

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN VICTORIA'S YOUTH TRAINING CENTRES

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THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS TO YOUTH in custody has provided educators and custodians with abundant material for dialogue over the past century.

The *Way Out* Conference held in Perth, Western Australia (Sirr 1992), investigated the provision of education and training to offenders. Many papers provided evidence that each jurisdiction in Australia has long been grappling with the issues of identifying the best ways in which education and training programs can be delivered to young people in custody.

There has been a chequered history of program delivery in youth custodial settings. Semmens (1992) has indicated the varying perceptions in current program delivery and custodial care models and their relative focuses. Over time, these focuses have been on either the rehabilitative function; the re-integration function; or the reconciliation function (Semmens 1992, p. 28).

As Meatheringham (1992, p. 31) advised, underpinning these foci is the "economic reality" of the institution in which these programs are delivered. Further, in his analyses of institutional practices, Foucault identified the complexities of introducing change into existing operational structures and providing a framework to understand the reasons for and nature of resistance to change within and between institutions and states (Cohen 1985, p. 135; Foucault 1980, p. 51; Foucault 1977, p. 194).

Although this paper will not investigate the intricacies of change management it is acknowledged that the planning, implementing and evaluation of programs and their delivery in institutions must recognise and address a range of complex issues. In terms of vocational education and training for young people in custody, the key message of both Semmens (1992) and Broadhurst (1992) was that despite the amount of energy expended into the provision of programs for young people in custody, there is very little, if any, evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs.

The Department of Health and Community Services Victoria (H&CS) and the Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE) have collaborated to develop a structure in which vocational education and training programs can be delivered to young people in custody in Victoria with a clearly defined program rationale, appropriate program resourcing, a policy framework and evaluation strategies.

To place the Victorian situation in context, this paper will consider the current national emphasis on training for young people and then address the manner in which Victoria has chosen to plan, implement and evaluate vocational training programs for young people in custody.

National Developments¾ Training for Youth

The early 1990s saw significant developments in the way that Australia positioned itself to be a more competitive force in the international marketplace. In the broad sense, the Federal Government facilitated efforts in industry restructuring and workplace reform. As part of this process the Federal Government also identified youth participation in vocational education and training as a priority.

The Review into Young People's Participation in Post Compulsory Education and Training (1991), also known as the Finn Review, presented a series of recommendations which in turn laid the platform for further significant reports including the following:

- the Deveson Report, *Taskforce, Pathways in Education and Training Report* (Department of School Education 1992);
- the Carmichael Report on *The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System* (Employment and Skills Formation Council 1992); and
- the Mayer Committee Report on employment-related key competencies (Australia Education Council 1992).

The Finn Review recommended that there needs to be greater participation of young people in formally recognised education and training . . . so that by the year 2001, 95 percent of 19 year olds should have completed Year 12, or an initial post school qualification, or be participating in formally recognised education or training (Health & Community Services 1993, p. 101).

The Carmichael Report (Employment and Skills Formation Council 1992) also provided a focus on young people and recommended alternative ways in which young people could enter the workforce via the Australian Vocational Certificate Training System.

This report built on the recommendations from the Finn Report regarding the attainment of competencies. However, Carmichael acknowledged the current lack of access to a significant number of young people to vocational education and training, and proposed strategies for young people to gain access to quality vocational education and training.

The issue of access to training pathways by those groups of people with special needs was a focus of the Deveson Report, *Pathways in Education and Training* (Department of School Education 1992). Recommendation 25 of the report specified that mechanisms need to be in place between H&CS, the Department of School Education and the Ministry of Employment, Post-Secondary Education and Training to ensure access to education and training for disadvantaged young people.

The Mayer Report identified a range of seven key competencies which are considered essential for effective participation in the emerging work organisation. These key competencies would not only constitute an integral component of the Australian Vocational Certificate but are also essential for participation in further study and in general life.

In addition to these significant reports, the Federal Government has also provided significant resources to implement a *National Employment and Training Plan for Young Australians* (1993). Through this plan, funding has been provided to introduce those strategies identified in the earlier reports. Again, this process identified specific assistance for disadvantaged youth to access training programs through various training agencies of which TAFE is a significant provider.

To coordinate these processes and establish a new national system of vocational education and training, the Federal Government established the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). One of the ANTA priorities for 1994 is to create and promote opportunities for lifelong learning. Specific objectives for this priority include the consideration of the competency needs of a diverse range of clients including the disadvantaged. Another is the development of flexible funding arrangements which promote greater access to groups with low participation rates.

Young people in custody are identified as an appropriate target group in all of the recently developed reports and agencies.

Developments in Victoria to 1993

In order to consider the current status of vocational education and training delivery in Victorian Youth Training Centres (YTC) it is worth reviewing the various developments within Victoria over the past few years.

Until January 1993 the provision of education and training programs to young people in custody in Victorian YTCs was the responsibility of the primary schools sector of the Department of School Education (DSE). For many years this provision had been delivered within the special education sector of the Department of School Education.

Since the early 1980s there have been various investigations into the most appropriate provider for education and training programs for post compulsory school-aged students. Both the Blackburn Report into Post Compulsory Schooling (Department of School Education 1984a) and the Collins Report into Integration in Victorian Education (1984b) presented recommendations which specified that TAFE had a significant role to provide quality vocational education and training programs for young people in YTCs as well as those in prison.

These recommendations were also reinforced by the Skilled to Change Report (1990) which emphasised the following needs in program delivery by YTCs:

- the delivery of accredited programs;
- the development of appropriate adult basic education programs;
- the provision of apprenticeship opportunities; and
- the introduction of flexible hours for program delivery (H&CS Industry Training Plan 1993, p. 3).

Since this time a significant focus has centred around the role of TAFE and the provision of vocational education and training for young people emerged in the National Agenda.

Victorian YTCs³/₄ Vocational Education and Training

In January 1993, the responsibility for delivering education and training programs to young people in custody in the YTCs transferred from the primary schools sector of the Department of Schools Education to the State Training System.

The factors underpinning this change were elaborated by the 1994 H&CS Industry Training Plan (1993) as follows:

- the identified link between training and employment and successful re-integration into the community;
- the recommendations of the three Commonwealth and State Government reports (Finn, Carmichael and Deveson) which relate to providing greater access to entry level training for young people;
- the high percentage of young people who are unemployed and not in any education or training at the time of entry to YTCs;
- the capacity of the State Training System to make a special case for young offenders aged 15-17 years to access vocational education and training;
- the successful development of vocational education programs in corrections settings through the development of an Industry Training Plan;
- the discrepancy whereby young people in prison are able to access vocational education through a TAFE campus at each prison, whereas young offenders in YTCs have limited access to accredited vocational education and training;

- the State Training System's commitment to ensuring access to vocational training for disadvantaged groups (H&CS Industry Training Plan 1993, p. 5).

In order to facilitate the change, the model for vocational education and training program delivery in the Victorian corrections system was used to provide the framework for establishing a complementary process for youth in detention in the H&CS Youth Training System.

Victoria has a legislative framework which facilitates the establishment of key advisory and implementation committees which can cooperatively and collaboratively plan for the most appropriate program profile for each location. An Industry Training Board (ITB) was established to provide direct vocational education and training needs advice to the State Training System.

The Corrections Industry Training Board

The Office of Corrections Industry Training Board (ITB), established in 1992, has the specific charter to provide advice to the State Training System:

. . . on policy, training needs, priorities and resource allocation for service delivery of . . . education and training . . . (Office of Corrections Industry Training Plan 1992).

The ITB provided this advice in the form of an annual Industry Training Plan. The Plan presented to the OTFE develops a statement of agreement with the ITB. This statement of agreement is a primary tool for obtaining resources for TAFE colleges to deliver programs to meet the agreed priorities.

The Corrections Network Management Consortium

As part of the State Training System, specific TAFE colleges are identified to act as designated providers or network managers for different fields of study. In particular, designated providers and network managers respond to the priorities within the relevant industry training plans by ensuring consistency in the development of curriculum and program delivery throughout the State.

Simmons and Wilson (1992) outlined the role of the Broadmeadows College of TAFE and the network manager for corrections education in Victoria, in establishing a management consortium consisting of senior managers from each of the colleges responsible for the delivery of programs in corrections settings. Representatives from the CSD, Adult Community and Further Education and OTFE are also in the consortium.

For the Victorian context, it was noted:

The legislative and structural framework which fosters the relationship between the State Training [System] and [Correctional Services Division] in Victoria has provided a valuable tool for the development and implementation of relevant vocational and industrial training. It provides an excellent example of inter-agency cooperation at State Government level (Simmons & Wilson 1992, p. 237).

The challenge arose to use the benefits of these existing structures to meet the training needs of young people in YTCs.

It was resolved by Health and Community Services and OTFE to use the structure of both the Corrections ITB and the Corrections Network Management Consortium as vehicles to address the Vocational Education and Training program for these clients (H&CS 1993, p. 2). Whilst this structure provided an expedient way to access a successful process, it was imperative that the Office of Corrections perspective and the H&CS perspective were kept completely separate as there was no desire to see an inherent linkage between YTCs and prisons.

Consequently, the Consortium and ITB have ensured that the issues relating to both client groups are treated separately and a separate committee of the Consortium was established to address program planning, implementation and evaluation issues for those programs for young people in custody.

Health and Community Services Industry Training Plan

To distinguish between identifying the vocational education and the training needs for Corrections clients and H&CS clients, a separate Industry Training Plan for H&CS was developed.

The H&CS ITP clearly enunciates the vocational education and training needs of those young people in the state's YTCs and for those young offenders on community based orders. Further, the plan recognises the specific training requirements of identified groups within the young offender population. These groups include the following:

- young Kooris;
- young women;
- young people with intellectual disabilities; and
- young people from a non-English speaking background.

Within the State Training System, the training needs of all of these groups are cross referenced in the ITPs of the generic industry areas. Consequently the focus on the training requirements of the particular young offender group is acknowledged through the wider community.

The benefits of this process are as follows:

- the vocational education training needs of young offenders are ascertained using the same processes used for any other member, group or organisation in the community;
- young offenders either in custody or under supervision within the community can access national and or statewide accredited courses available to the wider community;

- the programs accessed by young offenders whilst they are in custody or under supervision are widely available in the community following the offenders' release from either custody or community supervision.

Current Delivery

As a result of the planning processes outlined above, the State Training System provides the responsible TAFE college with the funding to resource those programs identified to meet the clients' needs.

For the YTCs, the program profiles for each location were specified in a performance agreement between the college and the OTFE. This agreement specifies the expected training outcomes and the resources provided to reach those outcomes (*see Appendix 1*).

Whilst the systemic structures have been developed to identify the program parameters and the resource requirements, the implementation and evaluation processes require further consideration.

Broadhurst (1992, p. 56) stated:

As practitioners know the gulf between the theory and praxis is wide and creating, implementing, developing, and administering such programs is easier said than done. It is clear that only the best conceived, led, resourced and staffed efforts will make sufficient impact and to find these a commitment . . . to monitoring and evaluation will be required.

In Victoria, there is a commitment to identifying needs, developing, resourcing and implementing programs and evaluating programs. Whilst the relationship between the State Training System and H&CS (Juvenile Justice) is still in its infancy the outcomes of the evaluation cannot be considered influential as this point of time. However, the solid base upon which the planning has been developed provides a sound platform for both short and long term evaluation.

Conclusion

Within Victoria, the cooperation between the major agencies concerned with vocational education and training and young offenders have capitalised on the significant national developments to support youth training and employment.

In particular, the planning structures in Victoria allow provision of vocational education and training programs available to young people in the wider community to be accessible to those young offenders in custody.

The evaluation and monitoring structures in place within both the H&CS and the OTFE have yet to provide any conclusive data regarding the effectiveness of the program provision, however early indicators show that consultation and planning has already broadened young offenders' access into the world of vocational education and training. This is exemplified by one student's comment appearing in the OTFE journal *Training Fax*:

Some of the trainees who made clocks in the furniture studies course had them out on display during the certificate presentation. Some of us gave our clocks to our mums for Mother's Day.

I was really nervous when my name was called out to receive my certificate. I did not like school in the past, but I really liked the TAFE course I did, and I worked hard to get my certificate. I gave my certificate to mum who was at the ceremony, to take home and frame for me.

Since the presentation I enrolled in another Broadmeadows College of TAFE course. This time I am doing Maths. When I finish that, hopefully I'll get another certificate (Mick, 14 June, 1993).

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APPENDIX 1

Table 1

Broadmeadows College of TAFE^{3/4} Turana Campus

<i>Course Area</i>	<i>No. of Groups</i>	<i>Sch</i>	<i>Funding</i>
Adult basic Education	5	2 400	\$128 800
COS Core Studies	3	7 200	\$77 328
Computing	3	4 325	\$44 288
Introduction to Trade Units	20	4 000	\$54 800
COS Stream Studies	7	6 400	\$88 480
Engineering (Broad based modules)	2	2 000	\$27 400
Certificate of Kitchen Attending	2	2 400	\$32 880
Small Engine Maintenance	3	1 200	\$16 440
Car Detailing	3	600	\$8 220
Ausmusic	3	3 600	\$22 932
SUB TOTAL:			\$501 648

Equipment:

Hospitality	\$ 10 000
Horticulture	\$ 7 000
Computing	\$ 32 900

Other:

Vocational Counsellor (salary and on costs) —to coordinate services across all YTCs	\$ 55 000
Music Teacher and Program Coordinator (salary and oncosts) —to coordinate music programs across all YTCs	\$ 55 000
Campus Allowance	\$ 50 000
Develop and conduct staff development programs for teachers and administrative staff at YTC campuses	\$ 10 000

Total: \$721 548

Adjustment to Broadmeadows Budget

In the role of Network Manager for Corrections and YTCs:

- undertake a research project which identifies the vocational education and training needs of young offenders, exiting YTCs or serving community based orders under H&CS supervision and make recommendations on strategies to meet those vocational education and training needs identified; and
- provide an evaluation report on the implementation of the Vocational Education and Training Strategy for offenders in YTCs in the first year of operation.

\$20 000

Table 2

<i>Course</i>	<i>Sch</i>	<i>Funding</i>
Certificate General Education	2 EFT	\$85 000
COS Core subjects	4 000	\$44 000
COS Stream		
- Hospitality	6 000	\$82 800
- Rural/Horticulture	3 800	\$45 600
- Automotive	4 250	\$46 750
- Recreation	5 400	\$59 400
- Business	1 200	\$13 200
Engineering	1 100	\$12 100
Commercial Music Certificate	3 200	\$35 200
Introduction to Furniture Studies	2 500	\$27 500
Introduction to Building Studies	6 400	\$76 800
Car detailing/Windscreen	1 400	\$16 800
Certificate Kitchen Attending	2 640	\$29 040
Chainsaw Operation (level 1)	1 800	\$9 600
Forklift Learners Permit	800	\$10 560
Arts/Ceramics/L. work	2 880	\$28 000
Sub Total:		\$622 350
Campus Allowance		\$ 50 000
Hospitality Facilities		\$ 15 000
Computer Facilities		<u>\$ 20 000</u>
Total:		\$707 350