘The Automotive Field Officer from APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services is often here. We have a nice partnership with* APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services *and our automotive teachers*.’

The Automotive Field Officer for APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services works with students interested in an automotive SBAT on an individual basis. School staff report that he is good at keeping in contact with individual students, visiting them in their automotive classes at school and on the worksite to discuss any issues and progress. He is also in regular contact with the teachers.

**Sourcing Work Placements**

The VET Coordinator at Peter Lalor says that the Automotive Field Officer from APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services and the LLEN’s Structured Workplace Liaison Coordinator at RMIT are the two key people that Peter Lalor Vocational College looks to for assistance in arranging placements for students.

There is strong pressure on the school and students to find required work placements for all enrolled students within a few weeks of school commencement. Placements need to be in industries appropriate to each student’s vocational program. APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services is a key partner for the school in identifying and locating placements required for the Automotive industry.

As the school’s VET coordinator notes:

*‘You need a stable relationship with these people so that you can work issues through and solve them together.’*

***Students***

A Year 12 student at Lalor Secondary College who is employed under an Automotive school-based apprenticeship at Bayford Motors indicates that both the preliminary work placement and the school-based apprenticeship have provided him with extremely valuable experience.

*‘It allows you to be hands on and actually do all the things that you want instead of just reading about it in books…. The most valuable thing about working with an employer is that I have gained some real life experience in my chosen field of work which I will use in the future’* – Student*.*

He indicates that the Field Officer from APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services assisted him to prepare for his Automotive work placement, arranging a preliminary visit to the workplace to meet the employer, and coaching him on preparation for an interview. This he found to be very useful.

***Parents***

The parent of the Year 12 Automotive student from Lalor Secondary College employed through Bayford Motors also considers the opportunity to be extremely valuable for their son. They felt that they were well briefed by the APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services Field Officer prior to their commencement at Bayford Motors, and that the opportunity has provided valuable lessons about the industry and the workplace that would not have been possible within the school.

*‘This program allowed my son a taste of the workforce (and) how to work as part of a team, as well as the ability to find out if this is the path he wishes to continue (in). It has taught him to work as a team member and also taught him the value of schoolwork, completing tasks that are set for him. I believe that the program has given my son the confidence and the ability to achieve anything in life.’*

**5. Critical Success factors**

* *Strong partnership across the region with schools* – Apprenticeships Plus has operated in partnership with schools in the inner north of Melbourne over several decades, creating a strong and confident relationship and level of trust.
* *Employment of a staff member with skills and a specific focus on the automotive industry* -who spends around 25% of his working week in schools developing relationships with students and staff
* *A partnership with a major automotive employer in the region* – facilitates promotion of a recruitment pathway from work experience, through the use of work placement, to School-Based Apprenticeships and eventually full-time employment in the industry.
* *A united approach between the GTO Automotive staff and a large employer* - promoting career paths in the Automotive industry, emphasising the importance of completion of Year 12, and providing integrated support and assistance to students.
* *Pathways based approach* - linking the use of Work Placements in Year 10 as a trial and entry point to School-Based Apprenticeships
* *Both GTO and employer are proactive in trying to engage with parents* - as a means of maximising support for the students while they are in the workplace, as well as when they are at school.
* *Workplace based learning embedded within a school Applied Learning Certificate* – APlus Apprentice + Trainee Services is supporting many students enrolled in Year 11 and 12 Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning programs for which workplace based learning provides a clear pathway into the trades.

**11 Group Training Employment – SA**

*For nearly 30 years Group Training Employment, a regionally based GTO has worked closely with local schools to provide students with career development activity, employability skills/experience and apprenticeship pathways. 10% of Field Officer time is spent in liaison with schools and in more recent times, these staff have complemented the work of teachers in facilitating Personal Learning Plans by all students (mandated as essential to the SACE).*

*This GTO and schools have built a partnership that is dedicated to the wellbeing of the student and their transitions. Careful monitoring of student progress is shared and VET teachers/career advisors and field officers ‘think and do’ together and share a strong commitment to equity and addressing the needs of the more “at risk”. Yet, this underpinning level of commitment is consistently threatened by the resourcing issues associated with maintaining effective levels of GTO participation.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *decision making structures and processes are clear to all partners, resulting in consistency of contact and clarity of roles between the GTO and schools, joint governance arrangements, and partnering arrangements involving the GTO, schools and employers to work together to help students ‘at risk’;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable with an emphasis on ‘test and try’ placements with employers who have a forthcoming apprenticeship vacancy and coaching and support for all during placements;*
* *diverse learning opportunities are planned, involving real tasks and hands-on learning and dialogue;*
* *employer participation is publicly recognised;*
* *continuous monitoring mechanisms are in place, involving more frequent visits, liaison and follow-up with young people to ensure progress in their placements..*

**1 The profile of Group Training Employment**

Group Training Employment (GTE) is a community based GTO located in the South East of South Australia. It was established in 1985 to provide employment and training support to local young people and to assist their host employers.

GTE employs 180 – 200 apprentices and trainees, with approximately 70% in the Building and Construction industry. On average 5% are Aboriginal and 7% have a disability. GTE also manages a community hub in Mt Gambier (where its main office is located) and organises a series of pre-vocational/pre-entry courses for early school leavers. GTE is a not for profit organisation, run by a volunteer board from local government, business, education and trade unions. If it ceased to trade, its assets would be owned by the four local councils.

**2 Working with schools**

***A long history***

GTE has a long history of working with schools. As early as the mid-late 1980s, GTE collaborated with schools to help develop an early skill centre for school students, and over time GTE staff have generally offered students in Years 9-12 a range of services including career talks, information sessions and Try-a-Trade style activities, as well as support to students (especially those undertaking VET) who seek a work placement. GTE also currently employs approximately 10 School-based Apprentices enrolled in Year 11-12.

GTE has a close working relationship with at least four large secondary schools, but also seeks to service all secondary students within a rural region of the size of 250 x 150 square kilometres, including a number of small schools with few potential candidates for apprenticeships. This economy of scale impacts upon the ‘cost’ and resourcing of such contributions. In terms of the scale of their contribution with schools, two key Field Officers have interacted with more than 4,000 young people in the last 5 years.

***An approach to work experience***

GTE has developed a particular approach to offering work experience placements to selected students across the region. A trusted host employer may contact GTE and explain that it is likely to have a vacancy in 6 months. They ask the GTO and schools to offer potential candidates a work experience placement to ‘try-out’ in the job. If there is a student who wishes to leave school and is interested in the trade on offer the GTO and employer will work with the school and negotiate a placement.

This is an ‘employer driven’ approach to work experience and it enables GTE to invest in work experience when it may lead to a real job for that young person. GTE is committed to both training and work placements, when they can be seen as a means of leading to skills and/or a pathway to paid employment.

***The Personal Learning Plan***

Approximately 3 years ago, the State Government made the Personal Learning Plan program an essential and compulsory part of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). All Year 10 – 11 secondary students in the GTE region must complete their Personal Learning Plan (known as their PLP). Nearly every school in this region asks GTE staff (via classroom teachers, VET and Careers Coordinators) to travel to schools and assist their students to research their plan e.g. to gain insights into employer expectations, practice resume writing and interviewing techniques and for pathways planning. However, the State Government implementation strategy did not also devolve resources to employers (and/or their intermediaries), making it difficult for a student to complete an informed plan without such employer interaction.

Whilst PLP is universal, GTE staff are often contacted by a parent or teacher of a ‘troubled student at risk’ in order to help support that young person into training and/or employment. There are expectations at the school end that a GTO should respond positively and assumptions made that the GTO can accommodate these challenges.

***Resourcing the effort***

Sustaining their contributions is a key issue. GTE estimates that nearly 10% of the GTO Field Worker time is spent on collaborative efforts with local secondary schools.

*‘It is viewed as something we do and budgeted through the marketing/sales ‘line’. However, this is difficult to sustain, especially if the local economy is offering decreasing numbers of apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities to young people. The Mt Gambier region has been hit recently by economic downturn, especially in the forestry industry.’*

As GTE does not receive specific additional funding for such work, the GTO has to continually put a brake on how much it feels it can do and to determine how many school requests to which it can respond.

Try-a-Trade is such an example. In 2008-2009 GTE made available a high quality program that engaged 100 plus school students in career conversations and ‘hands-on’ trade activities with their 4th year apprentices and staff with a trade background. However, the short term funding ceased and so did the program.

For this reason GTE and their Field Workers are concerned about the longer term future of their school collaboration.

*‘What we do now we do for free and/or we are dependent upon a temporary funding line. We have the skills, and we have the contacts but not the money to keep doing it.’*

Nevertheless, GTE is determined to fulfil their community commitment to the region and stay true to the vision and mission articulated by their founders. They are best able to resource their contributions to schools when and if, the economy demands more young apprentices and trainees. They integrate the school liaison into the role of the Field Officers and tend to respond to requests, rather than set up a particular program.

GTE also looks out for funding opportunities that may help the organisation respond to schools. Additional funding within the schools sector for Aboriginal students and young people with a disability has helped the GTO achieve higher completion rates for these groups. However, the needs of these groups are considerable with the time associated with pastoral care/personal care being intensive and the costs higher, especially in the following instances:

* at times of crisis e.g. confinement, homelessness and where there are difficulties with personal wellbeing;
* with respect to Aboriginal young people, where GTO/employer partnerships with schools ideally need to start earlier than Years 9-10, as a number of these students have already left before their senior secondary years commence;
* GTE has also been able to generate income from other sources; income that ‘subsidises’ collaboration with schools e.g:
  + through the Community Hub which sub-lets space to other training organisations (and the Apprenticeship Centre); and
  + through the GTE “gap year” employment program, where GTE places young people in a traineeship, whilst they accrue the income to qualify for an independent student allowance. This also helps the student to gain skills/qualifications that will help them to earn income whilst they undertake their tertiary studies.

**3 Implementation in schools and stakeholder perspectives**

Given the strength and length of collaborative experience involving GTE and schools both were keen to focus their thinking on their experience to date and possible improvements. The opportunity also arose in this Case Study to interview a local Indigenous student who was interested in providing some reflections on her school years.

***A joint School-Industry perspective***

Two VET Coordinators from Grant High School and Mount Gambier High School, the Education Department’s Regional Office Industry Skills Manager (who is also Deputy Chair of GTE) and the DEEWR Regional Coordinator (Education Skills and Jobs) joined three Field Officers and the GTE General Manager to comment upon improvements which could be made in Years 9-10 and Years 11-12. Their views on key activities included:

**Years 9-10**

* an improved Try-a-Trade program that has links between hands-on experiences of the trades and the school curriculum, and one which also strengthens the role/quality of conversations between students and apprentices and tradespersons;
* access to speakers from the world of work, but also visits to the workplace(s). Students want and need to leave the school or even TTC Skills Centres and visit the “real” world of work;
* for some students, particularly for those disengaged but with work potential, flexible placements at Year 9-10 in ‘nurturing’ work environments (as early as Year 9 and perhaps one day per week for 12 weeks) to taste work and appreciate the relevance of their learning to earning and thereby boost the students motivation to study, and to reduce their likelihood of totally dropping-out of mainstream education, training or employment;
* engagement with employers that complements the development of Personal Learning Plans, e.g. OHS/WHS induction, information, resumes, course counselling related to jobs and mock interviews;
* creative work experience programs such as the one at the Mount Gambier hospital (a place of skill shortages) where students rotate around various functions/departments – like a Work Inspiration program. This is particularly valuable for the student who already has a fairly clear idea of their vocational interest and it operates well with a larger employer with a diverse range of occupations in their workplace, like the hospital;
* ‘Nurturing Placements’ for ‘the more at risk’, where an employer(s) is ready and able to support the ‘different and more difficult kid’. A small network of these employers is really needed, as it may take more than one placement/worksite to ‘turn the kid around’ and in some instances, require the student even being accompanied in the workplace by an adult work mate/coach/mentor. It is recognised that this might be important for some students across Years 9-12;
* the work trial placement (when a trusted employer has a new job opportunity) which is suitable for a particular type of student who is keen to leave school and learn and work in the labour market; and
* work experiences (via a placement or through a special project) where the Year 10 student is introduced to the ‘8 hour day’ – getting the feel of what they are in for. They may like the work, but not the hours. This should then be followed-up by careful debriefing

**Years 11-12**

* acknowledge and strengthen current VET and ASbA activity which also contributes to students gaining their senior school certificate;
* build additional curriculum (focused on career development) around the VET component, rather than create a new “add-on” program;
* be more focused on the delivery of relevant competencies within school VET programs, like the Australian School-based Apprenticeship and Traineeship arrangements;
* resource employers and brokers to create more placements and add to the quality of workplace learning and its supervision;
* incorporate reporting arrangements which reward employers and their staff by offering them immediate feedback from the students – let them know the impact of their contributions and the returns on their investment of time;
* help young people to prepare for, acquire, and keep their car and their licence – especially if they want to be an apprentice. Without these they can be an added burden on their employer;
* standardise VET in Schools/ASbA arrangements across the nation, i.e. number of competences, hours of study, workplace time requirements. Currently VET requirements vary from state to state and from trade area to trade area;
* help schools and employers review the progress of students and their learning.

***A student perspective***

Jasmina is an Aboriginal person who has recently graduated from University with a degree in languages and multi-cultural issues. During her gap year, after Year 12, she undertook a Certificate II in Business through a traineeship, as an employee of GTE in Mount Gambier. GTE has a successful program which enables young people to do a traineeship in their gap year – so they earn, stay at home and save, and then travel and/or go straight to University (mainly in Adelaide). Jasmina also undertook work experience in Year 10, organised through GTE.

As a result of her school year experience with GTE and her traineeship experience, and now after completing a University degree, she was invited by GTE to provide an individual Indigenous perspective on her varied experience. She expressed interest in providing some reflections on this experience and her school years.

She made the following comments about her school work experience in Year 10:

*‘It is valuable to learn what to expect, just the kind of general rules about being at work – like not carrying your mobile in your hand and telling a colleague or boss to wait until you finish your text. Learn about the culture of work, and that means talking with bosses and colleagues about expectations.’*

She felt that work experience could be so much better, if students could learn to talk to adults, do research about a range of jobs and workplaces:

*‘I really agree with the idea of Year 9 – 10 being work exposure and Year 11 – 12 work placement.*

*Work Exposure/Preparation should be for all students and they should be inspired to find a direction. It would be great if that kind of activity was accredited.*

*The real value of employers is that young people feel that they can get valuable information about work, whereas they turn-off listening to the adult that they see as just a teacher – learn about expectations, build confidence and by talking with employers get to know what’s important when applying for a job.’*

When queried about what makes a good host employer for a work placement her view was that this required:

*‘Someone who is interested in your education, as well as work – taking into account the learning modules you are doing in the VET subject.*

*A person who trusts you and you can trust.*

*An organisation that has clear procedures to deal with problems and issues.’*

She volunteered perspectives on her experiences in the form of advice for employers taking young Aboriginal people on a work placement, issues which for her had been critical to her successes:

*‘Understand the background of the young person, but do* ***not*** *assume that this is all about problems – do not undervalue or even patronise us.*

*Be supportive; that means not only being compassionate, but also putting forward challenges to us, so we can learn.*

*Celebrate achievements – not only with us (young people), but also with our families and friends – involve all of us.’*

In terms of what schools/GTOs do to help employers Jasmina proposed the following:

*‘Cultural programs for employers – to understand the issues faced, our strengths and our communities.*

*Improve communication between the school, host employer and the GTO – so all three understand the modules and learning outcomes of the qualification.*

*Also help us to learn the theory behind the work, as well as the practical issues – connect the theory and the placement.’*

And, no doubt reflecting her recent University studies:

*‘Add a more global perspective to the placement in Years 11 – 12 and to the Year 9 – 10 preparation period – focus also on multi-cultural connections, futures, and technology.’*

**4 Critical success factors**

GTE believes it has an approach that is relevant to regional communities in which a GTO is an integral partner in promoting youth pathways and servicing local employers. GTE believes that the factors critical to their success offer valuable insights for other regional GTOs to consider.

***Continuity and reputation***

Continuity of contribution to schools and their students has built a strong foundation stone of mutual trust that is reinforced by a mix of social and informal contact, particularly at more formal school and regional forums, and celebratory events.

*‘It is the kind of capital that you can’t buy.’*

Schools want GTE to interact with students, as young people see the GTO as representing industry and acting as an ethical employer. Accordingly, students are more likely to listen to GTE staff offering insights and information about the labour market and career development.

In a rural/regional community, an organisation’s standing is dependent upon the track-record of its performance.

*‘Mt Gambier is not so big that one can hide; you must gain a reputation for delivering the goods.‘*

In the case of GTE, the evidence is there of providing support (pastoral care) to young apprentices/trainees, maintaining rotational placements with loyal and committed host employers and by being an active community citizen.

***Direct work to help employers***

Building a reputation with host employers must be followed up by investing resources - informally and formally – in recognising and even rewarding the ‘community minded’ efforts of the employers that nurture young people.

*‘Sustaining their contribution, requires such an investment.’*

A flexible funding model would be helpful to enable brokers such as GTE to build working relationships with local employers and sustain trust. Activities which might be considered locally include:

* local press articles praising their efforts/contributions;
* not overlooking the traditional plaques, vouchers, cards and awards;
* offering employers and their staff specialised staff development and training e.g. in working with school students and assisting them to link the workplace with their studies, OHS compliance and dealing with troubled young people;
* holding community get-togethers to celebrate the work of such employers.

***Quality staff***

The reputation with young people and their families and local schools is very dependent upon the quality and recruitment procedures of GTE field workers. GTE employs Field Officers who are both knowledgeable about the trades and who have a history of engagement with young people e.g. in youth work, sport or music. As management and the GTE workforce ages, more effort is spent in recruiting young staff. GTE also seeks to recruit staff who can constructively deal with the social and health issues facing troubled or at risk young people e.g. to assist those dealing with issues associated with drug abuse and mental illness etc.

***Monitoring programs and feeding back results***

Informal and continuous monitoring of young people’s programs is a critical success factor in sustaining quality collaboration. Rather than spending money (which is not readily available) on external evaluations, GTE has placed a high priority on gathering and sharing informal feedback from teachers, GTE staff, parents, employers and brokers. Local employers and schools have come to appreciate that GTE will follow through with support to the young person whether that be whilst they are at school or when seeking an apprenticeship/traineeship. They also know that GTE will visit an apprentice 15 – 20 times a year – far more than the stipulated 6 times a year. GTE goes the ‘extra mile’ and that goodwill boosts their collaboration with schools significantly.

***Effective partnerships***

The key to quality partnering in this regional area is maintaining the personal and professional relationships across all stakeholder groups. It is a continuous process as the staff of schools and the GTO often “come and go” for a range of reasons eg promotion. The need for consistent community liaison cannot be understated.

In reflecting on the partnership arrangements in place school staff indicated:

*‘The school sees the GTO as a partner in its own right, as the interaction between GTE field officers and our students is valuable. We also see the GTO as a link to a range of host employers who will also become partners. Conversely, the schools are a conduit to students and parents for the GTO. We are clear about what lines of communication and relationship building we offer each other and respect that combination.*

*We have clear protocols of collaboration – GTE works well by informing, discussing, liaising with the VET Coordinator in my school – this makes for effective (not random) communication.’*

Schools and the GTO both reflected that they had a shared understanding of the impact their collaboration had on the students’ career development:

*‘We can distinguish between the role of the insider (teacher) and the outsider (employer – GTO).*

*We can use that constructively, for the teacher telling the kid about careers is a bit like the parent telling their own teenager, whilst the GTO worker or host employer is seen by students differently – they are out there, and they really know.*

*We can respect and combine our professional territories and roles with young people.’*

There are however, challenges to maintaining effective partnering in a regional centre like Mount Gambier. These include:

* when a professional relationship is fractured by a breakdown of a personal relationship. In a small town, key workers and contact persons are often connected by social convenience and membership of common interests and clubs. Where this breaks down, as happens from time to time, this can damage professional/work based collaboration;
* regional centres feel that the distant creators of new initiatives don’t always think about the long term trust that can be eroded by short–term initiatives which build up expectations then disappear.

*‘We need to be careful of short-term fads. After a while, we become sceptical about taking on some initiatives – our key question is always – is it worth exploiting our relationships on something that will be short-term?’*

* the lack of resourcing for one partner, whilst another is well funded can pose a challenge to effective partnering. Schools know that GTOs contribute without payment, and therefore sustainability for the level of partnership activity is threatened.

Ultimately GTE and the schools interviewed were clear that the ideal partnership is for both to play a part in the Work Placement arrangements for school students:

*‘Through close partnering, we can best match the student and host employer for a placement. We can together encourage schools to refer the kids who will get most out of a particular work experience/exploration event. It is the combination of the two agencies that makes a real difference.’*

***Parental Engagement***

Whilst GTE and their school partners have undertaken some efforts to engage with parents, their analysis of their current situation was that a comprehensive parent engagement strategy needs to be developed and resourced to enable parents/carers to become more effective career partners. They believed also that whilst this could occur locally, some national work could assist to guide VETiS Coordinators.

Parent/carers need to be informed about how the trades have changed; about up-skilling, about new emerging technologies and the greater use of interpersonal, enterprising and diagnostic skills. They need to know about the value of literacy/numeracy in the workplace, but most importantly, they may need to become more effective supporters of their children’s career development. Employers can play a vital role in this strategy

***Joining the dots***

The prevailing view of those consulted was that there is a need to ‘join the dots’ between various state government initiatives and guidelines and Australian Government directions. As one example, national curriculum development in Years 9-10 needs to complement and strengthen the Personal Learning Plans mandated by the states.

**12 PEER VEET – SA**

*PEER VEET is an industry based GTO/RTO which operates in the electrotechnology and plumbing industries. It has established an effective working relationship with a large number (30 – 50) of secondary schools across SA. For over 15 years, PEER VEET has delivered VET, and offered students, apprenticeship pathways in the licensed trades. PEER and the schools have developed a strong mutual professional respect for competence and commitment to young people in transition.*

*Collaboration has moved beyond the important “effective business relationship”, beyond the notion of schools procuring (buy or beg) services from PEER, into a partnership.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *collaborative arrangements are established based on trust;*
* *decision making structures and processes are clear to all partners, resulting in consistency of contact and clarity of roles between PEER and then schools it works with;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable ensuring the nature and length of work placements are suitable with PEER providing insights for VET students into industry expectations, the recruitment process, applications and interviews*
* *learning is structured and relevant through contact with real work, with the GTO providing a LLN assessment for action by the school, RTO and student;*
* *continuous monitoring mechanisms are in place, including building in time to review progress with the partnership.*

**1 The profile of PEER**

PEER has developed a reputation for both high quality training and the support of young people in both school-based and post-school apprenticeships. In addition, it offers young people (at school and post-school) pre-vocational opportunities.

PEER VEET employs approximately 530 apprentices and trainees in the Building and Construction and related industries in licensed trades including Plumbing, Electrical, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, Data Communications, Roof Plumbing, Security Systems Installations and Business Administration. It has a host employer base of approximately 250 active employers ranging from sole contractors to large national corporations and government departments.

PEER VEET is also an RTO providing training to over 3000 students per year, ranging from industry professionals and qualified tradespeople to apprentices, trainees and entry level students.

**2 Working with schools**

As an industry based (and not for profit) GTO/RTO, PEER is mandated to raise the awareness of electrical and plumbing pathways to young people. It’s GTO and RTO functions combine to work with schools to achieve this goal and offer the skill training necessary for young people to navigate those pathways. These occur through VET in Schools programs, ASbAs, Pre-Vocational programs and the traditional GTO function.

PEER has a proud history of working with 30 to 50 schools over an 15 – 20 year period, having as an aim to:

* promote the opportunities available through its group training and employment and vocational educational training services;
* raise and sustain the profile and skill needs of the electrotechnology and plumbing industries to young people and their parents/carers.

***Years 11-12***

PEER VEET has delivered Vocational Education Training (VET) in Schools programs since the mid 1990’s and trained in excess of 2000 school students in this time, making it one of the largest providers of VET in Schools training in South Australia. Students are able to earn their South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) points towards higher education, should they chose to take this pathway.

The emphasis of PEER partnering with schools has been placed upon Years 11 – 12, as few students undertake these VET in Schools courses in Year 10. In addition to the VET in Schools and School based Apprenticeship and Traineeship programs, PEER VEET has delivered Pre Apprenticeship and Pre Vocational programs for many years and has recruited the majority of the students from these programs into employment.

Approximately 200 secondary students per year undertake VET in Schools courses at PEER, with approximately 60% involved in the electrical field and 40% in plumbing. PEER has dedicated up-to-date and specialised training workshops in these two fields.

The VET in Schools programs offer students one day per week training as well as on-the-job training, through a 4 week Work Placement. The mode of delivery is a combination of theory in a class room, practical experience in a workshop environment and work placement in industry.

The majority of students attend the PEER premises at Albert Park one day per week. PEER also has arrangements with various schools to train “on-site” utilising the school trade training facilities. This allows a cluster of surrounding schools to gather at one school if our RTO is not convenient. Programs that are held within schools are generally delivered to fit within the school schedule (eg half day sessions).

VET Coordinators within the schools generally refer students into the program. Students are assessed at the beginning of the program to determine their academic ability and when inducted into the RTO are required to undertake a Literacy, Language and Numeracy (LLN) assessment to identify areas that they may require assistance in throughout the program Students are provided with OHS and White Card training prior to undertaking practical units and work experience. They are also issued with a work shirt and personal protective equipment relevant to the work sites.

Whilst the mode of training delivered tends to be individually based within the electrical field, plumbing students (as part of the construction industry) are engaged in team projects i.e. building a ‘small home’. This variety of teaching styles enables the RTO/GTO to be experienced in a broad range of learning activity which has direct relevance to the development of work exposure activity e.g. Try-a-Trade, team projects, mentoring etc.

There is an agreement established with the schools comprising of feedback and work progress sheets. The progress sheets are completed by the work placement employer and sent on to the RTO for filing and record keeping.

Although the GTO finds and nurtures rotational placements for employed apprentices, the RTO asks the VET in Schools students (and their school) to find their own Structured Workplace Learning placement. There is simply not the resources available within the organisation to place this aspect of VET in the hands of PEER, although the GTO will frequently assist a student who is having particular difficulty in finding such a placement.

*‘All works well as long as the student and their parent/school networks are able to find the placement. This tends to work best when the student is well connected and/or aspirational.’*

The Work Placement is usually undertaken during school holidays.

Within the organisation, the PEER VEET GTO and RTO work very closely together to ensure the best outcomes for students. Specifically, the GTO Recruitment Services Coordinator:

* holds a session throughout the year with each group providing students with an insight into industry expectations, the recruitment process, and interview preparation and conducts mock interviews;
* works with the Entry Level/VET Team within the RTO to provide mentoring, career advice as well as assistance with work placements.

The program has been successful as it provides the students with an insight into the industry prior to commencing an apprenticeship. PEER’s experience of providing students with job preparation training has proven successful when making final employment selection. Additionally, many of those who begin as PEER trainees remain in the industry (full or part-time) as either employees or by running their own business.

Essentially, PEER has at its disposal both well-established networks of collaboration with schools and expertise in the training/coaching/personal support of young people, with the potential to be a serious provider of activity that is directly relevant to developing high quality work exposure and work placement on a broader scale.

***Years 9-10***

Alongside this activity, PEER has been consistently offering career information sessions to school students and parents in Years 9 – 10, in particular through involvement in approximately 30 Career Information nights per year. Field Officers attend the various school career expos.

***The challenges***

The implementation of such a large program is not without its challenges:

*‘The cost of VET Programs has been an obstacle as often the training is not paid for or not subsidised by the school.*

*In some cases, the students steered toward VET Programs have been those that struggle academically and therefore the students struggle with the program, in particular, the Electrotechnology Program.*

*We do have a team that focus on the VET in Schools Programs including administration personnel, training personnel, a Student Services Manager and our Recruitment Services Coordinator. However, in many cases, VET is only part of their role. A staff member that was completely dedicated to the VET Students, working closely with the schools and liaising with Parents would be ideal.’*

**3 Future implementation - Stakeholder Perspectives**

Staff from the GTO, school staff and former Year 12 students who are now apprentices with PEER were asked in a series of intensive interviews to reflect on their current experience, with a view to providing their perspectives on what would make a difference.

***GTO perspectives***

PEER believes that their collaboration with schools could be done so much better, and in a more coordinated and equitable fashion, if the missing link was put in place – the resources to develop and sustain quality Work Placements for all interested young people. To them, funding would be best used to employ a highly skilled Schools Liaison Officer rather than receive funding for each placement. The role of this position would best be directed towards:

* promoting awareness of pathways (at Years 9 – 10 – 11) through more thorough communication with parents of the students, explaining the way in which the trades can lead to further potential pathways of learning e.g. articulation to higher levels;
* working with school VET Coordinators/Career Advisers and other brokers e.g. Partnership Brokers and Structured Workplace Learning placement providers to maintain a flow of students and placements; and
* assist employers to further develop the quality of placements, their mentoring and personal support to young people who need it.

**Work Exposure (Years 9 – 10)**

*Students need to ‘touch, smell and feel’ the trades, not just be exposed and watch.*

A combination of excursions, project based learning, Try-a-Trade tasters and mentoring/coaching, together with a combination of hands-on activity and conversations with tradespersons is essential. These conversations with tradespersons are about:

* career development - stories of how a ‘tradie’ has got to where they are;
* the realities of the workplace and the expectations of employers, work mates and the young worker(s) themselves;
* the advantages/opportunities that a licensed trade offers the longer term aspirations/hopes of the young person i.e. passion to travel and earn, to work and gain an income for family, lifestyle and security;
* the contribution of the trades to people and society.

*My trade is the second most important occupation to medicine in the history of public health – (Young plumber, National Trade Awards; Adelaide).*

**Work Placement (Years 11 – 12)**

The need is to strengthen the partnering with schools and other brokers so as to not only enable information and understandings to reach out to parents and students, but also to build the quality of employer supervision and their support to young people – especially if such opportunities are to be available to all students, including the more ‘at risk’ of not achieving a successful transition from school to employment. The GTO stressed that it is the coordination and quality improvement of placements in the electrical and plumbing fields that is the vital missing link for them, as well as the potential to link activity with other partners delivering programs, such as the skilled mentoring program.

One Size Does Not Fit All

From a resourcing perspective, PEER suggested that the emphasis or needs in implementation will vary across localities and does not assert that one particular funding model (i.e. a particular allocation per student) will do the job. Rather VETiS should be clear about its outcomes and allow various VETiS Coordinators to ‘get on with the job’, in the way that best suits their stakeholders and the associated character and scale of partnering. In the case of PEER, what is needed is a Schools Liaison Officer. The teachers involved in the forum supported PEER’s contention and believe that resources should partly be used to support their partners (GTO and host employers).

***The School Perspective***

*‘Can we, as schools, do it all alone; no, we need partners.’*

VET Coordinators and Career Advisers from five schools (one public secondary and four private schools/colleges) joined key staff from PEER and participated in a two and a half hour forum. This forum reflected upon their many years of collaboration, critical success factors in their partnerships and how could any resources available via a VETiS initiative, be used most effectively.

**Work Readiness/Exposure in Years 9-10**

For the school staff work readiness/exposure was thought to be relevant across the school and for all students, integrated into the curriculum.

*‘Do you add it as a subject to the curriculum? If so, do you make it elective or core? The core holds more weight.’*

It brought to mind the following potential activities:

* work shadowing, Try a Trade programs and hands-on experience;
* guest speakers and career conversations with people at work, including tradespersons, which pin-point the relevance of learning at school and the world of work;
* Business skills and Life skills, but in the case of the latter, for all students, not where it is used as a ‘dumping ground’ for students ‘at risk’ only;
* Portfolio approaches and Personal Learning Plans;

**Work Placement in Years 11-12**

School staff indicated their current satisfaction with the arrangements in place with PEER. To strengthen current arrangements, the following activities were proposed:

* adding to the pool of work placements;
* networking employers involved;
* share funding between partners and schools;
* communication between school and employer made more effective;
* in the case of new arrivals and Aboriginals students, establishing Work Placement opportunities where 2 students of same culture went together, rather than alone;
* allocating funding to support the coaching (from a third party) of employers – especially in dealing with ‘more troubled’ students;
* paying industry people to go into schools – especially 3/4thYear apprentices;
* educating and engaging parents via parent workshops.

Participants in the GTO-School forum believed that the benefits for employers from being involved in the new arrangements could result in staff development for employees, a better pool of apprentices coming through schools and increased networking opportunities which can lead to further external alliances.

***Student perspectives***

A group of first year apprentices from PEER who had all undertaken a Work Placement as part of their VET in Schools program in Years 11-12 were interviewed utilising a range of questions. Their collective response is outlined below:

**What makes a good host employer of a VET in Schools student on their Work Placement?**

* + they must have knowledge and skills in the trades and be good (excel) at what they do;
  + willing to give you a range (variation) of work opportunities and sites with ‘good’ learning, care about you and what you are doing – taking time to teach, explain and even some ‘catch-up’ coaching;
  + have work colleagues (their employees) who know who you are, and what you are doing there – a supportive workplace environment;
  + have up-to-date, even state of the art equipment/technology and be serious about OHS and expect reasonable hours;
  + where you learn about the “short cuts” and the tricks of the trade.

**What can PEER (or for that matter any placement organisation) do to help make a host employer ‘good’?**

* + organise with employers for young people on placement to meet/talk with young apprentices who work for them;
  + send out a skilled person to check on progress in the Work Placement and help the employer to build quality;
  + promote the idea of ‘catch-up’ sessions between the young people on placement and work colleagues – to learn about skills and gain knowledge;
  + ensure the young people can meet with others and give feedback – less threatening when in a group;

**What should happen in Years 9 – 10?**

* + give you the chance to check out the trades so you can then make a good choice about VET subjects in Year 11/12; find out about how to get into the trades;
  + get out of the classroom and visit the workplace(s) – much better than speakers coming to the school;

*‘Most of us were not mature enough to do a full-on placement, but we needed to know about the options and learn about what employers want from us.’*

*‘Most people think a ‘tradie’ is a bogan – stupid and drinks iced coffee, it’s a real stereotype!’*

* + work with the school to make sure we have good careers education so I get to know where I am going.

*‘PLPs are a good idea, but they are not done well – yes I made it up, to get my SACE points.’*

* + when we go out to the workplace, be able to find out what they think it takes to be successful.

*‘I wish my school did something like that ‘Try-a-Trade’ project you talked about – that would be awesome.’*

**The value of the placement in Year 11 – 12**

* + hopefully you can get a chance in Years 9 – 12 to do more than one placement. Some young people are mature enough to do a placement in Year 10, but you have got to be careful because you can go there, and then can’t really do anything – safety, too young etc!
  + the trainees scored the value of their placement in Year 11 – 12 on a 1-10 scale with the average score over 8 – however, being defined as good was so dependent upon where you went, and how good the employer was;

*‘Take care so we do not become ‘cheap labour digging trenches’. We are young and want to learn about what is out there.*

*It really did help me to know more about the electrical trades, one place was great but in another all I got to do all week was change electric light bulbs. Better than just digging trenches I reckon.’*

* + the school needs to be really interested in what you did and learnt on placement.

**4 Critical success factors**

* *Clear rules of engagement between the GTO and the school*- understood and agreed by both partners;
* *Understanding of how school/RTO’s work* – understanding the procedures and protocols operating in schools as well as in the RTO, eg schedules/timetables/cultures and having some flexibility in dealing with each other, appreciation of both situations and how and why they are/are not compatible;
* *Shared goals by the partners for the student’s well-being* – requires a coordinated effort and joint allegiance to the higher goal of ‘getting kids to be successful’;
* *Open communication between key people with a focus on competent, committed staff with staying power* - ensuring consistent reliable contact people who have time to commit or follow through; ensuring good ‘handovers’ if a contact person changes; building key relationships over time*;* PEER providing feedback to employers, schools and students – regular review of progress for partners and students/trainees;
* *Partnership review* – building in time to review progress with the partnership.

**13 MPA Skills – WA**

*MPA (an industry based GTO/RTO) has developed a particularly creative partnership with one state and one Catholic school, and together they have developed an award (national) winning program of pre-apprenticeship and school based apprenticeship activity. Underpinning this work is an emerging framework of school – GTO/RTO career development initiatives for Years 8 – 10.*

*Using a clearly defined partnership decision-making structure and combined expertise, the collaboration has developed a set of expectations and guidelines for young people, the schools and the GTO. A full time Education Manager at the GTO works with the school VET Coordinators to monitor student outcomes - an estimated 90% have had positive destinations over the time period 2006 – 2012.*

*The partnership has already developed a collaborative strategy in planning to date; one which concentrates on the development of student employability skills through a combination of Work Exposure in Years 9 – 10 and Work Placement in Years 11 – 12. GTO host employers are to be actively involved in this strategy, and be resourced with coaching skills for their supervisors and 3/4th year apprentices. A parental engagement strategy is also to be developed.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *decision making structures and processes, roles and expectations, as well as consistency of contact are clear to all partners - students, parents, schools, GTO/RTO - with joint governance arrangements in place;*
* *employers having a prominent role, particularly in preparing students for developing apprenticeship qualities;*
* *extensive employer networks, with host employers committed to students experiencing a cross-section of work, sites and people in the selection of students to enter the program;*
* *learning is structured and relevant through contact with real work, including integrating learning outcomes associated with work into the curriculum;*
* *classroom work is aligned with the workplace, through work exposure activities such as Try a Trade and developing a chart of progressive interactions for students in Years 6-13;*
* *continuous monitoring mechanisms are in place, including monitoring the take-up of employability skills and literacy and numeracy.*

**1 The profile of MPA**

MPA Skills was formed by the Masters Plumbers and Gasfitters Association and the Master Painters Association in 1993 to ensure that there are sufficient, and appropriately trained staff, to sustain the plumbing and painting industries in Western Australia. MPA Skills has developed a four phase strategy for supporting and advancing well informed/prepared young people through high school and then on to apprentice programs, which lead to becoming a tradesperson, and finally a licensed member of their Association.

MPA Skills is both an industry based Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and as a GTO acts as an Apprentice Employment Organisation (GTO). Training is available in various Training Packages across urban and rural areas. Apprentices sign-up with MPA Skills Group Training Scheme and are then placed on a rotational basis with host employers.

MPA Skills has employed approximately 280 apprentices per year over the last decade - with approximately 65% in the Plumbing industry and 35% in Painting. The organisation is considered a market leader in matters of both training and employment. National recognition and awards for their apprentices/field workers, VET programs and more recently school partnerships is testimony to their positive reputation in both the market place and with education.

The Apprentice Employment program of MPA Skills and partnering schools, is a key component of the high school link in this ‘cradle to grave’ chain of interlocking opportunities.

**2 Work with schools**

By 2005, MPA Skills were already experiencing the ‘competition for young talent’ which was accentuated by the WA mining boom. The organisation was keen to work with schools. One of the RTO trainers was an ex-student of John Forrest Secondary College and this personal touch assisted the GTO/RTO and the school (with a strong commitment to VET) to develop a collaboration relationship from 2006 onwards. This in turn, enthused two other local schools to join the partnership in 2008-2009.

The schools wanted to broaden their VET offerings and meet the challenge of an increase in the school leaving age, whilst MPA Skills wanted to skill and recruit young people into the trades of plumbing and painting.

Since 2006, MPA Skills and the three participating schools have developed an effective working and business relationship that they believe is based upon the principles of true partnership – shared goals, clarity of roles, trust and mutual respect etc. This partnership initiative is known as *MPA Skills Apprentice Employment.* Historically, it has provided a shared vision, banner, and ethos for the partners to develop and sustain two distinct programs and associated relationships with three schools. The two programs are:

* + a pre-apprenticeship program with John Forrest, a State secondary college; and
  + a Australian School-based Apprenticeship Program with two Catholic Schools, Ursula Frayne and St Norbett.

In 2012, and for 2013, 75 trainees and school apprentices will have engaged in the two key MPA Skills Partnering Schools programs. Statistical data and feedback from the three partnering schools indicates just how successful these two programs have been for students. John Forrest estimates that between 2006-2012 96% of Year 11-12 students undertaking the program achieved positive outcomes, with over 75% gaining an apprenticeship and over 20% completing a School-based Apprenticeship (SBA); 50% of all participants gained their WACE certificate. At Ursula Frayne, the Careers Adviser states that 100% gained their WACE in 2011 – 2012. Her school leaders believe that participation in the ASbA program has led to improved performance in the other school studies of the participating students.

Activities with schools are in fact broader than these two programs with career talks and Try a Trade programs also being provided by MPA.

**3 A new approach**

An even stronger focus with a broader variety has begun in 2013 and will be a feature of future planning. In late 2012, MPA Skills established an Education Manager role across the RTO and GTO functions of the organisation. This position will champion a four component high school program that interacts with students across Years 6 – 12. In summary this ‘four part frame’ for 2013 onwards consists of the following themes and activities.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Years 6 – 8**  “Plant the Seed” | **Years 8 – 9**  “Gain an Insight” | **Years 9 – 10**  “Work Experience” | **Years 10 – 12**  “Employment and or Pathway” |
| Career Insights | Work Exposure | Work Experience | Pathway Taken |
| * Background awareness * Classroom activities with literacy, numeracy and enterprise focus | * Guest speakers * incursions/excursions * Open days | * Try-a-Trade * Transferable Skills * Choosing a trade | * Employment as school based apprentice /trainee * VET subjects taken * Pre-apprenticeship course |
| MPA Skills and teachers working on the design of classroom based activities | Teachers and MPA Skills developing education – industry programs | Schools and RTO/GTO staff supporting students to taste and try a pathway | Facilitated pathways of employment **and**/or education i.e. and still complete WACE |

At the very heart of those programs will be a unit of learning that focuses upon the development of personal, transferable and employability skills. In order to bring this about, MPA Skills will integrate a teaching and learning strategy into the work of their trainers and develop their teaching skills. Emphasis will be placed upon young people working through such issues as developing a work ethos, pride in one’s trade, respect and ownership over one’s apprenticeship, client servicing and OHS. This will be achieved through role plays, group work, conversations with employers and one-on-one coaching.

The new framework of programs is a qualitative measure that is designed to respond to the following changes in the WA labour market and the needs of employers:

* employers want more able and independent young workers;
* young people will be less costly, requiring less support in the workplace, for the employer;
* labour market opportunities are limited without skills and learning – up-skilling is continuous;
* good and confident students can at a later date, drive change and enterprise in the workplace;
* to not only increase apprenticeship completion rates, but also to inform and inspire secondary students to take greater leadership over their career development and vocational pathways.

*‘We want to invest more energy in the young people we have.’*

In essence, the key strategy is to consolidate the scale of GTO - School programs, develop lead-up activity in Years 6 – 9 and integrate the ‘employability module’ into all activity. It is a qualitative approach which is about bringing out the very best of the young people who are already participating in the school and/or pre-apprenticeship programs. This is responding to the changes in the modern labour market that demand from young people, more sophisticated technical/vocational skills and more developed interpersonal and transferable skills; qualities, attitudes and skills that make them a more engaging and interdependent learner and worker.

Beginning this year, each school student will participate in an employability skills unit that is inspired by the stated needs of host employers. They will engage in a process of learning that helps them to become more ‘placement ready’ i.e. to understand how to better interact and to learn from employers. Topics to be covered will include, how to be an active listener, how to respond to new instructions/challenges by communicating what they ‘get’ and ‘do not get’, be more able to take and give feedback from/to their supervisor, and above all, indicate to their employer and colleagues, that they are engaged in the tasks and accompanying work based learning.

By 2014, it is planned that all trainees and apprentices will also participate in a leadership module/unit. It is then hoped that the development of young people will lead to not only improved performance in the workplace, but also enthuse employers to further lift their commitment to empowering young workers, and boost the quality of both supervision and skills transfer. MPA Skills is well served by a network of ‘gold star’ host employers who are keen to ‘leave a legacy’ to their trade, and nurture young people’s career development as plumbers/painters.

***Sustainability and Possible Replication***

MPA Skills believe that they can sustain their qualitative investment in school programs, as long as they are generally working with students and schools who are offering the GTO/RTO ‘talent’; this is young people who are aspirational and keen, who are well supported by parents/family and who are confident learners. There is a shared understanding between the schools and MPA Skills that the partnership is serving a particular target group; students who are relatively able and who really want to ‘do a trade’. The reason that their activity has a good chance of becoming sustainable is that completion rates and positive destinations provide a business return to the GTO. They also tick the boxes for students, their families and the schools.

To make the same ‘high investment’ opportunities available to the less confident, the less mature, the less supported and less aspirational, would require resources that are additional to those provided via pre-apprenticeship programs and SBAs. Although the capacity of the partners to similarly assist the “more at risk” is in place, it would require additional resources.

Resources would need to be committed to assist host employers to become even more effective in coaching and motivating less aspirational students in the workplace – the kind of young people that do not easily access employment in the licensed trades and their industries.

**4 Stakeholder Perspectives**

***School perspectives***

The schools feel that current arrangements in Years 11 – 12 are working well with strong support being voiced for School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, as well as the VET in Schools arrangements incorporating Structured Workplace Learning plus the more informal work experience placements for secondary students who are still unsure of what course direction they want to take. The challenge is to find more placements and further boost quality.

However, schools see a clear need and gap in Years 9-10.

*‘This is what is missing, especially for those students who feel they are in a waiting zone - wanting to learn and work outside of the classroom and navigate a pathway.’*

Lead-up work exploration/preparation and work exposure activity is required, and a strong sense that it must be located both within the classroom and in the world of work. School staff indicated that the timing of any work exposure elective is also important. It should occur in late Year 9 or early Year 10 as the students must choose subjects/pathways for Year 11/12 in late Year 10.

**Ideas for Years 11-12**

In the interviews held with staff from schools associated with the MPA Skills program, the following priorities were identified as important for resourcing:

* creating and nurturing of more quality placements;
* targeting young people who are engaged in ‘try and test’ Work Placements that precede that same employer taking on a new staff person or apprentice/trainee;
* a parent - engagement strategy, so parents can become a ‘career development partner’ with their child. Parents should know about the ‘world of the trades’ and its pathways; especially that they can lead to a tertiary qualification and open doors (later) to University.

**Ideas for Years 9-10**

School staff consider the following may be useful activities to complement their planning. The teachers felt that a well-positioned GTO has the staff that can relate to students well (they are not seen as teachers), and that they can also tap into the networks of host employers:

* Try-a-Trade activity at the Trade Training Centre or in external workshops that enable current apprentices/trainees to have effective conversations with students;
* engage third and fourth year apprentices to interact with students and talk about their career i.e. share career stories;
* build upon the experiences of such programs as ‘Finding my Place’, where targeted students move into the local library and undertake research into the world of work and then enjoy conversations with visiting apprentices and other adults in the workplace. John Forrest staff believe that their Year 9 - 10 students want to learn out in the real world;
* GTOs selecting an ambassador (e.g. chef) to go out to schools and talk to students;
* visits to the workplace and the occasional placement for the student;
* do not exclude academic students who want to explore the world of the trades;
* engage parents – GTO/School/Host employer workshops that offer updated information and labour market information to parents – so encouraging them to be supportive. A parents’ workshop run by the school and a local employer is a far more attractive proposition than inviting parents to come to the school. Student presentations about their (NTC) learning (at the workshop) will also boost attendance;
* make Career Expos more interactive, (displays, activities, discussions).

**How do we support employers?**

School staff interviewed also had a number of views about the important role of employers and of the support they felt employers needed to assist young people in making their transition from school to work. In terms of their potential role school staff felt there is a need to:

* explain to employers that students want to interact, listen to and learn about the world of work from employers; they are more credible to students than teachers and TAFE staff. This is why it is vitally important that apprentices in their 3rd and 4th year and ‘trad**i**es’ be involved in such work exposure activities as Try-a-Trade, Career Talks;
* boys, in particular (in Years 9 – 10), listen best when they are engaged in a common activity e.g. enterprise project, work visit, Try-a-Trade demonstration. The boys who are in ‘the waiting zone’ (and who are often disengaged at this time) are particularly keen to engage in such activity with an adult at work.

School staff also felt there was a need to recognise the employer contribution by:

* paying for the time of 3rd – 4th year apprentices and tradies to deliver a combination of hands-on experiences and conversations at various work exposure activities;
* resourcing a facilitator to work between a cluster of schools and employers;
* acknowledging the role of employer ‘ambassadors’ who will talk to students and demonstrate their trade;
* ensuring the employer gets feedback on what the students have learnt;
* offer free coaching skills – especially to employers who are engaging with the more-at-risk students.

***Host Employers Perspectives***

Staff from two plumbing firms with a record of working with many school students volunteered for interview, responding to a range of questions.

*‘Samson Plumbers have employed, and/or rotated 50 apprentices with MPA since the mid-1990s – including four SBAs****,*** *and they have offered 50 Year 11-12 students Structured Workplace Learning placements plus provided Year 10 generic work experience. Charter Pig Plumbers has enabled more than 80 young people to undertake work placements (School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, VET in schools, Work Experience) in the last 10 years.’*

Their collective response is outlined below.

**What makes a good Host Employer for a Work Placement?**

* like young people – ‘*most of the ones we get are pretty good, even when the parents don’t care too much’*;
* offer students and trainees a good ‘cross-section’ of work, so they can see many jobs and aspects of the trade, not a false sense.

‘*It is not about just digging holes and putting pipes into the ground*’;

* help them meet a range of people and experience a range of sites;

*‘Don’t use as cheap labour, it doesn’t work as the student does not learn and they are turned off the trade*.

*Our guys need to act a bit like a guardian*.  *Take care about who you send the student to work with*.’

* Be honest with your feedback – ‘*you are not suitable’, is valuable for the young person to know and learn.*

**What help is needed to make a good Host Employer?**

* work with us to get better at debriefing the student, especially that young person who is not suitable for an apprenticeship in this area of work;

*‘Improve your briefing and selection process for placements. We need students who really want to try plumbing or even the trades more generally;*

*Getting better insurance, safety training and the necessary personal protective equipment’;*

* reward us – not high on our priorities. *I just want to use placements as a vehicle for potential recruitment and present a good face for the trade*. **I**deas of some value are:

*‘Yes to coaching, mentoring skills for my tradespeople and older apprentices and a platform to air our views;*

*Get feedback from students on what they have learnt – to see if our investment has a good return;*

*Take more care with follow-up, not just tick the boxes.’*

**On proposals relating to Work Exposure at Year 9-10**

* they are often too young to be channelled into a job or direction.

‘*Too many work experience placements in Year 10 are partially wasted on students who have not/should not be expected to have made up their mind on plumbing;’*

* I like the idea of work exploration/exposure in Year 9/10.

‘*At this age, they struggle* *to handle a full placement; they are often overawed by the experience, the lunch room with 20 tradies. We need to help students to prepare questions (prompts) to get value out of a conversation with our workers.’*

*Great idea – to use our 3rd/4th year apprentices to have contact with Year 9 - 10 students. Could be done as part of their block release and their development – visit schools and/or host visits – would need to be paid if not on release.’*

**Lead-up activity required – getting students Work Placement ready**

*‘Many of our students on placement seem unaware of the options. Come out and visit us, talk and gain a deeper understanding of our trade – not just get rid of them for a week.’*

The most important issue referred to by these employers in discussions about the lead-up process is for teachers/schools to become much more interested in the placements and where they can lead the young person. Other advice included:

* school teachers need to be fully informed of pathways and possible next steps by the student;
* schools need to explain that trades are a real option, and not second best;
* explore how the trades make a contribution to community, as well as make money;
* use pre-vocational courses to give young people experience of tools, using their hands, relate work to school learning;

*‘Get the TAFE and school to organise a bus tour of various sites and they can have a chat with our guys, if they all have their White Card.’*

**On the employer’s role taking on an ‘at risk’ student**

* the complete package is needed – follow-up, then offer extra support and guidance. It doesn’t always work to do this on the job;

*‘I’ve had three or more in a row – and its hard work and draining.*

*We definitely need help and support – our blokes need training in dealing with these kids.*

*We need to be warned of their issues – violence, loss of self-esteem as well as capability.*

*Supervisor stress can be a cost, but many of my good younger blokes can relate better to the students.’*

One of the most important needs stressed by these employers was for resources to be available to ensure a broker organisation can follow-up the student post-placement to help them to review progress and confirm what next needs to occur to build on the workplace experience. This has to be done by others:

*‘You just can’t get us off site to meetings in work time.’*

**5 Critical Success Factors**

* *Gradual building of trust* - MPA Skills believes that success (from their perspective) has been due to the gradual process of building trust (2006 – 2013) with the three partnering schools; schools who have a cohort of students that do aspire to become a licensed tradesperson, have family support, and possess the basic work readiness to earn and learn.
* *A clear decision making structure* - School principals and the CEO of MPA Skills have shared the vision and a management committee enables the school VET Coordinators and the MPA Skills Education managers to meet regularly and together, design programs, agree timelines, solve problems and innovate. A broader consultative group keeps the partners abreast of change and new challenges.
* *A five year agreement* - The partnering schools strongly confirm the value of such clear decision making procedures that are guided by a five year agreement signed by all partners. However what they feel that really makes this work, is the professional respect that the key operatives have for each other. They consult, problem solve together and collaborate on future directions – such as the new employability foundation, that will become the key strategy for the future of the partnership program.
* *Clarity over expectations and confidence in delivery -* An effective business relationship has been the foundation stone for effective partnering, as it allows each partner to be not only clear about, but also be confident of their partners’ capacity to deliver their particular contributions to the partnership.
* *Setting expectations for the partners -* Now that trust has been built, it is possible for a particular partner to take the initiative and quickly gain the ideas and cooperation of the partners. The development of the employability skills unit is a case in point. So also is the set of expectations of each partner that is required to bring about learning by the young people. A set of expectations for MPA Skills and School staff, host employers and young people has been articulated and will be worked through with all partners. These set of expectations build upon the 2012 list of Apprentice Qualities and Apprentice Expectations which so impressed GTA judges of the 2012 GTA Partnership with Schools Award.

**14 Hospitality Group Training – WA**

*Hospitality Group Training (HGT), an industry based GTO/RTO, provides broad based information on its website for hospitality students but also works closely with a small number of targeted schools, mostly with Year 11-12 students and strongly targeted at School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs). It has a clear view that the need in Years 9-10 is for young people to start to sort through their choices so that when they take on VET courses in Years 11-12 they are clear about their motivation and clearly interested in the pathway chosen.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *collaborative arrangements are established based on trust, and involve consistent contact;*
* *employers having a prominent role, particularly to ensure students are making correct choices and with the GTO supporting employers to deliver higher quality placements;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable an emphasis on providing mentoring, following up on queries and providing specialist knowledge throughout work placement programs;*
* *learning is structured and relevant through contact with real work, developing teacher skills and understanding of VET and the need for assistance in contextualising language, literacy and numeracy to the workplace.;*
* *employer participation is publicly recognised.*

**1 The profile of HGT**

Hospitality Group Training (HGT) is the most experienced organisation in training apprentice chefs and hospitality trainees in Perth, Western Australia. HGT offers a wide range of services from apprentice and trainee recruitment to professional hospitality and tourism training. HGT provides nationally accredited on- and off-the-job training tailored for [apprentices](http://www.hgtwa.com.au/job-seeker/what-is-an-apprenticeship.aspx), trainees, [employers](http://www.hgtwa.com.au/employers/default.aspx) and staff at various hospitality establishments throughout Perth and regional areas of Western Australia.

**2 Work with schools**

From a broad perspective, HGT works closely with West Australian schools to provide students with free career guidance and information regarding the hospitality, food and tourism industries. Staff representing the GTO are also available to present career advice or cooking demonstrations at schools within the metropolitan area.

In addition to this, HGT can provide support and training options to school VET coordinators on traineeships, validation and other customised training requirements.

The organisation does, however, have a strong belief in the model that moves students on a single journey from work exposure to work experience, to formal training and then to full time work. This requires more intensive work.

*‘The key role of a GTO is to provide expertise in transitioning kids from school to work.’*

Forming 1:1 relationships with schools is the start. They begin with HGT deliberately targeting schools to work with and build the relationship. It is important that the school genuinely sees HGT as a resource with specific knowledge that is useful and important to schools. It also relies on the school seeing their benefit to the relationship. Respect for the knowledge and experience of both sides builds the trust that is crucial to the success of this relationship.

***Years 9-10***

Although HGT doesn’t see these year levels as the focus of their work, they are happily in this space because it links to Year 11-12 apprenticeships and traineeships. HGT believes there is a lot of knowledge about work that needs to be delivered to these students to enable them to make informed choices in their final school years. However, there does seem to be a gap in service delivery at this level so HGT has picked up the challenge in line with their core work of transitioning students and providing a bridge from school to industry.

In conjunction with various schools in the metropolitan area, HGT has developed several Vocational Education and Training programs which give school students the opportunity to investigate career options and develop industry-specific skills. All training is nationally accredited. The general idea of the program at Year 9 is to get some exposure, have some fun learning about the world of work and the options available. In the first half of Year 10 there is some generic work exposure then in the second half of that year there is some specific industry work experience.

HGT produces very popular Fact Sheets on topics such as writing cover letters; tips on appropriate behaviour in the workplace; interview tips; how to resign correctly. They also produce information packs for students and for schools on key information to maximise the chances of a successful work experience.

Driven by the philosophy of working together HGT does what it can do best i.e. provide information and support on successful transitioning of kids from school to work; the school, as the other key player in the relationship needs to drive the process with due regard for their important duty of care responsibility. In order for the school to make wise decisions for these students they need all the information and support that the HGT can provide them with.

It is preferred that students have had a prior Work Placement or part-time work experience in the hospitality industry prior to acceptance of an application for School Based Traineeships/Apprenticeships or a Full-time Apprenticeship. So, the Year 9-10 program focuses on work exposure to the hospitality environment and provides real world experiences and expectations. This experience:

* assists students to develop skills on the job;
* gives an opportunity for them to demonstrate their abilities to potential employers;
* assists students in obtaining references;
* provides an opportunity to meet and create new work contacts;
* allows students to take part in structured training in a workplace;
* provides students with an understanding of how a business works in practice;
* provides a great opportunity to learn how to work for different types of employers and with co-workers as part of a team;
* gives students the opportunity to learn about different jobs available in the hospitality industry.

***Years 11-12***

By Year 11 it is hoped that the work exposure in Years 9 and 10 will have helped to weed out those students who are not really interested in this pathway, who are underachieving for whatever reason.

*‘By Year 11 and 12 you are working with those students who are committed to the industry and for whom the hospitality industry is appropriate. Hopefully this will mean less attrition in the Certificate II and III training.’*

HGT offers nationally recognised Certificates II and III in Hospitality. Certificate III is approved on a case by case basis. Both include on- and off-the-job training, support and mentoring from HGT Industry Consultants and workplace visits by a qualified trainer.

Students can start working towards a Certificate III in Commercial Cookery whilst still at school and fast track their cooking career. This School Based Apprenticeship program includes a combination of days at school, at a TAFE College and getting hands-on industry experience with a host employer.

HGT believes that parent/guardian involvement is critical to the success of the SBAT and invites parents to be on board from the beginning.

*‘In some ways HGT becomes a ‘surrogate’ parent who will step in if the students isn’t paid, if there is trouble in the work place etc.’*

HGT organises for one week off for ‘schoolies’ as experience has taught them the students will take the week off anyway. Where previously they may not have returned to their workplace they now know that leave is approved and they have a job on their return.

***Areas for improvement***

HGT identified a number of issues associated with implementation which need to be addressed to make the current placement experience of students more meaningful:

* teacher PD for VET Coordinators is a big gap. Practitioners need more skills to understand the VET landscape;
* school knowledge around the possibilities for implementing VET in Schools is very low. For example, flexibility around release can be an issue. GTOs are able to network with key policy makers to get policies changed, e.g. allowing weekend Work Placement was ‘championed’ by GTOs in the hospitality industry;
* Work Placement must be contextualised to the specific SBAT. It must not be seen as free labour. The employer needs to see the apprentice/trainee as a potential employee and be committed to their training.
* employers want students who have literacy and numeracy skills contextualised to their particular industry. This is too big an ask for schools as they are dealing with students who are involved (or will be involved) with a range of industries. Some generic contextualisation is probably the best you can hope for by school e.g. reading skills associated with WHS/OHS, Safety Materials Sheets etc. However, additional assistance may be available to be drawn upon given the ‘pool’ of work currently underway in Industry Skills councils to integrate language, literacy and numeracy within Training Package qualifications.

**3 Examples of implementation in schools**

***Recent policy decisions impacting on implementation***

In Western Australia there have been a few key policy decisions impacting on VET in Schools. These include:

* the increase in the mandatory school attendance age to 17. This has increased the pool of potential VET students as these were the students that may have left school early to get a job or other training;
* the increased responsibility on schools in the Duty of Care arena – schools are extremely mindful of their responsibility and the impact of this is to make them less flexible in some instances, e.g. all work placement occurs on the one day so that the school can easily track the movement of all VET students;
* the decision that by 2016 in order to graduate from school and achieve a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE), every student must have either an ATAR of 55 or above or a Certificate II or higher. This means that schools must be set up to provide vocational qualifications. The challenge is to ensure the qualifications that students enrol in are relevant to their future pathways and not just chosen to satisfy the above requirement. HGT referred to the dangers of schools having a default provision in this area by expanding provision of their Certificate II Business Studies, or similar, in order to comply.

Schools involved in the targeted school program with HGT have both had a long involvement with HGT. The school staff are clearly committed to meeting the needs to each student and support them in making appropriate choices for senior school study.

For example, at Belmont City College, students all do workplace learning in Year 11. Tertiary bound learners keep a log book and do one day release per week all year. These ATAR students do not do workplace learning in Year 12. The non-ATAR students do workplace learning as a subject in Years 11 and 12 which counts towards their Certificate ; but it doesn’t count towards an ATAR.

The VET in Schools timetable involves a 3 day week of school attendance and 2 days per week release for training and work placement. Schools either organise their own work placement or pay an external body (SEITA) to organise placement. The cost of securing external placements is $70 per student or $110 for a full service which includes organising the placement, induction day, record keeping and workplace visit. HGT does the training and placement for all Hospitality students in these and a range of other metropolitan schools.

The schools were clear about the crucial role of building trust in relationships with employer organisations such as HGT. The partnership works because both parties have strengths to bring to the relationship. HGT has industry credibility and is sensitive to the needs of school based students. If the GTO is also an RTO, as is the case with HGT, then this has big advantages. During the period of contact HGT, and other GTOs can play a filtering role in identifying which students are suited to and ready to progress to an apprenticeship. They are able to communicate this information to schools so that they can support the student to make good choices and hopefully improve retention in apprenticeships.

Both the schools were committed to breaking down the tertiary vs VET perception. They want their communities to review their attitudes to VET. To this end they mandate that all students, including tertiary bound students do Structured Workplace Learning in Year 11. There are clearly publicised VET medals and celebrations of VET success. They are committed to have every student either ‘workready’ or eligible for tertiary entry by the end of Year 12.

**4 Student perspectives**

*‘Without having work experience I didn't really know what to expect from working in a kitchen. You see the hyped up world of a working kitchen on TV, but for me it took working in the real world to find out what I liked. I quickly found out I liked the fast pace of the kitchen and working as part of a team. Without having the exposure of working in a kitchen, before I started my apprenticeship, I wouldn't have known what I was strong at or enjoyed.’* Chris (Year 11)

*‘Without work experience I am not sure how much I could have contributed to classroom discussion at TAFE or to understand what we were covering in class. I found work experience extremely helpful to have some understanding of how a business works in practice.’* Rebecca (Year 12)

*‘If I didn't have work experience I am not sure what I would have talked about in my interviews; you can only talk about your hopes and expectations for so long. The "Tell me about a time..." questions would have been hard to answer for me without work experience.’* Jacob (Year 12)

*‘My work experience was a great opportunity to learn how to work for different types of bosses and co-workers. I also had the opportunity to learn about different jobs available in the hospitality industry. It was a real eye opener. There is still a lot I have to learn and lots of opportunities to explore.’* Ryan (Year 11*)*

**5 Critical success factors**

The discussion about critical success factors underpinning HGTs success with schools focused on learning to date and the potential critical factors that need to be addressed. These included:

* the need to be industry driven.

*‘It needs committed students, not the leftovers.’*

* must view the Year 9-12 experience as one experience not two experiences, ie the year 9-10 experience and the year 11-12 experience.

*‘It’s like a train journey, some stay on the train while others need to get off the train for a while then get back on another train when they know what they want.’*

* there are enough placements available.

*‘Not enough has been ‘tapped’ yet – what’s needed is securing industry commitment but that will need resourcing.’*

* can only happen through a cooperative effort. In order to access good training resources schools need to partner with GTOs.

*‘We must join forces and then there will be the capacity to obtain good outcomes. Schools have the learners and have knowledge about learning, about timetabling, duty of care etc. GTOs have industry knowledge and credibility.’*

* the one thing that GTOs are well placed to do is to transition kids from school to work. This is our key strength and our key role.

*‘GTOs are in a position to play a mentoring role with students and to display constancy and visibility by visiting the school, following up on queries from any of the stakeholders and by providing specialist knowledge.’*

* showcase successes to schools and employers to celebrate VET and to strengthen the relationship between schools and industry, e.g. awards nights.
* involve GTOs in Years 9-10 in Work Exposure information sessions, career planning etc and then build on this GTO involvement in Years 11 and 12 so that there is a consistent industry presence.

**15 Group Training South West- WA**

*Group Training South West is a large regionally based GTO operating in the south west of Western Australia, providing a variety of programs and activities for school students undertaking VET in School programs, ASbAs and Aboriginal School based training. It has a Construction and Engineering Skills Centre and a strong reputation for delivering programs in the Automotive and Manufacturing industry areas.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *comprehensive information is provided, not only for students and employers but also for parents;*
* *decision making structures and processes are clear to all partners, with partnerships involving joint planning and a clear set of expectations and responsibilities;*
* *employers having a prominent role, with host employers ensuring students will be working in a safe workplace environment to undertake a Work Placement program;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable playing a key role, in conjunction with school staff, in the selection of students to gain entry to programs, principally through the screening, aptitude tests and application process designed to ensure those taking on a trade area are clear about their intentions*

**1 The profile of Group Training South West**

Group Training South West is one of the largest not-for-profit group training companies in the State. Their head office is in Bunbury and they operate regional offices in Busselton, Manjimup, Mandurah and Perth. Commencing in 1986 with just 12 apprentices in the Building and Construction sector, the company has grown to become the company of choice for many host employers and businesses within all sectors of industry and trades. The company has achieved significant growth over the past five years and now provides high quality employment for over 500 apprentices and trainees in the State. They are also the second largest employer of youth in the State, making a significant contribution to the local economy in the region.

Group Training South West is also a registered training organisation, starting in 1993, and now provides specialist nationally recognised training in Business, Retail, Automotive, Construction and Engineering. It is also the largest Australian Apprenticeship Centre in the Southern Region of WA.

**2 Work with schools**

***Years 9-10***

Group Training South West supports Work Exposure in Years 9-10 through a range of activities. Their ethos is very much around an informal commitment to the community and this is what drives any involvement in Work Exposure activity with these year levels. They see this as part of building relationships with schools and their current industry credibility and knowledge is greatly valued by schools. The organisation provides:

* Try a Trade activities (5 per year focusing on the Construction industry);
* career options workshops and presentations;
* delivers on-site information sessions;
* operates as a kind of ‘help desk’ providing quick answers and information around career options and apprenticeship and traineeship pathways;
* an annual road show where a key audience focus is parents of Years 9-10 students;
* delivers an Australian Indigenous School-based Traineeship program, where Indigenous young people are enroled in TAFE during Years 9-10 to undertake a Certificate 1 Leadership program, similar to the program delivered by SMYL in the metropolitan area.

Group Training South West is not a big supporter of the traditional work experience program, believing that students are too young for it to be of enough value.

***Years 11 and 12***

The focus on Year 11-12 is seen by Group Training South West as a key role for GTOs. Work at these year levels promotes the GTO and builds relationships with schools, employers and the community.

They offer White Card training funded through the Construction Training Fund. They visit schools marketing apprenticeships and conducting aptitude tests for the range of industry areas Group Training South West is involved in delivering for school students eg Automotive; Electrical; Mechanical Engineering; Business Studies. The conduct of aptitude tests is the direct result of finding many students making incorrect decisions about their career path in the trades. Field Officers conduct mock interviews, which although time consuming does allow the GTO to have a look at students who seem appropriate to a VET pathway. Typically, they might interview over 60 students over several weeks and as a result identify a dozen quality applicants for apprenticeship positions in the organisation.

In general, Group Training South West is not the organiser of Work Placements in the south west though they do assist with some and have had a key role with schools in finding placements as part of the School Apprenticeship Link (SAL) program. Under this program, applications take place in Year 10 ready to start in Year 11. There is a combined GTO and school effort in getting work placement organised. Group Training South West does the site security check, and organises the paperwork. SAL is now the school-based Pre-Apprenticeship in Schools program in Western Australia.

Group Training South West is strong in its support for School based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs) in Western Australia – this is a growing area of work for them. They point out though that this is a costly exercise as these students need close monitoring to achieve a valuable outcome for the student and the employer. Usually SBATs are initiated by the school. Every school in Bunbury has a Certificate II trainee in the school office placed by Group Training South West. In many cases these are people doing a gap year prior to starting university. So it means that the calibre of students doing a traineeship is good which helps to break down the stigma associated with following a VET pathway.

The RTO arm of Group Training South West auspices training for some VET in Schools sites. This builds relationships and may allow the GTO to impact on the training and assessment being offered by the school. Group Training South West will be the incumbent RTO in the some of the new Trade Training Centres in the area which further entrenches their close role with schools.

In addition to the widespread activity undertaken across schools Group Training South West sponsor VET awards each year in all schools in the region where the ‘best VET student’ in each school receives $100.

***Issues***

Discussions with Group Training South West indicate that whilst their work with schools has increased effective implementation is hampered by:

* the literacy and numeracy levels of many student. This is definitely more of a challenge. With the increase in school leaving age there are more students at school who tend to fall into the VET area rather than are bound for a traditional higher education pathway. These students often have significant literacy and numeracy gaps which make it difficult to complete the VET training for Certificate II or III;
* the 3:2 split in school timetabling, involving students spending three days at school then one day in the workplace and one at an RTO, may be administratively efficient from a school perspective but is not perfect. Schools are forced into being their own RTO because places are not available in existing RTOs (including TAFE) on the same day. There are also financial advantages to keeping the VET training within the school
* the VET coordinators in schools have huge pressure on them because there are so many kids in VET in Schools programs. This means that it is extremely hard for the VET coordinators to focus on quality issues , for example around work placement.

**3 Implementation in schools**

Interviews were held with staff from 3 of the key schools in the Bunbury area - Manea Senior Secondary College, Bunbury Catholic College and Bunbury Senior High School.

**Manea Senior Secondary College** is a Years 11 and 12 school only. About 53% of students are following a VET pathway. They face the normal challenges of visit, follow up which eats up the time so sometimes there isn’t enough attention to the quality side. Good kids get ‘snapped up’ for a Pre Apprenticeship program or are employed as an apprentice, usually in Year 12.

**Bunbury Catholic College** – Year 9 has a career exploration focus. In Year 10 ALL students do work experience. They have 1 period per week on preparation for their work experience, concentrating on communication skills and OHS/WHS. The students find their own work experience. About 10% of the Year 10 students do VET 1 day/week. These tend to be students with low level literacy and numeracy but who are capable of completing a Certificate II course. There is no leakage to apprenticeship at Year 10.

In Years 11 and 12 the school offers 11 Certificate courses in house and another 10 through external RTOs. All VET students undertake a career and enterprise course. School staff interview the students to judge their readiness for work and for specific industry areas. The school does work visits and has its own network of possible work placements. VET in Schools Certificate courses run over 2 years and the school backs the program, including financially.

**Bunbury SHS** has about 820 students and is the oldest school in the region. It draws students from a ‘good’ SES. About 50% of Year 11-12 students undertake a VET pathway or a VET/ATAR pathway. The school is an RTO for business, hospitality and visual arts with other courses outsourced to Group Training South West or a TAFE College.

Years 9 and 10 students undertake an introduction to careers with the emphasis in Year 10 on giving enough information to the students and parents so that they can make an informed decision about course selection for Years 11 and 12. The school offers an offsite facility for low level literacy and numeracy students to undertake the Certificates in General Education for Adults (CGEA). This enrolment accounts for about 15 students in a cohort of 400.

**4 Stakeholder perspectives**

Staff from the three schools interviewed were asked to comment on their experience and how this might be taken into account in the conceptual thinking and practical implementation of VETiS intitiatives. Views voiced included:

* *tensions between industry and school expectations* - there is a tension between industry’s expectation that VET students will get industry skills in specific industries and that the students will have a good attitude to work. The schools expectation is that the students will learn about the world of work and gain a general understanding about an industry area. It’s viewed by the school as a stepping stone only;
* *the ‘family of trades’ concept* - in thinking about the concept there were contrasting views. For students who have a definite idea about what they want to do, having to do work experience in other areas within the family of trades, even though they may be related, could be a turn off. Another view was that the family of trades lends itself well to an area like construction. It could work well to undertake experience in the general area in Year 11 and then to home in on a particular trade for Year 12.
* *Work Experience* - in relation to work experience one view was that, whilst popular, it eats up too many resources for too little reward at Year 10. Use the resources for Years 11-12 as the ‘resource bucket’ of places is finite;
* *Work Placement* is a human exercise (pastoral care, mentoring, follow up etc) as well as a logistical exercise (placing kids with appropriate employers). Currently schools can allocate about 1EFT per 100 students. Ideally the ratio would be 1:80 or 1: 60 for an outstanding job. It’s not the model that will make the difference; what will though is an increase in time allotted to allow for both the human and logistical sides of the equation to produce a quality result;
* Work Exposure and Work Placement experience allow students to learn about and try out different jobs. It’s fine to get attrition at this level, for students and parents to have a look before committing. Hopefully this will lead to more appropriate decisions about VET in Schools and SBATs and translate into higher retention in this more formal training;
* a centralised Work Placement model is not a good way to go according to one of the school staff interviewed. One critical thing that schools have is knowledge about their students so it is essential that schools are kept at the centre of a Work Placement model. On the other hand there was support from the school staff interviewed for a central register of safe work places, rather than have each school GTO or RTO doing safety checks. This often leads to doubling up of checks. Workplaces could be branded as ‘work experience safe’ and get a tax deduction for this. Also suggested was that businesses be given a tax deduction (not a payment) as an incentive to take on work placement students;
* *industry has raised its bar* - special needs students are extremely hard to place nowadays; supervision time costs money and safety is paramount;
* *kids are staying on at school longer* - a number of them have low literacy and numeracy levels. Previously some of these students would have left school at 15 or 16 and been in jobs but now they have to stay on at school until they are 17. These students are by and large steered into the VET pool, not the tertiary bound cohort;
* *Schools and Group Training South West* – school staff spoke of their good relationship with the GTO and said additionally, that whilst this relationship was excellent, having competition in training providers was also a good thing. All schools agreed that building the relationship with the GTO was essential albeit time consuming and this led to trust between the stakeholders. Group Training South West is recognised as having ‘gone the extra mile’ with schools, even putting particular courses on scope. In some cases they have an auspicing arrangement and this can strengthen training as the GTO can provide the school with specific industry knowledge and experience to inform the school’s training arm.

**5 Critical success factors**

* *Extensive and regular contact with employers* - Group Training South West staff undertake approximately 10,000 individual visits per year to employers given their role as a GTO, RTO and as an Apprenticeship Centre. They have a great depth of understanding of schools and industry;
* *Being clear about what can be achieved* - Group Training South West indicates that it can’t and won’t be able to place all students in jobs or workplaces of their choice;
* *Screening processes to ensure the recruitment of the right people* – information sessions and aptitude tests are used as a screening device to ensure that young people with a clear interest and aptitude for a trade is taken on;
* The breadth of roles within the organisation and the range of approaches and programs able to be provided for in Years 11-12’
* *Clear MOUs* – developed with schools and other partners eg TAFE Colleges, brokers;
* *Rewarding excellence* – the VET awards provided to every school not only promote the organisation but also give credence to VET as a valued pathway in the schools;
* *Strong partnerships* – grounded in the knowledge that Group Training South West has delivered for schools over a significant period of time exactly what industry needs.



**16 SMYL - WA**

*SMYL has a strong reputation for working in partnership with communities, business and Governments to increase the capacity and wellbeing of the whole community, and particularly to support the increased social and economic engagement of marginalised people. They have a strong focus on the community services sector, with ‘at risk’ and indigenous young people. In this role they play a key role in schools across the region. For example, secondary schools running vocational courses or wanting industry placements can use SMYLs group training services. SMYL Community College also delivers customised education and development to Year 10 to 12 students.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *employers having a prominent role, with the GTO playing a key role in identifying workplace experiences that have the potential to be mutually beneficial and rewarding for employers and students, including Indigenous students, students with a disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and students at risk of leaving school early;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable careful matching of students and workplaces, especially where the GTO is involved in assessing the cultural appropriateness of workplaces for Indigenous students, engaging the community in the program, and providing intensive support, where required;*
* *classroom work is aligned with the workplace, with programs implemented to expose students to the realities of the workplace in Year 10 and to prepare them well for skill based VET programs in Years 11-12.*

**1 The profile of SMYL**

South Metropolitan Youth Link (SMYL) is a large GTO and RTO established in 1983 from the Fremantle based Youth Centre Association supporting at risk young people in the area. SMYL Community Services is one of WA’s largest independent non-profit service providers and a leader in supporting people and communities to make positive changes for their future. SMYL has a strong community profile and industry network and keeps the needs of the young person central to decision making. SMYL has a key equity role in engaging with marginalised youth, including Indigenous youth. They are also engaged in training in Community Services.

The range of services provides has expanded, reflecting the changing community needs. In addition to the continued support for disadvantaged and marginalised people, SMYL has created Community Learning Centres, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal School-based Traineeships with Metro and Regional schools, provides services on community development and governance, is a partner with Aboriginal communities on driver training programs and opened its first specialist school in 2010. SMYL other ‘firsts’ include partnering with the Commonwealth Government on ‘New Work Opportunities’ and related programs; with the State Government on its ‘Landcare and Environment Action Program’ and ‘Fast Track’.

SMYL now offers services in many parts of Western Australia, including urban, regional and remote centres and communites.

**2 Work with schools**

SMYL takes an holistic approach to developing relationships with schools. They are clear about their focus on marginalised learners and run separate programs for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Years 10-12.

***Years 9-10***

For Indigenous learners in Year 10 SMYL runs Certificate I in Leadership with a community focus to engage parents and kids involved. They see parents/guardians involvement as critical to the success of working with these students. This program is for students identified as ‘at risk’ by the school. This work preparation course is provided annually to eligible Year 10 Indigenous students.

This qualification provides a good stepping stone for further studies, going into work and becoming actively involved in the community. It also provides students with employability skills which are applicable to a range of industries and career groups. It allows students to explore the processes of understanding themselves, fitting into a team, recognising the various roles individuals can undertake within the community, as well as assisting students to build networks and confidence in their own capacity to achieve meaningful outcomes.

The Certificate I Leadership is comprised of the following units:

* Explore fundamentals of leadership;
* Develop self awareness;
* Participate effectively in a team;
* Explore citizenship;
* Develop problem solving skills;
* Apply basic communication skills;
* Apply an enterprising approach in a team project;
* Follow workplace safety procedures;
* Operate a personal computer;
* Plan skills development;
* Health and wellbeing.

A major component of the Leadership Course is active participation in a team or community based enterprise project. Students are required to work in a team to undertake a practical project which benefits not only the team and the community, but also contributes to their own skill development and achievement.

***Years 11 and 12***

Once students have completed a Certificate I program, preferably, there are pathways into specific industry related Certificate II courses. In recent years SMYL has had an annual request from schools to arrange for the employment of 400 Certificate II School Based Trainees, which includes a high proportion of Indigenous students. Courses undertaken include Certificate II in Teacher Assistant, Engineering Electronics and Community Services. In most cases these courses are completed over Years 11 and 12.

SMYL prides itself on its role assisting young people move from school-based Certificate II training into further full time opportunities. In some instances students complete their VET in Schools Certificate II school program in Year 11 and are then ‘looking around’ for industry related Year 12 training. In some cases it has been possible to ‘pathway’ these learners into Certificate III apprenticeships in e.g. by referring them to specialist organisations such as Electrical Group Training. In the case of Indigenous learners there is quite a focus on supporting the learner through the transition process to further education, training or employment outcomes.

Throughout the process SMYL sees parent/guardian involvement as essential and although their level of involvement will vary, it is critical to get them engaged from the beginning.

***Some issues***

The following issues were raised by SMYL in relation to their current activity with schools:

* some schools that are not in a position to attain strong academic results, have marketed themselves as ‘VET’ schools. There is often some reluctance on the part of these schools to get kids involved in School Based Traineeships unless students will be able to complete the VET component and maintain the school record;
* Certificate II courses are quite demanding in the level of exposure learners need in order to understand different aspects of the particular industry. This relies on good employers who provide this range of experience for the learner. Unfortunately this cannot be guaranteed;
* whilst understanding the desire of employers to attract high achieving students it is recognised that there are a number of students who will not be able to satisfy the requirements of a Certificate II course. How will they be catered for? The system doesn’t seem to have much to offer them.

**3 Implementation in schools**

SMYL has been targeting schools to work with and now have long, well established relationships based on ‘delivering the goods’ and as a result, trust. Interviews were held with staff from two such schools to tease out the nature of their activity and the strength of the partnership arrangements.

***Melville Senior High School***

Staff interviewed at Melville indicated that the relationship with SMYL has enriched the VET program. There was a need to build up the teacher understanding of industry which SMYL has been able to do. Parents and students also now have a much better understanding of the VET area, as a result of the connection with SMYL.

**Year 10**

At Melville Senior High School all Indigenous students are encouraged to do the Certificate I in Leadership in Year 10. Work Placement at this level is structured and self-selected by the schools, with about 10% of students taking up this option. There is a lack of resourcing to do more at Year 10. To do a good quality job requires more resourcing than the school is able to provide. SMYL also provides some information on careers. Most of the interaction at this Year level is for the Indigenous Certificate I in Leadership.

**Year 11**

The VET pathway students in Year 11 attend school on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and do their Work Placement and training on Thursday and Friday. SMYL is responsible for the Work Placement component of School Based Trainees and acts as an advocate in other situations e.g. to change the RTO if the partnership is unsatisfactory. There is some flexibility to offer block release to industry.

The curriculum undertaken at school has a workplace element, includes preparation for work, employability skills, employer expectations, OHS/WHS and additionally, counts towards the students’ Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE).

There is a dedicated workplace teacher in the school and a dedicated area of the school for these students. The workplace teacher liaises closely with industry, including SMYL, to ensure the program works well from the school and industry point of view so that students can have a useful experience.

The workplace teacher visits workplaces, checks log books and checks competencies. There are 30 teachers in the school who have a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and deliver 19 different Certificate II courses.

Melville markets itself as an extremely strong VET school as well as catering for tertiary bound students, with about a 50/50 split at Year 11. Many ATAR learners also do Certificate II or III courses as part of their senior school Certificate. All students are exposed to Certificate courses and the benefits of VET are pushed by the whole school, including leadership from the Principal. The school has regular VET awards presented at assemblies and VET celebrations are featured in staff meetings so that there is constant and positive reinforcement about the value of VET in this school.

A key issue for the school is that VET in Schools is flooding the market and it is increasingly difficult to find employers. Currently for every 15 employers approached only 1 will accept a Work Placement student. The situation is difficult around Melville as there is only a small pool of opportunity for Work Placements.

***Rossmoyne Senior High School***

About five years ago the school community were leaders in promoting VET pathways and programs into what was previously a very academic school environment. Non-tertiary bound students needed more options. The school worked closely with SMYL to build up the VET side from small beginnings to a point now where VET is a strong component of the senior school offerings. Parents in the school community are engaged in this as it is seen as crucial to its success.

**Year 10**

Discussions with staff indicated the school was ‘not a fan’ of a compulsory work experience program. At Rossmoyne the focus in Year 10 is on understanding the world of work in order to build the knowledge on which to make good choices for Year 11 and 12.

**Year 11 and 12**

The school is very proud of its VET component and of its high success rate of VET students for their WACE.

School Based Traineeships are very popular at Rossmoyne for a number of reasons – the program has a name, there are forms to fill in, there is a legal contract, parents are involved from the beginning, payment received and time sheets to fill in. It is seen as legitimate by students and as a stepping stone into adult working life. The inclusion of a Group Training Organisation in SMYL also adds to this credibility.

It can be a good option for a student to do Certificate II in Year 11 and Year 12 when the learner can demonstrate some workplace skills and has a qualification to show which some employers like to see. Some schools want to keep the training in-house as they are concerned about their duty of care. In some cases students aren’t ready for the adult learning environment offered by RTOs and even transport can prove to be a challenge. It is important that students are well prepared and really want to undertake the training and work placement.

Rossmoyne believe the partnership with SMYL is working well. SMYL works very hard at the logistics, including sourcing good placements and completing all paperwork. The onus is on the school to choose appropriate students rather than feel the pressure to ‘let’s just place them’. SMYL also plays an advocacy role in recommending which students could bnefit from a School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship.

**4 Critical success factors**

* *getting students’ literacy and numeracy levels up to a standard* - SMYL believes that one thing that schools can do is encourage students’ literacy and numeracy levels up to a standard where they are able to cope with the requirements of Certificate II training courses. It can be very disappointing all round if a student is accepted for a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship but is unable to complete the training;
* *smoothing implementation arrangements* by:
  + minimising the lag time between signing up for a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship and commencing training;
  + using the same employer, if possible, for Certificate II so that competencies demonstrated across the training plan can be recognised;
* *getting all the stakeholders working together*. The whole process works best when you get the alignment of a school VET coordinator and committed school, Field Officers and training providers committed to offering a school-based model, community involvement (parents/guardians) and committed host employers. All stakeholders need to work together collaboratively in supporting the School Based Traineeship process;
* *filtering students* – SMYL, in partnership with then schools, identifies students who are eligible for appropriate for a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship. SMYL continues to work closely with all stakeholders to engage and re-engage eligible students within the program;
* *valuing VET* - schools need to be seen to value VET as well as tertiary bound students, e.g. celebrating successes, showcasing good performance and outcomes.

**17 RITE - Queensland**

*RITE operates in ‘bush’ settings and has a strong reputation in the cattle industry. Whilst the focus of its activity with schools has been on the delivery of School-based Traineeships and not Work Placements there are clear parallels which can be drawn between the processes in place under these arrangements and those which might be considered in VETiS initiatives delivered in remote areas of Australia.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *employers having a prominent role, but with the GTO supporting employers in their role;*
* *extensive employer networks, particularly learning from the processes which RITE has in place for students in:*
  + applying to enrol and the screening processes used to help select careers;
  + selection and matching with employers;
  + the induction programs implemented prior to beginning work on-the-job.

**1 The profile of RITE**

Rural Industry Training and Extension (RITE) Ltd has been operating for 25 years as a not-for-profit GTO and RTO in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia. RITE offers Certificate I in Agrifood Operations, Business, Construction and Certificates II, III & IV in Agriculture. These qualifications are delivered via full-time and school based traineeships, skill sets and commercial courses. Each year RITE completes approximately 120 trainees, all of which require a host employer throughout their traineeship.

**2 Work with schools**

RITE has been working with schools for approximately 15 years. Its initial entry into schools begins following invitations to provide talks about the Agriculture industry and careers in that industry in general, often at careers events. In these instances, RITE’s interactions with schools depend on the task required and might include staff from the Marketing, Recruitment or Field Service areas.

Intensive work with schools begins when these talks result in groups of students expressing interest in work as a trainee and then where this progresses to students taking on a School-based Traineeship with RITE. RITE has built close relationships with the schools these students attend, particularly in the region close to Charters Towers.

RITE has a long history in this area and has been offering School-based Traineeships for school students since 1998. It is currently working with approximately 100 school students across Years 9-12.

Students from Years 9 – 12 can apply to complete a School-based traineeship in either a Certificate II or III in Agriculture. These traineeships are seen to assist students in developing life skills, which in turn improve their employability in the future. It also gives them the chance to work on a property and gain knowledge from many of RITE’s experienced trainers.

RITE believes in the importance of encouraging students to stay in school, while giving them the opportunity to learn hand-on skills. In doing so, they see it as necessary to build good relationships with the parents of students.

**3 The school program in detail**

The application, selection process and implementation arrangements instituted by RITE for this School-based Traineeship program may be just as applicable for the Work Placement element of VETiS initiatives in ‘the bush’.

Students are required to complete an expression of interest form and submit to RITE. This is passed through to the recruitment officer who contacts the applicant and organises a telephone/face-to-face/skype interview and uses selection criteria to determine whether the applicant is successful or not. Once successful RITE, the student, parents and school work together to find a suitable host employer and once one is found sign up is organised.

Students are signed up by either the Recruitment Officer via skype/telephone/face-to-face or a Field Service Officer in the area. During sign up it is explained to the student how their training will take place, where it will occur and their obligations and rights.

After sign up the student is designated a Field Service Officer who will maintain contact throughout the traineeship. This occurs either by telephone, email or face-to-face contact. A Trainee Employment Report is completed at each training block and property visit to determine the well-being of the student.

The program usually operates for 12 – 24 months. Students are required to complete 50 days of paid employment on a Host Employer property and attend formal training at a RITE Host Venue for 4 days once a term, for those undertaking a Certificate II, or 7 days twice a year for those undertaking a Certificate III.

As most host employer properties are a substantial distance from the trainee, most employment is completed through the school holidays.

**4 Supporting employers in the bush**

Again, there are lessons to be learnt from the support provided to employers by RITE under their School-based Traineeship program which are just as applicable for assisting employers involved in work placement. Given the location of Host Employers in ‘the bush’ it is critical that their skills as a mentor are well developed as they are well-placed to teach the trainee many valuable skills relevant to the industry.

RITE conducts a Host Employer induction before trainees commence work on the property. The employer receives a list of all competencies that will be trained throughout the course. Upon sign-up of the trainee a Training Plan is discussed and all competencies that are relevant are chosen at this point.

**5 Critical Success Factors**

* the selection process in a bush setting;
* the support provided to train employers;
* *a taste of many industries* -the program gives students a taste of many different industries while completing one Certificate. Throughout the program students gain skills that will help gain future employment/apprenticeships in boiler making, mechanics, diesel fitting, mining etc.

*‘There are so many units that allow the trainees to have the opportunity to try and to gain a variety of skills that then assist them with their career*

*There is no one industry where this program takes you; many students have gone on to complete apprenticeships in other fields.’*

* the program is delivered as 80% practical and 20% theory, with the theory being provided during the training blocks. These periods of intensive work and training seem to be a huge factor in success.
* meeting the needs of employers - Over time the industry has indicated that certain skills were no longer required for the average station hand. This has led to the program becoming more diverse in its offerings.

**18 Australian Industry Group (AiG) – Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia**

*The Australian Industry Group (AiG) is a major national industry organisation based on the manufacturing sector. As a national organization the AiG works in a range of ways with schools across Australia. This case study focuses on the activities of the training arm of the organisation, AiG Training Services (AiGTS), across three States. The Sydney and Melbourne offices do not generally have a direct relationship with schools - rather, they focus on assisting school students across many schools undertaking VET in Schools programs, or wanting to take a job in the manufacturing sector. Most of this activity involves Years 11-12 though career information with advice is also being made available to Year 9-10 students. The Adelaide office undertakes a similar broad role but, in contrast, has more direct relationships with a small number of schools in South Australia.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *comprehensive information is provided, targeted to large scale audiences about careers in the manufacturing industry;*
* *employers having a prominent role;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable careful matching of students and workplaces – with the experience of delivering School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships providing valuable lessons for work placement programs ie through the use of an* application to enrol, screening processes *to ensure students have ‘picked the right career’, the use of intensive induction programs and supporting employers in their role;*
* *employer participation is publicly recognised;*
* *continuous monitoring mechanisms are in place, in relation to monitoring student learning and the achievement of competencies and in fine-tuning and adjusting programs.*

**1 The profile of AiG**

The Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) is a peak industry association in Australia which, along with its affiliates, represents the interests of more than 60,000 businesses in an expanding range of sectors including: manufacturing; engineering; construction; automotive; food; transport; information technology; telecommunications; call centres; labour hire; printing; defence; mining equipment and supplies; airlines; and other industries. The businesses represented employ more than 1 million people.

Ai Group employs more than 700 apprentices and trainees through its training arm, [Australian Industry Group Training Services](http://www.aigts.com.au) (AiGTS). This training arm is supported by a network of offices both nationally (and internationally) from which training may be delivered and managed. This geographic spread provides the necessary infrastructure to effectively manage the delivery of Government funded training in metropolitan and regional Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia.

As a point of difference with many of its competitors, AiGTS has access to knowledge and resources from other divisions within the organisation, such as:

* Industrial and Employee Relations;
* Workplace Strategies;
* Trade and International;
* Environment, Energy and Safety;
* Public Affairs.

**2 Work with schools**

***Years 9-10***

From the Melbourne office, AiGTS involvement at Years 9-10 tends to be limited to Try-A-Trade activity, and local community career days. At times, talks are given to school students but usually at events attracting students from across schools rather than with an individual school. AiGTS also provides mock interviews with about 35 Year 10 students undertaking a VCE/VCAL Engineering program at a TAFE Institute.

The Sydney office referred to the fact that they have historically attended both Career Expos, which attract thousands of young people, and Career Market Days or Job Sign-Up events which are targeted more to students who have clearly indicated an interest and often made a choice about a career. In some cases at these latter events, parents have also been invited. Examples cited included careers markets at Nepean and in Bankstown.

Given the choice and the best use of resources there is a clear preference for the latter.

The Adelaide office does attend large scale Career Expos from time to time but also conducts classroom groups for those interested in mechanical engineering, electrical or metal fabrication careers. In terms of work experience AiG in Adelaide is not involved in the delivery of a placement program, though will talk to host employers about taking on students in some instances.

*‘The more we talk to students early in Year 10 about choices with a view to them working out what they want to do the more likely it will be that the VET course they pick will be more appropriate and their Work Placement successful.’*

***Years 11-12***

In addition to providing information and other activities which attract or service students as in Years 9-10 above, AiGTS is also directly involved with Year 11-12 school students in more intensive ways.

In the first instance, all AiGTS offices offer School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships in Engineering, Automotive and Business. In the main AiGTS works through its existing Host Companies to identify places for interested and work ready students and then with the school they are enrolled in.

The duration of most Australian School-based Apprenticeships organised through the AiG Group Training operation is approximately two years. School-based Apprentices are paid for the productive time spent in the workplace (normally 1 day a week) or outside normal school hours with flexibility to work during school holidays.

As part of their service to Host Employers, AiGTS provides comprehensive help in setting up and administering these School-based Apprenticeships with host employers. The nature of these activities could be readily applicable to providing quality Work Placement experiences, whilst acknowledging that the issue of resourcing is central to whether the same, or similar, processes can be put in place. These crucial processes involve:

* working closely with participating career advisers in preparing and selecting students for interviews with AiGTS;
* assisting workplaces to select a suitable secondary school student who has proven to the school and to AiGTS to be ‘work ready’ and committed to integrate an apprenticeship as part of their final program of school study;
* employing the student on behalf of the host employer’s workplace for the duration of the School-based Apprenticeship;
* providing OHS & Employment Conditions Induction Programs;
* administering WorkCover, pay, registrations/enrolments; and
* guaranteeing regular monitoring and mentoring visits.

As a prior step though, in identifying the key purpose for employing a School-based Apprentice, the GTO works with the host employer to assist them in their decision for their business in determining a need for a School-based Apprenticeship. Again, whilst recognizing there is not the same financial decision-making and long term commitment involved in a decision to take on a student under an extended Work Placement, there may be some parallels to ensure that the best results are achieved. To that end AiGTS poses the following questions to host employers:

* what section of your business will benefit from utilizing an additional staff member (school based apprenticeship) who will be trained by you on the job and by a local Training Provider (eg. TAFE)?
* do you know someone who may be suitable?
* what supervision and mentoring can you provide to the staff person (new apprentice)?
* what future prospects are there for the staff person (new apprentice) once a qualification has been obtained?

The monitoring arrangements include:

* monthly interaction with all stakeholders, including Australian Apprenticeship Centres, to ensure an accurate and timely enrolment process, review progress with status reports provided;
* ongoing management - tracking program development via trainers and feedback/satisfaction surveys; and
* co-presentation of completion certificates with host employers.

In addition to the focus in Years 11-12 on School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships the Melbourne office targets attention on VCAL and VCE VET students, usually through those enrolled in the Engineering streams at TAFE Institutes. This is generally viewed as intensive in terms of time but resulting in few positive outcomes in terms of flow on to employment. More positive outcomes have been experienced where AiG is involved with students undertaking VET in the VCE in the Engineering stream.

This group of students often has a clearer pathway into engineering mapped out. Where this happens AiG have a vested interest in assisting them to their goal by beginning a process of mentoring them and helping them plan and monitor their progress in this occupational area. The organisation also arranges for the following:

* bringing in current and past apprentices to talk to them about ‘the job’;
* showing DVDs which tell the stories of apprentices and trainees.

Then over the period of a year AiGTS will revisit a number of times to provide:

* life skills training;
* mock interviews;
* a tour of ‘dirty’ and ‘clean’ workshops.

The aim is to build a rapport with students with a view to them being able to take on an apprenticeship or traineeship.

The Sydney office undertakes similar activities but added in their analysis that:

* as an industry organisation there was a need to constantly monitor the supply side of the market – it is all very well to encourage more and more interest in the engineering area, for example, but there is an issue when demand cannot be met;
* there are difficulties at times in explaining the concept of apprenticeships to some communities eg to Arabic communities where people are aspirational but find the concept of an apprenticeship hard to understand;
* there are ‘best times’ for undertaking these activities. Career markets and engaging with school students should occur from March/April till September/October because the recruitment phase for those ‘with jobs’, usually takes place from November to March;
* GTO involvement in the provision of pre-apprenticeship training in New South Wales gives a strong reality check to training.

It’s ‘rolled gold’ when a kid who has done a pre-apprenticeship attends a session and asks questions – they are attuned and will have the capacity to shop around the companies at Sign-Up Days.

This suggests a more targeted approach in the future.

In addition to the targeted work with schools outlined below the Adelaide office works with a number of schools to supplement the engineering pathways program within the SACE. In some cases, AiG gets involved in seeking Work Placements, utilising the clients or hosts which AiG regularly works with. Following these placements AiG will often be requested to assist the employer in brokering a selection process or helping to ‘suss out a kid’ and their interest

**3 Stakeholder perspectives**

The AiG Adelaide office works with four secondary schools in a partnership mode. In order to seek a school view of the role of AiG and their work in the schools sector, an interview was held with staff from St Patrick’s Technical College in North Adelaide.

St Patrick’s College is a $15million purpose-built secondary school that combines a unique trade focused SACE with award winning trade and apprenticeship training for Year 11 and 12 students. The school specialises in developing individual programs for students who wish to complete their South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) in conjunction with an Australian School-based Apprenticeship. As the publicity about the College says:

*At St Patricks Technical College, trade training is not just part of what we* ***do - IT'S ALL THAT WE DO!***

St Patrick’s began operations in 2007 as the Australian Technical College (ATC) – Northern Adelaide, an initiative of the Australian Government in partnership with the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Northern Adelaide Industry Consortium. In July 2009, the College governance and ownership passed to the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools on behalf of the Archdiocese of Adelaide, and the College began a new journey as St Patrick’s Technical College within Catholic Education South Australia.

The teaching and learning programs at St Patrick’s have been developed specifically to support the trades, in which the College delivers pre-vocational training. Core subjects including Mathematics, English and Science are each taught in a context that makes them relevant to each specific trade/career pathway.

These programs have been developed with significant input from industry and with the assistance of Registered Training Organisations. AiG has worked closely with the College on this exercise.

St Patrick’s aims to create a real workplace experience for students.

*From the fully equipped commercial kitchen, specialist workshops and live building sites to the six weeks of structured work placements that form a key component of the teaching and learning programs, the College places a strong emphasis on the transition from school to work.*

The College embeds the subject of Workplace Practices across all courses, assisting students in developing interview skills, resume writing and goal setting. They can do this because a significant proportion of teaching staff hold trade qualifications and have extensive experience in industry.

St Patrick’s offers pathways in the following trade areas:

* Automotive (Light Vehicle);
* Automotive (Heavy Vehicle);
* Building & Construction;
* Electrotechnology;
* Food & Hospitality;
* Hair & Beauty;
* Metals & Engineering; and
* Plumbing.

The College’s Advanced Technology Unit also offers a trade and tertiary pathway in Applied Engineering, with an Electrotechnology specialisation and a Metals & Engineering specialisation.

St Patrick’s Technical College works in collaboration with an extensive network of industry associations, employers, training providers and group training organizations. About 8 GTOs work with St Patrick’s; AiG is amongst the largest three employers in 2013, arranging hosts for the employment of approximately 30 School-based Apprentices.

Due to the flexible approach the College takes to timetabling, St Patrick’s students can spend up to 34 weeks full-time during Year 12 engaged in paid employment and training with an employer, enabling them to complete the first year of an apprenticeship while completing the requirements of the SACE.

Whilst the College can’t guarantee a student an apprenticeship, two out of every three students who has attended St Patrick’s Technical College since 2007 has gained an apprenticeship during their enrolment.

At the commencement of the 2012 school year, St Patrick's Technical College catered for 350 enrolled student-apprentices; this had dropped to approximately 300 at the start of 2013 due to the downturn in the construction industry. Since starting in 2007, over 500 young people have taken on an apprenticeship, with these now working throughout industry in South Australia.

The College reports that early in the establishment phase of the ATC views were expressed to senior staff not to work with GTOs but this view was rejected by the College. Working together has resulted in significant achievements occurring not just for the College but also for the GTOs involved. Joint activity started with GTOs being included on the College Industry Advisory Group – the result has been:

* the large numbers enrolled and employed as School-based Apprentices;
* the input provided to the curriculum at the College; and
* advice on how to get the best from the combination of work-based training and off-the-job training arrangements in place for the School-based Apprenticeship.

The College reported that AiG staff and their Field Officers also come into the College on a regular basis to give talks on career opportunities and about aspects of apprenticeships.

*‘They are much better at that than us.’*

At the end of Year 11 AiG come in and give students aptitude tests and other tests as part of a screening process before people look for jobs or are offered jobs. Where there are gaps the College might assist to fill these. They are then interviewed and where appropriate, short listed for interview.

Finally, the College reported that all Year 11 and 12 students not in a contract of training as a School-Based Apprentice or Trainee undertake a six week Work Placement. In these instances, the onus is on the individual student to find the placement with the processes set in place by the College simulating what needs to be done as though the student were applying for a job and ensuring that a ‘live interview’ takes place to get the placement. AiG, and other GTO partners, have been critical in advising how this might occur.

**4 Critical success factors**

* *Effective management of the program* - is paramount to ensuring its success and achieving the outcomes desired. The requirement set out is for both the client and AiG to commit to regular support of the program and the participants and to work together to monitor progress, fine-tune and adjust the program as required to ensure the individual needs of the participants and the outcomes of the organisation are met.
* Developing a targeted approach to where to best place effort in the information provision exercise.
* Assisting employers with selection.

**19 Hospitality Training Network (HTN) - NSW**

*The Hospitality Training Network (HTN) operates mostly within the metropolitan area of Sydney and focuses mostly on Year 11-12 students and mostly associated with the delivery of School-based Apprenticeships. There are lessons in the implementation of their approach for the delivery of work placement programs. The organisation also undertakes a range of activities aimed at promoting and attracting young people to the Hospitality industry, but in this exercise is clear about the need for this to be a considered choice.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *comprehensive information is provided, particularly to employers, prior to agreement to participate;*
* *employers having a prominent role, with those involved demonstrating a record of commitment to the training of young people ‘on the job;*
* *extensive employer networks and in-depth, long term relationships which enable careful matching of students and workplaces but - particularly the role of industry in the selection of students to enter the program;*
* *employer participation is publicly recognised with HTN promoting employers and students showing a commitment to rigour and excellence on a regular basis through competitions, awards and scholarships.*

**1 The profile of HTN**

HTN, an industry based Group Training Organisation was the brain child of a group of people led by the then president of the Restaurant and Catering Association together, with representatives from a range of industry organisations (Restaurant and Catering NSW/ACT, Australian Hotels Association NSW, the Hotel, Motel and Accommodation Association, Clubs NSW and the Tourism, Hospitality and Catering Institute of Australia), TAFE NSW and the then NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC). The current board of Directors is still comprised of representatives from these industry bodies.

The organisation was first established in 1985 as the Hospitality Group Apprenticeship Scheme. In 2004, the branding and company image evolved to become HTN – Hospitality Employment Solutions, to reflect a diversification in services and greater commitment to the hospitality industry.

Some of the stated aims of the organisation, and future directions, include:

* to continually upgrade the image of cooking by extensively marketing it as a desirable profession and an art form;
* to continue in the development of a highly skilled nation by providing training/employment and business development assistance to both individuals and businesses;
* with the alarming shortage of apprentices and qualified cooks, our aim is to address this demand in concert with other stakeholders, to ensure that the hospitality industry does not continue to experience this shortage;
* to provide a complete quality assurance service to both prevent exploitation of Apprentices and Trainees and to ensure training is of the highest standard.

HTN now is the largest group employer of Apprentice Chefs and Hospitality Trainees in Australia with offices located in Sydney, Newcastle and Canberra, employing hundreds of Hospitality Apprentices and Trainees. The organisation has employed and supported in excess of 10,000 Hospitality Apprentices and Trainees since it began. Currently, there are approximately 450 apprentices in Hospitality and Retail Butchery (about 60 of the 450) employed with approximately 250 host employers within the HTN Network. These host employers operate in diverse establishments, ranging from clubs, hotels, motels, restaurants, caterers, hospitals, cafes and more.

**2 Work with schools**

HTN has been working with schools in a variety of ways for approximately 10 years, mostly focused on programs associated with promoting and supporting the hospitality industry in their work with Year 11-12 students; however, there is clearly a flow-on which impacts on Year 9-10 students.

**Years 9-12**

In getting the message out to school students about careers in the Hospitality industry the HTN schedule of Marketing and Promotion Activities indicates that HTN staff were involved in providing the following demonstrations, displays and talks, aimed at students at a variety of year levels:

* 13 Career Expos across New South Wales, the ACT and Victoria between May and September in 2012 (note that until 2013 HTN was operating as a GTO in Victoria);
* 2 Try-a-Trade activities in June and August;
* 2 talks to individual schools in July and August;
* a ‘roadshow’ in May in the Hunter Valley;
* an Apprenticeship Information Session in August in Western Sydney;
* a technology workshop in May; and
* a tour of a cruise ship in October, organised with SkillsOne.

Activities were targeted to particular time periods recognising that for school students there are critical times when course choices need to be made, with these hopefully being made on the basis of career choices. HTN research indicates that nearly 1 in 5 apprentices employed by HTN heard about HTN through their school teachers or through school activity.

At the same time however, HTN are conscious of the fact that the outcomes from these activities vary markedly and that many requests are ad hoc. The organisation is very conscious of the need for a strategic approach.

***Years 11-12***

In the first instance, HTN is involved as an employer providing School-based Apprenticeships in Certificate III in Commercial Cookery (Western). In addition to the normal benefits of being employed through a GTO eg where the GTO deals with pay, leave, superannuation, award/pay advice, and dealing with the paperwork associated with the Training Contract, there are other benefits for young people connected in through these programs, such as:

* vetting of the workplace prior to an arrangement being established, to make sure it is a suitable place for learning;
* induction training prior to placement;
* provision for rotation through a number of venues throughout an Apprenticeship to allow for the development of a broad range of skills as opposed to being trained in just one establishment;
* regular on-site support visits from an experienced Industry Advisor;
* a regular skills assessment to ensure that your training is on track;
* consultative career ‘pathing’.

Information and access to the best awards and competitions is an added bonus with these School-based Apprentices and Trainees being eligible to access:

* industry news and advice regarding industry competitions and events;
* the largest annual cooking competition series for Apprentices Chefs and Trainees and to scholarships for future chefs;
* premium positions in the most elite establishments.

In the commercial cookery sector of the hospitality industry two long standing, critical issues continue to impact in New South Wales. Firstly, the demand for the recruitment of apprentice chefs into the industry continues to outstrip supply – for HTN there is a pattern of demand averaging 100+ cooking apprenticeships listed all year round. Secondly, there is an issue with the retention of chefs who begin the qualification and complete it. Hospitality apprenticeships have one of the lowest levels of retention across all trades - there are numerous theories as to why this is the case with those commonly mentioned as poor recruitment, loss of interest/motivation, hours of work and impact on social life etc.

Given these factors, getting school students to enrol in a hospitality program for the right reasons and to stay in it are important drivers for the focus of work which HTN undertakes with schools.

HTN is involved with schools in a range of other ways in addition to having a strong presence in the School-based apprenticeship field. It is not a provider of work placements in a coordinated manner for Years 11-12 students in the hospitality industry:

We prefer to focus on our core business – apprentices and trainees and host employers – and we don’t want to add any additional demands on our hosts, who already provide lots of services and get involved in a number of other activities we run.

Notwithstanding this there some instances where assistance is provided with work placement. The organisation has also been involved in assisting some colleges with the development of their programs in Commercial Cookery for school students, providing a key advisory role eg at the Hills College and at Southern Cross Catholic Vocational College.

Rewarding skill acquisition, and particularly excellence, are two key themes. In the general apprenticeship market HTN organises the following for their employees:

* *The HTN Apprentice Chef Culinary Competition Series*. Thirteen regional heats took place across New South Wales in 2011 and attracted in excess of 300 apprentice and trainee chef competitors;
* a *Youth Skills Showcase* – an invitation only event showcasing the talent of HTN apprentice chefs and attended by 120 hand-selected industry leaders as well as the media. The purpose of the event is to increase the profile of commercial cookery apprenticeships as well as encourage industry to provide more opportunities for first year apprentices to get a ‘foot in the door’;
* the *HTN Peter Howard Culinary Scholarships* – two scholarships are provided annually with a $5,000 award which can include overseas travel and work experience coordinated by HTN;
* *HTN Master Classes* – with renowned chefs, conducted exclusively for HTN apprentices to inspire and educate, including on a cruise ship docked in Sydney Harbour.

To complement these activities for full-time apprentices there are competitions and scholarships for those involved in hospitality in schools, whether as part-time school based apprentices and trainees or through VET subjects undertaken at TAFE Institutes within the HSC. HTN works regularly with school students at TAFE in South West Sydney, the Hunter and parts of the Central Coast and on the Northern Beaches.

First of all, HTN organises Inter-School Culinary Challenges in conjunction with a number of the TAFE Institutes which deliver the training of school students undertaking hospitality. The Challenges provide the opportunity for high school students who are studying hospitality to demonstrate their skill and capability. For example, the South Western Sydney Institute of TAFE NSW held its inaugural cooking competition in June 2012. High schools in the area, offering Hospitality as a subject for Year 11-12, were invited to enter 1-2 students to represent them. Approximately 30 local students were involved.

Leading local chefs demonstrated a signature dish for competitors to reproduce in a given time-frame and judged according to technique, presentation and taste. The Challenges rely heavily on participating chefs who volunteer time and expertise and teachers who support students in the lead-up to the competition.

HTN believes:

*‘This event provides Hospitality students the opportunity to showcase their culinary talents as well as learn some tricks from a leading local chef. It is also the ideal platform for HTN to promote careers in cookery and to draw attention to the fact that we are continuously recruiting for over 100 vacancies that we have listed all year round for commercial cookery apprenticeships.’*

Secondly, HTN provides the Peter Howard Future Chefs Scholarship. This is a junior scholarship to the larger scholarship outlined above and is open to all Year 12 students throughout New South Wales and the ACT who are studying hospitality as part of their HSC – and more importantly, are able to demonstrate a solid interest in pursuing a career as a chef.

Amongst other information to be provided, HSC applicants need to outline in their portfolio:

* why they are attracted to the Hospitality industry;
* how the scholarship would benefit them; and
* how they would be a good ambassador for the industry and for HTN.

The scholarship is promoted to schools on career days, as well as relying on Hospitality teachers and Parents and citizens committees, to notify potential candidates.

HTN selects two HSC students with the award being travel and accommodation in conjunction with paid work experience with a leading industry partner for a week, at an international hotel or leading restaurant.

It is interesting to note that the research commissioned by HTN about the drivers resulting in their employment by HTN, and particularly the international potential offered to an apprentice chef through international scholarships, working opportunities and competitions following the completion of their qualification with HTN, indicates that this is a strong driver for younger people employed via HTN.

HTN believes that whilst they do a great deal of work promoting careers as a chef throughout high schools and trade schools, these programs could be complemented by the employment of a young, enthusiastic and charismatic chef who is a recent graduate of HTNs apprenticeship program to act as a Culinary Ambassador, speaking to school students about a career as a chef, conducting master classes for school students and helping teachers delivering hospitality as a VET subject in schools.

HTN also works with teacher groups, attending a number of professional development networks associated with the delivery of VET hospitality studies within the New South Wales and ACT HSC. For example, in March 2012 HTN staff attended four network meetings in the West and South West of Sydney as well as in the Hunter Valley.

**3 Stakeholder perspectives**

***Student perspectives***

HTN does not generally work directly with individual schools in an intensive manner, rather it works with school students who:

* are enrolled/employed as School-based Apprentices or Trainees;
* are enrolled in a TAFE Institute and undertaking a VET program there as part of their HSC; and
* attend activities in an ad hoc manner.

To gauge reactions to the activities delivered by HTN views from employers and students involved were sought.

The two student winners of the *HTN Peter Howard Future Chef Scholarship* had the opportunity of undertaking practical experience at the Campbelltown Catholic Club, associated with a Rydges Hotel. Comments from the two students winning this scholarship included:

*‘The prize provided us with the opportunity to see how a big club caters for huge numbers of people all wanting to eat at the same time. It also provided us with an understanding of how a big club operates in all that it does – we couldn’t believe how it all comes together;*

*We are very lucky to have won these scholarships and want to thank HTN for organizing this. When I first starting working with HTN I never realized that these scholarships happened, and I certainly would never have imagined it would be me who would be a winner;*

*The competition was challenging – it was hard – we all knew it would be because that’s the reputation HTN has. At the same time though, we were all in it together and learnt a lot about working under pressure;*

*The judges were very hard on us. But I know that they know what’s expected in the industry.’*

***An employer perspective***

In responding to the survey of employers an employer associated with HTN which employs over 100 employees indicated that it had been involved in working with schools for more than 4 years and had:

* visited schools to give a talk;
* been involved in Career Expos;
* provided visits to our workplace;
* mentored students in the workplace; and
* provided an Australian School-based Apprenticeship for school students.

This employer is motivated to be involved:

*‘in order to promote careers in our industry’*; and

*‘it is essential for experience to be real, not manufactured as at school.’*

**4 Critical success factors**

HTN is a significant player in the NSW hospitality employment and training arena. It has strong connections to the industry and could play a key role in the provision of Work Placements if resources were available. Critical factors in their success with the schools sector to date include:

* extremely strong connections to the industry and to their host employers;
* a commitment to rigour and excellence and to showcasing the industry through competitions, awards and scholarships;
* a considered and targeted approach to what they do with schools.

**20 Apprenticeships Group Australia (AGA) - Victoria**

*Apprenticeships Group Australia (AGA) has traditionally been a major provider of apprenticeships in Victoria in a number of traditional trades. Originally regionally based it is now a GTO with a wider reach. It is currently a GTO and an RTO and has previously been an AAC.*

*This Case Study highlights aspects of implementation associated with the following Principles:*

* *collaborative arrangements are established based on trust;*
* *decision making structures and processes are clear to all partners, including the capacity to develop a shared vision and approach and a clear set of expectations and responsibilities, underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding.;*
* *employers having a prominent role, particularly those who:*
  + *have a record of commitment to the training of young people on-the-job*
  + *can provide activities which enable the skills they have learnt off-the-job to be reinforced with practical experience on-the-job;*
* *extensive employer networks which enable the GTO to:*
  + *carefully match students and workplaces;*
  + *design and support induction activities;*
  + *monitor placements.*

**1 The profile of AGA**

AGA was one of the first group training organisations in Australia, starting as the Latrobe Valley Training Company in 1982. The organisation was originally created through a partnership of local industry leaders to encourage young people in the region to enter trade apprenticeships. Business grew rapidly in response to the need for apprentices, driven by the efforts of field staff who pro-actively engaged with local employers to understand their business needs. Within a few short years, the company had expanded to operate throughout the wider Gippsland region, renaming itself Gippsland Group Training Ltd (GGT).

In 1988, GGT sought accreditation to function as one of the first private Registered Training Organisations in the State, so that they could provide industry driven training to apprentices as part of their employment with the GTO. Since that time, their training capacity has grown to incorporate multiple trade and professional qualifications and a network of training facilities across Victoria.

In 1994, GGT opened its first training centre in Melbourne under the business name Apprenticeships Victoria (AV). As in Gippsland, the business expanded rapidly in response to increasing demand for young people in the automotive, engineering and building trades. From 1999 to 2012, both GGT and AV provided Australian Apprenticeships Centre services under contract to the Australian Government.

In 2008, the two business names (GGT and AV) united into a single identity, Apprenticeships Group Australia (AGA). Gippsland Group Training (or GGT) remains the parent organisation, although it now trades as Apprenticeships Group Australia in all regions.

Although the business has changed in response to new challenges and industry needs over the years, their guiding philosophies remain the same. AGA’s goal is still to help young people to build a career for themselves in trades, by working directly with industry under the support and guidance of AGA.

*‘While our past focus has been firmly on traditional trades, today AGA offers a wide range of training and employment solutions (including pre-vocational courses and traineeships) which can be tailored to many different industries or professions.*

*Today’s apprenticeship landscape is more complex than ever before, with a range of service providers and training options. AGA is committed to remaining ahead of the pack, and using its size and flexibility to offer services to apprentices, trainees and employers which are relevant, up-to-date and innovative.’*

As a not-for-profit organisation, AGA operates in 8 training centres located across Victoria – 5 in Gippsland and 3 in the metropolitan area in Bentleigh, Croydon and Deer Park. It employs an apprentice and trainee population of nearly 1000 each year and works with a dedicated network of hundreds of host employers across many industries. Approximately 700 students are enrolled in their RTO operations. It delivers apprenticeships and traineeships, as well as pre-vocational training in the following industry areas:

* Automotive (Light Vehicle and Vehicle Servicing);
* Carpentry;
* Electrical;
* Engineering (Fabrication trades);
* Plumbing; and
* Business Administration.

Over 90% of its group training employees are apprentices rather than trainees.

**2 Work with schools**

AGA has had a long history of working closely with TAFE Institutes and schools, particularly in partnership arrangements in the Gippsland region. It is a partner to every Trade Training Centre (TTC) in the Gippsland Region, has close relationships with the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) in Gippsland, and has had a key role as a partner in the development of a Gippsland Education Precinct in Churchill.

As well as assisting with employment and planning in the region, the direct work undertaken by AGA with school students involves the development and delivery of specifically designed:

* VET in Schools programs, with over 150 school students being trained by the AGA RTO arm;
* School Based Apprenticeships or Traineeships, mostly in Gippsland where there are approximately 40 School-based Apprentices; and
* Pre-vocational qualifications for students leaving school.

Activity has been focused on Years 11-12 rather than Years 9-10.

Given the traditional base of AGA in Gippsland, past school level activity has focused on that region. This is now beginning to change together with the changing locations in which the company operates in the metropolitan region in Melbourne. Central to AGA ‘new thinking’ about the relationship they have with schools includes:

* taking a more strategic and targeted approach to its work with schools with a ‘keen eye’ on the return on investment from working in the area;
* identifying the most productive ways to engage with schools, including with more Trade Training Centres;
* consideration as to how they might become involved in Years 9-10 over time;
* involvement in all the LLENs in the areas they are active in;
* getting better quality candidates into the trades via the programs offered in schools – and acknowledging that to do so will require ‘raising the bar’ on the expectations about VET in Schools programs in a manner which results in students not seeing this as an easy option in their VCE;
* a more structured approach to recruitment, aimed at securing higher levels of retention from a school program into an apprenticeship post-school – utilizing pre-apprenticeship programs, mock interviews, Try-a-Trade, higher quality VET in Schools and strong school-based apprenticeship programs as a feed into a full-time apprenticeship, ideally with the GTO of AGA.

**3 Implementation in schools**

AGA has worked with Warragul Regional College for many years, providing elements of their VET programs for school students, both in their role as a Group Training Organisation and as an RTO. Students enrolled in the VET course attend a Registered Training Organization (RTO) every Wednesday.

AGA is one of a number of RTOs providing programs for school students in particular industry areas – other RTOs include Central Gippsland TAFE, Community College Gippsland, as well as Warragul Regional College itself and Drouin secondary college. Some courses are held in Warragul, though others are provided at Drouin, Yallourn or Morwell.

AGA acts as the employer and RTO for many students at Warragul undertaking a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship in the traditional trades and as the RTO for many similar VET in Schools programs. Their record as an employer and being close to their host employers give AGA an edge in the market.

In line with the changing emphasis of the company, AGA recently announced the establishment of a new partnership with the Outer Northern Trade Training Centre (TTC), a consortium of 7 local secondary schools in the City of Whittlesea, and with lead school Peter Lalor Vocational College. This new facility was funded by the Australian Government and officially opened in March this year. It is subject to a formal agreement.

The Outer Northern TTC will provide training to around 130 local students in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, in trades such as Building, Automotive and Electrotechnology (Cabling). AGA has been engaged as the Registered Training Organisation to deliver the Certificate II in Building and Construction at the Outer Northern TTC, following a competitive tendering process. This Certificate II is a pre-apprenticeship qualification which can assist students in gaining a full time carpentry apprenticeship. AGA is hoping that some of the graduates at Outer Northern TTC will go on to apply for full time employment with AGA after they complete their secondary schooling.

**4 Critical success factors**

The following factors are viewed as the key factors in the success of AGA to date:

* *a significant base of experience in the traditional trades* - providing opportunities which lead to real, ongoing jobs, not just training courses;
* *being ahead of the game* – now taking a more strategic, targeted approach to working with schools based on gaining returns on their investment – not just being involved ‘as a good thing’ – it must be a ‘win-win’ situation for AGA, the student and any host employer; and
* *strong partnerships* - based on schools knowing that AGA is a big employer, has close connections with its host employers and a record of achievement in the traditional trades.