

# POLICY FUTURES

## *A Reform Agenda*



### The cultural shift needed to improve Vocational Education and Training (VET) outcomes for school students

In Norway, programs of vocational education and training for secondary school students (VfSSS) achieve a student employment rate of 96%, while only 40% of students studying VET in Australian schools gain employment in their field of training.

It is clear from the success of the Norwegian system, and from the small number of leading examples in Australia, that the key to the success of VET is the adoption of a workplace learning culture within the school itself, one in which workplace expectations and attitudes are simulated as much as facilities.

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### Key Policy Recommendations

- 1 Support development of VETiS programs to meet industry expectations.** Government must ensure that Recommendation 10d of the Shergold Report, “Formal VET qualifications delivered in schools must be of a quality that is valued by industry and match the quality of VET delivered outside schools,” is implemented by requiring education systems to provide support to schools to implement workplace learning cultures where VET programs are delivered. In implementing Shergold Recommendation 11, “Education authorities and industry bodies should formalise their working relationship in order to facilitate the engagement of industry in senior secondary schooling in a systematic and comprehensive manner,” government must ensure that the relationship is as much benefit to industry as to education.
- 2 Commonwealth school funding arrangements should ensure school-industry partnerships deliver work-relevant programs.** Education Systems must support and require School Principals to define the place of VET programs in their school with MOU’s with industry to ensure that VET subjects are offered as much for industry workforce development and employment as for student engagement.
- 3 Compliance assessments.** Discussions should be held with Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to determine whether compliance audits ascertain if providers are meeting the assessment conditions in terms of workplace environment. ASQA procedures should place additional emphasis on investigating whether simulated workplace environments are socially simulated as much as physically simulated.
- 4 Collaboration between industry and schools.** The brief of Industry Training Hubs should be clarified to require them to actively work with schools and industry to assist in the changing of school cultures to more appropriately model those of workplaces.
- 5 Ensure Commonwealth school funding arrangements mandate professional development.** VET teachers in schools must be provided with targeted and systematic professional learning to develop capacity to implement and operate within a workplace learning culture.

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