

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING****INQUIRY INTO COMBINING SCHOOL AND WORK:  
SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL YOUTH TRANSITIONS***Chair: Ms Sharon Bird MP  
Deputy Chair: Dr Dennis Jensen MP*

## Over 1,000 students have their say on balancing school with part-time work

Part-time jobs offer invaluable work experience for secondary school students and those students who do participate in part-time or casual work believe it will greatly enhance their post-school job prospects. However, attempting to balance part-time work and study can be a significant struggle for some students, who are also striving to maintain an active social life and participate in sporting and recreational activities.

These are some of the key messages being conveyed to the House of Representatives Education Committee via a survey targeting Years 10-12 students. The committee is using the survey to collect evidence for its inquiry into 'combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions'. The survey is available online at [www.aph.gov.au/studentsurvey](http://www.aph.gov.au/studentsurvey) and will be open until at least the end of May.

Committee Chair Sharon Bird MP (Member for Cunningham, NSW) said today that the committee is delighted by the number of students submitting responses to its student survey, which has now surpassed 1,000.

"The committee is very grateful to the principals and teachers of those secondary schools who have encouraged students to participate in the committee's survey and in particular, the committee would like to thank all of those students who have taken the time to provide feedback to the committee," Ms Bird said.

"It has been comforting to note that for the vast majority of students, they believe that their employers understand the needs of students and provide flexibility to help them balance schooling commitments. Nonetheless the committee has received feedback from students—particularly those employed by smaller businesses—where their employer is unable to offer the same degree of flexibility," she said.

"Students working longer hours during the school week are finding that they are too tired and unmotivated to study."

The committee will begin conducting a series of interstate hearings within secondary schools during April. The committee will be travelling to Adelaide, Perth, Burnie, Melbourne, Brisbane and Port Kembla. Ms Bird said that the committee recognises the importance of engaging students in consultation and decision making processes and looks forward to teasing out some of the issues raised in responses to the committee's survey.

The following comments extracted from responses to the survey are typical of those students who are finding combining school and work a challenge:

*"If I don't have a lot of time to do my homework after work then that's my weekends gone... which means 'no life'!!"*

*"Teachers believe year 12 students should not work whilst doing their HSC and try and discourage their students from it. I think this is hard as I personally need to work during this time."*

*"There is no time left to study... After work (9-5 on Saturday and Sundays, and 4 hours on Thursdays) I'm too tired and unmotivated to do much study."*

*"...as teenagers we need to learn the values of earning money and if we keep needing to take time off from work, our employers will eventually fire us because we would be unreliable."*

*"I may only work one or two (lengthy) shifts in a week, but the school offers no assistance with maintaining the work load. They do not encourage applying for or maintaining jobs until completion of year 12 has been achieved... I think both school and work need to take into account that I do have a job/school work and be more flexible."*

*"My job is very flexible, but I know of others who have set shift time slots who feel the stress of a job rather overwhelming, especially when parental pressure is a contributing opinion when maintaining a job."*

The majority of responses from students, however, had more positive things to say about their experiences in combining school and work:

*"My work is very important to me as it supplies me with my own money and lets me gain skills for later in life. It does not interfere with my school study much and is a positive impact upon my life."*

*"(My employers) want me to do well at school and get the grades I need... They are very kind to me and don't make me work set hours. Some weeks when I have a lot of exams I don't have to work as they let me study."*

*"My employer tries not to roster me on during weeknights only when absolutely necessary to give me adequate time to complete my school studies."*

Individuals and organisations interested in making a written submission to the inquiry should contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4573.

**For media comment:** please contact the Committee Chair, Ms Sharon Bird on (02) 4228 5899 (Electorate Office)

**Further information:** contact the Inquiry Secretary on (02) 6277 4578, email [edt.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:edt.reps@aph.gov.au) or visit the Committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/edt/>