

Recipient Details

Name of organisation or individual: [O] TAFE Directors Australia

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Responses

Curriculum and assessment

Since poorer outcomes in accessing tertiary education are often seen in regional, rural and remote youth, it is imperative that they be given every opportunity to succeed. A recently released report has identified the future trends in work for young people. The report *The New Smarts – Thriving in the New Work Order* The Foundation for Young Australians 2017 has identified the need for all young people to be ready for the 'non-routine' industries and jobs which require innovation, creativity, problem solving, relationship building and responsiveness to change. Other researchers back this up (Torii and O'Connell 2017). Even at entry-level roles, employers are demanding and paying a premium for transferrable enterprise skills.

'Demand for digital skills went up 212 per cent over three years, while critical thinking increased 158 per cent, creativity increased by 65 per cent and presentation skills by 25 per cent.' (*The New Work Smarts – Thriving in the New Work Order 2017*)

Greater focus should be spent on developing and assessing these skills in young secondary students as well as at tertiary level to better prepare them for the work of the future. Furthermore the skills required in the future in most industries are very different from those being taught in the current curriculum. Work by the Foundation for Young Australians shows that "the demand for enterprise skills is on the rise, with presentation skills, creativity, critical thinking and digital linking rising sharply".

Rating: 5

Teachers and teaching

Teacher education focussed around the process of successful innovation is imperative. Innovation is a process which requires new ways of thinking and teaching and will involve the concepts of systems thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, working in partnerships and teams and will ensure that the teacher becomes the facilitator rather than the expert. This is the recommendation from the work undertaken by *The New Work Smarts – Thriving in the New Work Order* report, 2017. The school will also need to be linked through effective partnerships to TAFE Institutes, universities, business and community for best outcomes (*The New Work Smarts 2017*).

Rating: 5

Leaders and leadership

Rating: 5

School and Community

The development of partnerships with the community, TAFE, business and industry for the benefit of students is critical in regional, rural and remote regions. In a recent report by TDA (*The Regional*

Paradox – Undersupply of skilled workers and over representation of unemployed and disengaged youth 2015) it became clear that schools play a major role in educating young people about the opportunities for either work or further studies in their region. As a result, recommendations included:

- support for government initiatives designed to encourage youth training for employment in skill shortage occupations in regional industries;
- developing courses and programs which provide training, mentoring support and recruitment pathways to sustainable employment in the region;
- developing strong networks with local employers and industry so as to establish place based models where employers and industry input into the planning of training activities and programs that ensure a pipeline of robust and transferrable skills for local individuals seeking employment;
- piloting programs which focus on job streams and career vocations, where the focus is midway between the generalist educational activities of school and the highly targeted and jobs specific outcomes of Vocational (training package led) qualifications (The Regional Paradox 2015)

An example of a very successful collaboration, which could be duplicated for regional, rural and remote schools, can be seen in the recently established Victorian TAFE Association Regional TAFE collaboration Project which is designed to ensure that all regional and rural TAFE institutes work collaboratively to establish greater efficiencies and more productive outcomes for each of their students, staff and organisations. This collaboration has received significant funding from the Victorian State Government to undertake a range of projects. Principals of schools could be supported to establish a similar collaboration to encourage exchange of ideas, resource development and other efficiencies.

Rating: 0

Information and Communication Technology

Rating: 5

Entrepreneurship and schools

It is essential to focus on entrepreneurship in schools and tertiary education. This is supported by work undertaken by The New Work Smarts 2017. Entrepreneurship and innovation is a process which requires new ways of thinking and teaching and will involve the concepts of systems thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, working in partnerships and teams

Rating: 7

Improving access – enrolments, clusters, distance education and boarding

Improving access - a summary response:

- more meaningful and focussed advice provided to school leavers about the benefits of further education
- developing programs which provide individualised (case management) support for high-risk young people transitioning from school
- Accurate career advice to ensure students select a relevant pathway;
- Pathway details and opportunities across the AQF spectrum;

- Mentorship programs for first year students
- provision of teacher education focussed around the process of successful innovation
- provision of better analysis of the job market in the regions to encourage young people to address the skills shortages in their area through further appropriate study
- access to less complex funding opportunities for young people living in regional, rural and remote areas to be able to travel, have access to accommodation, mentoring and adequate living expenses
- exploring and implementing projects that support young people to develop employability and entrepreneurial skills such as the concept of 'start-up' companies.
- harnessing community and business leaders to encourage the retention of students and advise on options for school leavers;
- supporting TAFE Institutes to work in partnership with schools to provide Vocational Education and Training programs for school students
- developing strong networks with local employers and industry so as to establish place based models where employers and industry input into the planning of training activities
- rebuilding of the VET sector through increased funding particularly for TAFE
- a strong marketing and promotional campaign by the Federal Government to rebuild the confidence in the VET sector as a viable and exciting alternative to university
- VET funding models should explicitly recognise the true costs for regional TAFE Institutes in thin regional markets.

Rating for enrolments: 5

Rating for clusters: 4

Rating for distance education: 5

Rating for boarding: 5

Diversity

Rating: 5

Transitioning beyond school

In addition to greater investment in TAFE at the regional, rural and remote locations, young people need support to be able to study outside their regions when the educational institutes are not immediately available. This means that there will be a need for

- developing programs which provide individualised (case management) support for high-risk young people transitioning from school.
- providing financial resources in regional areas, acknowledging the additional cost burden, and reduction in social support, placed on rural and remote students who must relocate to study.
- reviewing current policies and removal of system barriers where aged based funding 'cut-offs' act as a barrier to effectively supporting students to achieve employment pathways.

- the provision of financial and administrative support to enable the development of regional partnerships between secondary schools, training providers, industry and community organisations to facilitate successful outcomes for youth and industry.
- exploring and implementing projects that support young people to develop employability and entrepreneurial skills such as the concept of 'start-up ' companies.
- Mentorship programs for first year students
- provision of better analysis of the job market in the regions to encourage young people to address the skills shortages in their area through further appropriate study
- supporting TAFE Institutes to work in partnership with schools to provide Vocational Education and Training programs for school students, including high quality work exploration/vocational placements(The Regional Paradox 2015).

Rating: 7

Additional Comments

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) is the national peak body representing the interests of all of Australia's publicly funded TAFE institutes. In 2015 TAFE institutes across Australia enrolled more than 2 million students in over 2000 locations. Despite increasing privatisation of vocational education and training (VET) TAFE remains the dominant provider of VET across most of Australia's core skilled occupations, and with major Australian industry.

TAFE institutes are prominent regional institutions. As both major employers and training providers, regional TAFEs have long been embedded in local communities and understand local business needs and opportunities. Regional TAFEs are the major providers to indigenous Australians and play a crucial role in community sustainability.

Regional TAFE Institutes put employment opportunities in the grasp of rural and regional Australians by responding to industry demand for skilled workers in regional locations (eg agriculture, mining). TAFE's prominence is accompanied by high community expectations for regional social and economic leadership and a responsibility to build local skill for local businesses. TAFE provides access to VET, tertiary education and pathways to employment in these areas for young people leaving school, for existing and retrenched workers, and for people who have left school with no qualifications. TAFE provides access to VET, tertiary education and pathways to employment in these areas for young people leaving school, for existing and retrenched workers, for students disengaged from education, and for people who have left school with no qualifications. Many of these students do not have the means or support to travel to metropolitan centres to continue their studies and/or to maintain currency of skills and qualifications.

Regional TAFE Institutes seek to lift aspiration, remove barriers to education and be instrumental in closing the gap on employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians in regional Australia. Despite lower attainment and lower socioeconomic status, students from regional Australia often succeed in higher education at a rate similar to higher SES students (Gale and Parker 2013). In Australia's regions industry diversity may be high, population densities are low and geographical spread is wide. High quality, efficient training provision in these regions requires close cooperation between TAFE, industry, community agencies and services, other training providers, and with local businesses. By necessity, regional TAFE Institutes maintain multiple small campuses, support small student cohorts and travel to remote areas to service local communities and businesses. While they are increasingly

delivering quality blended learning programs to reach their students, the ability of students to undertake distance programs (ie low literacy or digital literacy, lack of access to technology or internet service and low demand for training) can mean financially unviable learning programs in thin training markets. Therefore, TAFE institutes are important organisations that build skills and knowledge for young people but in particular for disadvantaged and disengaged youth in regional, rural and remote areas. This is achieved by providing young people with the confidence to build their knowledge and skills through a supportive and encouraging learning environment beyond secondary school in order to increase their chances of obtaining meaningful and rewarding work.