

# Enhancing the status of VET



# Presenters



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School of Education and Professional  
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Griffith University



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Manager, VET  
Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority

# Enhancing the standing of vocational education and the occupations it serves (SVEOS) – Stephen Billett (Griffith)

The relative low standing of VET and the occupations it serves, is a significant impediment for VET realising its goals.

Influences young people and parents' decision-making about post-school pathways, and government, community and employer support

In an era of high aspiration, VET is often seen as an option only for those unable to secure university entry.

Leads to: mismatches with kinds of skills young people are securing and employment opportunities, what employers seek in employees, and potentially lengthy/unproductive tertiary education experiences.

So, enhancing the standing of VET, improving its provision as a worthwhile post-school pathway for young Australians is important.

It is a global issue, however.

# Standing of vocational education: a global concern

United Kingdom – concerns about lack of participation (Wolf 2011, 2016)

Germany – ‘war for apprentices’ (Deissinger)

Switzerland – too many young people engaging in degrees with no specific employment outcomes

Korea – strong societal disaffection with manufacturing work (Cho & Apple)

Australia – preference for higher education leading to skill shortages and ‘un-employable’ graduates (Bradley, 2008; UA 2017)

Two concerns: i) young people not being attracted and ii) kinds of qualities needed for many these occupations (Gore et al 2017).

Key global agencies are mobilising

BiBB/Cedefop conference (2017)

Recent UNESCO-UNEVOC virtual conference on Improving the image of TVET (2018)

# UNESCO virtual conference: some perspectives

“There are very few youth who want to take up Vocational and technical training because they do not want to be viewed as failures (Kenya).”

“... as we all may know TVET is, at best, viewed as a second or non-preferred choice (Ghana)”.

“The overall perception of TVET in Nigeria is generally seen to be poor.” This is characterized by low enrolment of students, apparent lack of interest in the field by students and parents, slim chances of career progression from technical colleges to universities ... “

“In Romania, despite the programmatic drive to reshape the image of initial VET, it has a discrediting societal bias.”

“TVET is still mostly seen as being suited for learners who are "academically challenged" and whose only option is to "work with their hands". (Barbados)

“ To many people, the vocational trades are viewed as "hands dirty" types of skills.” (Ethiopia)

“In China, the image of TVET is low or poor, compared with the corresponding levels of education ...”,

Improving the image of TVET: Making TVET attractive to youth (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2018)

# UNESCO report on work-based learning programs in Arab region (2018)

Societal perspectives of VET and the occupations it serves in Arab region countries

... there is a vicious cycle of negative image, low quality and low self-esteem related to TVET, its students and even its teachers in the Egyptian society and culture. This phenomena, is well documented and acknowledged, however, very little is being done to create awareness to change this. (El-Ashmawi, 2017, p. 5)

Social perspective towards vocational training in general is negative which led to minimal participation in VET in Jordan. (Rawashdeh, 2017, p. 14)

... TVET in Lebanon is socially looked as low image, and the choice of those who have no choice. (Ghneim, 2017, p. 16)

In general, it is socially looked at the TVET sector as low image, and ... it remains a second option for youngsters....- Palestine (Jweiles, 2017, p. 6)

Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia – mature vocational systems – a more positive picture

Very high aspiration of young people and their parents

# TWO RESEARCH PROJECTS: ENHANCING THE STANDING OF VET

1. Perspectives of and suggestions by Queensland students, parents, teachers and employers
2. Evaluating initiatives in Europe and Scandinavia

# Research project 1: Enhancing the standing of vocational education and the occupations it serves (QLD study)

*What factors influence young people's decisions about participation in vocational education and training (VET) to prepare for future careers?*

*How can the status of VET be enhanced to increase uptake by young people?*

Three phases

Phase 1 - interviews and focus groups to secure parents, school and VET students, employers and teachers' perceptions and suggestions.

Phase 2 – a survey of informant populations to verify and extend Phase 1 findings.

Phase 3 – workshops to identify and appraise specific and interventions in Queensland communities.



# Phase 1 findings (interviews)

School students' post-school pathways shaped by a range of close influences (i.e. parents, teachers and peers) and indirect suggestions (e.g. electronic and broadcast media).

They differ in: i) knowledge, ii) level of influence and iii) engagement, and are not always correlated.

For school students who had decided their occupations, the differences were their schools and year-level.

For VET students who had decided their occupations, teachers were more influential than for school students, and VET student families' knowledge was higher than for school students, and teachers' knowledge had lower influence than for school students.

Undecided students are often drawn to universities' social and institutional attractiveness, and breadth of options and pathways. Yet, the specific occupational focuses of VET are barriers for these young people.

School and VET students suggest actions for schools to take, what VET institutions might do to attract young people and governmental support for young people's engagement in VET.

## Phase 2 findings (survey)

Students ranked influences on decision-making ranked as: i) themselves; ii) immediate family (i.e. parents, carers, siblings); iii) school teachers; iv) friends; v) career guidance officers; vi) electronic media; and vii) news stories etc.

Differences between school students' preferences and adult informants (i.e. parents, school and VET teachers) about strategies for enhancing the standing of VET.

Students ranked desirable employment as: i) future job satisfaction; ii) future job security and stability; iii) personal interests and passions; iv) high-paying future work; v) future prospects; vi) other lifestyle benefits; vii) status of future occupation and viii) status of qualification.

To present VET more positively, students ranked the following strategies:

- i) schools providing more personalised career information about VET/jobs;
- ii) exposure to a range of work situations while still at school;
- iii) exposure to different institutes and education facilities (e.g. visit TAFE institutes);
- iv) promoting examples of with successful careers after completing VET;
- v) accessible online materials;
- vi) wide advertising (e.g. TV, radio, social media); and
- vii) simple, easy to understand printed materials (e.g. brochures, guide books).

## Phase 3 findings (workshops)

Workshop added a finer level of detail to strategies for SVEOS.

Main focus was on localized issues, engagements and agencies as being central to provisions of initiatives to enhance the standing of VET.

Suggestions about KPIs for principals, engagement with local workplaces and employers and how teachers in schools can play greater roles were repeated.

### Four broad courses of action

The findings suggest positioning vocational education and training (VET) as a viable and worthwhile post-school option through:

- i) a public education process – give VET a ‘fair go’ – promoted by government;
- ii) actions by schools to promote, inform and advise evenly about different post-school pathways;
- iii) VET institutions offering attractive environments and broadly-based programs; and
- iv) concerted effort and leadership by government and industry sectors to promote the occupations VET serves.

## Research project 2: International ways forward

Denmark - The raising of the entry requirements and improved educational facilities and institutions that are modern and attractive to young people (Aarkrog).

UK - use of ambassadors – young people who have engaged in trade related occupations and speak at local schools, to create, also, having pathways to higher education (Unwin).

The Netherlands - Some elements of vocational education are high status, but lower qualification levels are low status. Fourth level MBOs can lead to either good jobs or to universities of applied sciences (de Bruijn).

Germany - vocational technical courses now offered through universities of applied sciences - seen as being more attractive than the dual system approach. Chambers of commerce and large employers are advertising to make occupations more attractive to young people (Deissinger).

Switzerland - standing of VET is improving because of societal concerns (expressed in newspapers and television) about the number of young people enrolling in university courses with no link to the labour market (Stadler).

Finland - the rise of applied universities helped elevate the standing VET and the occupation (Nokelainen).

Norway – Preparing VET teachers in specialised institutions that offer Masters programs and pathways through to PhD has supported its standing (Hiim).

## So what?

VET's appeal to communities and governments, attractiveness to young people, their parents and employers is central to realising its important educational potential.

Improving the standing of vocational education needs to co-occur with promoting the status of the occupations it serves.

This includes essential contributions to local communities, enterprises and fulfilling working life for young people, and teachers in the VET system.

Greater impartiality by parents, teachers and career guidance officers whose personal pathways have not included vocational education and the occupations it serves.

Schools need to ameliorate for the different kinds and level of engagement, knowledge of and influence that school age students are exposed.

The advice provided and options for young people who are undecided need to be available across compulsory and tertiary education.

Brokering of realistic and helpful advice for young people might be considered independent of what occurs in and through education.

# Enhancing the status of VET

## Case studies from Victoria



Daryl Sutton, Manager, VET  
Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vet/index.aspx>

# Background

- Attitudes within schools and family biases support the notion that VET pathways are inferior to University.
- Myths and misconceptions surrounding VET have contributed to poor perceptions and can misguide the decisions being made about a student's secondary education.
- Students in the middle years of secondary schooling have little exposure to VET and their knowledge is often limited to hearsay or dated material.
- The VCAA VET Unit has started to develop material using a variety of mediums to promote the reality of VET opportunities and outcomes for secondary students.

# Multiple initiatives

## Get VET campaign

- Teachers, parents, students and industry have been engaged and will be targeted through provision of resources.

## SWL Recognition

- The VCAA have implemented a recognition mechanism for the time students spend in a workplace providing greater understanding of the connectedness between VET studies and industry.



# Aims

Better understanding  
Better perceptions  
Better engagement



# Inform through exploration



## VET myths versus facts

- Myth:** University graduates earn more than VET graduates.  
**Fact:** University and VET both offer a wide range of qualifications that lead to a wide range of salaries. The salary you earn is a result of your qualification and what you do with it – not where you get it.  
 To put this into perspective, the highest average starting salary for a university graduate is \$78,300 (Dentistry) (The Social Research Centre 2018). The highest average starting salary for a VET graduate is \$93,000 (Certificate IV in Hazardous Areas – Electrical) (myskills 2018).
- Myth:** There are fewer job opportunities for VET graduates.  
**Fact:** More than half of all new jobs projected to be created by 2022 will be achievable with a VET qualification. 57% of new jobs projected by 2022 will be achievable with a VET qualification (Labour Market Information Portal 2017).
- Myth:** VET is only for VCAL students.  
**Fact:** VET is for VCE and VCAL students.  
 VET can provide credit towards the VCE and VCAL. It is important to choose studies that complement your pathway.
- Myth:** You cannot go to university if you do VET at school.  
**Fact:** You can still go to university if you do VET at school.  
 If you are a VCE student, VET can be used in the calculation of your Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).  
 If you do not achieve the ATAR you need, or if you are a VCAL student, undertaking a VET qualification may give you an alternative pathway to university.
- Myth:** VET courses delivered to secondary students are not the same as VET courses delivered to everyone else.  
**Fact:** VET courses delivered to secondary students are identical to VET courses delivered to everyone else. VET has national standards. The same standards apply to everyone undertaking a qualification.



Integrated Technologies, Bendigo Senior Secondary College



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Library Skills, The Grange

## This is how VET is different

Here are the top five differences between a VET program and a VCE study or a VCAL unit.

- 1. An extra qualification**  
 You can gain a nationally recognised VET qualification while undertaking your VCE or VCAL. You receive the VET qualification from a Registered Training Organisation, such as a TAFE.
- 2. Connected to the workplace**  
 VET qualifications give you industry exposure and experience in the workplace that reinforces your skills development. This connection also makes for a smooth transition between training and work.
- 3. Practical**  
 VET can strengthen your education by giving you the opportunity to gain practical skills and knowledge that complement your VCE studies. For example, if you want to be an engineer and you are studying VCE Physics and VCE Mathematical Methods, you can develop practical skills, technical knowledge and industry insight by doing VCE VET Engineering.
- 4. Units of competency**  
 Units of competency are the building blocks that make up a VET qualification. Each unit of competency includes specific skills and knowledge.
- 5. Competency based assessment**  
 VET students are assessed as 'competent' or 'not yet competent' in each unit of competency. To be assessed as competent, you must show a consistent application of skills and knowledge to the standard required in the workplace.  
 To make sure you are ready to begin your career or continue with further study, assessments take place in a real or simulated workplace environment.

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# Engage through self reflection

Get VET

## Which VET are you?

[www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/getvet](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/getvet)



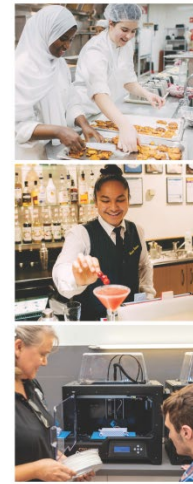
1 Find your passion	Animals	Building and furnishing	Business and finance	Cars, trucks, and anything with an engine	Children and the community	Design	Electrical	Engineering and manufacturing	Entertainment	Farming and the environment	Food, coffee, restaurants and hotels	Hair and beauty	Health	Languages	Science	Sports and outdoor activities	Technology							
2 Pick a career that interests you	Animal Studies	Equine Studies	Building and Construction	Furnishing	Business	Small Business	Automotive	Community Services	Applied Fashion Design and Technology	Creative and Digital Media	Electrical Industry	Engineering	Dance	Music Industry	Agriculture, Horticulture, Conservation and Land Management	Hospitality	Hair and Beauty	Health	Applied Language	Laboratory Skills	Sport and Recreation	Information, Digital Media and Technology	Integrated Technologies	Cisco®

### 7 questions to ask yourself



Get VET

- 1 What am I passionate about?**  
"I'm passionate about good food!"
- 2 What are my strengths?**  
"I'm a legend in the kitchen. People all over the world like my food ... on Instagram."
- 3 What careers will allow me to follow my passion and develop my strengths?**  
"Hospitality is a huge industry. I need to learn more about the different careers and where they can take me."
- 4 How can I get a better understanding of different career opportunities?**  
"I did work experience at a hotel restaurant during the school holidays. I learnt so much. The food and beverage manager was about to move to Asia and work for a five-star resort. It was really inspiring."
- 5 What job opportunities will there be in the future?**  
"I had a look online and hospitality is one of the fastest growing industries."
- 6 What qualification will help me get the job I want?**  
"I think I'll start with a Certificate II in Hospitality. I can learn new skills and get more real world experience. Hopefully I can get a good employer reference too."
- 7 What are my long-term goals?**  
"It's too soon to know exactly what I want to do. I could work, study, travel ... and maybe one day run my own food truck. Right now, I just want to keep my options open. I'll finish year 12 and get my VET qualification at the same time!"



Top and centre: Hospitality. Above: Integrated Technologies



# Inspire with success stories

## Overview

## Extended

## Publication

## Website

## Webpages

## Printable A3 posters

**HEALTH**  
**MICHELLE**, Warragul Park Secondary College  
**Registered Nurse**

VET was a great way to experience working in hospitals, around a variety of health professionals, and gain a taste of the career I thought I wanted.

After I completed a Bachelor of Nursing and the practical component I had gained a VET, gave me a distinct advantage in my studies. After my first year I was able to get part-time employment in a hospital. After university I worked at a large Melbourne hospital for two years, before returning to Shepparton to work in the emergency department.

**ENGINEERING**  
**AUTOMOTIVE**  
**MASON**, Eaglehawk T-12 College  
**Light Vehicle Automotive Apprentice**

I chose VET because I wasn't a very academic student and wanted to learn by doing hands on. VET allowed me to explore my interests and challenge myself along the way. I was able to choose my career path, develop industry skills and gain experience.

With the VET qualifications I received while I was at school, I was accepted into apprenticeship training in Australia, where I completed a two year full time course in electromechanics at a private college. I am currently doing my first vehicle automotive apprenticeship.

**Get VET**

Formal  
• About VET  
• About VET on YouTube  
• How to do VET in the VCE or VCEA  
• VET success stories  
• Get a taste of VET  
• Resources

**VET success stories**

**Electrical Industry**  
**Emily**, Canning High School  
**Electrical Apprentice**

VET gave me opportunities that couldn't find anywhere else. Structured workplace learning gave me the chance and gave me an understanding of what to expect in the apprenticeship industry. I was in a position to decide if this career pathway was right for me.

In a male dominated industry that I chose to see that to challenge myself and build my confidence by proving that my abilities are no less than the others in my class.

**Hospitality**  
**Hannah**, Cranbourne College  
**Apprentice Chef**

VET gave me a clear understanding of what was involved in becoming a chef. Comparing my VET course with real life at school has also indicated the time required for me to complete my apprenticeship after secondary school.

I was also lucky to have a great teacher who mentored me with a passion for learning, that faced challenges with options, but I never lost sight of my goals. In 2011 I was awarded Apprentice of the Year for all RACV Clubs across Australia and received the Ian Taitson Excellence Award for Excellence for Best Dessert.

**Hair and Beauty**  
**Shelby**, Hill College  
**Salon Chemist**

I was over the moon academic student so I knew VET pathways would be perfect for me. It gave me the power to step outside my comfort zone, gain a new passion and work towards my dream career.

VET was fun, challenging, exciting and interesting because I was a whole new environment and get to meet other people with the same interests.

I found that the balance between school, VET and work placements was great because it gave me a complete overview of my job at school and what my future would look like!

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• Resources

**VET success stories**

**Electrical Industry**  
**Emily**, Canning High School  
**Electrical Apprentice**

VET constantly greeted me with new opportunities to expand my career pathway while building my confidence, challenging my abilities and creating new friendships.

**Why I chose VET**

I chose VET Electrical Industry to develop my knowledge and gain an understanding of the industry. I wanted to be sure that this was the right career pathway for me.

**What I got out of VET**

VET gave me opportunities that I could not find anywhere else. Structured Workplace Learning gave me the chance to see the electrical industry that I had an understanding of what is involved and what is expected. VET challenged me and helped me to be more confident in my abilities. By doing VET, I had an advantage over others seeking employment in the electrical industry.

**My VET success story**

VET opened up endless amounts of opportunities and new challenges for my future. Through Structured Workplace Learning I was placed with a reputable company offering me the best experience possible.

**My pathway**

1 **Completed**  
VCE VET Electrical Industry

- Electrotechnology
- Structural Workplace Learning
- English
- Further Mathematics
- Physics
- Visual Communication and Design

2 **Current**  
Certificate III Electrotechnology

3 **Career Goals**  
Employed full time Industrial Electrician in the Australian Army

**VCE VET Electrical Industry**

**MY VET SUCCESS STORY**  
**EMILY**  
Electrical Apprentice

**3 words that describe VET:**  
Memorable. Challenging. Rewarding.

**Secondary school:** Canning High School  
**Location:** Victoria  
**VET qualification:**  
• Certificate III in Electrotechnology

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**WHAT I GOT OUT OF VET**

VET gave me opportunities that I could not find anywhere else. Structured Workplace Learning gave me a foot in the door of the electrical industry. It gave me an understanding of what is involved and what is expected. VET challenged me and helped me to be more confident in my abilities. By doing VET, I had an advantage over others seeking employment in the electrical industry.

**MY VET SUCCESS STORY**

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**MY ADVICE**

Gain as much information as you can about the course before you start. Ask as many questions as you can because the teachers are only there to help you. Take up as many opportunities as you are faced with and gain as much experience as possible. You definitely get out what you put in. So give it your all and it can only be rewarding in return.

**MY PATHWAY**

1 **VCE**  
VCE VET Electrical Industry

- Electrotechnology
- Structural Workplace Learning
- English
- Further Mathematics
- Physics
- Visual Communication and Design

2 **TAFE**  
Certificate III Electrotechnology

3 **EMPLOYED FULL-TIME**  
Industrial Electrician in the Australian Army



# Put VET on display

Pull up banners

A3 posters

Social media



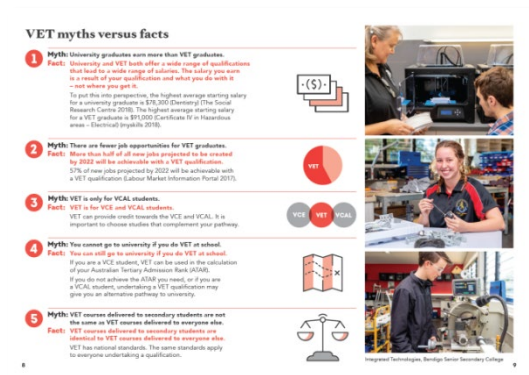
**VET in the VCE and VCAL**

**Get VET**

**PASSION  
JOB OPPORTUNITIES  
FLEXIBILITY**

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**VET myths versus facts**

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**Get VET**

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VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY



**This is how VET is different**

Here are the top five differences between a VCE/VET program and a VCAL unit.

- 1. An extra qualification**  
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- 2. Connected to the workplace**  
VET qualifications are designed to ensure you have the skills and experience in the workplace that will ensure your skills are up to date. This connection also makes for a smooth transfer between training and work.
- 3. Practical**  
VET can strengthen your education by giving you the opportunity to gain practical skills and experience in the workplace. This means you can gain your VET qualification while you are still at school. For example, if you want to be a graphic designer, you can gain your VET qualification while you are still at school.
- 4. Skills of employability**  
VET qualifications are designed to ensure you have the skills and experience in the workplace that will ensure your skills are up to date. This connection also makes for a smooth transfer between training and work.
- 5. Competency based assessment**  
VET qualifications are assessed by competent or VET-qualified assessors. This means you can gain your VET qualification while you are still at school. For example, if you want to be a graphic designer, you can gain your VET qualification while you are still at school.

**Get VET**

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**ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY**

'VET constantly provided opportunities for me to expand my career pathway while building my confidence, challenging my abilities and creating new friendships.'

- Emily, Electrical Apprentice

**Get VET**

[www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/getvet](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/getvet)

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY



**HOSPITALITY**

'Completing my VET courses while at school has reduced the time required to complete my apprenticeship and gave me an understanding how to become a chef.'

- Harrison, Apprentice Chef

**Get VET**

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**ENGINEERING**

See the difference Vocational Education and Training (VET) can make to your VCE or VCAL.

**Get VET**

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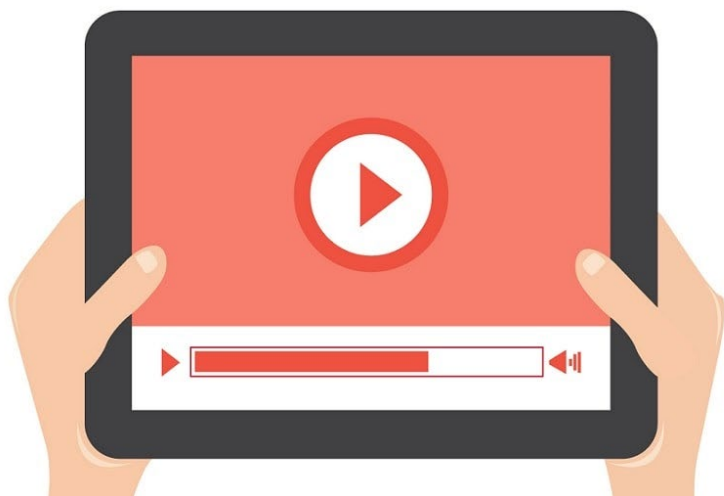
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# When and how to use Get VET

The VCAA has engaged with teachers to determine how they best see the Get VET resources supporting students.

- **VCE or VCAL subject selection information sessions**
- **School open nights**
- **Course counselling**
- **One-on-one sessions with students/parents**
- **Share with leadership teams and school staff**
- **Include in careers curriculum**

## Next steps



- Video content
- Industry profiles, pathways and advice
- More success stories

# VCAA Contact details and web links

Daryl Sutton, Manager VET

Matthew Braithwaite , VET Communications advisor

[vet.vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vet.vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## Get VET

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vet/getvet/index.aspx>

## SWL Recognition

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vet/publications/swlr/recognition.aspx>



# Upcoming Events



28th National VET Research Conference  
10-12 JULY 2019  
**NO FRILLS**  
Adelaide  
The student journey: skilling for life

 NCVER   Government of South Australia

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