

Queensland the Smart State Education and Training Reforms for the Future

A White Paper



Foreword

Many of us reflect on our years at school as amongst the best and most important years of our lives. If we look forward we see a world that is rapidly changing, and we know that if we are to keep up with the pace of change we too must change.

It is important that we all work together to achieve this change. The Queensland Government will work with industry and the community to ensure that future generations gain the benefits of a rewarding and fulfilling education that sets the foundations for future success.

Our vision for the Smart State is to create a state of prosperity and social justice with a commitment to equality of opportunity.

Education and training are at the heart of the Smart State vision and that means providing the very best learning opportunities possible for every young Queenslander regardless of their economic and social circumstances.

Thousands of Queenslanders have taken part in consultations about proposed reforms to our education and training system and we want to thank those who participated for their valuable contributions.

A well-educated and skilled population has become a defining characteristic of a modern society with high living standards. To compete in today's world, young Queenslanders need exciting and flexible pathways from school to work, training or further education.

Learning should prepare students for the world. Our education and training system must teach them about the world as it is now and prepare them for a future that we — today — can only imagine.

Queensland is committed to delivering these opportunities through an innovative and vibrant education and training system. This system provides students with an excellent foundation for future success. However, to maintain this strength we must reform the system from time to time in response to the changes that are reshaping our world and our communities.

National and international research shows that completing Year 12 or its equivalent gives young people greater opportunities in further education and employment.

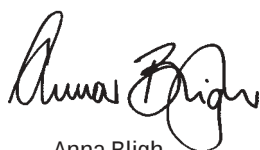
Gone forever is the job for life with on-the-job training that delivered a comfortable lifestyle. High-level qualifications are the currency of today's global economy and rapidly changing job market.

Today, 10 000 Queenslanders aged 15 to 17 years are not in school, not in work and not in training. This is simply not good enough and we have to try harder.

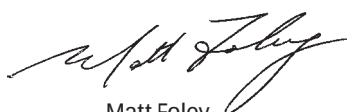
The future of every young Queenslander depends very much on their ability to achieve high-level qualifications and to continue learning throughout their lives.

That is why our Government wants all young people to complete Year 10, then go on to gain at least a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III vocational qualification. We will introduce legislation to achieve this.

Our Government is committed to supporting young Queenslanders and helping them to achieve. We are demonstrating that commitment by changing the education and training system to ensure that young Queenslanders lead the way, and are not left behind, in a world of rapid and constant change.



Anna Bligh
Minister for Education



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Training and Youth
Minister for the Arts



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Premier and Minister for Trade



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Executive summary

Young Queenslanders can no longer expect to get good jobs, earn decent incomes and lead rewarding lives without obtaining Year 12 or some kind of substantial vocational or university qualification that gives them the skills for work and life.

In Queensland — the Smart State — we are responding to these challenges by creating one of the most flexible education and training systems in Australia to ensure that our young people are equipped to lead the way into the future.

At least 10 000 young Queenslanders aged 15 to 17 years are not in school, not in training and not in any kind of substantial work. The future is bleak for most of these people unless better ways are found to help them re-engage in learning to gain the skills and qualifications needed to survive and prosper in today's society.

The Smart State means positioning Queensland to take its place among the best in the world. It is about encouraging innovation. It means educating and skilling people so they can compete for and create jobs in emerging fields, and revitalise traditional industries.

In 2000, the Government set a target to increase completion rates in schools from 68 per cent to 88 per cent by the year 2010. Already we have achieved 73 per cent. For many of these students, the pathway through school and into university or further studies will not change.

In March 2002 the Government released *Queensland the Smart State — Education and Training Reforms for the Future*, a landmark package of proposed education and training reforms in which we proposed that all young people should be 'learning or earning'.

The reforms contained in this White Paper follow a comprehensive process of consultation with parents, young people, employers, schools, TAFE and community leaders.

During the consultation, two reports commissioned by the Government were completed. The Pitman report — *The Senior Certificate: A New Deal*, and the Gardner report — *The Review of Pathways Articulation* provided valuable guidance in developing this paper. Out of a total of 99 recommendations, 62 are supported in this paper and will be fully implemented or trialled, 22 are partially supported in this paper and 10 will require further consideration by Government for future action.

This package of reforms also encompasses our commitment to *Stepping forward: improving pathways for all young people*, a declaration signed in mid 2002 by education, employment, training, youth affairs and community services ministers from around the nation.

This White Paper reaffirms the Government's commitment to providing the very best education possible for every young Queenslander and outlines the actions to achieve this.

We are building an unprecedented partnership between parents, students, state schools, non-state schools, TAFE, training providers, the Queensland Studies Authority, community organisations, universities, and employers to trial and implement the package of reforms outlined in this paper.

The Queensland Government recognises that a range of different options is needed to cater for the diverse needs of our young people. More than a quarter of our young people do not complete school. That is why we are tailoring our solutions to give them a range of options to help them achieve the academic or vocational education qualifications they need to compete in the world of work. We are also encouraging those who leave learning for full-time employment to return by recognising a broader range of previous learning achievements.

In this document the term young people refers to those aged 15, 16 and 17 years.

All young people in education and training

Our excellent education and training system is meeting the needs and aspirations of the vast majority of young Queenslanders and helping to transform Queensland.

The Government wants all young people to complete Year 10 and then go on to gain at least a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III — a competency-based vocational qualification issued through TAFE institutes or registered training providers.

What is a Certificate III?

More than 100 different types of Certificate III vocational qualifications are available to students. These range from veterinary nursing and retail to engineering and furnishing. The training ranges from six months to four years.

Vocational qualifications vary in complexity and provide a variety of skills, from basic to advanced. Students enrolled in a Certificate I are fully supervised and acquire basic practical skills, while Certificate II-level students are expected to take more responsibility in the tasks they perform. Students at Certificate III level apply their knowledge independently in the workplace.

To achieve this we will change the compulsory school leaving requirements, and we will change the law to require young people to participate in education and training after Year 10.



We will give them greater flexibility to achieve qualifications beyond Year 10. This could be in school, in TAFE or through other forms of training.

We will introduce new laws that:

- make it compulsory for young people to stay at school until they finish Year 10 or have turned 16, whichever comes first
- require young people to then participate in education and training for:
 - a further two years; or
 - until they have gained a Senior Certificate; or
 - until they have gained a Certificate III vocational qualification; or
 - until they have turned 17
- provide exemptions for young people who enter full-time work after they have either completed Year 10 or turned 16.

These changes will take effect for students who enter Year 10 in 2006. The penalties for breaking the law will remain the same as they are now.

If you are in Year 6 in 2002, what do the changes mean for you?

- You will have to stay at school until you finish Year 10 or turn 16.
- In Year 10, you and your parents will work out your future education and training plan with your school. This is called a Senior Education and Training Plan.
- When you have finished Year 10 or turned 16, you will have to participate in education and training for a further two years, or until you gain a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III vocational qualification, or until you turn 17. Your education and training could be at school, in TAFE, or in an apprenticeship or traineeship, or a combination of these.
- If you get a full-time job after you have completed Year 10 or turned 16, you won't have to participate in education and training, but you can come back to it later.

This reform is about engaging young people in learning. It is not about forcing reluctant or disruptive students to remain in classrooms or lowering the standards of behaviour we expect from young people. Processes for dealing with disruptive behaviour, such as suspension and exclusion, will continue. Extra career guidance and personal support, and more flexible learning options will be provided for these young people to continue their learning in different environments.

The Government's commitment

We will underpin these requirements with new learning opportunities, assistance and support for all young Queenslanders.

The Government's education and training commitment means:

- better preparation for children before they enter school so they can achieve more in their early years
- a new approach to the middle years of schooling to focus on students' learning needs and to provide a solid foundation for the senior years
- flexible opportunities for 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds to achieve a Senior Certificate or vocational education qualifications
- a focus on strengthening overall standards of achievement and attainment
- fostering a Community Commitment to young people.

Improving the early and middle phases of schooling

The early years

Our commitment starts with better preparation for children before they enter school so they can achieve more in these early years and set the foundations for their success in school. Planning is already well under way for 59 trials of a preparatory year in schools across the state, starting from 2003. Parents will decide if their children take part.

If the trials are successful, the Queensland Government will consider introducing a preparatory year that would be available at schools to every child and would replace existing preschool education.

The middle years of schooling

The Government will strengthen the middle years of schooling by focusing on students' learning needs. We want to inspire them to keep learning and to provide a smooth transition to the senior years.

To further support students and their teachers, the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal will provide advice to the Minister for Education by June 2003 on a range of matters including:

- the curriculum implications, teaching methods, and policy considerations associated with adopting a Middle Phase of Schooling
- innovative ways to improve student achievements in the middle years
- providing continuous support to students through different stages of learning
- specific strategies for students at risk of leaving school early
- strengthening links between primary and secondary schools.

The Government will also:

- introduce a new target for Queensland students to achieve national Year 7 literacy and numeracy benchmarks by 2005
- work with stakeholders through the Queensland Studies Authority to explore the feasibility of introducing a Year 9 literacy and numeracy test.

Ensuring Year 10 completion and transition to a Senior Phase of Learning

Building on our new legislation that will require young people to stay at school until they finish Year 10, or until they have turned 16, we will ensure Year 10 is a year of quality learning by:

- building Year 10 as a transition to the Senior Phase of Learning
- requiring schools to develop individual student plans for the Senior Phase of Learning — Senior Education and Training Plans — with young people and their parents or guardians. These plans will be developed and agreed to during Year 10
- requiring schools to register young people with the Queensland Studies Authority during Year 10 so their progress can be monitored and achievements recorded in the Senior Phase of Learning.

Reshaping senior

The Government also wants young people to have exciting and relevant opportunities in the Senior Phase of Learning so they go into the world with knowledge, skills and confidence.

While the pathway through schooling will continue to be the main track to university or further study for most students, we want to ensure that the 27 per cent of students who currently do not finish Year 12 have the best possible chances to succeed.

The valuable learning gained through work can be counted toward vocational education qualifications and may be considered for recognition on the Senior Certificate.

The Senior Certificate will change so it becomes an even more valuable document for young people and employers. That means young people will have to achieve an agreed amount of learning, including literacy and numeracy, to receive a Senior Certificate.

To achieve this we will:

- establish the quantity and quality of learning that students must achieve to receive a Senior Certificate. This will take effect from 2006
- record a broader range of learning, including learning in both school and vocational education and training, that will count towards a Senior Certificate, from 2006
- design a system so that students' achievements can be 'banked' with the Queensland Studies Authority
- provide students and their parents or guardians with easy access to information about their achievements and progress toward a Senior Certificate.

Providing more options and flexibility for young people

We will introduce a range of measures to give young people more options and more flexibility so they are better equipped for further education and the world of work.

We will:

- enhance options and flexibility in schools, TAFE institutes and other settings to meet the needs of even more 15- to 17-year-olds, by reviewing existing courses and offering a wider range of tailored courses

- work with communities to develop localised services and better access to education and training for young people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities
- enhance distance, online, and virtual education provision
- ensure that more young people who undertake vocational education and training in schools achieve qualifications that are highly regarded by industry
- provide more school-based apprenticeships and traineeships
- improve the recognition of learning and qualifications between the education and training sectors
- give young people equitable, affordable access to vocational education and training in schools and TAFE
- provide an employment program specifically designed to assist young people at risk of disengaging from learning.

We want all young people to achieve at least a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III vocational qualification, however, we accept that some need time-out from formal learning. For this small group, full-time employment may be the best option at this time in their lives and exemptions will apply. They will, however, be encouraged to return to education and training at a later stage. A brief time-out from learning is okay, dropping out from learning is not.

Giving more support to young people

Young people will be offered more career and personal support to assist them to move successfully through the Senior Phase of Learning.

The Queensland Government will provide funding to help young people improve participation in learning and achieve qualifications by:

- engaging up to 100 additional youth support workers
- assisting schools and TAFE institutes to coordinate vocational education and training and enhance career guidance and counselling. Schools and TAFE institutes may wish to pool these funds at the local or regional level. They will have the flexibility to buy services and expertise as required
- establishing a grants program to trial initiatives that improve participation, retention and attainment for 15- to 17-year-olds in learning, including:
 - offering Fresh Starts — an innovative program of workplace learning and community activities designed to re-engage young people who have disengaged from learning
 - supporting schools to provide a range of education programs in new learning environments for those students not suited to traditional schooling
 - creating local models to support young people who need to be away from home for school, work experience or work placement
 - providing targeted support, such as transition brokers, for young people who are making the transition to work or further learning in Indigenous communities
 - purchasing industry or vocational education and training expertise to support schools in rural and remote areas



- using mentors — experienced people from the community with local knowledge, expertise and standing — who will volunteer to work with young people at risk of not achieving
- using the arts and music to re-engage young people with the learning process.

Some young people enter into full-time work without obtaining qualifications. To ensure that they have every opportunity to succeed, we will encourage them to return to learning and we will recognise previous achievements.

We will also make schools, TAFE institutes and other participating vocational education and training providers the local coordinators for renegotiating and monitoring Senior Education and Training Plans. They will work with other agencies and providers to implement these plans.

Working together — building new community partnerships

The Queensland Government has a significant investment in the education and training of young people.

We will:

- foster a Community Commitment to young people by building partnerships at the local level
- develop District Youth Achievement Plans that will set local targets for participation, retention and attainment in education, training or employment programs.

We will amend the *Training and Employment Act 2000* and the *Education (General Provisions) Act 1989* to include, in the objects, the fostering of a Community Commitment to youth, and to include provisions to the legislation incorporating the intent of the national education, employment, training, youth affairs and community services ministers' declaration *Stepping forward: improving pathways for all young people*.

It is important that we build new relationships that draw on the best from across our communities for our young people, coordinate programs and services at the local level, and use resources more efficiently across sectors.

The Queensland Government has started improving collaboration and coordination between schools, TAFE institutes and universities.

However, each of us has a responsibility to the young people in our community. Along with parents, schools, TAFE and universities, there is a special role for industry and business because they can provide work experience and ultimately jobs for our young people.

We will also call on the dedication and professionalism of teachers in state and non-state schools, TAFE and vocational education and training providers to help implement these reforms.

The way ahead

Our young people are the future of our state. The Queensland Government is dedicated to making these reforms a reality for the benefit of generations to come. While the legislative changes will not come into effect until 2006, we will begin trials of the reform package in six selected areas in semester 2, 2003. These trials will involve students who are in Year 10 in 2003.

We will start work immediately on:

- developing the new Senior Certificate that will report achievements in school and vocational education and training, and could include work and other learning
- improving access to information about students' achievements.

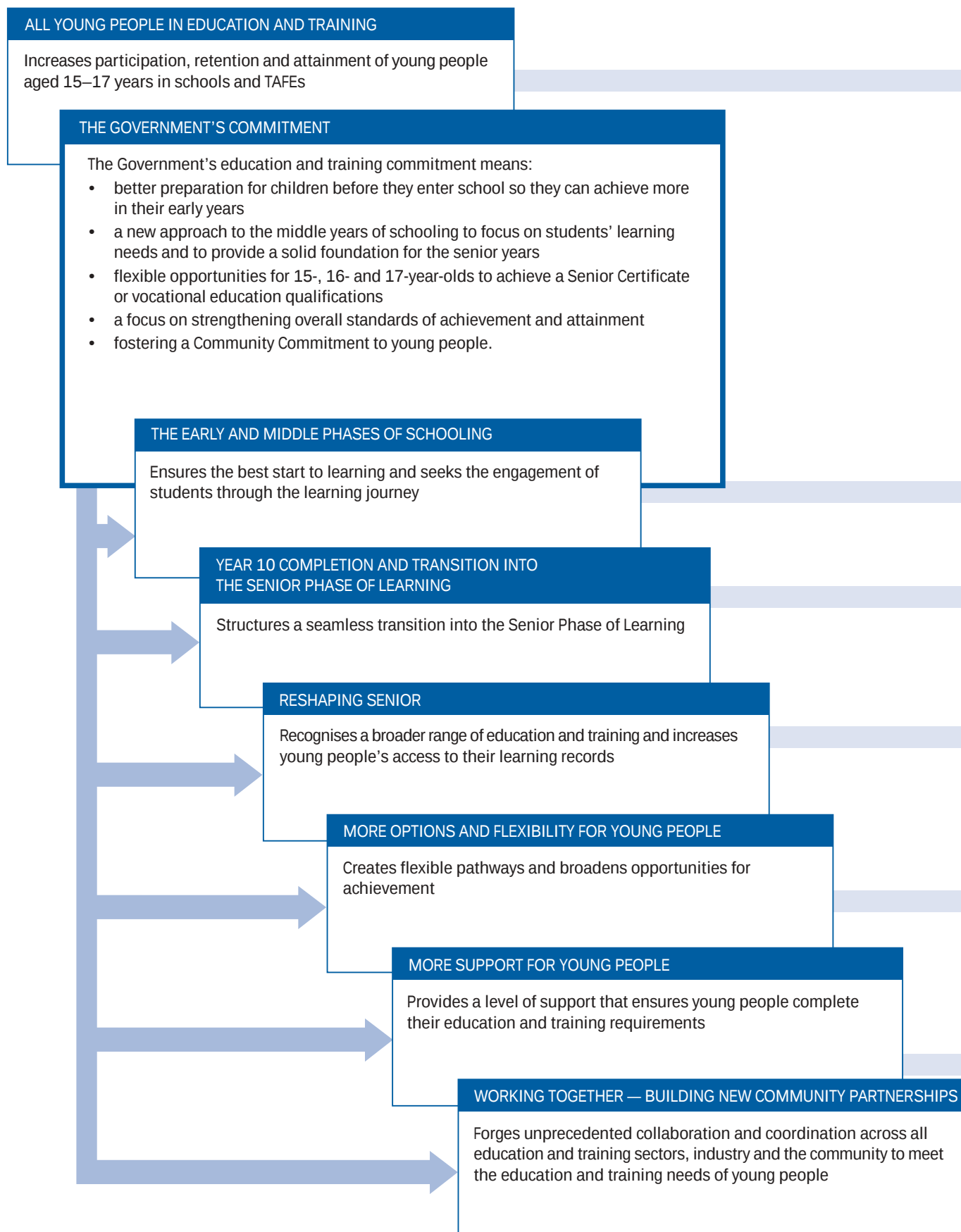
We will start implementing the White Paper reforms through trials in six selected areas across the state from semester 2, 2003. Trials will include:

- local initiatives to improve participation, retention and attainment for students in the Senior Phase of Learning, including new or enhanced alternative programs, supported by grants program funding
- implementing District Youth Achievement Plans
- building Year 10 as the transition to the Senior Phase of Learning, including developing Senior Education and Training Plans, and registering students with the Queensland Studies Authority.

We will work toward implementing other reforms by 2006 including introducing the new Senior Certificate and introducing legislation that will:

- make it compulsory for young people to stay at school until they finish Year 10 or have turned 16, whichever comes first
- require young people to then participate in education and training for:
 - a further two years; or
 - until they have gained a Senior Certificate; or
 - until they have gained a Certificate III vocational qualification; or
 - until they have turned 17
- provide exemptions for young people who enter full-time work after they have either completed Year 10 or turned 16.

A snapshot of the reforms



- introduce new laws that:
 - make it compulsory for young people to stay at school until they finish Year 10 or have turned 16, whichever comes first
 - require young people to then participate in education and training for a further two years, or until they have gained a Senior Certificate, or until they have gained a Certificate III vocational qualification, or until they have turned 17
 - provide exemptions for young people who enter full-time work after they have either completed Year 10 or turned 16

- provide new foundations for Queensland children entering school and consider a preparatory year of schooling
- take a new approach to teaching and learning in the middle years of schooling

- ensure completion of Year 10 to provide a solid foundation for future learning by:
 - building Year 10 as a transition to the Senior Phase of Learning
 - requiring schools to develop individual student plans for the Senior Phase of Learning — Senior Education and Training Plans — with young people and their parents or guardians. These plans will be developed and agreed to during Year 10
 - requiring schools to register young people with the Queensland Studies Authority during Year 10 so their progress can be monitored and achievements recorded in the Senior Phase of Learning

- establish the quantity and quality of education and training that students must achieve to receive a Senior Certificate (from 2006)
- record a broader range of learning, including learning in school, vocational education and training, and other learning, that will count towards a Senior Certificate (from 2006)
- allocate extra funding to the Queensland Studies Authority to:
 - design a system so that students' achievements can be 'banked' with the Authority
 - provide students and their parents or guardians with easy access to information about their achievements and progress toward a Senior Certificate

- enhance learning options that provide greater flexibility to meet the needs of even more 15- to 17-year-olds
- work with communities to develop localised services and better access to education and training for young people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities
- enhance distance, online and virtual education provision
- ensure that more young people who undertake vocational education and training in schools achieve qualifications that are highly regarded by industry
- provide more school-based apprenticeships and traineeships
- improve the recognition of learning and qualifications between the education and training sectors
- investigate ways of giving young people equitable, affordable access to vocational education and training in schools and TAFE
- provide an employment program to assist young people who are at risk of disengaging from learning or who are not served by formal education and training options

- help young people improve participation in learning and achieve qualifications
- make schools, TAFE institutes and other participating vocational education and training providers the local coordinators for reviewing, monitoring and implementing Senior Education and Training Plans

- foster a Community Commitment to young people by building partnerships at the local level
- develop District Youth Achievement Plans that will set local targets for participation, retention and attainment in education, training or employment programs

Education and Training Reforms for the Future

Our world is being shaped by rapid change. The types of available jobs and the nature of work have changed and the revolution in information and communication technologies (ICTs) has altered cultures, economies and work around the world. These changes have all increased the importance of completing senior schooling and achieving post-school qualifications.

Labour market trends indicate that more than half of the jobs currently held by Australians did not exist in 1965. They also indicate that many more new jobs will emerge in the decade ahead. In Queensland, the Government's Smart State strategy has resulted in an increase in new high-tech jobs in areas such as biotechnology and information and communication technologies.

The future of every young Queenslander depends very much on their ability to adapt to these changes, achieve high-level qualifications and continue learning throughout their lives.

This means they must have strong foundations in skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative learning, and communication. They must be able to read and write and work with figures, as well as master new technologies. Most importantly, they must be ready for lifelong learning so they can pick up new skills and knowledge and adapt as the nature of work continues to change.

At least 10 000 young Queenslanders aged 15 to 17 years are not in school, not in training and not in any kind of substantial work. The future is bleak for most of these people unless better ways are found to help them re-engage in learning to gain the skills and qualifications needed to survive and prosper in today's society.

In Queensland in 1981–1982, around 34 per cent of 15- to 17-year-olds were in full-time employment. By 2001–2002, this had reduced to 8.4 per cent. Part-time employment for this age group rose from 15 per cent to 36.2 per cent in the same period. Almost half of all young people work on a casual basis, and Queensland has the nation's highest rate of casual employment.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data show the benefits that flow from post-school qualifications. In May 2001, 70 per cent of people who completed Year 12 and almost 80 per cent of people with vocational education and training qualifications at Certificate III or IV level were in work. Only 57 per cent of people who had not completed Year 12 were in work.

Internationally, there is a trend to retain students in school or vocational education and training for longer because of the benefits in literacy and numeracy, maturity and preparation for work and further study.

To ensure that young Queenslanders are fully equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world, we are creating one of the most flexible education and training systems in Australia.

The package of reforms outlined in this White Paper follows a comprehensive process of consultation with parents, young people, employers, schools, TAFE and community leaders. It covers all stages of education from preschool to middle and senior schooling, as well as vocational education and training, and employment. It includes 19 specific actions that will be implemented through partnerships between schools, TAFE, universities, young people, parents, employers and local communities.

During the consultation, two reports commissioned by the Queensland Government were completed. The Pitman report — *The Senior Certificate: A New Deal*, and the Gardner report — *The Review of Pathways Articulation* provided valuable guidance in developing this paper. Out of a total of 99 recommendations, 62 are supported in this paper and will be fully implemented or trialled, 22 are partially supported in this paper, and 10 will require further consideration by the Queensland Government for future action.

All young people in education and training

The Government wants young Queenslanders to be engaged in learning and achieve valued qualifications. We want to inspire in them a lifelong passion for learning. These are the foundations for their future success and our shared future in the Smart State.

We believe that the proportion of young people in Queensland completing Year 12 or achieving vocational education qualifications should match that projected for leading Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.

The Queensland Government reaffirms its commitment to a quality education for all. We have already committed to a target of 88 per cent of young people completing Year 12 by 2010 and are proud of our achievement to date of 73 per cent.

The Queensland Government wants all young people to complete Year 10, then go on to gain at least a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III vocational qualification.

To achieve this we will change the compulsory school leaving requirements, and we will change the law to require young people to participate in education and training after Year 10.

We will give young people greater flexibility to achieve qualifications beyond Year 10 — this could be in school, in TAFE or through other forms of training.

ACTION 1

We will introduce new laws that:

- make it compulsory for young people to stay at school until they finish Year 10 or have turned 16, whichever comes first
- require young people to then participate in education and training for:
 - a further two years; or
 - until they have gained a Senior Certificate; or
 - until they have gained a Certificate III vocational qualification; or
 - until they have turned 17
- provide exemptions for young people who enter full-time work after they have either completed Year 10 or turned 16.

These changes will take effect for students who are presently in Year 6 and will be entering Year 10 in 2006. The penalties for breaking the law will remain the same as they are now. Currently, if a young person does not attend school, their parents are subject to penalties that may result in a fine.

At the moment, compulsory schooling is defined by the school leaving age. Students must stay at school until they are 15. This means some young people can leave school the day they turn 15, even if they have not completed Year 10. Up to 1100 students turn 15 in Year 10 and leave school. Some go on to other education or work. Some do not.

We want young people to finish Year 10 and be prepared for senior schooling or vocational education and training.

The legislation will be changed to ensure that young people, including those who turn 15 part-way through Year 10, complete the tenth year of schooling and prepare for further learning. However, there may be a small number of young people who have turned 16 while still in Year 10 and who could find one of the other learning options, such as TAFE, more suitable.

During the compulsory years of schooling, if young people do not attend school the law requires their parents or guardians to apply for exemptions. Exemptions are approved in exceptional circumstances for a range of reasons such as serious illness. A small number of students receive exemptions to enter paid work, or to enrol in vocational education and training.

We will retain the existing exemptions for reasons such as serious illness, for the new compulsory years of schooling to the end of Year 10 or the age of 16, whichever comes first. However, young people will no longer automatically receive an exemption to go into full-time work before they have finished Year 10 or turned 16.

Currently, everyone is entitled to 12 years of state school education starting from Year 1. The Government will require every young person to participate in some kind of education or training in the Senior Phase of Learning.

The definition of education in the Senior Phase of Learning will be expanded to encompass a broader range of learning opportunities.

These may include:

- all senior subjects taken only in school, as at present
- senior subjects in school, TAFE, or alternative settings
- vocational education and training undertaken in schools, TAFE institutes, agricultural colleges or with other training providers
- an apprenticeship or traineeship
- a combination of education or training and part-time employment
- an employment program that prepares young people for work
- training programs that are tailored to individual student needs, such as literacy and numeracy programs
- virtual or online schooling or vocational education and training
- international learning programs
- university subjects undertaken while students are at school.

Young people who have completed Year 10 or turned 16 and take up full-time paid or unpaid work will be exempt from the requirement to participate in education or training. They will be able to re-enter the education and training system to resume their learning at a later date.

Amendments to the *Education (General Provisions) Act 1989* and the *Training and Employment Act 2000*, to take effect from 2006, will spell out that young people will be required to participate in two years of education or training beyond Year 10, or until they achieve a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III vocational qualification. This requirement will not apply when a person turns 17. The amendments to the legislation will be in accordance with Commonwealth legislation.

While these requirements for 15- and 16-year-olds will become law, we do recognise the need for local flexibility and will make provision for exceptional circumstances.



This reform is about engaging young people in learning, re-igniting their interest if it has waned, and supporting schools and young people. It is not about forcing reluctant or disruptive students to remain in classrooms. And it is not about lowering the standards of behaviour we expect from young people. Processes for dealing with disruptive behaviour, such as suspension and exclusion, will continue. We will ensure that extra career guidance and personal support and more flexible learning options will be provided for these young people to continue their learning in different environments.

The Government's commitment

The Queensland Government will provide new learning opportunities, assistance and support to underpin the requirement for young people to be engaged in education and training in a range of settings until they achieve a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III vocational qualification.

The Government's education and training commitment means:

- better preparation for children before they enter school so they can achieve more in their early years
- a new approach to the middle years of schooling to focus on students' learning needs and to provide a solid foundation for the senior years
- flexible opportunities for 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds to achieve a Senior Certificate or vocational education qualifications
- a focus on strengthening overall standards of achievement and attainment
- fostering a Community Commitment to young people.

The early and middle years of schooling

The early years

The early years of schooling are critical to children's ongoing learning and development because they set firm foundations for learning and progression through school.

Good preparation for school can make all the difference throughout a child's education. Research shows that early childhood education helps prepare children for school. These

programs enhance thinking skills, school performance and social adjustment. There is also extensive research showing that early education leads to long-term improvements in achievement in schools and greater learning capacity.

Queensland is the only Australian state where state schools do not offer a full-time year of education for children before they start Year 1. Queensland children are also at least five months younger than their interstate counterparts when they start Year 1.

ACTION 2

We will provide new foundations for Queensland children entering school and consider a preparatory year of schooling.

The Queensland Government wants all children to have the best start possible to formal schooling. That is why we are running 59 trials of a full-time preparatory year for children before they enter Year 1.

Thirty-nine Preparing for School trials will start in 2003 at state, Catholic and independent school sites, and another 20 will start the year after. The trials are structured in different ways and will be delivered by a suitably qualified teacher, using specially developed curriculum guidelines. Parents will decide if their children take part.

The trials will help the Government evaluate different ways of providing quality early education that suits the needs of Queensland children and fits with the realities of daily life for parents. They will answer questions about the preparation of children for formal schooling, including the importance of extra preparation and the age at which children should start school.

If the trials are successful the Queensland Government will consider introducing a preparatory year at schools that would be available to every child and would replace existing preschool education.

The middle years of schooling

The Government also recognises that the middle years of schooling, when students are progressing through the early stage of adolescence, are crucial. These are important years in the life of a young person, not only in schooling, but also in their personal development.

Research shows that by 10 years of age, students have formed beliefs about school and about themselves as learners. These beliefs are influenced by their relationships with teachers, their skills in literacy and numeracy and ICTs, and their relationships with peers and family.

Success in the middle years of schooling equips students with the academic and social skills required in later years of learning. The Government wants to ensure students have every opportunity to succeed in the middle years and make smooth and successful transitions into senior learning.



ACTION 3

We will take a new approach to teaching and learning in the middle years of schooling.

In recent years, the middle years of schooling have become a major focus for reform and development in Queensland schools. Already, the Government has set a target in *Destination 2010* for 85 per cent of Year 5 state school students to reach the national reading benchmarks by 2005.

To further support students and their teachers, the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal¹ will provide advice by June 2003 to the Minister for Education on a range of matters including:

- the curriculum implications and policy considerations associated with adopting a Middle Phase of Schooling
- innovative ways to improve student achievements in the middle years
- providing continuous support to students through different stages of learning
- specific strategies for students at risk of leaving school early
- strengthening links between primary and secondary schools.

The Government will:

- introduce a new target for Queensland students to achieve national Year 7 literacy and numeracy benchmarks by 2005
- work with stakeholders through the Queensland Studies Authority to explore the feasibility of introducing a Year 9 literacy and numeracy test.

Case study:

Enhancing Participation through Middle Schooling

In response to research on the disengagement of young adolescents, Redeemer Lutheran College at Rochedale has adopted a middle schooling approach. This approach has made it possible to increase the size of the senior school and the subject options available to senior students, while building a middle school for Years 6, 7 and 8. The focus has been on building positive relationships and a sense of responsibility to the community. Teachers are chosen for their enthusiasm for working with young people. They take account of different learning styles, use multiple intelligence approaches, and pay particular attention to the social and emotional needs of students. Teachers plan together and teach between two and four subject areas. The middle schooling approach has had a positive effect on students, sustaining their enthusiasm and engagement in learning into the later years. Student surveys have indicated a more positive attitude towards school and towards academic effort and achievement. Students appreciate the closer relationships in the middle school and being valued as individuals.

Year 10 completion and transition into the Senior Phase of Learning

Year 10 is an important juncture in a young person's life. Some remain in school, some go on to vocational education and training, and a small number go into full-time work. We need to provide a renewed focus at this critical time to help young people make the best possible choices to improve their life chances.

Currently, senior schooling in Queensland usually means Years 11 and 12. It generally involves two consecutive years of full-time study at a school. With very few exceptions, students who enter senior do so once they have finished Year 10, and are then awarded a Senior Certificate when they complete Year 12. At present, more than a quarter of young Queenslanders leave school before the end of senior and without achieving a Senior Certificate.

ACTION 4

We will ensure completion of Year 10 to provide a solid foundation for future learning by:

- building Year 10 as a transition to the Senior Phase of Learning
- requiring schools to develop individual student plans for the Senior Phase of Learning — Senior Education and Training Plans — with young people and their parents or guardians. These plans will be developed and agreed to during Year 10
- requiring schools to register young people with the Queensland Studies Authority during Year 10 so their progress can be monitored and achievements recorded in the Senior Phase of Learning.

Our legislated requirement that young people stay at school until they complete at least Year 10 or until they turn 16 will consolidate and extend earlier learning and provide an important time of transition planning into either further schooling, vocational education and training, or combinations of these.

The transition of students through Year 10 into the Senior Phase of Learning will help students and schools focus on the importance of all young Queenslanders completing Year 10 and participating in further learning. Learning beyond Year 10 will occur in a range of settings including schools and TAFE institutes.

The Queensland Studies Authority was established to develop syllabuses from preschool to Year 12. The development of the next generation of syllabus and curriculum materials will ensure that studies undertaken in the early and middle phases of learning give young people every opportunity to achieve success in the Senior Phase of Learning. We want all young people to experience a seamless transition between the phases of learning.

Year 10 will be an important point where young people and schools work together to build on individual strengths and interests, and identify areas where more work is needed.

Individual schools and communities will determine how Year 10 is developed as the transition to the Senior Phase of

¹ Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal was established in March 2002 to provide advice on the reform of Queensland's education system.

Learning. Flexibility in the Senior Phase of Learning will mean that schools will be able to better prepare young people in Year 10 for their future studies.

Our aim is to ensure that young people embarking on their Senior Phase of Learning have the grounding to be able to achieve success in their chosen path and are given every opportunity to engage in a personally rewarding program of studies.

A number of Queensland schools are already exploring innovative approaches in Year 10, including offering transition programs that introduce students to the additional rigour of learning in Years 11 and 12.

Case study:

Burnside State High School — Foundation for Senior Studies

Burnside State High School, on the Sunshine Coast, uses Year 10 to introduce young people to senior studies. The aim is to ensure young people understand the demands of senior courses and undertake the prior learning required for these courses. Each student works with their parents and a school staff member to map out a learning and development plan, which is reviewed regularly. Foundation for Senior English and Foundation for Senior Mathematics are compulsory and students can select another four subjects. This is an opportunity to sample different subjects, and students can change subjects at the end of semester 1. At the start of Year 11, students and parents sign a senior schooling agreement that sets out enrolment conditions, the expectations of students, and their learning program for the senior years.

Case study:

St Michael's College — A Senior Curriculum Framework

This Catholic College, at Carrara on the Gold Coast, started a Senior Curriculum Framework in Year 10 in 1999. Year 10 is now a transition year for senior studies rather than the final year of junior studies. The aim is to introduce students to a range of experiences before they choose their Year 11 and 12 subjects. Students in Year 10 choose subjects that will give them an OP score and possible entry into university, or vocational subjects, or a combination of both. Everyone must study English, Mathematics and Religious Education as well as six semester units of other subjects. This program has enhanced options for students, significantly reduced the number of students changing subjects in the final two years, and better-prepared students for Years 11 and 12.

During Year 10, we will require schools to register young people with the Queensland Studies Authority. This registration will provide information about young people's intended learning options beyond Year 10. We will also require schools to develop and agree to a Senior Education and Training Plan with each student and his or her parents or guardians.

Each plan will review past achievements and provide an individual learning plan of action for the Senior Phase of Learning.

For preschool to Year 10 (P–10) schools, this means the school will develop plans for Year 10 students that link to other learning options beyond Year 10. This may involve linking with another school or a vocational education and training provider.

The Queensland Studies Authority will set the guidelines for these plans. As young people change between learning options or move into employment their plans will be updated by the relevant provider.

The Queensland Studies Authority will develop an assessment and recording framework for lifelong learning skills in the Senior Phase of Learning.

Senior Education and Training Plans will detail how schools will ensure students achieve these lifelong learning skills as part of the transition to the Senior Phase of Learning. For many students this will have occurred by the end of Year 10. For some students, skills in this area will continue to be acquired during the Senior Phase of Learning.

Reshaping senior

The Queensland Government is reforming the system because we believe all young people should have every chance to reach their full potential. We want to ensure that no-one misses out simply because the current system cannot neatly accommodate them.

ACTION 5

We will establish the quantity and quality of education and training that students must achieve to receive a Senior Certificate. This will take effect from 2006.

The current Senior Certificate, issued at the end of Year 12, is a formal record of a young person's individual achievements in approved studies during Years 11 and 12. It is a valuable record for many young people, but it can be enhanced. Our consultations have shown that people agree that there needs to be more flexibility to enable young people to undertake their Senior Phase of Learning over different periods of time.

There was strong support in the Pitman report for a Senior Certificate based on an agreed amount and standard of learning, including literacy and numeracy.

The Queensland Studies Authority will determine the quantity and quality of learning, including learning that takes place outside school, and also decide how to conduct future reviews of these requirements.

This work will be completed by the end of 2004.

While maintaining the rigour of the Senior Certificate, this new approach will:

- provide the flexibility needed to encourage more students to complete senior schooling
- enable some young people to complete their studies over a period more suited to their individual circumstances, which might include periods of part-time or full-time work and/or study
- enable exceptional students to accelerate their learning.

This change will make the Senior Certificate an even more valuable document for young people and potential employers.

ACTION 6

We will record a broader range of learning, including learning in school, vocational education and training, and other learning, that will count towards a Senior Certificate, from 2006.

The Government believes that all learning of an appropriate standard should count towards a Senior Certificate. This will give a better picture of the skills and abilities of each individual. It would also benefit those who undertake vocational education and training that is currently not counted.

From 2006, the Senior Certificate will be based on learning and achievement in:

- all school subjects
- skills for lifelong learning recognised by the Queensland Studies Authority
- recognised vocational education and training programs
- university subjects undertaken while students are at school.

This means learning undertaken with vocational education providers can count towards a Senior Certificate. The certificate will no longer be based solely on learning at school.

Some young people are learning outside of schools or vocational education providers, through employment or community activities. We want this learning, where it is of an appropriate standard, to be included on the Senior Certificate. The Queensland Studies Authority will trial new assessment and recording processes to recognise this learning and report back by the end of 2004.

Current subjects that contribute to university entrance undergo rigorous quality assurance processes. It is important to maintain the current rigour for these subjects while ensuring that students not seeking entrance to university have their learning fully recognised.

ACTION 7

We will allocate extra funding to the Queensland Studies Authority to:

- design a system so that students' achievements can be 'banked' with the Authority
- provide students and their parents or guardians with easy access to information about their achievements and progress toward a Senior Certificate.

To ensure young people have a record of their achievements, across the range of settings, we will ensure schools, TAFE and other vocational education and training providers lodge students' achievements with the Queensland Studies Authority. This will enable students to 'bank' their learning credits and monitor their progress.

The Queensland Studies Authority currently ensures that all students who complete Year 12 are issued with a Senior Certificate that records their two years of senior study at school.

From 2006, the Senior Certificate will be based on learning and achievements in both school subjects and recognised vocational education and training programs. Schools, TAFE and other vocational education providers will lodge students' achievements with the Queensland Studies Authority.

As part of the new Senior Certificate, we want students and their parents or guardians to have easy access to information about students' achievements at any time. We will enhance the existing Queensland Studies Authority database and design a new system so that the learning achievements of all young people in the Senior Phase of Learning — whether in school or vocational programs — can be lodged. Young people will be able to regularly check the amount of learning achievements that they have 'banked', and monitor their progress toward a Senior Certificate. Those young people who leave school or a vocational program to undertake full-time employment will be able to access their learning achievements should they recommence education or training.

We also want to make it easy for young people to navigate through the information on subjects and courses, particularly information that relates to careers and employment. We will provide web-based and freecall telephone-based information services on career pathways for young people. The website will provide links to online information about education and training options in various regions and link to the national online career information system *myfuture* (www.myfuture.edu.au). The freecall telephone information service will build on the guidance and support young people receive from school guidance officers, counsellors and TAFE student support services.

More options and flexibility for young people

Many education and training pathways already exist and are being used by young people. We need to make sure that education and training pathways are suited to the needs of 15- to 17-year-olds, and that their achievements are recognised.

Approximately 80 000 young Queenslanders are studying for a Senior Certificate in state and non-state schools.





Queensland schools recognise and respect the diverse needs and aspirations of young people and work to provide appropriate learning opportunities.

A further 14 000 15- to 17-year-olds study at TAFE institutes. They benefit from TAFE's job-focused courses, a broad range of vocational courses and an adult environment.

ACTION 8

We will enhance learning options that provide greater flexibility to meet the needs of even more 15- to 17-year-olds.

Schools are already providing a range of flexible options, such as flexible timetables, that allow students to undertake vocational programs or work.

To cater for the diverse needs of young people, we are also running three-year trials of multi-path colleges in Brisbane at Cooparoo, Hendra and Toowong. These colleges are regular schools that also provide flexible options over an extended school day. They cater for a wide range of people, including mature-age students and young people seeking an alternative schooling environment.

To support students at risk of disengaging from learning, Education Queensland has run trials at five education sites that provide alternatives to traditional learning methods. Research has indicated that, in the short term, these sites have a positive effect on students identified as early school leavers and those who are disruptive in a traditional environment.

Any new alternative programs will be aligned with the ongoing reform of schooling. They will be based on the best available evidence and will use local networks and community partnerships to support young people.

TAFE also provides alternative senior schooling for young people in an adult environment and with the advantage of combining senior studies with vocational education and training. About 1000 young people take these courses each year at Moreton Institute of TAFE at Alexandra Hills, Wide Bay Institute of TAFE at Hervey Bay, and Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE at Roma.

To complement existing courses and provide for more young people in TAFE institutes, we will review the range of vocational courses, including prevocational courses, to ensure that they cater for 15- to 17-year-olds.

To provide more flexible options, we will:

- continue support for the five alternative trial sites within state schools subject to local decisions on future operations
- continue to support schools that offer education programs that will re-engage young people who are at risk of disengaging from learning
- continue the Youth Access Program that provides work experience and basic skills for school students to enable them to enter apprenticeships and traineeships
- trial a new range of TAFE courses that cater to the learning needs of young people including:
 - prevocational programs that give students an appropriate transition from school to TAFE
 - packages of vocational studies, career skills, structured industry placements and personal development activities to build self-esteem
 - vocational certificates, including literacy and numeracy training, tailored for the specific needs of individuals
 - distance education offered by TAFE institutes, including tele-tutorials, online learning support, and face-to-face tutorial support where possible
 - tertiary preparation that offers a second chance to young people who have not attained tertiary entrance through senior studies
- address completion rates in TAFE and other vocational education and training by tailoring courses to 15- to 17-year-olds, and providing additional support for students.

Case study:

Rebecca succeeds across the board

Rebecca travels three hours each way to attend Moura State High School where she is completing Year 12. She attends normal classes for most of her subjects and a virtual distance education classroom for Maths C. However, this determined young woman also attends the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE, Callide-Dawson Campus. At TAFE, Rebecca has completed seven computer-related competencies towards a Diploma of Business through class participation and flexible delivery. She undertook this study to fulfil the requirement to learn a new skill for the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award and to learn the skills she would need for the future. Into this busy schedule Rebecca has also included more than 100 hours of voluntary work this year, as well as a part-time job and work on her family's farm. Combining her academic and vocational education achievements with her extracurricular and community activities has resulted in Rebecca being one of only 12 young Australians to be awarded the prestigious Bond University Vice-Chancellor's Scholarship valued at more than \$112 000. Next year Rebecca will begin her studies for a combined degree in commerce and e-commerce. Rebecca hopes to eventually find employment in either human resource management or accounting.

Case study:

PLACE — Alternative Education Program

PLACE is an alternative schooling initiative based at Woodridge State High School. The centre provides an alternative education setting as part of the high school that caters for students who have dropped out or are at risk of not completing compulsory schooling. The main aim is to assist students back into schooling. PLACE works in close partnership with students and their families to cater for individual needs of students.

One student was referred to PLACE with a history of refusing to participate in school. PLACE worked with the student through intensive intervention and support to re-enter school. The young person is now participating in school and is the recipient of the Gold Award for behaviour at his school. Students maintain contact with the program after returning to school, some even volunteering to work in the program and help other students.

ACTION 9

We will work with communities to develop localised services and better access to education and training for young people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

Two clear messages emerged from community consultation — rural, remote and Indigenous communities will need extra assistance to make these reforms work, and some communities have already found innovative local solutions.

We have set key commitments to improve participation and achievement for Indigenous students, and measure our progress in a number of strategies. These strategies include improving standards of education, improving employment and career development, improving literacy, developing school and community partnerships, and enhancing vocational education and training options.

A number of key strategic initiatives are also being trialled under Partners for Success, such as flexible staffing models and alliances between schools, health professionals and police.

Approximately 15 000 students attend P–10 schools, which provide education from preschool to Year 10. The majority of these are in rural and remote communities.

Young people in rural and remote areas and Indigenous students face a range of challenges in completing Years 11 and 12, including travelling great distances or living away from home to attend school or undertake work placement.

We will:

- develop innovative cross-sectoral partnerships between principals of P–10 schools, neighbouring high schools, boarding schools, TAFE institutes, training providers, agricultural colleges and representatives from local communities to find community solutions to enhance opportunities for young people
- investigate the expansion of vocational education and training pathways to P–10 schools in rural, remote and Indigenous communities
- use workplace assessors to recognise skills that young people achieve outside traditional learning environments, including in rural and remote areas
- support local innovative transport solutions that allow young people to undertake work experience or block training sessions
- continue to work with Indigenous communities to bring about the changes necessary for continual improvement in educational and employment outcomes for Indigenous peoples
- trial the delivery of job preparation services to Indigenous TAFE students through a Job Network provider.

Online and distance education technology will be used to provide better school and vocational learning options for young people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

Case study:

Thursday Island: Enhancing Engagement and Outcomes

Over the past three years Thursday Island High School, in the Torres Strait, has developed a range of strategies to increase the engagement of students in learning and to achieve better outcomes. Ninety-eight per cent of senior students are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. The school held a series of meetings with key community people and decided that literacy was the school's core business. It has adopted methods for teaching English as a second language, ensured that students understand the tasks expected of them, and introduced a system to encourage them to attend school and actively participate. Academic rigour has increased across the school, extra after-hours tutorials are offered to students and learning is made more meaningful through real-life tasks. In partnership with TAFE, young people from Boigu Island have been re-engaged with school through 10 structured work placements. Improvements include an increase in the number of OP-eligible students from three in 2000 to 13 in 2002, and an increase in Year 10 to Year 12 retention from 72 per cent in 2000 to 82 per cent in 2001. In 2002, 59 per cent of students achieved sound achievement or better in English, 69 per cent achieved sound achievement or better in Maths A, and five students have school-based apprenticeships or traineeships. Students have also built a vessel as part of their marine and construction studies, and a number of students have gained coxswain's qualifications.





ACTION 10

We will enhance distance, online and virtual education provision.

The Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Training offer a wide range of general education and vocational programs through schools of distance education, the Virtual Schooling Service and the Open Learning Institute of TAFE.

Distance education in Queensland caters for a variety of students including home-based learners, those in rural and remote areas, in hospital, those travelling in Australia and overseas, adults who are returning to school studies and those in alternative school settings. The Government recently announced the digitisation of critical parts of existing paper-based distance education materials to increase the flexibility of schooling for students who undertake their studies at home.

Our challenge is to build on and link up these resources to extend the learning and training opportunities for young people, including those attending schools and TAFE institutes in rural and remote areas. Furthermore, we need to better support young people as they learn in virtual classrooms.

The Virtual Schooling Service currently provides a vital online service for students, especially in rural and remote areas. The service has continued to expand in state schools, offering more subjects that continue to Year 12 and a new range of Year 11 subjects including Maths C, Economics, Physics, Modern History and Japanese.

We will:

- continue to expand the Virtual Schooling Service to increase the subject range and deliver a range of support services, such as guidance counselling online and alternative programs
- convert all schools of distance education to telephone teaching
- enhance ICT support to full-time distance education students in Years 11 and 12 in rural and remote areas
- provide more regularly programmed classes with teachers for students in Years 11 and 12 who are using distance education
- enable primary school students to return work by email
- expand online support services in vocational education and training to include learning support, career guidance, mentoring and counselling
- improve Internet access for education and training.

Case study:

The Open Learning Institute of TAFE — A Virtual Precinct

The Open Learning Institute of TAFE (OLI), in South Brisbane, offers a range of flexible, individualised learning opportunities. Many young people who are disadvantaged by personal circumstances, disability or health, those at risk of leaving school early, those without local options, and young people on the move including those living or travelling overseas have taken up these opportunities. Young people can study using paper-based packages or online. Young people are supported by local school-based learning coordinators, teachers, tutors, guidance officers, youth workers and mentors. There is also support for students with a disability and for Indigenous students. OLI provides workshops, a computer laboratory and a library as well as access to work placements and on-the-job assessment. There are many success stories. Luke became the first school-based trainee to enrol in Certificate II in Asset Maintenance (Pest Management — Technical) and began his traineeship with a Toowoomba-based pest control company. Luke has now converted to a full-time traineeship and is doing well. Julia completed courses in Interior Decoration with OLI while still at school. This helped her to achieve her goal to commence a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Griffith University.

ACTION 11

We will ensure that more young people who undertake vocational education and training in schools achieve qualifications that are highly regarded by industry.

Vocational education and training in schools caters for the diverse needs of young people, gives them more opportunities in life after school, and encourages more young people to remain at school until Year 12.

Vocational education and training is offered in senior school in three ways. Some vocational education is embedded in senior school subjects — that is, vocational competencies are included in school subjects. In other cases, a vocational education qualification is stand-alone — that is, it is taught in its own right as separate school subjects. Stand-alone vocational education and training in schools is taught by schools themselves or by training providers such as TAFE, using nationally accepted training. Finally, students can take up a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship where they are placed with an employer and the State Government pays for their training. This training is delivered by TAFE and other training providers.

Vocational education and training in schools is a Queensland success story. Queensland schools lead the nation. In 2001, more than 55 per cent of students in Years 11 and 12 were enrolled in vocational education and training programs. Young Queenslanders accounted for more than half of all the school-based apprentices and trainees in Australia.

We want more young people who study vocational education in schools to leave with qualifications that are highly regarded. This means:

- helping young people to choose courses that lead to qualifications
- making sure that there is a strong component of workplace experience in the courses
- encouraging all students to complete their courses
- ensuring schools deliver vocational education and training that satisfies the quality requirements of industry.

We will provide more options for students who wish to undertake a vocational education and training program that is not available at their school.

The Queensland Studies Authority will:

- develop a better way to accredit and deliver vocational education and training in schools, in conjunction with the Training Recognition Council
- develop a package of vocational education and training programs that will:
 - lead to qualifications
 - include work placement, so that they meet vocational education and training standards
 - promote the completion of stand-alone vocational education and training programs, or school-based apprenticeships and traineeships
 - be counted on the Senior Certificate.

ACTION 12

We will provide more school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships allow senior school students to combine studies towards their Senior Certificate with training as a paid employee for a nationally recognised vocational education and training qualification. When they complete Year 12, they not only have a Senior Certificate, they have a head start on a career.

In 2001 the Queensland Government undertook to increase the total number of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships by 60 per cent by mid 2004. The Government has provided training funds so that, on average, 3500 more school students can start an apprenticeship or traineeship each year. The number of school students willing to take on a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship is ensuring these funds are well utilised.

We will set targets for the employment of school-based apprentices and trainees and we will also top up the Commonwealth Government's incentives by offering incentives to employers to take on up to 1750 extra school-based apprenticeships and trainees. We will offer new incentives of:

- up to \$4000 to not-for-profit community organisations for each school-based placement that provides at least 96 days work in two years
- up to \$2000 to private employers who provide a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship for the required period to young people living in rural and remote communities.

ACTION 13

We will improve the recognition of learning and qualifications between the education and training sectors.

We need to ensure that learning in school, TAFE and university leads to qualifications and credits that are recognised by other institutions and employers. Providing valued and meaningful qualifications is the goal of most institutions. However, questions have been raised through the Gardner report about the extent to which organisations and institutions recognise partially completed work, and in some cases, entire qualifications.

We will establish a committee with an independent chair to:

- develop guidelines for credit transfer arrangements between institutions across all education and training sectors
- oversee the work of smaller groups focusing on different subject areas.

The chair and a committee will be appointed in early 2003 with the committee to report back by the end of 2003.

ACTION 14

We will investigate ways of giving young people equitable, affordable access to vocational education and training in schools and TAFE.





The Government's commitment to young people in the Senior Phase of Learning includes providing them with access to learning in a wide range of settings. Vocational education and training is a major option — through both schools and TAFE.

Vocational education and training must be affordable for young people. TAFE fees are already quite low, because the Government pays most of the costs, and most people aged 15 to 17 years already receive concessions. However, we want to ensure that students studying vocational education and training in schools and students enrolled in TAFE are able to access vocational education and training on equal terms and at reasonable rates.

In 2003, the Queensland Government will investigate how to make student fees for vocational education and training consistent for 15- to 17-year-olds, whether they are enrolled in a school or in TAFE.

ACTION 15

We will provide an employment program to assist young people who are at risk of disengaging from learning or who are not served by formal education and training options.

The primary focus of the education and training system is, rightly, on increasing the number of young people who complete a Senior Certificate or Certificate III vocational qualification. We acknowledge, however, that there are young people who are at risk of opting out of formal learning. Some of these young people are in part-time training or part-time work. Others are facing personal issues, which result in gaps in their education and make it difficult for them to participate in mainstream options. Without alternative options, these young people face the possibility of long periods of unemployment and disengagement from the community.

The Department of Employment and Training has developed an intensive and specialised employment and training program specifically for early school leavers aged 15 to 17

years. It is designed to cater for those young people who are not yet ready to return to more formal learning environments such as school or TAFE.

The program will offer:

- opportunities to re-engage with the community through outreach, personal development and team building activities aimed at improving self-esteem and behaviour
- referrals and links to personal and social support services such as housing, family and health
- access to learning options that address gaps in learning such as literacy and numeracy support, bridging programs, life skills, and accredited vocational training
- workplace learning through links to work experience, practical training projects, community work, apprenticeships and traineeships, or Commonwealth programs
- preparation for employment with the development of résumé writing and interview skills, and job search, job placement and post-placement support and mentoring.

The program will be delivered through local government and community organisations, which are best placed to build ongoing relationships with other youth services. TAFE will work with these organisations to deliver training outside traditional classroom settings. The aim of the program will be to help young people achieve their immediate goals, and also to prepare them for a return to education and training at a later stage. The program will be trialled in 2003 and introduced in 2005.

More support for young people

To help young people move successfully through the Senior Phase of Learning we will offer more career and personal support.

We also recognise that some young people enter into full-time work without obtaining qualifications. To ensure that they have every opportunity to succeed, we will encourage them to return to learning and we will acknowledge previous achievements.

Schools, TAFE institutes and other participating vocational education and training providers will become the local coordinators for renegotiating and monitoring Senior Education and Training Plans. They will work with other agencies and providers to implement these plans.

ACTION 16

We will help young people improve participation in learning and achieve qualifications.

The role of guidance officers and counsellors varies across communities depending on local needs and is critical in supporting young people with personal and career counselling.

TAFE institutes also provide career advice and personal counselling that assists young people to make their way through courses.

Youth Support Coordinators, funded by the Department of Families and employed by community-based organisations, provide very focused one-to-one counselling for young people at risk of disengaging from learning.

Throughout the consultation process, there was strong support for schools and TAFE to have greater flexibility to spend funds as required to meet the needs of the young people in their local communities.

The Government will provide funding to:

- engage up to 100 additional youth support workers
- assist schools and TAFE institutes to coordinate vocational education and training and enhance career guidance and counselling. Schools and TAFE institutes may wish to pool these funds at the local or regional level. They will have the flexibility to buy services and expertise as required
- establish a grants program to trial initiatives that improve participation, retention and attainment for 15- to 17-year-olds in learning, including:
 - offering Fresh Starts — an innovative program of workplace learning and community activities designed to re-engage young people who have disengaged from learning
 - supporting schools to provide a range of education programs in new learning environments for those students not suited to traditional schooling
 - creating local models to support young people who need to be away from home for schooling, work experience or work placement
 - providing targeted support, such as transition brokers, for young people who are making the transition to work or further learning in Indigenous communities
 - purchasing industry or vocational education and training expertise to support schools in rural and remote areas
 - using mentors — experienced people from the community with local knowledge, expertise and standing — who will volunteer to work with young people at risk of not achieving
 - using the arts and music to re-engage young people with the learning process.

Case study: Sisters of Mercy — Jobtrack

The Sisters of Mercy, at Zillmere, developed Jobtrack to assist people aged between 15 and 25 years, who have no family support. The program is particularly for those who are homeless, in care, and those who have left school early. The program helps them improve literacy and numeracy skills, develop life skills such as cooking, learn work skills and find jobs. Jobtrack connects with other programs delivered by the Sisters of Mercy, including accommodation services and individual support. Two hundred and nine young people have taken part in programs run in northern metropolitan areas. Of these, 97 gained work and 39 are undertaking further education and training. Another program has been developed specifically for young Indigenous people who are in care or at risk. These people begin with sport and recreational activities and are then gradually introduced to other aspects of the program. Of the 37 participants in this program, 25 found work and seven entered further education and training. As a result, these people emerge from this program more skilled, confident and motivated. The Queensland Government has funded Jobtrack under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative.

We recognise that teachers and young people in school need support from a range of professionals and para-professionals.

These initiatives will complement the important role of school guidance officers and counsellors, and mental health promotion officers. The Gardner report found that guidance officers in high schools often spend much of their time on personal and crisis counselling. Increasing the number of Youth Support Workers will refocus the work of guidance officers on providing career and vocational advice.

ACTION 17

We will make schools, TAFE institutes and other participating vocational education and training providers the local coordinators for reviewing, monitoring and implementing Senior Education and Training Plans.

Schools, TAFE institutes or other participating providers will have the primary responsibility for coordinating each young person's learning opportunities in the Senior Phase of Learning. Responsibility will rest with the main learning provider with which a young person is enrolled.

They will:

- provide learning opportunities and/or negotiate with other agencies to provide opportunities
- update Senior Education and Training Plans
- monitor attendance, participation and achievement
- build partnerships between learning providers, employers and youth service providers throughout the community.



Across Queensland, there is already a range of local service providers and local networks. They include schools and TAFE, state and local government, Commonwealth-funded programs and community organisations. In some cases, they are already coming together in innovative partnerships that benefit young people.

Case study:

Riviera Marine — Apprenticeships Project

Riviera Marine (International) Pty Ltd is a boat manufacturing company on the Coomera River on the Gold Coast. The company was having trouble finding tradespeople to meet production demands and decided to train its own staff.

A partnership was developed with Helensvale State High School to offer senior students school-based apprenticeships in boat building. The project has now expanded to 14 schools. The company manages recruitment and selection. Successful students complete a work experience trial one day a week in Term 4 of Year 11. In Year 12, they start their apprenticeship with one-and-a-half days a week at Riviera Marine and three-and-a-half days at school. Gold Coast Institute of TAFE delivers the training. Helensvale State High School has employed an industry-trained teacher to deliver off-the-job training to all the apprentices and to mentor the apprentices. There is also a full-time, non-teaching industry liaison officer who communicates between the company and the schools. The aim is that at the end of Year 12 the students will become full-time apprentices at Riviera Marine. Currently, there are 138 young people in training. The partnership between the company, schools and TAFE is a success with student demand exceeding places.

Working together — building new community partnerships

The Queensland Government is committed to breaking down barriers that prevent young people learning and achieving, whether these barriers are structural, financial or cultural.

That is why we are building an unprecedented partnership between parents, students, state schools, non-state schools, TAFE, training providers, the Queensland Studies Authority, community organisations, universities, and employers to trial and implement the package of reforms outlined in this paper.

Ground-breaking partnerships like this can improve coordination, reduce duplication, close any gaps that exist and draw on the best from each partner. This kind of cooperation and commitment can make all the difference for young Queenslanders.

ACTION 18

The Government will foster a Community Commitment to young people by building partnerships at the local level.

Community consultations and successful existing programs have made it clear that the best way to achieve local solutions that work for local communities is to use local knowledge and expertise.

Students will need support as they undertake a range of learning to achieve a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III vocational qualification. By working together and using local networks, schools, vocational education and training providers, employers, government agencies and community organisations can support young Queenslanders to achieve success as individuals and as members of society.

Our new Community Commitment to young people will involve:

- improved planning and coordination between schools, vocational education and training providers, and community agencies to improve services
- better use of local expertise and innovation, including building on existing networks, to generate solutions that cater for all young people in local areas
- working with local employers and authorities to generate new solutions including more work placement opportunities, providing career advice and building a local commitment to young people.

We will amend the *Training and Employment Act 2000* and the *Education (General Provisions) Act 1989* to include, in the objects, the fostering of a Community Commitment to youth, and to include provisions to the legislation incorporating the intent of the national education, employment, training, youth affairs and community services ministers' declaration *Stepping forward: improving pathways for all young people*.

ACTION 19

We will develop District Youth Achievement Plans that will set local targets for participation, retention and attainment in education, training or employment programs.

The Government has a significant investment in the education and training of young people. It is important that we coordinate programs and services at the local level, across state and non-state schools, vocational education and training providers and other services to cut duplication, use resources more efficiently, and close gaps in services.

The development of District Youth Achievement Plans will require districts and communities to understand the local environment, as well as the factors that influence how well young people make the transition from school to further education, training and work. The district will need a comprehensive analysis of the local economy, youth employment, the pattern of education and training, transport, the types of risks that young people face and how well existing programs and services work together. Through the development of District Youth Achievement Plans, we will also explore how to use existing resources more flexibly to better meet the needs of young people.

Local networks will play a key role in developing District Youth Achievement Plans. These will be developed in collaboration between state schools, non-state schools, TAFE, other representatives of vocational education and training providers, universities and youth services. Commonwealth involvement will be critical to the success of these plans to coordinate a range of existing programs and services.

The way ahead

The Queensland Government recognises that our young people are the future of our state and it is dedicated to making these reforms a reality.

While the legislative changes will not come into effect until 2006, we will start implementing the White Paper reforms through trials in six selected areas across the state from semester 2, 2003. These trials will involve students who are in Year 10 in 2003 and will include:

- local initiatives to improve participation, retention and attainment for students in the Senior Phase of Learning, including new or enhanced alternative programs. These trials will be supported by grants program funding
- implementing District Youth Achievement Plans
- building Year 10 as the transition to the Senior Phase of Learning, including developing Senior Education and Training Plans, and registering students with the Queensland Studies Authority.

We will also start work immediately on:

- developing the new Senior Certificate that will report achievements in school and vocational education and training, and which could include work and other learning
- improving access to information about students' achievements.

We will work toward implementing other reforms by 2006 including introducing the new Senior Certificate, and introducing legislation that will:

- make it compulsory for young people to stay at school until they finish Year 10 or have turned 16, whichever comes first
- require young people to then participate in education and training for:
 - a further two years; or
 - until they have gained a Senior Certificate; or
 - until they have gained a Certificate III vocational qualification; or
 - until they have turned 17
- provide exemptions for young people who enter full-time work after they have either completed Year 10 or turned 16.

The Queensland Government's education and training commitment builds on our Smart State vision of a state of prosperity and social justice with a commitment to equality of opportunity.

The reforms in this White Paper outline how we intend to deliver the best opportunities by creating a system that builds the mind and character of every young Queenslanders.

We look forward to working together in partnership with parents, teachers, employers and the community to achieve these goals and help all young Queenslanders reach their full potential and prepare them for lifelong learning.

Summary of consultation

Thousands of Queenslanders took the opportunity to have their say on the education and training reforms proposed in the Green Paper, *Queensland the Smart State — Education and Training Reforms for the Future*.

A total of 58 000 Green Papers and 4000 Green Papers for young people were distributed and community consultation ran for five months, from March to July 2002. People gave their feedback in a variety of ways — at meetings, through the questionnaire in the Green Paper, via a website and in written submissions.

Almost 8000 people participated in 39 community consultation forums held around the state. Forums were held at 14 state schools, 10 Catholic and Independent schools, seven TAFE institutes and eight community sites.

A significant feature of the consultation process was the involvement of students in state and non-state schools and TAFE, and the involvement of young people, including those who were not in learning or in work. They responded with frank and fresh views and ideas. Their collective contribution was invaluable.

We received feedback from 160 people who attended eight Ministerial Regional Forums. Many more people attended other key stakeholder consultations and community meetings to hear about the proposed reforms and give their views.

Approximately 600 individuals, groups and peak organisations provided responses, either in writing or online.

Queenslanders offered thoughtful and thought-provoking views. They talked about the needs of different areas across the state and shared examples of what worked in their local communities.

This is a summary of what the Government heard.

Our proposal to have all young people in full-time education, training or work, or a combination of these — learning or earning — received very strong support.

There were diverse views on whether raising the school leaving age was the way to achieve the ‘learning or earning’ proposal. Approximately half of all respondents supported the proposal to raise the age, to either 16 or 17. Some people gave conditional support and expressed concerns about adequate funding for these reforms.

Most people supported reorganising senior schooling to include Years 10, 11 and 12. Approximately half of all respondents supported a proposal to make Year 10 a ‘stocktake’ year. Many supporters also wanted to ensure

Year 10 would remain a year of rigorous learning. A number of people believed the term ‘stocktake’ was not appropriate, suggesting instead the term ‘transition’.

Respondents indicated that they believed any changes to senior schooling would affect middle schooling in two ways — through the possible transfer of Year 7 into secondary school and through changes to the curriculum. There were differing views on whether Year 7 should be moved into high school and suggestions about what changes to make to the Year 7 curriculum. Views ranged from making it harder, to making it more varied, more concentrated on core curriculum or more vocationally oriented.

The majority of respondents supported a proposal to record a broader range of student achievements, including those obtained outside school. There were differing views on whether the Senior Certificate was the place to record this information, with some suggesting a portfolio of students’ achievements could be introduced. The majority believed the record should be available at any point during Years 10 to 12.

Most forum responses indicated that there would need to be a new assessment framework to ensure assessments were accurate and consistent. Opinions from submissions varied. Some suggested this should be the responsibility of the Queensland Studies Authority.

Respondents agreed that information, coordination and support is required for young people to move successfully through school, or into further education, training or work. Many respondents believed schools should play a central coordinating role for many young people, but they did not believe schools should be the main site or the only site for this coordination. There was an emphasis on shared responsibility across education and training providers and community support agencies.

There was widespread support for a proposal to provide individualised assistance to young people at risk of leaving school and not going on to work, training or further education.

A majority of respondents also supported a proposal for youth workers to assist more young people to stay at school or enter further education, training or work. There were a number of qualifications with the main comments concerning adequate or ongoing funding.

In general, there was a strong message that the community wants young people to have the opportunities and support they require to move successfully through school and into further education, training or work.

Summary of the Pitman and Gardner reports

The Education Department engaged John Pitman, then Director of the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, to review the Senior Certificate. The aim was to see if the Senior Certificate should be changed to assist the Government's goal of increasing the number of young people completing Year 12.

Professor Margaret Gardner, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland, was engaged to review the links between senior schooling and further education, training and work. She found a need for greater collaboration between the education, training and employment sectors to ensure access and support for all young people.

Both reports were released in August 2002.

A total of 72 recommendations are contained in the Pitman report. These recommendations encompass the following eight broad areas:

- The Senior Stage of Education
- Domains of Learning for the Senior Certificate
- Threshold Quantum
- Senior Plans
- The Auspices of the School
- Support Personnel
- Three Spheres of Responsibility
- Tertiary Entrance.

A total of 27 recommendations are contained in the Gardner report, which focus on the following four areas:

- Patterns of Education — Journeys and Consequences
- Access and Local Flexibility
- Connecting the Sectors
- Guidance in a Complex Field.

In August 2002 the Government held information sessions with key education stakeholders in Mount Isa, Cairns, Rockhampton and Brisbane. These sessions gave stakeholders an opportunity to discuss the findings and recommendations in the reports, and their feedback assisted the Government in drawing up the reforms contained in this White Paper.

The sessions indicated that stakeholders supported the following ideas:

- changing the criterion for the award of a Senior Certificate from a time-based system to an achievement-based system that includes minimum standards for literacy and numeracy
- 'banking' of learning credits centrally as students accumulate learning leading to the award of a Senior Certificate

- the establishment of a Senior Phase of Learning allowing different timings depending on individual students' circumstances
- the concept of recording achievements occurring outside school settings
- Senior Plans for all students entering the Senior Phase of Learning
- enhanced support for students disengaged from learning, such as trialling Fresh Starts and mentors
- enhanced articulation between sectors of education
- improved collaboration and pooling resources across education and training sectors.

Stakeholders wanted to have further involvement in how some of these recommendations would be implemented. In particular, how a minimum quantum would be established.

Stakeholders expressed the following concerns about some of the recommendations:

- although stakeholders supported the concept of experiential learning, people did not support the mandatory inclusion of experiential learning and generic skills for the award of a Senior Certificate
- people expressed strong concern at the expectation that all students sit the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test
- although there was support for the concept of non-syllabus learning, the feasibility of assessing and recording this learning was questioned
- learning in the Senior Stage of Education being exclusively under the auspices of a school was not supported. People felt that learning in the Senior Phase of Learning should come under the auspices of the education and/or training provider delivering the learning
- people believed the current OP (overall position) system was working well but that, as it was more than 11 years old, a review of tertiary entrance was warranted in the future.

Although stakeholders supported a move away from the time-based system towards providing young people with greater flexibility, they did raise concerns about a lack of time constraints and ensuring the currency of 'banked' learning.

As a result of all the feedback we have received, this paper has incorporated 62 recommendations fully and 22 partially. These relate to:

- adopting a Senior Phase of Learning
- strengthening the Senior Certificate
- learning plans for young people in the senior years
- better links between the education, training and work sectors
- extra support for young people.

It should be noted that many of the recommendations will be taken forward as broad policy directions with further work and negotiation to occur before they are implemented. For example, the move to an achievement-based Senior Certificate is fully supported but the details of the achievement levels required will be determined by the Queensland Studies Authority in consultation with key educational stakeholders. Likewise, many of the recommendations will be progressed through trials to determine whether they will be adopted by Government in

the longer term. For example, the assessment of learning in the workplace or through community activities will be trialled.

Of the other recommendations, 10 require further consideration by Government, the most significant of which was the call for a review of tertiary entrance procedures from both reports.

Only five recommendations — relating to the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test and all learning coming under the auspices of the school — will not be taken forward.