The Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001:

Recognising the Importance of Education, Vocational Education and Training on Student Retention Rates

The Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001 establishes the Queensland Studies Authority, replacing the existing Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, the Queensland School Curriculum Council and the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority. These bodies have in the past been responsible for advising the Minister for education on discrete educational issues falling within their respective functions. The Queensland Studies Authority will take over responsibility for the range of functions that are now covered by the three entities that it replaces.

Wayne Jarred
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1 INTRODUCTION

The Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001 was introduced into the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 12 December 2001. The government issued a Green Paper (Discussion Paper) that was central to a community consultation process. This Green Paper did not represent government policy nor did it commit the government to any particular course of action. The then Minister for Education, in the foreword to the Green Paper, indicated that the government was concerned with the emerging trend manifested in a decline in the number of students completing Grade 12, and the number of students cancelling their university enrolment in their first year of studies. The Minister indicated that this trend could be a symptom of a wider need to lift the relevance of educational studies to students in general.

Student satisfaction with curriculum content has been found to be an important ingredient in school retention rates and, in this regard, research has shown that a curriculum that fosters close links between school and work is more likely to contribute to higher retention rates. However, the link between curriculum dissatisfaction and early leaving has also been contradicted.

The content of the Green Paper suggests that a re-focusing on the roles and functions of the existing statutory authorities in relation to curriculum frameworks is seen as a catalyst to lifting the relevance of educational studies to students, parents and employers. The Green Paper detailed three possible options for action to be taken by the government in this regard:

Option one

- Extend the jurisdiction of the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies to include Year 10.
- Extend the powers of the School Curriculum Council to include the creation of curriculum standards and a monitoring framework for Preschool to Year 9 (Years P-9).

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• Introduce accountability measures between the School Curriculum Council and the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies for the establishment of a strategic plan for syllabus development for Preschool to Year 12 (Years P-12).

**Option two**
• Create a single curriculum authority for the Preschool to Year 12 school years by amalgamating the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, the School Curriculum Council and, perhaps, the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority to allow consistency in relation to standards and curriculum development and assessment practices.

**Option three**
• Amalgamate the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, the School Curriculum Council and the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority into one statutory authority to be responsible for standards and assessment from the Preschool year to Year 12.

When introducing the Bill, the Minister stated that the government’s preferred option was the establishment of a single statutory authority that would assume the responsibilities of the existing three statutory authorities (in essence, Option 3).

### 2 EDUCATION IN A DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT

The expectations placed upon the educational system have resulted in many reports. For instance, between 1981 and 1987, there were 21 major reports prepared for state and federal educational authorities.¹ Major reports in Queensland have included:

- Report of the Committee Set Up to Consider and Make Recommendations to the Board of Secondary School Studies Concerning the Introduction of a Leaving Certificate (Bassett Report) (1968);
- WJ Campbell et al, *Some Consequences of the Radford Scheme for Schools, Teachers and Students in Queensland* (Campbell Report) (November 1975);
- Queensland Legislative Assembly, *First and Second Interim Reports of the Select Committee on Education in Queensland* (Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education) (1978 & 1979);

• Queensland Board of Secondary School Studies, Department of Education, *The Review of Tertiary Entrance in Queensland* (Viviani Report) (1990), and

The 1978 Select Committee of the Queensland Legislative Assembly recommended that the *Education Act* be amended to include a general statement of the aims of education.4 Some of the recommendations from the Select Committee to the Queensland Parliament were later reflected in an agreed statement of the objectives of schooling reached by all the State and Territory Education Ministers in 1989.5

An educational Taskforce in New Zealand, a decade later, linked the aims or objectives of the educational system to the administrative structure:

> Our view is that the objectives of the system must determine the organisational structure, and so we have identified two fundamental objectives for the education system as a whole and then attempted to design a structure to achieve them.6

The Taskforce went on to point out that good management practice was essential for the efficient and effective administration of education.7 At that stage the Taskforce felt that minor changes or adjustments to educational administration in New Zealand would not be appropriate and subsequently recommended *significant restructuring*.8

Educational policy in Australia since the 1980s has been viewed as containing four main areas of concern:

• Full secondary education for all students
• A balanced curriculum
• New curriculum structures and content

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7 New Zealand. Taskforce to Review Education Administration, p 5 (1.2.9).
8 New Zealand. Taskforce to Review Education Administration, p 6 (1.4.2).
Vocational orientation.\textsuperscript{9}

When introducing the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001, the Minister indicated that a coordinated curriculum system for the Preschool year to Year 12 was a policy objective that would continue to be pursued. A coordinated curriculum, which by its very nature encourages students to fully complete secondary school, has also been identified by educational authorities in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania as a key policy objective.\textsuperscript{10}

In contemporary times, the central role of schools is to equip students with essential generic attributes and abilities.\textsuperscript{11} However, in a changing world characterised by advanced knowledge, that underpins a previously unsurpassed communication and technological society: “…what is now to be considered ‘essential’ has … changed, or rather enlarged in scope far beyond ‘basic skills’ and previous notions of ‘core curriculum’ ”.\textsuperscript{12}

2.1 ACCESS TO LEARNING IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

Nowhere is the need for educational opportunities more pressing than in rural and remote areas. Young people living in rural communities in inaccessible towns in Queensland are far more likely not to have access to TAFE facilities where there are 64 communities with a population exceeding 200 living more than 80 kilometres from a TAFE facility. Such areas have been described as “commencing

\textsuperscript{9} Kerry Kennedy, p 367.

\textsuperscript{10} Kerry Kennedy, p 367.


where the mobile phone reception ends and this is where the need to learn to change is most profound".  

At the secondary school level across Australia, rural students are over-represented among early school leavers, with 29% of students in rural and remote areas leaving school before completing Year 12. This compared with a 26% rate for regional areas and a 17% rate for metropolitan areas.\(^{14}\) Despite concern that a lack of school relevance is an important factor in not completing secondary schooling, research indicates that, by far, the most important reason is the gaining of employment or job training that was not available at school.\(^{15}\)

### 2.2 Early School Leaving and Young Indigenous Australians

Indigenous Australians as a demographic group exhibit the highest proportion of early school leavers. A Taskforce established by the Prime Minister reported in 2001 that Indigenous Australians experience substantial disadvantage in educational participation, attainment of qualifications and subsequent labour market participation.\(^{16}\) Paradoxically, however, Indigenous Australians have traditionally maintained a lifelong learning focus within their culture and

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\(^{15}\) Gary Marks and Julie McMillan, p 8.

communities but it is not a system of learning that mirrors the experience of other Australians.\textsuperscript{17}

Research has shown that Indigenous students enrolled in Year 10 are absent up to three times more often than non-Indigenous students. Nationally, Indigenous retention rates to Year 10 are also lower than for other students. Whilst the Year 10 retention level for non-Indigenous students is just below 100\%, the retention rate for Indigenous students to Year 10 is 83\%. Approximately 38\% of Indigenous students fully complete secondary schooling to Year 12, compared to 75\% of non-Indigenous students.\textsuperscript{18}

The policy agenda of the Australian education and training sector now includes the achievement of educational equality for Indigenous Australians. There is widespread agreement that this will be achieved when the range of educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians is the same as for other Australians.\textsuperscript{19}

\section*{2.3 Gender Pathways}

Most students in Year 10 who plan to continue to Year 12 have little idea about the course of study that they would want to pursue after Year 12. This in turn leads to a compromise in the selection of subjects on the basis of subjects enjoyed, subjects in which best results are most likely to be obtained, and subjects that are prerequisites for particular university courses.\textsuperscript{20}

Added to this, girls and boys experience schooling in different ways with both sexes.tending to concentrate their subject choices within gender based pathways. Subjects such as mathematics and physics attract the interest of more boys than girls whilst the humanities do just the opposite. Girls are more likely than boys to be deterred by subjects that are presented as absolute bodies of knowledge and do not include social


\textsuperscript{18} Peter Buckskin, p 56.

\textsuperscript{19} Peter Buckskin, p 55.

Fewer girls than boys rate themselves as being good achievers in mathematics and science.  

Improving the educational outcomes for either gender requires a thorough understanding of the complexity of the situation. The gender image associated with some subjects (such as the masculine image perceived to be associated with physical science) and the occupations into which those subjects lead must be at least partially influential on the decision to choose particular subjects.

The differential rates of participation for boys and girls in accounting and economics between Queensland (where female participation is higher) and Western Australia has been highlighted to suggest that educational systems and schools are a factor in portrayed gender images associated with particular subjects. Consequently, the role of schools is seen as essential for the portrayal of subjects in terms that are gender neutral.

2.4 REASONS FOR SUBJECT SELECTION

A survey published by the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority in 1993 identified student subject selection falling under 4 categories:

(i) Tertiary entrance
(ii) Enjoyment/interest
(iii) Employment related
(iv) Ability/skill.

(i) Tertiary entrance

For the purposes of tertiary entrance, the predominant subject choices of students entering into Year 11 are mathematics, biological sciences, physics and chemistry although accounting and economics are also consistently chosen.

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22 Sue Johnston, p 25.

23 Sue Johnston, p 27.

(ii) **Enjoyment/interest**

Naturally, the spread of subjects chosen for enjoyment and interest was much wider. This category contained subjects such as mathematics, biology, history, geography, accounting, economics, theatre, art, and health and physical education.

(iii) **Employment related**

The subjects taken that fell into this category were also listed under the tertiary entrance category but also included such subjects as languages and graphics.

Rural students surveyed tended to indicate that they chose subjects for employment reasons and enjoyment and interest. City students, on the other hand, were more oriented toward selecting subjects that would enable tertiary entrance. This could be a result of the greater financial burden that accrues to country students with respect to attending a tertiary institution. This ‘tyranny of distance’ that mitigates against access to tertiary study by rural students has been identified with community leaders in the regions expressing a desire for the establishment of local university campuses.25

3 **RESPONDING TO LOWER RETENTION RATES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

School completion rates in Australia are on the decline. In 1992 the national rate of retention to Year 12 was approximately 77 % which had fallen to 72 % by 1995.26

A comment from the Australian Council of Educational Research on the results of a study conducted on the employment prospects of those who fail to fully complete secondary schooling highlights not only the personal decisions confronting students but also a stark reality that government policy should be directed toward encouraging students to fully complete secondary education:

*This report has made it clear that those who do not complete school find it hard to gain secure jobs and face a greater risk of exclusion in a society that requires active learning well beyond the school years. It's particularly*


important that we develop policies that encourage young people to complete Year 12 and improve their opportunities for further learning.\textsuperscript{27}

This represents the underlying rationale as to why students should be encouraged to fully complete their secondary schooling. Research studies have shown that students who leave school early tend to earn less money, are more likely to be unemployed and, if employed, are more likely to be employed in work of low skill when compared with their peers who fully complete secondary schooling.\textsuperscript{28}

The Queensland Government has responded with a strategy designed to raise the retention rates for Grade 12 students from 68\% in 1998 to 88\% by 2010.\textsuperscript{29} Correspondingly, the Victorian Government has also established a Grade 12 retention target of 90\% by 2010.\textsuperscript{30}

In the 1999 Green Paper, the Queensland Minister for Education acknowledged that there is a genuine need to ensure that schooling is relevant to the lives and needs of students.\textsuperscript{31} In a 1999 research paper published by the Australian Council for Educational Research, it was recognised that positive student attitudes towards schooling are a significant factor in decreasing the likelihood of early school leaving. The study reported that at least 13\% of early school leavers left because they did not like school.\textsuperscript{32}


3.1 RETENTION RATES IN ALL STATES

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures indicate that Queensland is currently recording one of the highest retention rates of all States and Territories for students from Years 7 to 12:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>VIC</th>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>TAS</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>Aust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 RETENTION FIGURES - QUEENSLAND

3.2.1 Government Schools

The overall leaving rate for all students completing Grade 8 in government schools in Queensland indicates that 24% of them do not go on to complete Grade 12.

A comparison of recorded retention levels for males and females between Years 8 and 12 shows that, in percentage terms, female retention rates are higher than for males. August 2000 figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate that the male drop out rate between the Years 8 to 10 in Queensland is around 0.2% whilst for females, the numbers completing Grade 10 increased by around 3%.

The leaving rate for boys between Grades 10 and 11 also surpasses that for girls. The ABS statistics indicate that over 18.6% of boys who complete Grade 10 in government schools do not go on to enrol in Grade 11. The corresponding figure for girls is 11.8%. Statistically, this means that, for every 10 girls in government schools in Queensland who complete Grade 10 but do not go on to complete Grade 11, there are approximately 15 boys who do the same.

33 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools 2000, Catalogue No 4220.0, Table 13, p 15.
34 The figures in the above text are calculated from data in Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools 2000, Catalogue No 4221.0, Table 8, pp 21-22.
For those boys who do go on to complete Grade 11, but do not continue to Grade 12, the leaving rate is greater than for girls. The figures here are 13.8% for boys and 9.5% for girls.

3.2.2 Non-Government Schools

As could be expected, the overall leaving rate and the leaving rate between boys and girls is different from government schools.

The figures indicate that 13.53% of all students who complete Grade 8 in a non-government school do not continue on to complete Grade 12.

In non-government schools the differential between the sexes is not as great as with government schools. Of the boys who complete Grade 8, 15.8% of them do not go on to complete Grade 12 whilst the corresponding figure for girls is 11.1%.

3.2.3 Government and Non-Government Schools Combined

Combining the student numbers for both government and non-government schools, the statistics indicate that 20.3% of all students who complete Grade 8 do not go on to complete Grade 12.

3.2.4 Reasons For Leaving School Early

It is arguable that since a weaker teenage labour market and high levels of youth unemployment have been in existence for some time, then there must be other reasons why the number of students leaving school early has increased.

Increases in the number of apprenticeships and traineeships has, to a degree, contributed to the increased level of early leaving by boys. There is also a perception on the part of some students that there is little value in remaining in school as attaining a full secondary education is now more widespread, thereby lessening its economic and social value.

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35 The figures in the above text are calculated from data in Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Schools 2000*, Catalogue No 4221.0, Table 8, pp 21-22.

36 The figures in the above text are calculated from data in Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Schools 2000*, Catalogue No 4221.0, Table 8, pp 21-22.

37 Stephen Lamb, pp 5-6.
There is evidence to suggest that students are more likely to leave school early if they are not performing academically to an adequate standard. To the extent that early leaving may be related to academic achievement, it is important that schools maintain levels of general attainment to combat its influence. Low academic achievement has also been identified as one of a range of predictors in delinquent or anti-social behaviour that may further lead to the commission of offences.  

Increased class size and staff reductions, along with a decline in support services and other resources, which in turn have negative consequences for the range and quality of school programs that are made available, may also be factors contributing to the declining rate of secondary school completion.

A survey conducted in 1999 revealed the main reason given by respondent early school leavers who left school before completing Year 11 and these are listed in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Reason</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desire to get employment/apprenticeship</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not like school</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to earn own money</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic results were low</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to complete vocational training</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired subjects/courses were not available at school</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers encouraged early leaving</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financially it was hard to remain at school</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings confirm the results of an earlier 1982 Australian Bureau of Statistics survey that reported that school factors were only listed by a small proportion of students as the

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main reason for leaving school early.\textsuperscript{40} Conversely, there are research findings that suggest that school factors do impact on retention rates by the level of leadership shown, the dedication of the teachers, level of parental involvement and expectations placed on students.\textsuperscript{41}

### 3.3 INFLUENCES ON EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

Various studies have examined the issues that have affected students’ decisions to leave school early. For instance, the 1999 early school leaving study by the Council for Educational Research\textsuperscript{42} concluded that the following issues were influential on a decision to leave early:

(a) Students who perform well at school are far less likely to leave school early whilst, conversely, students who exhibit low levels of achievement are much more likely to do so.

(b) The gender differential in early leaving is progressively increasing to the point where there is a stronger tendency for boys to leave early compared to girls. Boys are more likely to leave early because there are greater job opportunities available to them and this is partly supported by research findings.

(c) The early leaving rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is 2.5 times higher than for other students and is only partially explained by their lower academic achievement and lower socioeconomic backgrounds. There may be additional factors such as social and cultural norms, pessimism about their ability to remain at school, a lack of encouragement to remain and a perception that further schooling would not pay off.

(d) Students in rural and regional areas are more likely to leave school early than students living in metropolitan areas. This regional background effect is confined to male students with the greater differential tending toward male students in rural and remote areas.

(e) It is unlikely that employment opportunities would be a factor inducing students in regional and rural areas to leave school early, so their higher level of early leaving may be due to social norms.

\textsuperscript{40} Australian Bureau of Statistics, \textit{Reasons for Completion or Non-Completion of Secondary Education in Australia}, 1982.


\textsuperscript{42} Gary Marks and Nicole Fleming.
3.4 EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING – THE COST

The identified cost of early school leaving is borne both by the individual concerned and the community. Nationally, estimates that have been put forward as to the cost of early school leaving are:

(a) the cost of one year's early school-leavers is an estimated $2.6 billion, classified into:
   • $1.3 billion of direct monetary costs, of which $800 million or 60% accrues to government and $500 million accrues to early school leavers
   • $1.3 billion in social costs

(b) the lifetime cost (in 1999) made up of direct costs and social costs to Australia of each early school-leaver is $74,000

(c) the estimated direct monetary cost of each early school leaver in Australia is:
   • for each male who leaves at Grade 10, $37,200
   • for each female who leaves at Grade 10, $21,800
   • for each male who leaves at Grade 11, $54,700
   • for each female who leaves at Grade 11, $40,600
   • nationally, the weighted average is $37,100

(d) half of this lifetime cost is a direct monetary cost that is borne both by the individual and government whilst the other half is a social cost which falls across the individual, government and the whole community; and

(e) a reduction in the level of early school leaving would yield an estimated 12.5% rate of return.

3.4.1 Direct Monetary Costs

Early school leaving does not totally amount to a cost as there are some identified benefits or savings. However, overall, the cost outweighs the savings. Provided the school leaver obtains employment in the short term, he or she, and the community will enjoy benefits rather than incur costs. The earnings of the early school leaver are known as additional school-age earnings. There is a commensurate saving on the cost of providing education as service provision to fewer students costs less and, where there are individual costs to the student’s family such as fees and levies, there are also individual savings.

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44 National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, p 5.
Even when an early school leaver finds employment, the short-term savings are overtaken by the long-term costs. Once the early school leaver passes schooling age, schooling costs are no longer a factor to be considered. The focus is on the differential between the life-time earnings of the early school leaver and a student who fully completes secondary schooling, which generally falls in favour of the student who fully completes his or her schooling. This cost is represented by forgone earnings of the individual.

Weighing up the benefits in the short term as against the costs in the long term results in an estimate of the direct monetary costs of early school leaving.

### 3.4.2 Social Costs

In addition to identifiable direct monetary costs in the form of earning differentials and direct education costs, there are also social costs attached to lower levels of education. Identifiable social costs associated with early school leaving that are borne by the community at large are:

- Increased administration costs of social welfare programs
- Increased demand on the health system
- A less efficient operation of markets
- Higher costs of crime prevention and detection
- Decreased participation in the electoral process
- Decreased level of charitable giving; and
- Decreased social cohesion.

Identifiable social costs borne by the individual who leaves school early are:

- Lower non-wage benefit at work
- Decreased opportunities for training and mobility
- Less successful employment search
- Lower return on investment portfolio
- Less highly educated offspring
- Decreased financial security; and
- Decreased cultural enjoyment.\(^{45}\)

### Lifetime cost to country

In estimating that the lifetime cost to the country of each early school leaver was

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\(^{45}\) National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, pp 9-10.
$74,000, the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling\textsuperscript{46} included in the following factors:

Costs to the country separated into:

(a) **Direct monetary costs:**
   - forgone after tax earnings
   - forgone tax receipts

(b) **Less direct monetary benefits:**
   - Additional school age after tax earnings
   - Additional school age tax receipts
   - Savings to government on education costs
   - Savings in individual education costs
   - = Net direct monetary costs

(c) **Plus social costs adhering to individuals and government which include transfers of:**
   - Income tax
   - Social security
   - Index tax.

4 **OVERVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN QUEENSLAND IN RECENT TIMES**

4.1 **FUTURE SCHOOLS**

A Discussion Paper\textsuperscript{47} published in 1990 heralded for the first time a move toward a managerialist approach to school based management in the State educational system. The rationale behind school based management is that schools are best able to provide and deliver education in an efficient and effective manner. It is an approach that involves a devolution of power to the school level that affords the following benefits:

- reduction in the level of student alienation from schools;
- increased employment satisfaction for employees, and
- the promotion of community involvement and understanding.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, p 10.


The devolution of decision making to schools was also accompanied by a restructuring of the Department of Education that was designed to re-focus available human and physical resources on the needs of students.49

4.2 LEADING SCHOOLS

The 1996 report of the Commission of Audit recommended that the government restructure the Department of Education to ensure that responsibility and accountability for service delivery lay at the point of delivery.50

The 1997 Leading Schools51 initiative continued the process of devolution of authority, responsibility and accountability to the school level. This was to be achieved by emphasising a district structure for Education Queensland, focusing more on schools and student outcomes, which would replace the regional structure that had existed since the 1940s.52

4.3 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A report released in 1998 by Education Queensland furthered the progress of school based management, highlighting the positive contribution that school based management could make to student learning outcomes, which is the primary focus of the educational system.53

5 SOME RESEARCH FINDINGS

- The gender gap between girls and boys in participation in Year 12 and higher education is still widening with girls outnumbering boys in both areas. The gap has been increasing since the 1980s and is currently manifested in a 10


percentage points gap. The gap cannot be explained by such factors as poor school achievement, which indicates that boys are now experiencing educational disadvantage.\textsuperscript{54}

- There is a gap of approximately 10\% in retention rates between urban and rural students with urban students recording the higher level of retention.\textsuperscript{55}
- Of those students who do not fully complete secondary schooling, the participation rate in vocational education training as part of the post schooling years indicates that males (42\%) predominate over females (30\%).
- Males who leave school after commencing Year 11 (51\%) are less likely to enrol in a trade-related course compared with those males who leave school earlier (64\%).
- Those students who enrol in vocational educational training (VET) at school tend to be less satisfied with school in general, and have a lower belief in their ability to do well at school. Generally, they also feel that school is less relevant to them and are not as satisfied with the student-teacher relationship. Research shows that students undertaking VET at school show early signs of disengagement from school and from learning and that VET study returns the relevance of schooling for them.\textsuperscript{56}

6 PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

6.1 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001 creates an administrative structure that is depicted in Diagram 1.


\textsuperscript{55} Gary N Marks, Nicole Fleming, Michael Long and Julie McMillan, p v.

Diagram 1: Administrative Structure of the Queensland Studies Authority

The administrative provisions of the Bill represent the biggest change since the Board of Secondary School Studies superseded the former Boards for Junior and Senior Secondary Education in February 1971. The creation of the Board of Secondary School Studies was described in a report commissioned by the then Australian Advisory Committee for Research and Development in Education as being part of an innovative approach (the introduction of the Radford scheme into secondary education) that was “probably unprecedented in Australian educational history”. 57

The implementation of the Radford Scheme necessitated the creation of new administrative structures within the educational system. 58 The Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority was established as a response to recommendations contained in the Viviani report.

The Bill provides for the abolition of the existing Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, the Queensland School Curriculum Council and the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority and the establishment of the Queensland Studies Authority. The creation of one authority to perform functions previously performed by three bodies is viewed by the government as streamlining the administrative network essential for a modern education system expected to meet the needs of students, parents, industry and the community. 59

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57 WJ Campbell, GW Bassett, EM Campbell, JL Cotterell, GT Evans and MC Grassie, Some Consequences of the Radford Scheme for Schools, Teachers and Students in Queensland, November 1975, p 13.

58 WJ Campbell, GW Bassett, EM Campbell, JL Cotterell, GT Evans and MC Grassie, p 42.

6.2 **FUNCTIONS OF THE QUEENSLAND STUDIES AUTHORITY (CLAUSES 7-17)**

The Authority’s functions will include responsibility for the following:

- The development, approval and revision of Years 1-12 syllabuses and preschool guidelines
- The development of resources and services to ensure the professional development of teachers responsible for the implementation of approved school syllabuses
- The accreditation of syllabuses developed by entities other than the Authority
- The development, revision, administration and marking of tests
- The development, revision and creation of procedures for the testing of students
- The issuance of certificates of achievement to students tested
- Powers delegated under the Training and Employment Act 2000
- Advice to the Minister responsible for vocational education and training on matters relevant to the authority’s functions; and
- The establishment of tertiary entrance procedures with respect to the ranking of students for tertiary entrance, the monitoring and reviewing of those procedures, and advice to the Minister for Education on desirable changes.

6.3 **MINISTERIAL POWERS RELEVANT TO THE AUTHORITY (CLAUSES 22-24)**

The Minister for Education will have a general power of referral to the Authority, for the purpose of investigation, of matters that the Minister considers fall within the functions of the Authority.

The Minister will be empowered to give the Authority directions in the public interest about matters that are relevant to the Authority’s functions with respect to such things as policies and standards. However, the Minister will not have the power to direct the Authority on the content, approval and accreditation of Years 1-12 syllabuses or preschool guidelines nor the recording of results of a particular person in relation to a certificate of achievement.

The Authority will be required to include within its annual report to Parliament a list of all directions received from the Minister for Education during that financial year.

6.4 **MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY (CLAUSES 25 - 29)**

There are to be 20 members of the Authority, five of whom may be appointed by the Minister for Education and one by the Minister responsible for vocational education and
training. Of the five members to be appointed by the Minister for Education, one is to be experienced in special education, one must have expertise in the education of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders whilst one is to be a representative of industry. One of the members nominated by the Minister is to be the chairperson of the authority whilst the members collectively will appoint the deputy chairperson.

The holders of the positions of chief executive of Education Queensland and the chief executive of the department concerned with vocational education and training will also be members of the Authority.

Stakeholder organisations that will nominate representatives for membership are: the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, the Higher Education Forum, Queensland Council of Parents’ and Citizens’ Associations Incorporated, and a joint nomination of the Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of Catholic Schools of Queensland, and the Independent Parents and Friends Council of Queensland.

The chief executive of Education Queensland will have the power to nominate a school principal and a teacher whilst the Association of Independent Schools and the Catholic Education Commission will jointly nominate a school principal and a teacher.

The Queensland Teachers’ Union and the Queensland Independent Education Union of Employees will each nominate a member.

Clause 27 provides that each member is to be appointed for a term of no longer than 4 years.

6.5 COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Clause 45 provides that an executive committee of the Authority shall consist of particular members of the full Board. Membership of the executive committee will consist of the Chairperson and the chief executive of Education Queensland or the chief executive of the department responsible for vocational education and training and the two nominees of the Association of Independent Schools and the Catholic Education Commission. It will be the responsibility of the executive committee to establish the agenda for each meeting of the Authority.

Clause 47 provides for the establishment of committees for the purpose of performing the functions of the Authority in an efficient and effective manner. Committee membership will not be restricted to members of the Authority. This will allow persons who have acknowledged expertise in specific educational matters to assist the Authority.
Under clause 47(3) the Authority must decide the terms of reference of committees which it establishes. It will be the function of these committees to advise and make recommendations to the Authority on matters falling within the Authority’s functions. A committee may also exercise a power of delegation that it receives from the Authority under clause 55.

Clause 53 provides that the Authority will be accountable to the Minister for Education for its performance. The clause places a responsibility on the Minister to ensure that the Authority observes best practice standards with respect to its functions and operations. The Minister may, at any time, request the Authority to report on the efficiency, effectiveness, economy and timeliness of the systems and processes it employs in fulfilling its functions.

Any requests made of the Authority by the Minister for Education under clause 53 must be included in the Authority’s annual report. The wording of clause 53(4) indicates that the annual report must contain copies of Ministerial requests as received and acted upon.

Part 5 of the Bill establishes the Office of the Queensland Studies Authority, headed by a director who is to be appointed by the Governor in Council for a term not exceeding 5 years with eligibility for reappointment (Clause 59).

The function of the office is simply stated as providing help to the Authority in the performance of the latter’s functions (Clause 58).

The Office may operate alone or as an attachment to Education Queensland but, in either case, the director of the office will not be under the control or direction of the Minister for Education. The director is obligated to act in the public interest in an independent and impartial and fair way (Clause 61).

7 INTEGRATING EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENTS

Educational researchers have focused on the relationship between educational choices and career paths. For instance, the 1990 Viviani Report identified the importance of career education and counselling in schools in order to assist students with the transition from schooling to employment, vocational training or tertiary study.60

When introducing the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill, the Minister for Education said that the Government was determined to provide the best opportunities for all students to complete 12 years of schooling for possible tertiary entrance or, alternatively, its equivalent in vocational training areas.\textsuperscript{61}

In September 1994 the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority surveyed nearly 400 Queensland secondary schools.\textsuperscript{62} A key finding of the survey was that, at the school level, there is a commitment to ensure that educational planning and career development in upper secondary school education would continue to be integrated into the school curriculum.

The Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority has acknowledged that since 1990 there has been an increased support for career development and educational planning to become a common concern in the curriculum offered in schools.\textsuperscript{63}

The objective of the study was to ‘map’ the approach being taken by schools in educational planning and career development in Years 10-12 in all secondary schools in Queensland with respect to policies, practices, and materials and the perception of school staff on issues of ‘best practice’.\textsuperscript{64}

The study highlighted a need for school staff involved in career education to be aware of the approach being taken in other schools. This lack of external awareness also indicated that there was little awareness of ‘best practice’ yardsticks against which schools could evaluate their own career education program.\textsuperscript{65} The research report went on to say that there may be no definitive ‘best practice’ but schools needed to develop an approach with due regard to student needs, goals and motivations whilst at the same time ‘searching out’ approaches that are working well elsewhere.\textsuperscript{66}

The study also highlighted the fact that there was a trend toward integrating educational planning and career development programs into the whole school curriculum.
Educational planning and career development is now viewed as an important part of each school’s overall program to cater for individual needs.⁶⁷

8 EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS – A CAUTIONARY VIEW OF MAINSTREAM POLICY

There are researchers who have argued that those who choose to leave school before fully completing secondary studies are at risk of becoming marginalised due to educational policies that focus heavily on maximising retention rates at secondary school level. Policies aimed at providing mainstream educational provisions will not cater for those students who do not regard continued school attendance as attractive or even suitable for them.⁶⁸

The downside associated with a preoccupation with increasing retention rates is that there is a danger that a policy vacuum will develop regarding early school leavers.⁶⁹

There is the criticism that the alternative choice which early school leavers make needs to be taken seriously by policy makers by acknowledging the important connection between educational policies and training policies, for failure to do so will perpetuate myths about opportunities and options for all young people.⁷⁰

The connection between education and training is recognised in provisions of the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001. For instance, clause 25(2)(j) provides for a nominee of the Minister responsible for vocational education and training to be appointed to the Queensland Studies Authority whilst clause 14 provides the Authority with vocational education and training functions.

9 2002 REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF COMMONWEALTH/STATE SERVICE PROVISION

The 2002 Report on Government Services indicated that, for 1999-2000, government expenditure on education equalled 5.4% of the national GDP. This figure does not

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⁶⁹ Peter Dwyer, p 273.

⁷⁰ Peter Dwyer, p 277.
account for private consumption which accounted for a further 1.4% of GDP.\textsuperscript{71} The level of government expenditure on government and non-government schools in each State and Territory for 1999-2000 is contained in Table 3.

Between August 1996 and August 2000 Queensland recorded an annual growth of 1.6\% for total primary and secondary full time enrolments.\textsuperscript{72} This was the highest level recorded for all States over that period.

### Table 3: Government Expenditure on School Education, 1999-2000 ($ Million)\textsuperscript{a, b, c}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic</th>
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<td>Government schools</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>329</td>
<td>183</td>
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<td>1 846</td>
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<td>States and Territories</td>
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<td>3 040</td>
<td>1 360</td>
<td>1 160</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>321</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>1 543</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>216</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>States and Territories</td>
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<td>245</td>
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<td>137</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>All schools</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
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<td>857</td>
<td>462</td>
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<td>States and Territories</td>
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<td>3 803</td>
<td>3 273</td>
<td>1 497</td>
<td>1 232</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>15 942</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6 667</td>
<td>4 978</td>
<td>4 130</td>
<td>1 959</td>
<td>1 590</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>20 688</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a} See notes to table 3A.11 for definitions and data caveats. \textsuperscript{b} Based on accrual accounting (whereas financial data in previous reports are based on cash accounting). \textsuperscript{c} Includes Commonwealth specific purpose payments to schools provided under Indigenous education programs. These payments were excluded in previous reports.


### 9.1 Participation Rates

Participation rates for 15-19 year olds for whom school attendance is no longer compulsory are compared in Graph 1. Participation rates vary across jurisdictions and differ within age groups and by gender.

- Nationally, 49.8\% of 15-19 year olds were enrolled in school in 2000.
- Nationally, female participation rates were 2\%-4\% above that of males.


\textsuperscript{72} SCRCSSP, Volume 1, p 65.
9.2 TRENDS IN COMPLETION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLING

The Commonwealth has compiled statistics for estimating the percentage of young Australians who complete Year 12, categorised by socioeconomic background and gender. The completion rate is obtained by calculating the number of students who obtain a Year 12 certificate which is then expressed as a percentage of the potential Year 12 population. The estimate for each State and Territory is contained in Tables 4 and 5.
Table 4: Year 12 Estimated Completion Rates by Socioeconomic Status and Gender, 2000
(Per cent)\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>ACT\textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>NT\textsuperscript{c}</th>
<th>Aust</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>..</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High socioeconomic status deciles</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>86</td>
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<td>83</td>
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<td>All students</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>95</td>
<td>82</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>68</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a} The ABS Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage has been used to calculate socioeconomic status on the basis of students’ home addresses. Low socioeconomic status is the average of the three lowest deciles and high socioeconomic status is the average of the three highest deciles. \textsuperscript{b} On the basis of this index, the ACT has only medium and high socioeconomic status deciles. \textsuperscript{c} Small increases in the estimated resident population can cause significant fluctuations in the data. As a result, high socioeconomic status rates for the NT are unreliable and have been excluded. na Not available. .. Not applicable.

## Table 5: Year 12 Estimated Completion Rates by Locality and Gender, 2000 (Per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>Qld</th>
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<th>ACT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital city</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
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<td>79</td>
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<tr>
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<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other metropolitan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td><strong>Other rural and remote areas</strong></td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There are no Other Metropolitan Areas in this jurisdiction.  
* All of the ACT is defined as a Capital City.  
* There are no Other Metropolitan or Rural Centres in the NT.  
* Not applicable.


### 9.3 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

All levels of government and the private sector are stakeholders in the vocational education and training sector and, as such, the sector forms an integral part of the nation’s educational system as it provides opportunities for skills development and pathways to further tertiary education and higher education. The target group is the 15-64 year old
age group. In Queensland the participation rates for males and females are the least differentiated of all the States and Territories. The male and female participation rates for each State and Territory are recorded in Graph 2 whilst Graph 3 records the participation rate for areas within the States.

Seventy-three percent of public funding for the vocational, education and training sector comes from State and Territory governments which nationally provided 73.1% of recurrent funding in 2000. The proportion of State government recurrent funding allocated to private and adult community providers differed across jurisdictions, with Queensland having the highest proportion in 2000 (9.1%).

**Graph 2: VET Participation Rates for People Aged 15–64 Years, 2000**


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73 SCRSSP, Volume 1, p 115.
Interpretation of rural and remote participation rates should consider the absolute number of students from these regional areas (table 4A.3 and appendix A). The number of students from other metropolitan areas is too small to calculate meaningful rates. The numbers of students from rural, remote and other metropolitan areas are too small to calculate meaningful rates.


10 CONCLUSION

The desirability of fully completing secondary schooling has become most evident in recent times in the light of the structural changes taking place in the workforce. Economic globalisation has been a catalyst for structural change which, in turn, has highlighted the need for a more flexible workforce that can cope with the changes being expected of it.

Increasingly, the community has come to accept the soundness of government policies aimed at encouraging students to stay at school longer. This has been due to the dramatic reduction in full-time employment opportunities for young people since the mid 1970s, a reduction that has been associated with industry restructuring.
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