



## OFFICIAL MINISTERIAL OVERSEAS TRAVEL Outcomes Report

The provision of the information below is consistent with the *Guidelines for Official Ministerial Overseas Travel*. This report must be sent to the Premier within 40 working days of return, and published on the relevant department website within 60 working days of the Minister's return. The published version of the report does not need to include the 'next steps / follow up' section or the Premier's signature.

<b>Name of Department / Agency</b>	Department of Education and Training (DET)	
<b>Departmental / Agency Contact</b>	Simon Booth, A/Executive Director, Tertiary Education Policy and Strategy Division	
<b>Telephone Number</b>	03 9651 4412	
<b>TRAVEL DETAILS</b>		
<b>Minister's Name</b>	The Hon. Gayle Tierney, MP	
<b>Portfolio/s</b>	Training and Skills, Corrections	
<b>Did the Minister's spouse accompany the Minister in an official capacity?</b>	<b>YES</b> (official capacity) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> (private capacity) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>NO</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Accompanying Ministerial staff</b>	Ms Cathy Whelan, Chief of Staff, Minister for Training and Skills	
<b>Countries visited</b>	China (Hong Kong SAR), Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom (UK)	
<b>Date of travel</b>	26 January – 4 February 2018	
<b>Number of official travel days (include day of departure and day of return)</b>	10	
<b>Funding source (list Department/s or Agency)</b>	DET	

<b>EXPENSES</b> <i>Include combined expenses for Minister, accompanying staff and spouse (if accompanying in an official capacity)</i>	<b>\$52,880.54</b>
<b>Air fares (excluding taxes and fees)</b>	\$ 35,501.76
<b>Accommodation (including taxes and fees)</b>	\$ 11,486.95
<b>Other expenses (including travel fees, rail travel, travel allowances, cab charges, private cars, passport costs, meeting rooms)</b>	\$ 2,637.55
<b>Travel cost for Minister and ministerial staff (and spouse or de facto partner if applicable)</b>	\$ 3,254.28
<b>Are the above costs final and complete?</b>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Purpose of travel**

From 26 January—4 February 2018 I travelled to Hong Kong, Munich, Zurich and London in my capacity as the Minister for Training and Skills and Minister for Corrections. My engagements during the travel aligned closely with the *Skills First* policy, guiding reform in the Victorian training and TAFE system, and also contributed to the Victorian Government’s *China Strategy: Partnerships for Prosperity*.

For the European and UK leg of the trip, I travelled with a small, high level delegation of representatives from Victorian industry, unions, training providers and social partners interested in the future of apprenticeships and traineeships in Victoria.

The travel built on the review of the apprenticeship and traineeship system by the Victorian Skills Commissioner – ‘Rebalance and Relaunch’ – which was released by the Government in November 2017.

The purpose of my travel was to:

- identify best practice examples of apprenticeships and training in action in leading international jurisdictions to inform the development of reforms in the Victorian training and TAFE system, including those relating to apprenticeships and traineeships, industry engagement and funding models;
- develop relationships in China leading to enhanced engagement in line with the objectives of the Government’s *China Strategy*; and
- visit an overseas correctional centre to observe a functioning international correctional facility and discuss how training and education, specifically for enhancing rehabilitation and reducing recidivism is administered.

### **Benefits of travel to the State of Victoria**

Meetings and site visits with organisations in Hong Kong, Germany, Switzerland and the UK, provided valuable insights into international best practice in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and apprenticeship systems which have informed the development of reforms in the Victorian training and TAFE system.

Valuable relationships have been developed with key international networks as a result of the travel and my office and officials from my Department will maintain an ongoing dialogue and share experiences in the promotion of best practice in VET and apprenticeships.

Examples of my key engagements and related outcomes included:

- ***Hong Kong: Meetings and site visits with senior representatives from the Hong Kong Education Bureau, Vocational Training Council, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, MTR (transport) and the Hyatt Regency (tourism and hospitality).***

These meetings and site visits provided me with an insight into a high performing VET system in a contemporary Asian context, including the valuable perspectives of government, training providers and employers. Valuable relationships have been initiated with key counterparts engaged in VET in this dynamic regional jurisdiction.

The historical development of apprenticeships and VET in Victoria and Hong Kong has been informed by their shared heritage in the British system and, in my meetings with my Hong Kong hosts, we identified a range of common experiences and contemporary challenges for our respective systems. Raising the status of VET as an option for young people was identified as a shared challenge in several of my meetings and the need to demonstrate the positive outcomes of completing VET qualifications. To support more informed decision making by students, Hong Kong authorities are examining ways to improve careers education, broadened in concept to include 'life planning' education. The Hong Kong government has established a committee to undertake long term labour market planning and aligning training efforts to address forecast market needs.

Examples of collaboration between Hong Kong organisations and Victorian TAFEs were also noted during my visit. For example, the Vocational Training Council (VTC) has articulation arrangements in place with RMIT University, providing opportunities for VTC students to progress to an RMIT degree program.

A meeting with Professor Joseph JY Sung, Vice-Chancellor of Chinese University of Hong Kong, was a highlight of my visit as it provided an opportunity to acknowledge his recent appointment to the Council of the University of Melbourne and discuss Victorian higher education issues.

- **Germany:** Meetings with senior government officials from the **Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Science**, education providers (**Munich University of Applied Science and Staatlichen Berufsschule Bad Aibling**), employers (**Siemens AG, BMW Group**), industry associations (**Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Munich and Upper Bavaria**) and unions (**German Trade Union Confederation**).

I was joined in Germany by a delegation of representatives from Victorian industry, unions, training providers and social partners. The program concentrated on organisations based in Munich and these meetings and site visits provided me with an invaluable insight into Germany's world-leading training and apprenticeship system. The engagements that had been arranged with a diverse range of stakeholders in the local Bavarian training and apprenticeship system showcased the key drivers of success in the highly integrated German system in which local partners work together with a shared vision and a commitment to agreed economic and social outcomes.

Bavaria shares many similar characteristics with Victoria, including highly developed manufacturing and scientific capabilities, high levels of education among its population and significant economic integration within its region and globally. A number of shared challenges were identified including the promotion and management of community expectations regarding the value of VET pathways compared to higher education, ensuring responsiveness with rapidly changing labour markets and the nature of work, and high quality delivery.

A highlight of the Munich leg of the trip was the visit to Siemens AG, including a tour of its training facilities. The meeting was attended by the CEO of the Australian arm of this multinational company, Mr Jeff Connolly. We identified a range of issues and challenges of relevance to both Bavarian and Victorian businesses, including the critical importance of developing the skills of young people for future high-tech industries. Siemens will continue to play a leading role among companies in promoting apprenticeships that are geared to the future needs of the Victorian economy.

My visit to one of the leading public VET providers (*berufsschule*) in Munich was another highlight, demonstrating the highly integrated approach to the development of theoretical understanding and practical competence expected of German apprentices. My hosts noted that more than 60 per cent of post-secondary education in Germany occurs in the VET system (the *duales* system) with students concurrently employed in businesses providing complementary, quality-assured practical training in the workplace. While workplace-based training is integral to the German apprenticeship system, it was made clear in the presentations and during my tour of the school that the learning in the *berufsschule* consolidates and complements the skills gained in the workplace.

Through a number of my meetings, it was apparent that enrolment in university courses (*fachschule*) is certainly considered a prestigious pathway, however, gaining employment and undertaking training through apprenticeships is also a common and well-regarded pathway for German school leavers and the system is strongly supported by business, government and social partners. These observations were confirmed through my meeting with Mr Bernd Sibling, the Bavarian State Secretary for Education and Science and Professor Karl Stoffel, a VET expert from the Munich University of Applied Science.

- **Switzerland:** Meetings with **Bildxzug Association**, an employer association responsible for group training in the Zug region south of Zurich, and **CSL Behring**, a biotechnology company and leader in the plasma protein therapeutics industry located in Bern, south-west of Zurich.

These meetings and site visits provided an opportunity to gain an in-depth and practical understanding of the Swiss employer-led model for apprenticeships and training, demonstrating a highly integrated partnership approach among local partners with a shared commitment to agreed economic and social outcomes. Similar to the German system, my meetings with Swiss organisations highlighted the pathways into apprenticeships and training for young people and the critical role of workplace-based training delivered by employers, with around two-thirds of students pursuing VET pathways after completion of compulsory schooling.

At Bildxzug, we examined the “networked apprenticeships” model through which apprentices receive professional support and guidance through their VET program and become familiar with a range of companies and company cultures during their apprenticeships. The Swiss model shares some similarities with the *Group Training Organisation* model in Australia and lessons from this model may be relevant for application in the Victorian context.

CSL is a major investment partner in Victoria and I was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit its headquarters in Bern and learn more about the company’s approach to apprenticeships and employee training. CSL offers apprenticeships across nine occupations including laboratory technician, IT technician and mechanical engineer. Graduates learn valuable, practical skills and are well remunerated, earning around 5,000 Euro per month upon graduation. This compares to around 6,000 Euro for university graduates. Staff turnover at CSL is low as employees’ career pathways are clear and supported by a strong technical training and professional development programs.

- **United Kingdom:** Meetings with senior government officials responsible for VET in the UK (**Education & Skills Funding Agency**), education providers (**Barking and Dagenham College**), employers (**Great Ormond Street Hospital**), research and employer organisations (**Gatsby Foundation, Institute for Apprenticeships**) and union (**Trades Union Congress**). I also visited **HMP and Youth Offender Institution Isis**, an institution for sentenced young adults who are aged 18-30.

These meetings and site visits provided an invaluable insight into the UK system for apprenticeships and training which shares many features and faces similar challenges to those in the Victorian system. In several of my engagements, the promotion and management of community expectations regarding the value of VET pathways compared to higher education was highlighted as a challenge shared between the UK and Victorian systems. Ensuring responsiveness in the system in the face of rapidly changing labour markets and the nature of work was also highlighted as a challenge shared with Victoria, as was a focus on ensuring high quality training delivery and assessment.

The overview of the UK system's approach to student assessment provided separately by the Institute of Apprenticeships, the Education Skills and Funding Agency and Barking and Dagenham College was of particular interest. We learned that assessment of individuals' skills and occupational competency is conducted independently of the training provider and in accordance with established standards designed by apprenticeships panels in consultation with industry. In reflecting on the current arrangements in the UK apprenticeships system, our hosts each highlighted the potentially important role to be played by employers of apprentices, but also noted the challenges of engaging employers and gaining their commitment to co-invest in the cost of training and assessment. In my meeting with the Institute of Apprenticeships, it was noted that the UK system is seeking to move to an employer driven system, but still demonstrates features of a supply-driven system. Strategies for improving the engagement of employers and industry in the apprenticeship and training system were explored during many of my meetings in London.

My visit to *HMP and Youth Offender Institution Isis*, provided a unique opportunity to gain an insight into the UK Government's approach to managing youth offenders in custodial settings and particularly focussed on training programs for enhancing rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. This visit highlighted the prison's programmatic focus on reducing offending and demonstrated the effective link between HM Prison Service and training and education providers. I was especially interested to observe the role played by an external provider contracted to deliver training in Isis and its emphasis on supporting reintegration pathways for prisoners preparing to exit custodial settings.