**Vocational and Applied Learning Pathways Review**

Victorian Government response – November 2020

The Victorian Government welcomes the final report of the review into vocational and applied learning pathways for senior secondary students, led by former Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Chief Executive Officer, John Firth.

The major review was commissioned by the Victorian Government in November 2019 to make recommendations for reform with two key aims:

1. to ensure all Victorian secondary school students have access to high-quality vocational and applied learning options
2. to look for ways to improve transitions for students between school, post-secondary education and work.

The Victorian Government accepts in principle all of the review’s recommendations. They provide a set of transformative reforms that will improve the skills and work readiness of young people by:

* lifting the quality and perception of vocational education
* helping more students access high-quality programs, and
* providing students with a vocational pathway that gives them the skills they need to move successfully into further training and jobs.

These reforms will build on the Education State agenda and significant investments already made to reforming vocational and applied learning through initiatives such as Head Start Apprenticeships and Traineeships, transforming careers education, and more Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) teachers and VET trainers in secondary schools.

This reform agenda will also support Victoria’s recovery from the economic impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. At any time, the senior years of school are a critical period in a student’s life. And they are especially critical now to be sure young people can get on to a good pathway – one that gives them the skills they need, and that leads them into further training, education and, ultimately, a great job.

Key to the success in implementing this reform agenda, particularly in light of the significant disruption caused by COVID-19, will be engaging with stakeholders, including students and families, schools, TAFEs, universities and other service providers, peak bodies, industry and employers.

# Key review recommendations

1. Lift the quality and consistency of vocational and applied learning for Victoria’s students

* Create a new specialist vocational pathway in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and transition over time to an integrated senior secondary certificate. This will create a high-quality, engaging offering that will see more young people stay in education, and provide highly visible and appropriate recognition of the value of vocational and applied learning, as well as helping to address the current negative perceptions of the VCAL.
* Create a new Foundation Pathways Certificate to provide a structured and recognised certificate to build the knowledge and skills of students who would benefit from specific support to prepare for the full senior secondary certificate.
* Ensure all students can access VET Delivered to Secondary Students (VDSS) courses that align with Victoria’s growth sectors and local industry, including an explicit role for TAFEs in supporting universal access.
* Introduce minimum workplace hours for school-based trainees and minimum requirements for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.
* Provide more work-related opportunities for students through Victorian Government employers and government projects.

1. More efficient delivery so all students can access vocational and applied learning

* Manage collaboration and networks between school and non-school providers, Registered Training Organisations, employers and TAFEs to deliver vocational and applied learning.
* Explore alternative delivery models, support access for students at isolated schools, better utilise existing infrastructure for vocational and applied learning, and share leading practice between schools.

1. Stronger support to schools, reinforced by stronger accountability for delivery

* Increase support for schools with administration, professional learning for teachers and school leaders, and up-to-date equipment.
* Reduce the complexity of existing funding arrangements and ensure funding considers the additional costs of VDSS delivery.
* Strengthen schools’ accountability for providing appropriate pathways for all students.

# Approach to implementation

The Victorian Government will take a staged approach to implementing the reforms set out in the review, with each stage informed by stakeholder engagement and budget considerations.

Initial priorities are:

1. Supporting schools to deliver improved vocational and applied learning pathways for students, by:

* funding Jobs, Skills and Pathways Coordinators in Victorian government secondary schools to provide practical support for planning and administration of vocational and applied learning pathways.
* creating Jobs, Skills and Pathways Managers in DET Areas to provide tailored support to government schools in the delivery of vocational and applied learning pathways.
* improving the collection and reporting of data about post-school outcomes so we can better assess how well we are supporting students.

1. Commencing the development of a new vocational and applied pathway within the VCE, with the first students starting the new certificate in 2023.

* Work will commence in 2021 to redesign the current certificate to introduce elements such as sequential curriculum, graded assessment for higher level units and new subjects in areas of industry demand.

Further work is now being undertaken to plan for implementation of later stages of the reforms.