



Tasmanian Building and
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Training Board

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File Ref: 3/21

Mr Richard Selth
Standing Committee on Education and Training
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Selth,

Re: Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools

We are pleased to enclose the Board's submission and an industry background report to the inquiry into VET in schools.

Existing programs in Tasmania for the building and construction industry are currently recognised as benchmarks of best practice nationally.

Genuine consultations and partnerships between industry, schools and training providers have been the building blocks of that achievement. For it to continue growing, the building and construction VET in schools programs will have to remain industry driven i.e. relevant locally.

Industry's capability to train students and subsequently employ them as apprentices rely on an improvement in construction activity levels and flexibility in the construction Training Packages to design and implement training that meets regional enterprise needs.

The Board would be interested in the outcome of as well as updates on the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

PETER J COAD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Encl.

internet: <http://www.tbcitb.com.au>

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Funding quality training
for the industry



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Vocational Education and Training in Schools Programs for the Building and Construction Industry in Tasmania

“Seventy five employers (22 percent of 346 respondents) planned to employ students placed with them, or have done so during the year, and 234 respondents (68 percent) would do so if they had an employment opportunity.”

“Ninety seven percent of students (out of 443 respondents) became involved to get some practical on the job training and experience.”

“The ‘worst’ things about VET in Schools relate to a lack of available placements...”

Hobart Education, Business and Training Partnership (April 2001)
VET in Schools Customer Feedback Research.

At present, **two VET in schools programs** exists for the building and construction industry in Tasmania:

1. Building and Construction VET in Schools Program

The program started in 1996 and continues to be highly successful in getting students into apprenticeships. It has recently placed its 100th student into an apprenticeship. The program also received an Excellence Award from the Australian National Training Authority.

2. Civil Construction VET in Schools Program

Modelled on the Building and Construction VET in Schools Program, the Civil Construction Program started with 20 students in February 2002. Being the first such program in Australia, it is being watched closely the industry locally in Tasmania and nationally.

Features contributing to the success of the programs include:

1. Management committee made up of highly committed stakeholders from industry and educational and training organisations.
2. Partnerships between senior secondary colleges (Claremont College, Elizabeth College, Launceston College, Rosny College, St Brendan-Shaw College) and registered training organisations (Infratrain, TAFE Tasmania)
3. Vocationally oriented education delivered by a college.
4. Specialised industry skills delivered by an RTO.
5. Each comprises a specific two-year program designed to produce job-ready graduates with sufficient exposure to several trades including bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating and plastering or the main civil construction occupations.
6. Vocational placements (six weeks) in the building and construction industry.
7. Training and certification is based on national standards (General and Civil Construction Training Packages).
8. Students are highly sought after because of their skills, attitude and productivity. They also tend to complete their apprenticeship earlier because of prior study.
9. Good communication on the ground between students, teachers, industry contractors, and other stakeholders.

Issues that could affect VET in schools programs are:

1. Construction activity levels

The long term decline in building and construction activity levels would mean work placements will pose a challenge. Better scheduling of capital works programs in support of the Tasmanian Government's Building and Construction Training Policy will assist the industry in that regard. However, Tasmania still needs a few substantial development projects to turn that decline around.

2. Articulation into the construction Training Packages

There have been suggestions from some industry organisations through Construction Training Australia that VET in schools programs be limited to modules in schools separate from the Training Packages. If that suggestion is followed, existing programs will lose substance and relevance and will leave graduates few meaningful skills to offer enterprises in the building and construction industry locally. Hence, apprenticeship opportunities will be lost.

3. Inflexibility of construction Training Packages

Training Packages govern the delivery and funding of apprenticeships in the building and construction industry. At present, construction Training Packages have become rigid and prescriptive allowing no room to design locally relevant training. The Board's experience e.g. asphalt paving, carpentry and joinery and roof plumbing clearly shows the need to give enterprises the flexibility to design relevant training. Enterprises would have a good knowledge of their own (and not necessarily of others') requirements. And because those requirements largely vary across Australia, Packages made up of mostly core units won't meet regional enterprise needs. Hence lost opportunities for apprenticeships continue to mount. To get the full benefit (relevant and sustainable apprenticeships) of VET in schools programs for the building and construction industry, a flexible structure with proportionally and substantially more elective than core units will have to underpin the Packages.

4. Funding and resources for VET in Schools Programs

Determination of priorities should be industry driven and based on independent industry advice. The Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Board is a tripartite body established under the Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Act 1990. The Board is the industry's collective, independent voice and principal adviser to relevant government ministers on training in the building and construction industry.

5. Career promotion

Tied to the above issues are raising the profile of and promoting a training culture within the industry. Although the value of training participated in by industry will be further experienced over the longer term, the Training Fund has contributed to the development a training culture locally and nationally. Since inception in 1990 to June 2001, the Board has funded 2,683 training courses for 25,718 participants. Those figures are significant given that the industry only employed some 10,400 people. That corresponds to 478,636 hours of training. Industry members have suggested that one of the major factors in the growing participation in training is the accessibility of assistance and services provided by the Board. That accessibility combined with a balanced representation of industry players on the Board provides the solid base upon which to expand the range and use of services available. The Board will continue to be involved in career promotion through such activities as Worldskills Competition and initiatives like the development of an online building and construction industry careers kit.