

New framework for vocational education in schools

A comprehensive guide about pathways for young Australians in transition

POLICY DIRECTIONS



MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON EDUCATION,
EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

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Foreword

This document represents the endeavours by the MCEETYA Taskforce on VET in Schools to establish a new framework for vocational education in schools consistent with the recommendations of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.

The document was developed in 2000 and has, as its core, a new framework for vocational education in schools comprising six key elements. These elements are:

- vocational education and training
- enterprise and vocational learning
- student support services
- community and business partnerships
- effective institutional and funding arrangements
- monitoring and evaluation.

As is evidenced by the breadth of the new framework the taskforce covered territory beyond vocational education in schools, and used recent international and national research on the broad area of transition to post-school life.

This document represents a comprehensive explanation of the new framework and is designed to assist a wide range of interested stakeholders.

I commend the document to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Spring', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Geoff Spring
Chair
MCEETYA Taskforce on VET in Schools

Organisations and their acronyms

ACACA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities
ACCI	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ANTA MINCO	Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ARF	Australian Recognition Framework
ASTF	Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (became ECEF in 2000)
AVCC	Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
AVETMISS	Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard
CESCEO	Conference of Education System Chief Executive Officers
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
ECEF	Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (formerly the ASTF)
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NEPM	National Education Performance Monitoring taskforce
NTF	National Training Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VET-TER	This refers to a national group which is working towards gaining greater recognition by tertiary institutions, business and industry of achievement in VET in Schools courses .

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Introduction

The *Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* were endorsed at the April 1999 MCEETYA meeting. They contain a range of references to elements of vocational education and training (VET) in schools and linkages between the education and training sector, business and industry. The goals are the following.

Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. In particular, when students leave school they should:

- have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, VET, further education, employment and lifelong learning.

In terms of curriculum, students should have:

- participated in programs of vocational learning during the compulsory years and have had access to VET programs as part of their senior secondary studies
- participated in programs and activities which foster and develop enterprise skills, including those skills which will allow them maximum flexibility and adaptability in the future.

Schooling should be socially just, so that:

- all students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable the completion of school education to year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training.

The preamble to these proposed goals indicates that:

The achievement of these common and agreed national goals entails a commitment to collaboration for the purposes of:

- further strengthening schools as learning communities where teachers, students and their families work in partnership with business, industry and the wider community.

These goals outline the destination towards which school systems, schools, students, teachers and parents

are being asked to direct their efforts. They also seek to broaden traditional approaches to include the wider community, and, in the case of vocational education and training, require productive partnerships to be developed with industry.

In response to the national goals, the MCEETYA Taskforce on Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools proposed to ministers in March 2000 a new framework for vocational education in schools. At its heart lies the imperative for improving the transition of all young people from school to work and further study. This signals a broadening of the agenda beyond senior secondary to include expanded roles for community partnerships, the centrality of lifelong learning, Key Competencies, enterprise education and integrated career information and guidance services.

State and federal ministers agreed to the further development of the new framework and asked the taskforce to prepare an implementation strategy with a view to the framework's implementation in the 2001 school year.

At the same time ministers noted the *need to improve mechanisms for coordinating policy, program and resource management across the broad area of vocational education in schools* and asked the taskforce *to progress more coordinated and integrated approaches in this area, with particular attention to streamlining diverse funding initiatives and focusing on outcomes driven arrangements.*

In preparing this report to ministers, the taskforce has consulted with all school systems and authorities, boards of studies, Conference of Education System Chief Executive Officers (CESCEO), Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA), Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP, formerly known as the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation—ASTF), and Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), and has taken note of directions arising from the work of the Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce.

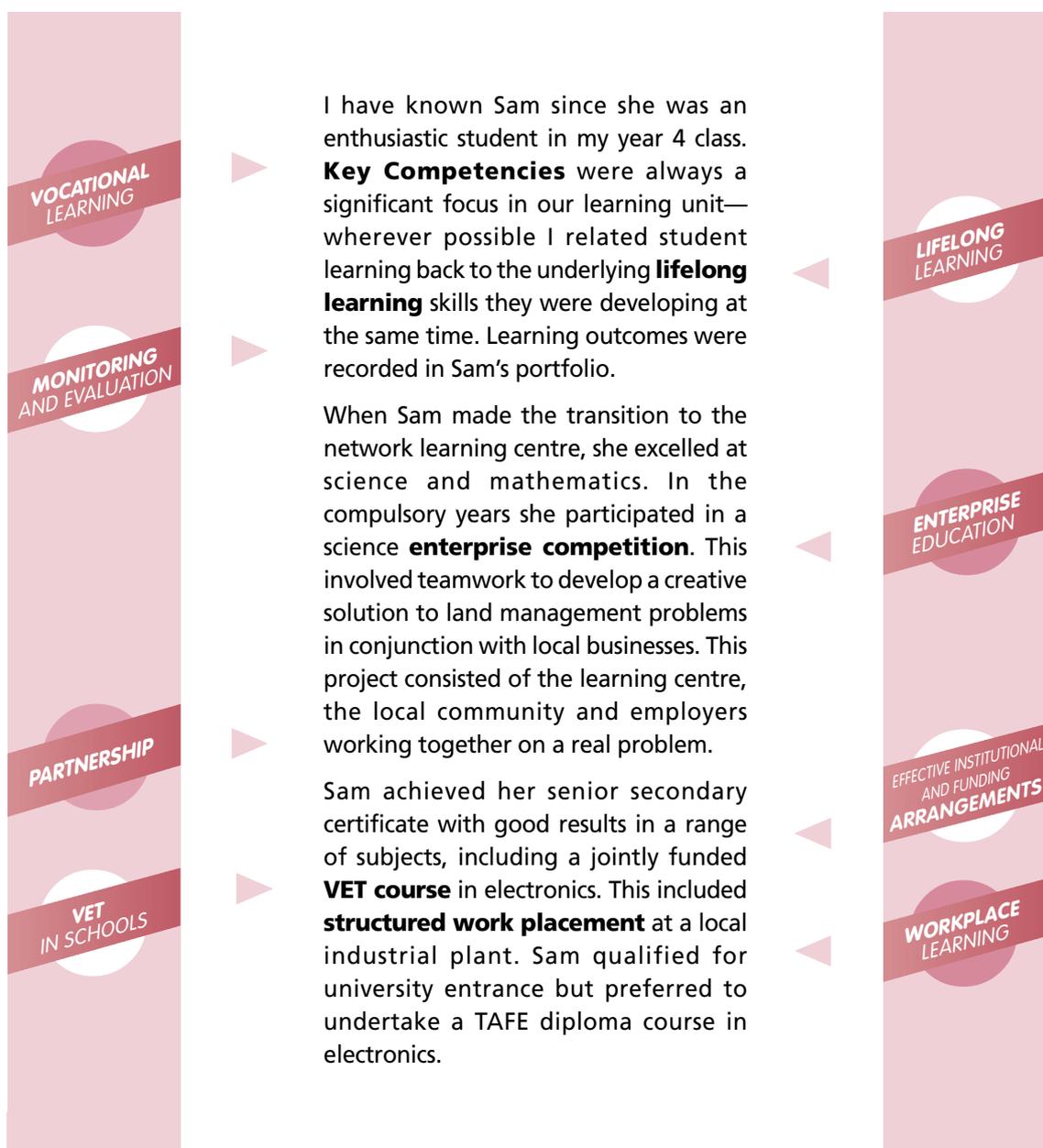
A future scenario: Life in 2005

Back in 2000 everybody agreed to implement a new framework for vocational education. Now, in 2005, what does it look like for those participating in the framework?

Three situations are explored:

- 1) A teacher talks about an ex-student
- 2) An employer talks about an employee
- 3) Two friends talk about an old school friend.

A teacher talks about an ex-student



A future scenario: Life in 2005 (continued)

An employer talks about an employee

I employed a young retail manager three years ago. From his references and CV Jason appeared to have outstanding abilities in team management, interpersonal relations and generally 'getting the job done efficiently'. During his interview I asked him how he believed he had developed his business and management skills.

Jason said at school he was regularly engaged in learning activities to analyse his interests and abilities in terms of potential careers and pathways for himself, and always considered that he would become a retail manager.

He said he remembered a time in school when his class conducted a project on work roles in their local community. A local businessman gave a talk to the class about complexities of running his business and stressed that he continually updated his skills in order to remain competitive. Jason said this message stayed with him.

Jason told me that he completed a part-time traineeship in retail operations while at school. This counted towards his senior secondary certificate.

He found that he didn't have too many problems 'fitting in' his paid work at a retail outlet. He also enjoyed the combination of learning at school and at TAFE.

Jason achieved full-time employment in the retail industry after the successful completion of year 12. He completed a Certificate III course while working to gain enhanced managerial skills.

Jason came across in interview as someone offering more than just retail skills and this was one of the main factors in my decision to employ him.

I have no doubt that he will progress to running his own business in the foreseeable future.

A future scenario: Life in 2005 (continued)

Two friends talk about an old school friend

'Hey guess who I saw the other day—Joe, and he's doing very well for himself.'

'Really? What's he doing?'

'Well, he's in private enterprise, and doing pretty well for himself.'

'How did that happen? He never struck me as the business type!'

'Well, do you remember when we were at school and we were involved in that vocational learning project? We had to form our own company and produce and sell a product. It was key-chain torches, wasn't it? We had a ball.'

'Oh that's right, we had to sell shares and everything to get the money to make 'em. Joe had some amazing ways of going about that! I thought he dropped out of year 11 and never finished school.'

'He was going to leave but a transition broker suggested a part-time traineeship in sports and recreation. He worked part-time at a fitness centre near where he lived.'

'Yeah, that's right, I remember hearing something about that. But didn't that all fall through?'

'Sort of. When he finished the part-time apprenticeship he then got an offer of a full-time apprenticeship at another company, so he shifted. He eventually finished it, got his full qualifications and continued to work for the company. He got more and more interested in IT and management!'

'Is he still working for them?'

'No. After a while he got more involved in the business side of things and set up his own business. So he did some more part-time studies at TAFE and eventually left the company to start his own. He is even studying part-time at uni doing Business!'

VOCA
TIONAL
LEARNING

STUDENT SUPPORT
SERVICES

PART-TIME
TRAINEESHIP

LIFELONG
LEARNING

Vision and principles

The new framework is built upon the following vision and principles, agreed to by ministers in March 2000.

Vision

Vocational education in schools assists all young people to secure their own futures by enhancing their transition to a broad range of post-school options and pathways. It engages students in work related learning built on strategic partnerships between schools, business, industry and the wider community.

Principles

- 1** Vocational education is an essential and valid element of the education of all students.
- 2** Vocational education will improve the transition of young people from school to work by acknowledging the importance of lifelong learning.
- 3** Vocational education will facilitate young people learning in a variety of settings, including the classroom, workplace and the wider community.
- 4** Vocational education will integrate a range of school-to-work initiatives and facilitate the involvement of employers, industry and the community generally.
- 5** Vocational education is a shared responsibility in the community and fosters collaboration between education, business, government and community interests.
- 6** Vocational education will ensure, through creative and flexible approaches, that all students have access to the widest possible range of its programs so they can acquire broad work related skills and competencies to the highest possible level.
- 7** Vocational education will ensure that students and their school communities have a recognised, significant and valued role in contributing to social, regional and economic development.

The changing context of transition

Transitions occur throughout life with increasing frequency and diversity. The most common understanding of the term transition, as it relates to education, is the change that most young people experience in the movement from primary to secondary education and their respective settings. This is usually considered to be a major change in a young person's life and is accompanied by a number of processes and supports. However, another major transition has emerged in recent years which is also attracting significant levels of interest and concern. This is the transition by students from the compulsory years of secondary school to the next stage of their lives 'at which young people's principal activity is some recognised form of productive activity.'¹ This is probably the most important and most difficult transition of all and, if successfully completed, provides a sound foundation for later life.

There is a lack of specificity in language in this arena. Some analysts refer to this stage as school-to-work transition, others to post-compulsory pathways and some to independent adulthood. This lack of specificity is directly related to the wide variety of pathways open to young people that involve various periods and combinations of further study, training and employment. Concern has widened from seeing the transition as an issue primarily for unemployed youth or for those in vocational education programs to seeing it as an issue for all young people whether work is entered via upper secondary education or from tertiary education². The resulting pathways are unlikely to be neat or linear.³ The immediate post-school years have been referred to as a period of 'milling and churning'.⁴ If there is an end point

to this transition and it is considered to be steady employment, then the Dusseldorp Skills Forum in a recent publication has indicated that the length of this period has increased from three to five years.⁵ The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has also drawn attention to this longer transition.⁶

There is a range of factors that contribute to the complexity of this period of transition for young people. These factors include:

- the significant degree of global change in the last generation and at an accelerating rate of change
- the capacity of social and educational institutions to adapt to meet the challenges that face young people
- the profound change in the nature of work
- the significant changes in the institution of the family and associated relationships
- the rapid pace of technological advancement affecting many dimensions of life.

Many of these changes have had a significant impact on young people in the post-compulsory years of schooling and the success of transition. Key issues include the following.

- There is a virtual disappearance of the availability of full-time employment for early school leavers. This is sometimes referred to as the collapse of the youth labour market.
- There is an increasing importance of part-time employment as a labour market feature for people of this age group. The participation rate for 15–19 year olds has increased in the decade beginning in 1989 from 19 per cent to 31 per cent.

¹ *Bright futures for young Australians*, ASTF, 1999, page 2.

² Sweet R: *The Jigsaw Revisited: Comparative Perspectives on Transitions*, paper presented to Victorian Industry Education Partnerships Forum, 26 April 2000, page 44.

³ *Bright futures for young Australians*, ASTF, 1999.

⁴ Sweet R: *All of Their Talents? Policies and Programs for Fragmented and Interrupted Transitions*, paper based on a presentation to the Business Educators Australasia 17th International Conference, Brisbane, September, 1995, pages 10–14.

⁵ *Why Australia needs a national youth commitment*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Sydney, 1999.

⁶ *Thematic review of the transition from initial education to working life: Interim Comparative Report*, Organisation for Economic Cooperation

The changing context of transition (continued)

- There is also an increasing importance of casual employment which now accounts for 55 per cent of all teenage jobs.
- The rate of youth unemployment is three times that of experienced workers.
- There is low participation in training with a 44 per cent decline in teenage apprenticeship commencements in the 1990–1996 period.
- The establishment of a new economy based on the acquisition and use of knowledge places increased pressure and uncertainty on young people and provides an imperative for them to be information technology literate.
- The school retention rate has steadily decreased throughout the 1990s.
- Although approximately three quarters of young people complete secondary education there is a persistent concern about whether these people have the increasingly important skills necessary for success in the knowledge economy such as communication, teamwork and problem solving.
- Changes in social and community life have had a significant impact on young people particularly where communities exhibit limited employment opportunities and jobless families with consequent youth alienation and many forms of abuse.⁷

There is a number of key decisions that young people have to make during the transition period. In the first instance there is the selection of the school to provide initial post-compulsory pathways. Within the school setting subjects and courses need to be chosen, increasingly including vocational options, that are linked to the potential future education, training and

employment destinations. Throughout this complex transition journey various forms of assistance are necessary to support or adjust chosen pathways.

Institutional support is an essential component of successful transitions by young people. A range of difficulties is encountered in terms of securing this support. These difficulties include the following.

- **Information access:** It is essential for young people to have sufficient information about schools, courses and services.
- **Parent support:** It is increasingly difficult for many parents to understand the complexities of post-compulsory life and so be valuable supports to young people.
- **Lifelong learning skills:** In addition to the various content specific courses that young people engage in it is increasingly important for them to develop and acquire lifelong learning skills to enable them to cope with the rapid pace of change that they will encounter.
- **Transition pathways:** Many of the transition pathways from schools remain narrow and too focused on university destinations given that only 30 per cent proceed on this pathway.
- **Accountability:** There is no clarity about the accountability for transition. Schools currently do not have accountability for young people making successful transitions and there are no other institutions that have this responsibility.
- **Linkages between institutions:** A difficulty exists for young people if related services provided by different institutions and agencies are not linked. This has an impact on the quality of information available and the accountability issue.

⁷ Data derived from *Australia's youth: Reality and risk*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 1998 and Dusseldorp J: *Australia's youth: From risk to opportunity*, Victorian Industry Education Partnerships, Volume 6, Number 2, December 1999.

The changing context of transition (continued)

The Interim Comparative Report of the OECD has indicated that a number of countries including Australia have not had responsive institutions, including schools, in relation to the issue of early school leaving. This lack of responsiveness has been characterised by difficulties in the provision of workplace learning experiences and adequate career and guidance services.⁸

Some key principles have been advanced as the basis of employment and educational assistance. These focus on a range of supports for young people at risk, the importance of tracking, the provision of customised pathways and the benefits of the brokerage of support services.⁹

Although all young people are confronted with the challenge of making successful transitions not all young people are the same. Their characteristics and circumstances vary widely. The Youth Pathways Taskforce¹⁰ has identified three broad groupings of young people in terms of transition needs.

- **Successful transitions:** Most young people successfully achieve pathways with support and information from institutions, families and others.

Nevertheless, these pathways could be improved by increasing options and the capacity of young people to determine them.

- **Vulnerable transitions:** Some young people experience particular difficulties in pursuit of their pathways and need intervention in terms of additional professional supports to ensure that the transitions are successful.
- **At risk transitions:** A smaller number of young people experience multiple disadvantages and require higher levels of support to make successful transitions. These people often lack access to services and to the integration between services. More comprehensive support from a range of services for longer periods of time is required to secure successful transitions. An intensive case management approach is likely to be required.

Given the importance and complexity of successful transitions for all post-compulsory young people this document seeks to provide advice that will lead to the achievement of this through the involvement of all stakeholders in partnership.

⁸ Sweet R: 'Youth: The rhetoric and the reality of the 1990s', in *Australia's youth: Reality and risk*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Sydney, 1998.

⁹ Bentley T and Gurumurthy R: *Engaging the problems of marginalised youth*, Demos, London, 1999.

¹⁰The Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce draft paper, May 2000.

Key policy determining successful transitions



As already indicated a major development in the establishment of policy related to successful transitions occurred when the Commonwealth Government announced the Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce in September 1999. The taskforce is a result of a key recommendation from the Prime Ministerial Youth Homeless Taskforce Report *Putting families in the picture*. It recommended 'The development of a Youth Pathways Action Plan to strengthen and build pathways for young people to participate actively, socially and economically, in the community'.¹¹

As reported in the previous VET in Schools Taskforce report, the National Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce is currently providing advice to government on the scope and direction of a youth pathways action plan aimed at:

- improving support for young people and their families during young people's transition to independence
- strengthening pathways for those young people who do not, or are not likely to, go straight from school to further education and training or full-time employment, and those who are not fully engaged with their community.

In identifying strategies to assist those young people at risk of experiencing some difficulties in their transition from dependence to independence, the taskforce is looking to achieve positive outcomes for all young people. This general approach is consistent with developments in the *Thematic review of the transition from initial education to working life* report produced by the OECD.

The taskforce established working groups to consider a range of areas including 'Learning, work and community partnerships: The acquisition of knowledge, skills and

enterprise'. The taskforce identified the following issues to be explored in relation to this area:

- creating a community climate which accepts responsibility for fostering young people's transitions
- strategies to assist young people to develop a broad range of skills for life as well as work
- strategies to help young people make better choices about their futures
- determining the kind of partnerships which have the greatest potential for helping young people to develop skills and capabilities
- measures that governments might introduce to strengthen various partnerships.¹²

There exists an opportunity to link these aspects of the work of the Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce to the VET in Schools taskforce to develop a policy platform which addresses the future of transitions to better anticipate changing socio-economic circumstances and significantly advance local practices.

The Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTF) in developing the advice on the 'Future of Transitions' for the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs indicated that there is substantive agreement on a range of areas. Successful transitions for young people demand that:

- they will need to be capable and confident in applying what they learn in learning situations beyond the school
- they should be provided with the foundation skills to continue learning and solving problems in a way that will sustain them through all the stages of life
- education must become connected, drawing on the resources (human, financial, social, cultural and information) of the wider society to stimulate and develop young people

¹¹ As quoted in *New pathways for learning*, Report of the MCEETYA Taskforce on VET in Schools, March 2000, page 16.

¹² As reported in the *New pathways for learning*, Report of the MCEETYA Taskforce on VET in Schools, March 2000, pages 16–17.

Key policy determining successful transitions *(continued)*

- learning for the knowledge economy will not only be situated in schools but will take place in communities, workplaces and families
- young people must be able to understand and negotiate their flows between learning and working in a transformed society
- schools will be better connected to their communities and a key characteristic of this will be community partnerships which mediate the learning and working relationships young people must navigate
- industry, business and community organisations will be engaged in learning not only in a spirit of goodwill but as a recognised means for generating economic prosperity and social cohesion
- entry level employment opportunities for young people need to be further developed, especially in regions struggling to cope with the impact of economic restructuring and globalisation
- young people themselves must be at the heart of policy development and actively consulted and included as pathway policy and programs evolve and take shape.¹³

The ASTF further indicated that to improve outcomes for students in transition:

- **every** young person will need to have mastered the key work and life related competencies in order to 'learn to learn', to be resilient in adversity, and to be enterprising in both social and economic relationships
- from early years to year 12, our schools will need to have developed a seamless system supporting the transition to productive activity in society
- our schools will need to be more truly developed as a core community-learning resource
- our communities will need to more genuinely share the responsibility for our young people's learning.

The considerable body of available research and analysis suggests a number of key elements appear to contribute to successful outcomes for students in transition. The Interim Comparative Report of the OECD has identified the following key features of effective transition systems:

- clearly defined, well organised, open and coherent learning pathways and qualification frameworks designed and developed in a lifelong learning perspective
- the availability of extensive opportunities for young people to participate and learn in real work settings while they are students
- the provision of a broad range of vocational and technical skills, together with general education and personal skills, for young people not continuing into higher education
- the existence of labour markets that are 'youth friendly'
- tightly knit safety nets for young people who are most at risk of social and economic exclusion which reintegrate them into mainstream education and training
- attractive and accessible information, guidance and follow-up services for all young people integrating educational, labour market and social counselling
- institutional frameworks for the organised and continuous involvement of and cooperation among all the relevant players at the national, sectoral and local levels in order to achieve policy coherence and effective program implementation
- well-designed monitoring tools such as statistics, indicators and longitudinal surveys reflecting developments in education and employment systems not in isolation from each other but revealing their interactions.¹⁴

¹³ *Bright futures for young Australians*, ASTF, 1999, page 3 and *New pathways for learning*, Report of the MCEETYA Taskforce on VET in Schools, March 2000, page 28.

¹⁴ *Thematic review of the transition from initial education to working life*: Interim Comparative Report, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, October 1998, pages 99–100.

Development of the new framework

Basic eight features

The VET in Schools taskforce proposed that to support the achievement of the national goals, taking into account international trends and the importance of VET in Schools, the following eight features provide a reasonable basis from which to develop an effective framework for the broad area of transition.

Explicit and well-articulated pathways

The new framework should help maximise outcomes for students by:

- ensuring there is a range of pathways suited to differing needs and interests
- providing flexibility for young people moving between pathways
- encouraging a higher proportion of young people to stay in education and training
- ensuring young people have access to courses of study that not only provide industry recognised Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications but that are also recognised for entrance to university.

Community partnerships

Successful transitions for young people are enhanced when their diverse learning needs are supported and responded to by community based partnerships involving schools, training providers, business/industry and employers, educational institutions, government agencies and the wider community.

Lifelong learning skills and attributes

Successful transition requires a solid foundation for lifelong learning, including a positive attitude to learning as well as skills that enhance immediate employability.

Enterprise and innovation

Changes in Australia's socio-economic environment mean that young people increasingly need to be more enterprising and innovative within the community and in small business, and public and private enterprise.

Career information and guidance and access to student services

Successful transition is enhanced when young people are provided with attractive, comprehensive, accurate and accessible career information. Such information, guidance and follow-up need to integrate social counselling with services provided by the education, training and labour market sectors.

Individual assistance for students at risk

Case management and access to services for students at risk of leaving school early will decrease the likelihood of them dropping out of education, and will support their re-integration into education, training or work when they do.

Supportive institutional and funding arrangements

There should be supportive institutional frameworks and funding approaches to achieve policy coherence and effective program implementation, and organised and continuous involvement of all relevant players at the national, state/territory and local levels.

Monitoring and evaluation

In order to understand and enhance transitions for young people, measures must be in place to provide information on participation, completion rates and destinations to enable the effectiveness of current and future arrangements to be examined.

Development of the new framework (continued)

Issues

In order to inform the development of the new framework, the taskforce requested that school systems and authorities and other stakeholders (eg ECEF, ANTA, DETYA, ACCI) collect information about current and proposed enterprise and vocational education in schools programs and initiatives. Sectors were asked to provide feedback about current overall policy and program alignments as they relate to the new framework, issues and obstacles to ongoing development.

The remainder of this section includes an analysis of issues based on a comprehensive mapping exercise organised according to the eight features.

Explicit and well-articulated pathways

Results of the survey indicated that efforts should be directed towards:

- increasing the skills base of more young Australians in order to improve their capacity to move directly from school to employment or further education and training
- ensuring that genuine pathways exist by establishing arrangements for the assessment of VET to provide a direct contribution to tertiary entrance scores
- raising the status of VET in Schools and building linkages between these programs and further education and training courses
- enabling more students to undertake these programs and increasing the depth of students' participation in VET studies
- strengthening and supporting employer involvement in VET in Schools programs
- developing more options in this area for groups of young people at risk of leaving school early
- clearly establishing the place of vocational learning in the compulsory years and VET in Schools as an ongoing feature of senior secondary schooling.

Community partnerships

Results of the survey indicated that efforts should be directed towards:

- broadening the role of key stakeholders (schools, employers, parents, government, community groups and young people) significantly so they overlap and intermesh
- developing mechanisms that allow community partnerships to
 - bring together stakeholders in providing programs and services for young people
 - act as an 'umbrella organisation' providing stakeholders with a common focus
 - respond to local school-to-work issues in ways appropriate to the region
 - promote more efficient use of resources
 - promote local responses to national and statewide agendas.

Lifelong learning skills and attributes

Results of the survey indicated that efforts should be directed towards:

- adopting new approaches to the compulsory years of schooling through vocational learning and enterprise education
- ensuring every young person has mastered key work and life related competencies to learn to learn, to be resilient and to be enterprising
- ensuring learning for the knowledge economy takes place in a variety of settings including schools, communities, workplaces and families
- ensuring young people understand and negotiate their own flows between learning and working
- ensuring schools engage with business and industry, government and community organisations to provide learning experiences for young people not only in a spirit of good will but as a recognised means of generating economic prosperity and social cohesion.

Development of the new framework *(continued)*

Enterprise and innovation

Results of the survey indicated that efforts should be directed towards:

- building on the significant potential of enterprise education being able to contribute to students' general education, vocational learning and preparation for work, and to bridge the divide between academic and applied learning
- improving student learning and achievement by engaging students in real-life contexts that address personal, social and economic issues
- giving young people a means of acquiring such skills as adaptability and flexibility which they will need in all aspects of life in a modern Australia
- promoting school reform, especially in relation to curriculum, organisational and professional development, by challenging schools to examine their culture and relationships, including the relationship with the outside world
- assisting the development of communities, both economically and socially. Enterprise education promotes the growth of partnerships between schools, families, businesses and communities, all of whom have a vital role in bringing about an enterprising culture and maximising the potential and resourcefulness of individuals and communities.

Career information and guidance and access to student services

Results of the survey indicated that efforts should be directed towards:

- improving access to attractive and accessible information, guidance and follow-up services which integrate education, labour market and counselling services
- professional career and transition advice being made accessible for all young people in local community settings

- developing comprehensive career advice linked to job opportunities (including local opportunities) supported by information technology systems which should be accessible at the local level
- community networks which focus on the local commitment of young people
- career education in school programs that link education, labour market and welfare services.

Individual assistance for students at risk

Results of the survey indicated that efforts should be directed towards:

- individual and integrated services for young people to enable them to gain the skills they need to achieve their transition
- achieving greater levels of school, community and other agency cooperation and coordination
- local stakeholders developing practical local strategies of support for young people with high support needs.

Supportive institutional and funding arrangements

Results of the survey indicated that efforts should be directed towards:

- achieving policy coherence and effective program implementation and the continuous involvement of all relevant players at the national, state/territory and local levels
- creating links and structures so that from the point of view of young people there are no barriers to learning and transition
- changing current mechanisms and structures to promote
 - the streamlining of diverse funding initiatives and focusing on outcome driven arrangements
 - broad based funding arrangements
 - cross-portfolio and integrated approaches to policy, planning, funding and service development.

Development of the new framework (continued)

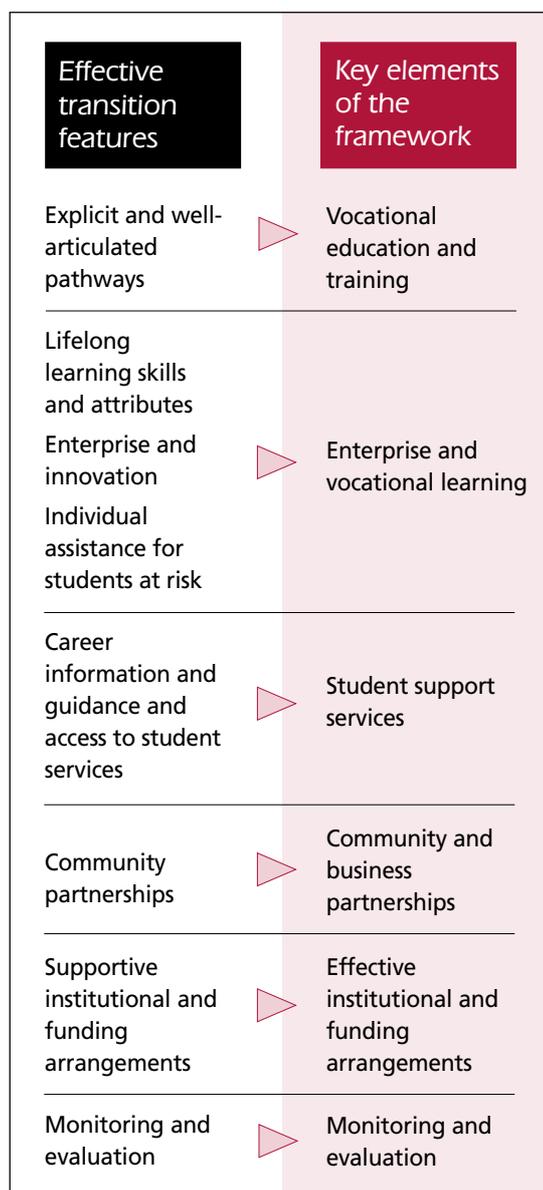
Monitoring and evaluation

Results of the survey indicated that efforts need to be directed towards:

- putting measures in place to understand and improve the experience of young people in their transitions and to provide information which will enable the effectiveness of current and future arrangements to be examined
- implementing successful and cost effective procedures for collecting data
- allowing every community to map the trajectories of its young people
- reviewing the extent to which existing data collections and longitudinal surveys may need to be enhanced to give effect to common reporting frameworks.

The emergence of the key elements of the new framework

The VET in Schools taskforce developed the eight features of effective transitions largely from the work undertaken by the OECD as reported in the Thematic Review.¹⁵ These in turn were used as the basis of a mapping exercise of the jurisdictions on these features. The analysis of this review indicates that the original eight features can be further refined to six key elements. As a result of some re-grouping and the removal of duplication, the following six elements emerged as the key elements for the new framework.



The details of the key elements are described in detail in the following section.

¹⁵ OECD Thematic review, op cit.

The new framework

Introduction

For schools to fulfil their responsibility to their students, they need to provide them with a broader range of skills and qualifications resulting in wider opportunities and choices of multiple pathways and transitions to the workforce. The new framework is designed to assist schools to do this.

With the horizons of vocational education expanding so rapidly, the framework now embraces *vocational learning*, *enterprise education* and *vocational education and training (VET)*. These elements are seen as important components of another emerging concept, lifelong learning.

- Vocational learning is general learning that has a vocational perspective. It includes elements such as general employability skills, enterprise education, career education and community and work based learning. All students should experience vocational learning at each year level throughout their schooling. Vocational learning is appropriate for all years of schooling and, when integrated in the school curriculum, it enables students to adapt to the changes that are going to be a constant feature of their lives.
- Enterprise education is generally accepted to be directed towards developing a learning culture which results in greater numbers of students enthused and equipped to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal, business, work and community opportunities. As a result, it has significant potential for contributing to students' general education, vocational learning and preparation for the world of work. It has the particular benefit of bridging the so-called divide between academic and applied learning. It also gives young people a means of acquiring and exercising skills such as initiative, problem solving, creativity, adaptability and flexibility, and translating them into practical action. These are skills which young people will need in all aspects of life in modern Australia. Other benefits include:
 - improved student learning and achievement by engaging students in real-life contexts that address personal, social and economic issues

- school reform, especially in relation to curriculum, organisational and professional development
- assisting in the development of communities, both economically and socially.

- VET refers to appropriately accredited and industry-specific entry level training programs that deliver competencies endorsed within the National Training Framework (NTF) and certification of industry accredited training aligned to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Enterprise and vocational education in its broader sense therefore provides school leavers with not only industry-specific skills but also generic competencies, which enable them to acquire new skills as they are needed by the changing demands of industry and society. It provides students with an understanding and an orientation towards the world of work as they investigate a range of pathways to post-school options.

A key feature of the new framework is specifically addressing the concerns of students in transition. This occurs at a number of points in schooling, such as the transition from primary to secondary school, from junior secondary to senior secondary school, and from school to post-school options (including work and/or further education and training).

In the compulsory years of schooling a comprehensive and integrated approach to enterprise and vocational education allows young people to have multiple opportunities for authentic learning in which they contribute to deciding its nature and location. These opportunities, provided both inside and outside school, are cooperative, collaborative, experiential and project based.

They should be built around a range of elements, including generic skills and competencies, enterprise education, community based learning, career education and work based learning. Programs should have a strong community and employer involvement and make use of local networks which include those two groups of people, and parents.

The post-compulsory years of schooling should also include student access to VET programs that incorporate structured workplace learning opportunities and part-time New Apprenticeships for school students.

The new framework (continued)

These programs should encompass the full range of student interests, local state/territory and national employment patterns, and regionally specific demands for skills. They should be delivered through active local networks of schools, training organisations and employers working closely with post-school training and job placement services.

There should be emphasis on career guidance and advisory services that are linked to employment outcomes, job placement services and external networks of advice and information drawn from the community and employers. These services should be integrated with programs that offer youth-focused services such as job seeking skills, training and direct contact with local employers and their requirements. Strategies should include case management of students, such as school leaver tracking, and personally tailored services for disadvantaged students, offering advice, support, training and access to part-time work.

A properly integrated system of enterprise and vocational education provides a seamless transition from school-to-work for the majority of young people. It promotes a re-thinking of relationships between schools, businesses and the wider community, working in local level partnerships. It also leads to recognised and valued qualifications.

The new framework provides for a long-term commitment from stakeholders to working together to achieve improved recognition of vocational education outcomes for all young people. It will encourage the development of partnerships between communities, business and government. It provides for coordination of overall directions, strategies and actions to harness joint effort and work progressively towards agreed goals.

The new framework is described in terms of six key interrelated elements. 

Key elements of the new framework

1	<p>Vocational education and training</p> <p>Appropriately accredited industry-specific training based on AQF qualifications and competencies endorsed within the National Training Framework.</p>
2	<p>Enterprise and vocational learning</p> <p>Enterprise and vocational perspectives incorporated into general learning that is appropriate for all years of schooling.</p>
3	<p>Student support services</p> <p>Services that guide and support young people in their transition from compulsory schooling to post-compulsory schooling options and post-school destinations, especially the inclusion of explicit career education programs in school curriculum. Services will allow for local discretion over delivery and relate to participation and attainment in education, training and work.</p>
4	<p>Community and business partnerships</p> <p>Mechanisms that foster close cooperation between all levels of government, business, community organisations, education and labour market authorities.</p>
5	<p>Effective institutional and funding arrangements</p> <p>Policy coherence and effective program implementation through institutional arrangements for the organised and continuous involvement of all relevant players at the national, state/territory and local levels.</p>
6	<p>Monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>Data collection processes to provide information that will enable the effectiveness of current and future arrangements to be measured.</p>

The new framework *(continued)*

Key element 1

Vocational education and training

Vocational education and training (VET) in Schools programs have emerged as a major pathway for senior secondary students in recent years. Previous reports have documented the development and widespread growth of these arrangements. The next major stage in the development of this pathway is to ensure that VET in Schools programs become a fully integrated and sustainable feature of senior secondary schooling.

The Review of the ANTA VET in Schools Program provided a useful range of areas for assessment of program sustainability including:

- the establishment of infrastructure
- absorption into schools' and systems' recurrent budgets
- adjustment to schools' operation and culture
- the establishment of certification arrangements and access to tertiary entrance
- efficient delivery
- routine links with industry.¹⁶

The achievement of sustainability across government and non-government school sectors in all states/territories represents the next major challenge for VET in Schools programs.

VET in Schools programs will comply with the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF) and progressively implement training packages. Compliance with the ARF will increasingly occur in an environment of strengthened quality assurance arrangements. Qualifications delivered through VET in Schools programs will need to be indistinguishable from qualifications delivered by other providers. State/territory authorities will work progressively to ensure this compliance. The progressive introduction of training packages on an industry basis indicates that the transition to full implementation will take a number of years.

VET in Schools qualifications will be recognised for tertiary entrance purposes and will be increasingly accepted in the employment market. In order for VET in Schools pathways to be accessible for all students it is necessary to establish satisfactory arrangements concerning tertiary entrance. Some progress has been made in this area but there is a need for more universal application. Acceptance of VET in Schools qualifications in the employment market requires employer confidence in the quality assurance arrangements.

This element of the new framework includes the relatively new pathway of school based apprenticeships first introduced in 1998. Programs conducted under these arrangements are based on a formal training agreement between the employer and the trainee. To further expand opportunities for school students through this pathway a number of issues require further attention including:

- more effective accommodation of the arrangements within school operations
- appropriate levels of coordination between the diverse partners to these arrangements
- recognition of student achievement in senior secondary certificates and tertiary entrance arrangements
- consideration of the potential of recognition of part-time employment associated with training in these arrangements.

Key element 2

Enterprise and vocational learning

A major focus within this element is to enhance the transitions for all young people through access to generic skills and competencies. These are valuable to all students throughout their school life. The development and attainment of these skills also contributes to the selection of VET in Schools programs in senior secondary schooling.

¹⁶The Allen Consulting Group: Review of the ANTA VET in Schools Program, June 2000, pages 66–77.

The new framework (continued)

Programs that provide access to generic skills and competencies will be:

- included in compulsory curriculum and post-compulsory education and training, and emphasised in work based and community based learning
- emphasised as foundations for lifelong learning
- included in policy frameworks for improving all young people's transitions.

A further focus within this key element is access to enterprise education programs and activities. Opportunities for involving young people in enterprise education programs and activities will be identified and implemented. Such programs will:

- develop the resourcefulness of young people
- contribute to general education and preparation for the world of work through learning in real-life settings
- provide increased opportunities for young people to learn in workplace and community settings
- promote curriculum and organisational reforms by challenging schools to further develop and enhance partnerships with the wider community, including business.

Key element 3

Student support services

Career education programs, activities and experiences will continue to be provided in schools to increase student awareness about the rapidly changing nature of work and careers. Accordingly, career education will:

- be explicitly included in the school curriculum
- involve community members such as employers and parents
- link education, labour market and welfare services
- provide young people with the opportunity to acquire and articulate achievement of generic skills and competencies.

The provision of readily accessible, well-organised, accurate, comprehensive and current information is a

vital element of the new framework. This information is essential for all young people to be able to meet the demands of the knowledge economy. In addition to these features, information also needs to be broader and include careers and labour market information to enable students to make informed transition decisions.

The effective provision of this information involves schools cooperating with employers, employment services and other relevant organisations in gathering and disseminating local industrial trends and job opportunities. There is a growing realisation that not all of the necessary information is within schools and there is a need for linkages to be established to ensure that young people have access. In addition to this, the production of high quality information in a variety of formats able to be used independently by young people is required.

High quality information services alone are not enough. Effective student support services require facilities which provide personal help and assistance. Case management approaches drawing on the professional counselling services available within the school and in the wider community are necessary to support many young people experiencing difficulties in transition. School-community partnerships will assist young people in transition by establishing arrangements to:

- connect them to appropriate learning and work opportunities
- provide mentoring, brokering or other appropriate support
- assist them in developing personal transition plans and becoming informed about new and expanding opportunities in the labour market.

Key element 4

Community and business partnerships

A major process for the implementation of the new framework is the application of community and business partnerships. This is a recognition that individual stakeholders cannot achieve outcomes for young people

The new framework *(continued)*

by acting alone. The establishment and continuous development of partnerships between a wide and diverse range of agencies and groups concerned with young people is essential for the advancement of student outcomes.

The centrality of partnerships is a further indication that increasingly learning takes place in a variety of ways and in a variety of settings. There is a substantial body of growing evidence that indicates school students achieve learning outside the school. Other important learning settings include training providers, workplaces and community organisations. The advancement of this learning is possible only as a result of the establishment and development of genuine, local partnerships between those concerned with youth.

Government and non-government agencies at local, state/territory and national levels in partnership with business and the community will support and allow schools and local partnerships greater flexibility and authority to:

- create more diverse learning experiences and post-school opportunities for young people
- facilitate and support employers to participate in enterprise and vocational education activities
- coordinate local programs and services for young people
- implement local responses to the transition issues facing young people.

Key element 5

Effective institutional and funding arrangements

Arrangements are individually developed between the Commonwealth and each state/territory government system and non-government school authority to enable integrated and coordinated approaches to policy, planning, funding and service delivery.

The coordinated and integrated arrangements will be tailored to the unique situation of each system and authority and recognise that they have different needs,

histories, stages of development and policy emphases. Accordingly, these arrangements will be supportive of flexibility in local implementation.

The coordinated and integrated arrangements will be based on agreed performance measures that are outcome driven. These arrangements need to be broad based in order to encourage and facilitate greater stability in government funding, greater cooperation at the community level, and greater flexibility.

Key element 6

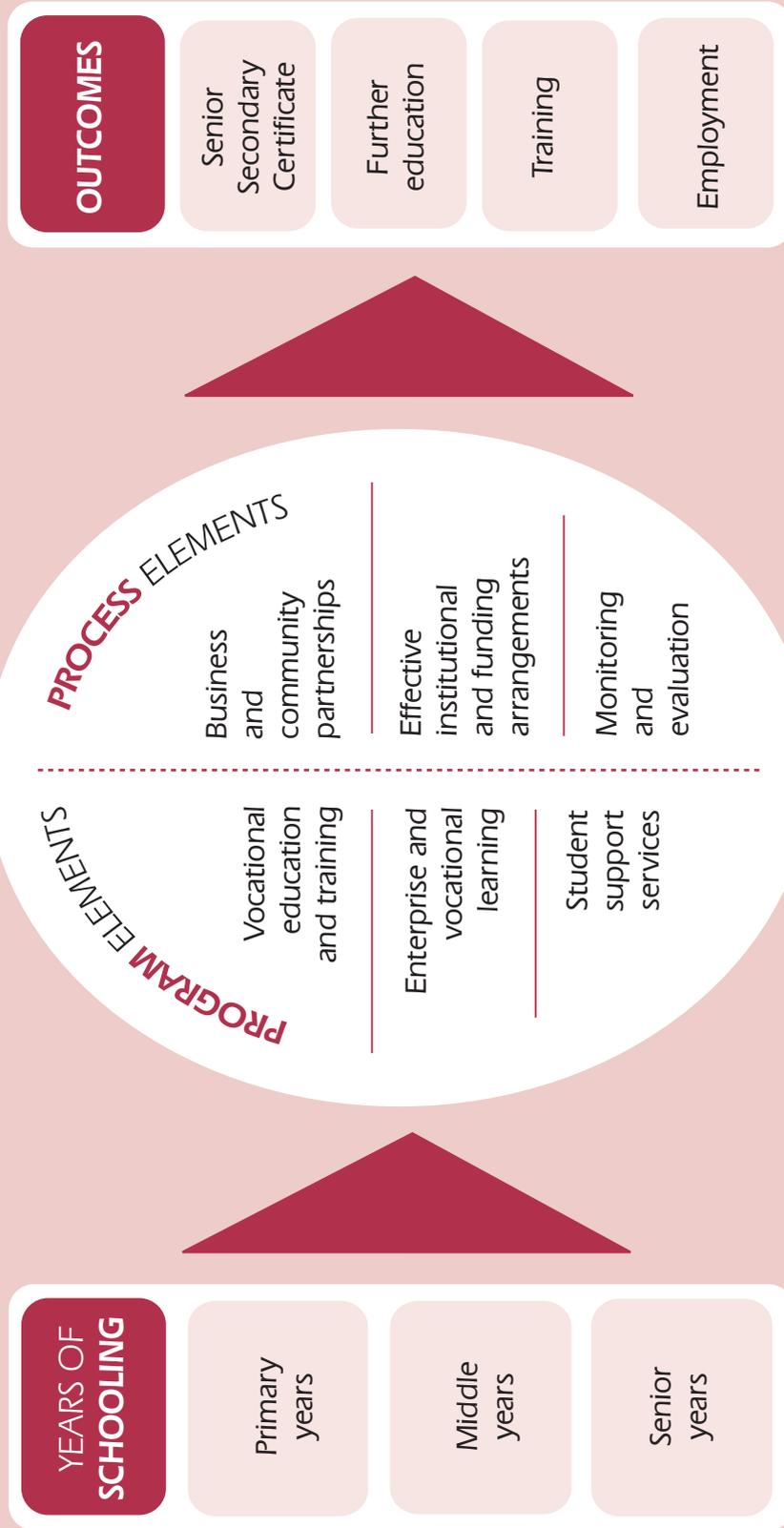
Monitoring and evaluation

There will be a nationally agreed collection mechanism for gathering data about programs encompassed by the new framework. There is a recognition that data collection needs to be systematised to enable more effective measurement of the achievement of outcomes.

More effective tracking and monitoring of young people will be implemented after they leave school. This is necessary in order to:

- identify students who become vulnerable or potentially at risk of not making successful transitions
- help schools and school systems to assess their achievements in supporting young people's transitions.

The new framework



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