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20 January 2009

Ms S Bird MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Education and Training  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Bird

Please find enclosed the Tasmanian Government's submission to the inquiry into Combining School and Work: Supporting Successful Youth Transitions.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this issue of national significance. I look forward to learning the outcomes of the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Rhys Edwards  
Secretary

## **INQUIRY INTO COMBINING SCHOOL AND WORK: SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL YOUTH TRANSITIONS**

### ***Response to the Terms of Reference***

Successful youth transition from school to work requires an appreciation of the underpinning skills, qualities and dispositions an employer expects of a young person entering a workplace.

The Tasmanian Government's Tasmania *Tomorrow* reforms establishes three new education and training institutions: the Tasmanian Academy, the Tasmanian Skills Institute and the Tasmanian Polytechnic, providing young people with more options to manage their pathways to a career. The Tasmanian Academy will focus on academic learning with pathways to University. The Tasmanian Skills Institute will focus on skills development for employees in enterprises. The Tasmanian Polytechnic will provide students with vocational education and training pathways, in addition to Tasmanian Certificate of Education subjects, be more flexible and take an alternative approach for young people to attain a senior secondary certificate with a vocational focus.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 data on Australian young people 15-19 years enrolled in a full time course of study and at work, full time or part time provides a snap shot of the contribution by young people to Australia's labour force. The statistics indicate that greater than 360,000 students are also engaged in work in some capacity. Unfortunately, the data does not analyse the effect this has on school completion or whether the work itself contributes to a vocational qualification.

Recognition and accreditation of the employability skills a student will gain through part time or casual work is essential. Some Tasmanian schools have adopted a "skills passport" or a "work placement diary" that allows a student and employer to communicate to the school skills gained in the work place. This is not consistent and not recognised state wide, however.

Through the Tasmanian Government's *Guaranteeing Futures* initiative, schools are encouraged to recognise employability skills, record and document these in a student's pathway plan. The process of Pathway Planning continues for Tasmanian Government school students from Year 8 to 10.

Tasmania Police in cooperation with *Guaranteeing Futures* established a Junior Constable Police College Program. This program combined full time College studies with part time employment as a Junior Constable in Tasmania Police and recognised that a full time student in Year 11 or 12 had the maximum capacity to work 8 hours of paid employment in order to maintain a healthy school/work balance.

### 3.

Students meeting the demands of a full time course of study and the demands of employment either part time or casual may require additional assistance. Students undertaking both study and work may do so for financial reasons, for career development reasons or as a means of remaining engaged in school, while pursuing other interests. Assessing the beneficial or detrimental effects of part time/casual work on any student should take place at a school level. Ideally, students, their parent(s), the school and the employer will negotiate reasonable hours and commitments for a balanced school/work life. Students who undertake a combination of work and study for financial reasons may need to consider the impact on access to other supports such as the Centrelink Youth Allowance. School Based Trainees combining school and work may be disadvantaged under the current arrangements for the receipt of Youth Allowance.

School Based Traineeships offer young people in Years 10, 11 and 12 the opportunity to combine work and study in a formalised way. The negotiated arrangement between student, school, parent, registered training organisation and employer allows for supported employment and an understanding from the school of potential timetable impacts, vocational pathway and skills acquisition. Skills Tasmania, through the School Based Traineeship system, recognises that students engaged in a School Based Traineeship should not exceed 15 hours of paid work per week. There are currently 568 School Based Trainees, engaged in 66 different qualifications, in 69 Tasmanian schools.

School Based Traineeships may offer young people with the potential to disengage from education a practical application, making their schooling relevant. School Based Traineeships may on occasion engage young people, who may not ordinarily attend school, through formalising an arrangement with an employer and with an alternative educational provider (for example, Ed Zone, Start@TAFE, Student Works or Distance Education).

Part time or casual work while studying offers some students valuable opportunities to acquire skills and develop career prospects. Supporting and recognising the skills achieved by students in informal work arrangements is vitally important. Students completing Year 12 (or Certificate III or above qualification) is also vital for Australia's future workforce productivity.