



Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee

Inquiry into student pathways to in-demand industries

Name: Harlequin Goodes

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Bio:

Harlequin is a 24-year-old from the Latrobe valley in Gippsland.

Harlequin is currently studying community services at her local Tafe; she is also a passionate youth advocate and works closely with young people and their support services in order to advocate for regional youth voices.

Miss Goodes also works part time at a local youth centre and continues to volunteer time at many community events. She also sits on two committees at this time and looks forward to continuing her education and strengthening her community ties.

Summary of consultations:

Twenty five (25) young people from Gippsland were interviewed.

Jacob-24-M. rural Victorian (sale), working (tradie), connected through friends, over the phone.

Aiden-22-M. Footscray but was regional at time of education, working in the trades, over the phone, connected through shared acquaintance.

Ethan-23-M. rural, employed- LGBTQIA+, met through school a long time ago, in person.

Matthew-23-M. regional/rural (Churchill), currently attending Tafe, over the phone, met at Tafe

Nicholas-18-M. regional (sale), recent graduate + working, disabled, meeting was over the phone, met each other working.

Joshua-19-M. rural/regional, gap year/working, meeting was online, met at a community activity

Caleb-21-M. Rural/regional, Tafe/working, met at a work event, meeting was in person.

Michael-20-M. Rural/regional, gap year/looking for work, acquaintances, met over the phone

Zachary-25-M. Rural/regional, full time work, were employed together at one point,

Tyler-20-M. Rural/regional, attending university in Melbourne, living regionally. Met this person through past work, interviewed over the phone.

Dylan-24-M. regional/rural, LGBTQIA+, Disabled, acquaintance, meeting was in person.

Emily-21-F. in the city area but has been rural, is currently attending Tafe, meeting over the phone, recommended by other interviewee.

Emma-25-F. regional/rural (Traralgon), looking for work, met in person, volunteered for this survey.

Madison-20-F. regional/rural (Morwell) working full time, interviewed in person, met through friends.

Hannah-30-F. currently residing in the Melbourne outer suburbs, currently attending Tafe, meeting was over the phone, we met at work

Hailey-24-F. regional/rural (Morwell), currently attending Tafe and working, LGBTQIA+, knew previously, held the meeting in person.

Sarah-19-F. regional/rural, Tafe/looking for work, aboriginal, responded to request for participants, in person.

Kaitlyn-26-F. regional/rural, working, met at work, meeting over the phone

Isabella-18-F. regional/rural, finishing high school, sibling of a previous interviewee, met in person.

Olivia-22-F. regional/rural, working, interviewed over the phone, recommended by a friend.

Abigail-24-F. regional/rural, at Tafe, over the phone, recommended by a friend

Kaylee-18-F. regional/rural, recent graduate, lgbtqia+ recommended, in person.

Ryan-22-Non-Binary. regional/rural(swan lake), looking for work, disability, aboriginal, lgbtqia+, online meeting met through education

Aaron-21-Genderqueer. regional/rural(Traralgon),looking for work (disability), lgbtqia+, interviewed over the phone, met through a mutual friend

Alexis-24-Non-Binary. regional/rural, working, lgbtqia+, volunteered for survey, over the phone.

Interview questions and responses

What are the main factors you consider, or have considered, when choosing what direction to take after you leave secondary school?

The participants brought up transport struggles and monetary security the most frequently however there was also several participants that said they're own mental health as a huge driving force. One stated that it was a difficult decision between what he loved, his passions, and what would provide security/safety and monetary comforts. Another prioritised his relationship with community and knowledge that would best help him in he wanted, over a vet course that wasn't helping him.

Who or what has a large influence on your future career choices when you are a student?

Most participants say their parents or teachers where the largest or only real influences in their decision while others stated that grandparents or other family members had input.

To what extent did you consider the types of industries that have worker shortages when choosing your senior secondary pathway at school?

A majority of the participants say that they were somewhat aware of these industries however they do not feel that they were given enough information to determine their interest in the fields.

What would make you more aware of these industries and the job opportunities they offer?

Most of the participants felt that theyre schools lacked easily accessible information and that a noticeable push for information that is easier to access in schools.

"better information, my teachers mostly directed me to websites"-‘matt’

Poster maybe? Talks in class/school

How effective was career development at your school in guiding you with what you chose to pursue after leaving secondary school?

Over half of the participants stated that they found carer development at school not helpful or non existent, all other participants stated that is was somewhat helpful , and only one participant stating that he found it helpful, and even this participant believed it was lacking.

How can school career development be improved?

The consensus across the board is that career development was either inadequate or non-existent in their experiences.

Have you or others you know had experience with VET in school, and if so, how did you, or they, find it?

Just under half of the participants participated, just under half knew people who did, and a small minority did not participate and did not know anyone who did participate. Out of those that did participate, most believed that Vet was worth doing, however it was also dissatisfactory, both through quality of learning and delivering on the conceived idea of the class.

How could VET in schools be improved?

Those that did have experience in high school, said that they would have preferred more choices, and more flexible choices, especially considering the new industries in the area.

When you think of VET, who do you think it is best suited to?

Overall participants believe that vet is best suited to students that have conviction and know what jobs and education they want, while some stated that it is best suited to students who are not able to participate in regular electives.

How you compare the value of VET with university in terms of: quality of learning

while a majority stated that university has a higher quality of learning, most of them also admitted that a larger mass of knowledge isn't necessary for most jobs, and that expense and location does not always prepare you with the expertise you may actually need in your work life

work experience

There is a consensus that Vet courses give you more in person and on hand experience for your desired career path, but that the classes themselves can also be limiting weather in what is allowed or equipment available

job outcomes?

Most participant believe that university has better job outcomes because you can specialise a bit more, while other participants believe that both vet/Tafe and university have the same potential and it fully depends on what you are wanting to achieve.

"They are fairly even, University is for highly specialised courses, vet and Tafe work on 'in-demand' industries, while still providing an adequate education" -Ryan 22

Where do students get most of their information about VET?

Either online or from teachers, sometimes from other students.

How well do you feel that you understand VET pathways and the types of jobs they can lead to?

Students that did vet or vce feel that they are mostly familiar with the pathways, some feel intimately aware while some , students that did not participate feel that they have no understanding, they where not aware that there where 'pathways'

What would help raise awareness about VET pathways among students?

Across the board participants felt that there was no meaningful promotion at their schools. It was the sort of thing you would be told by teachers one on one or in a small group, it may be a family member or a friend that recommends it.

What are some of the barriers that students face to pursue the following pathways and what support could help overcome these?

-VET while at school

There is a shared belief that there is not enough choice, a lack of information, and there is no way to guarantee quality of placement.

-University

Money, housing, money, accommodation, attar should be a work around so that people can still learn what they want to.

-TAFE

There are not very diverse choices available, especially if you only have access to one maybe two Tafe campuses, if you cannot physically get to location or can't access adequate tech at home, you can't access alternative classes, if any.

-Apprenticeship

"There doesn't appear to be enough space in industry to accommodate full time apprentices"-Ryan 22

Multiple participants said that some way to compile apprenticeships in your area especially in rural areas would be a game changer, for those seeking apprenticeship and those seeking an apprentice.

Some groups of students may find it harder to pursue and complete university or VET.

Some examples include:

Matthew(23) a **regional student** says "students can't even attend Tafe or high school if there is not one in a town where they live, there is nowhere for them to stay, and no way to catch a bus"

Tyler(20) and Zachary(25), two young men with differing **disabilities** both stated that having more staff that specialise in learning disabilities on campus would be extremely helpful, especially in areas where those that need these sorts of support are not likely to already have a diagnoses or long term supports in place.

In your experience, what are some of the reasons why students might not complete their qualifications?

Participants noted that the most common reasons they could think of where mental health struggles taking priority over qualifications, and being dissatisfied/disillusioned with the qualification, if not completely uninterested in the career path.

What resources and support would help students to complete their qualifications?

Multiple participants stated that they would have liked if the qualifications where more flexible to obtain, and that there was too much emphasis on time frame over quality of education.

What influence do government initiatives such as Free TAFE, or HECS costs based on subject type, have on your study and career choices?

While a large group stated that governments initiatives have a strong impact on their choices others made it very clear that they only have some or no impact.

How do these initiatives influence your decisions?

Participants feel that these initiatives are wonderful especially for those that alternatively wouldn't have any choice to attend further education or grow their career, however there is an agreement across the board that the limited options for free Tafe can make it incredibly hard to justify other sacrifices like giving up working hours, paying for travels/ accommodations/childcare that they may need in order to seek a further education, let alone in a field they do not prefer.

Are there any other thoughts, experiences or ideas you'd like to share on the topic of student pathways to in-demand industries?

n/a