



Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta Submission
NSW Government Green Paper May 2022
Securing future innovation and global competitiveness in NSW

1. Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) makes this submission to the NSW Government's consultation on its Green Paper, *Securing future innovation and global competitiveness in NSW*, released in May 2022.

INTRODUCTION

2. CEDP is a system of 80 Catholic schools in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. CEDP educates over 43,500 students and employs almost 5,000 staff. It is the largest non-government employer in Western Sydney.
3. Like forward-thinking and agile industries, CEDP's focus is on **transformation**. We are determined to be agents of change and innovation, and push the boundaries of the existing models of schooling. Innovative thinking and cross-functional approaches are needed to do this.
4. CEDP's submission focuses on school education, as well as post-school opportunities. This is a critical pivot for the NSW Government and industries to effectively adapt to and harness the transformative forces that will shape challenges and changes in all industries over the next 10 years. The submission incorporates responses to the Consultation Questions contained in the Green Paper. Case studies are provided at the end of the submission.
5. CEDP's submission draws on initiatives in its schools that demonstrate how secondary education is critical to skills development in industry, where there are limitations, and how the NSW Government can create education settings that will drive industry innovation and growth. It argues that if the NSW Government is to be successful in '[s]ecuring future and innovation and global competitiveness in NSW', it needs to be open to doing schooling differently. With so many emerging industries the current models of education were not designed to support, reimagining schooling

is the key determinant of whether industry will be able to meet the challenges of transformation.

6. The NSW Government can make a marked difference in facilitating industry innovation and growth by:
 - 6.1. ensuring schools have the flexibility they need to respond to the industry transformations needed;
 - 6.2. enhancing the capacity of schools to provide Vocational and Education Training (VET) and VET attractiveness for students;
 - 6.3. advocating for and implementing micro-credential training options in school and through new tertiary education models;
 - 6.4. advocating strongly for and financially supporting school/industry partnerships with both in-school training and training in industry workplaces; and
 - 6.5. reducing inefficiencies and improving student data (eg. USIs and qualifications) linkages across the secondary and tertiary education, and state and federal sectors.

ENCOURAGING INDUSTRY INNOVATION AND GROWTH THROUGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

7. CEDP has been moving away from an 'improvement model' of schooling to a transformation model. Improvement is about accepting and enhancing a traditional model of learning and is limited to building on the existing structures of schooling, which are no longer fit for purpose. It is comparable to trying to convert a steam train to a rocket ship.
8. In AECOM's 2019 article, [*Skills 2030: Securing the talent to build our future infrastructure*](#), the authors' proposed skills manifesto for creating an engineer of the future is insightful and delineates the challenge for the Government, industry and the education sectors. Their "call to action" is compelling:
 - *Break with tradition: if the way we've always done things isn't delivering the results we need, then more radical change is essential*
 - *Talk honestly: We need to uncover and address the unconscious biases and assumptions that currently go unspoken*

- *Check your privilege: just because you don't see a problem, it doesn't mean a problem does not exist. We need to look again and think again.*
- 9. CEDP's schooling framework is founded on a pre-to-post learning continuum. Rather than breaking up schooling into pre-school, primary, secondary and post-school categories—which can perpetuate a silo mentality—this framework acknowledges learning as a continuum, a seamless learning experience from early years to post-school that is informed by best practice, research and evidence.
- 10. Each CEDP school is encouraged to reimagine how learning occurs based on local context and network with other schools as co-constructors, collaborators and critical friends. Secondary schools in particular are encouraged to work with business and tertiary providers, who can provide richer experiences that deepen student insights and improve their skills. The transformation model puts the personal learning growth of each child and teacher at the centre of schooling. *The Green Paper* identifies that “the alignment of training and education services to match industry skills needs...is a major factor in driving productivity and lifting performance.”
- 11. Students require skills that allow them to adapt to the changing nature of the world and work. These skills include critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration. These are also the skills that will power transformation. Currently, these skills do not drive the learning agenda at schools which remain constrained by traditional learning and teaching models and measures of achievement. Building teacher and student capabilities in these skill sets is not happening in any systematic way; tinkering around the edges and building on more of the same will have limited success.
- 12. Because transformation is not captured within a finite time or defined boundaries, we should not be striving to find one alternative model to the entrenched industrial model. We will need to accept that *we will learn how to do the work by doing the work* and need to trust teachers and schools to create multiple ways of doing it better.
- 13. The problem with educating students for a particular job is that many of the jobs that young people will do post-school do not currently exist. Rather than preparing them for a particular job, we should instead be making them ‘any-job ready’ entrepreneurial thinkers, explorers, adaptors, responders and in-real-time learners. Industry is telling the Government and education sectors this is what it needs from its employees. Under current models of schooling, students and teachers will not be well prepared for a future that is constantly changing.

14. The NSW Government has the opportunity to back business and industry by reframing how schools are able to operate, with the aim being to create more sustainable, knowledge jobs as well as more resilient industries.
15. **School flexibility to respond to industry transformation**
 - 15.1. Training plans should be a continuum. There are inconsistencies with students post-school. There are instances of providers not recognising student qualifications that they have already completed.
 - 15.2. Schools require the flexibility and incentives to adapt and adjust curriculum offerings in response to surging demand for specific industry skills. Schools have a key role to play in building 'industry resilience'.
16. **Schools and VET**
 - 16.1. The restrictive pattern of study for HSC students needs to be addressed. There are insufficient Board Developed Courses available. The current rules are archaic and a significant barrier to transformation.
 - 16.2. The NSW Government should ensure that mandatory work placement opportunities, traineeships and internships be built into Government contracts with industry that must be detailed in tenders. There are significant issues with Work Placement Service Providers accessing a sufficient number of work placement opportunities for students.
 - 16.3. Mandatory work placement hours that are not required for the qualifications delivered should be removed. Mandatory work placement is resulting in employer burnout, poor quality opportunities and deterring students from engaging in the industry if they do not have a meaningful and productive experience. It should be an opt-in process for students, not a mandatory one.
 - 16.4. The Government should create a campaign for parents of primary school-aged children that dispels myths regarding VET and future employment prospects.
 - 16.5. NESA should enable students to access VET qualifications in Stage 4 where those courses are appropriate.
 - 16.6. The current structure of the NSW HSC is largely responsible for the perception many young people and their parents have towards VET, for these reasons:

- it privileges an ATAR pathway;
- subjects offered are overwhelmingly geared towards university study;
- vocational and dual-credited subjects are defined as non-ATAR Category B - relegating them to lesser status or non-status;
- the university sector sends clear messages that a pathway of VET options does not meet the standard for university;
- CEDP has schools that provide higher VET credentials (eg Diplomas) but these are not eligible for the *Smart and Skilled* subsidy as these students are still enrolled at school - this distinction should be removed, and
- Trade Training Centres struggle to find meaningful patterns of study for senior students as there is a lack of suitable NESA-developed subjects.
- Regulations about Stage 6 patterns of study lack vision. Diverse pathways should be given equal weight and prestige.

17. Microcredentials

- 17.1. Micro-credentials should be recognised within NESA courses - for example, given credit for units of work/school-based assessment.
- 17.2. The development of a micro-credential framework should be prioritised, ensuring they do not duplicate existing qualifications and meet the needs of industry.
- 17.3. Promotion of the importance and relevance to students of micro-credentials should occur in all schools. There should also be a common approach to the micro-credential student portfolios and 'statements of attainment' in the same ways as NESA provides certification for traditional measures of achievement (eg, NAPLAN, HSC etc).

18. School-industry partnerships

- 18.1. Partnerships need to be authentic. Students should not be limited by teacher knowledge - there needs to be deep engagement with industry. One-off "open days" are not sufficient to respond to the acute needs of industry, now or in the future.
- 18.2. Often partnerships that are supported by government funding are not effective in the medium to long-term when government funding is withdrawn. They

need to be sustainable and able to continue once government funding ceases.

- 18.3. Employers need to understand the benefits of liaising with schools and working with students. Schools are training students which will provide a pipeline of workers for organisations post-school.
 - 18.4. Industry engagement in planning, design, implementation and co-delivery will improve outcomes for industry, the community and people.
 - 18.5. Industry needs to provide opportunities for real employment in emerging areas, such as School-Based Apprenticeship/Traineeships (SBATs) or Cadetships as well as new and emerging areas of work, including in STEM-focused areas.
 - 18.6. Strengthening partnerships between schools and industry can create long-term benefits and build stronger local communities. They can support families in more disadvantaged areas, as well as creating more meaningful employment opportunities within local communities.
 - 18.7. There should be support with VET teacher/trainer upgrades when new training packages are released.
 - 18.8. There is an opportunity to rethink how TAFE and TAFE teachers engage with schools, including the running of TAFE courses in schools and across sectors. The model should be complementary, not competitive.
19. **Improved efficiency for student transition to further education and work**
- 19.1. Administrative red tape issues need to be addressed to enable the economy to be more productive by channeling and using resources more effectively. For example, USIs could be captured at birth or automatically generated on the first day of enrolment at school, which will then capture all primary, secondary and tertiary education.. Whilst there is currently work occurring in this area, it needs to be prioritised.
 - 19.2. The entering of student data across education sectors eg NESA and TAFE should be streamlined.
 - 19.3. A Youth Advisory Forum, with representation across all sectors, regions and cultural groups, should be established to provide input on how schools can

better support young people develop the knowledge and skills they are seeking to support their aspirations.

CONCLUSION

20. In the report 'Looking to the Future: *Report of the Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into Work, Further Education and Training* (June 2020) Peter Shergold emphasises:

...we have to design our education system to prepare young people for their future rather than for our past. The interests of our students must be front and centre. We need to recognise how they can best be prepared for employability in a fast-changing labour market and for active citizenship in a democratic society.

If the NSW Government is to deliver on its aim to 'secure the future and global competitiveness in NSW', it will require a complete rethink of the way that schools operate so they have the capacity to equip students with the knowledge and skills they require to power the transformed economy.

Gregory B Whitby AM KSG
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References:

CESE (2021), [2020 NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey](#), NSW Department of Education, Table 8, p18

Shergold, (2020), [Looking to the Future: Report of the Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into Work, Further Education and Training](#), Council of Australian Governments Education Council.

Below are examples of *schools done differently*:

1. CathWest Innovation College (Mount Druitt and Emu Plains)

A response to changes in the way we live and work, [CathWest Innovation College](#) provides exciting new opportunities for students from Year 10 to Year 12. Part of the [Catholic](#)

[Education Diocese of Parramatta](#) (CEDP) system of schools, and with campuses at Mt Druitt and Emu Plains, CathWest offers exciting opportunities and flexible pathways for students informed by inquiry-based learning or through trade training. Combining study and training, CathWest students can attain their HSC and while getting a head-start on their chosen career. Professional mentoring, industry partnerships, workplace placements and recognised qualifications support this learning. CathWest Innovation College really is a school *done differently!*

Here is a video of [CathWest Innovation College](#).

2. St Luke's Catholic College, Marsden Park -- Higher Education Fast-Track for Secondary Students

St Luke's Catholic College in collaboration with Kaplan Business School has designed an alternative pathway whereby students enrolled in secondary education can begin a Diploma-level course in tandem with the final years of high school. In this model, students have two ways to commence a higher education Diploma of Commerce with Kaplan Business School while still at St Luke's. The first way sees students engage with the diploma coursework embedded within the HSC curriculum, while the second way sees students undertaking voluntary extracurricular study in addition to their HSC pattern of study.

Avenue 1: The HSC curriculum

Through a process of strategic curriculum mapping, it is possible for HSC units to be developed in such a way they map to a unit of study within a higher education course accredited at Level 5 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Because students are still studying the NSW curriculum, this approach does not put at risk the funding provided by the government.

At St Luke's, for example, the two-unit 'Work Studies' HSC subject is core for all students and has been developed so the learning outcomes, content, duration of study and most importantly the assessments are equivalent to Kaplan's BUS101 (Business Communication) and BUS201 (Skills for Workplace Success). Successful completion of Work Studies will therefore entitle students to two exemptions in Kaplan's Diploma of Commerce. If they prefer, CEDP schools can opt for an alternative core unit more suited to their own demographics and pedagogical priorities. Kaplan can assist with the mapping in this regard.

Depending on the electives students select in their later years of high school, they may also become entitled to exemptions for Kaplan's BUS109 (Skills for Numerical Analysis) if they

participate in and complete two-unit Mathematics, and for Kaplan's BUS115 (Business Information Systems) if they likewise participate in and complete the two-unit 'Information Processes and Technology' unit.

Benefits for students include:

- ✓ *Completion of up to half a Higher Education Diploma without additional work required.*
- ✓ *Completion of even just one unit becomes sufficient for confirmed entry into a business-related Bachelor course at Kaplan since it reflects a student's capability for higher education study, thereby bypassing the inequitable ATAR hurdle and rescuing students from much angst.*
- ✓ *Savings of cost and time for students who transition to a Bachelor course at Kaplan since the exemptions are carried over and therefore shorten the duration and reduce the cost of post-school study required to obtain a degree. It is also worth noting the exemptions last a period of ten years.*

Avenue 2: Voluntary extracurricular study

Ambitious students who aim to complete more of the Diploma of Commerce can do so via instruction from Kaplan outside of standard school hours. This would necessitate their enrolment as an official student of Kaplan Business School and would be contingent on their successful completion of the Work Studies unit as evidence they have the capability to succeed in an AQF Level 5 course.

Availability for 'Extracurricular Diploma study' could be achieved through a clever use of time. For example, early commencement of Preliminary HSC courses in Year 10 and a 'minimum units approach' spread across Years 10, 11 & 12 (3 years), would see possibly a day per week where students could commit to a diploma module across a term/semester.

Benefits for students, in addition to those listed for Avenue 1, include:

- ✓ *Students can graduate not only with a HSC but also a Diploma of Commerce.*
- ✓ *Students will effectively transition into the second year of a three-year Kaplan degree.*
- ✓ *Pressure to attain a high ATAR is alleviated due to this alternative pathway.*

3. Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Glenmore Park -- LEARN+

Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, a Catholic girls' high school in Glenmore Park, is currently piloting a program that delivers diploma courses into Stage 6 (Year 11 and 12) as

an alternative to a traditional HSC to allow students to tailor a further education pathway within the supportive structures of their high school. Upon high school graduation, these students will have a seamless transition to a range of universities (with advanced standing and course credit), should they choose this path. Alternatively, they will carry a nationally recognised diploma qualification into the workplace or further training.

The current cohort of students are studying either a Diploma of Business Administration, Diploma of Legal Services or Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care. They are also studying NESA Mathematics and English and a course in Religious Education. Currently, these are VET Diplomas awarded under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). In 2021, Caroline Chisholm offered a higher diploma delivered into the college by Southern Cross University. The Diploma of Construction Management, completed over the two years (Year 11 and 12) will then articulate into a bachelor's degree in Construction.
