

# **EDUCATION AND HEALTH STANDING COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO THE DELIVERY OF THE  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SCHOOLS (VETiS) PROGRAM**



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE  
TAKEN AT PERTH  
WEDNESDAY, 16 AUGUST 2017**

## **Members**

**Ms J.M. Freeman (Chair)  
Mr W.R. Marmion (Deputy Chair)  
Ms J. Farrer  
Mr R.S. Love  
Ms S.E. Winton**

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**Hearing commenced at 9.41 am**

**Mr JAMES ALLAN WALKER**

**Chair, State Training Board, examined:**

**Mrs KATHLEEN HOARE**

**Director, State Training Board, examined:**

**Mr ALAN DAVIS**

**Director, Skills Development, Construction Training Council, examined:**

**The CHAIR:** On behalf of the committee, I thank you for agreeing to appear today to provide evidence in relation to the inquiry into the delivery of vocational education and training in schools, better known as the VETiS program. My name is Janine Freeman and I am the Chair of the Education and Health Standing Committee. The other member of the committee here today is Ms Sabine Winton. The other members send their apologies. That is part of the problem with having two members who are remote and regional, or country members, and one who is unwell, unfortunately. It is important you understand that any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. Your evidence is protected by parliamentary privilege; however, this privilege does not apply to anything you might say outside of today's proceedings. This is Hansard who are here to make the transcript for today.

Before we begin, do you have any questions about your attendance here today?

**Mr WALKER:** No.

**The CHAIR:** We can go straight into questions, or do you have an opening statement that you wanted to outline or anything that you wanted to say to set the scene?

**Mr WALKER:** No; we will go straight to questions.

**The CHAIR:** What were you speaking about at the RAC this morning?

**Mr WALKER:** Safety. I am a director of the RAC Holdings board, but my background is that I was CEO of WesTrac for 15 years and with CAT dealerships for 45 years. I was talking about safety in the workplace, but we also get into safety in homes and also outside the workplace.

**The CHAIR:** So it was not to do with the State Training Board?

**Mr WALKER:** No.

**The CHAIR:** But was opening a science block yesterday to do with the State Training Board?

**Mr WALKER:** No; that was another hat. I am chair of Wesley College. I got that by default because Dean Nalder was supposed to be the chair. He decided to go into politics, so I had to stay on longer to keep things going. Dean Nalder has got a fair bit to answer for!

**The CHAIR:** Yes; we say that all the time!

**Mr WALKER:** I can agree with you, so when you see him, just tell him I spoke nicely about him.

**The CHAIR:** As you know, we are quite interested in looking at the vocational education training system in schools, because with the dual system, especially the Department of Education and training, there seems to be a certain amount of frustration and questioning, and in some cases dissatisfaction, within the industry with regard to the VET in Schools program. Are you able to give

us an understanding of what you think the scale of that is? Are there just certain aspects that the industry is unsatisfied with or is it a broader philosophy–policy issue? That would be a great place to start.

**Mr WALKER:** Let me talk about industry, and then I might, on the policy side, hand over to Kathy, and Alan will come in as well from the industry side of it. I will talk about broad industry, and Alan will talk more about his side with building. As recently as Wednesday of last week, when I was in Kalgoorlie, I met with varied industry leaders there, and their discussion about VET in Schools and the biggest issues is that most go to VET in Schools and do arts, sport science and those sort of things, so when they come out from school, most then want to do a trade of some sort but they have not had that experience in the schools because it is just not there. Also, from their point of view there is a lack of discussion between the schools and industry. There were 13 people in the room, and when I asked what collaboration they have with the local schools, I think only one employer said he has any association with the schools. Coming from my previous background with WesTrac, we had VET in Schools. We looked after Wesley College with VET in Schools and also St Stephen's. What we tried to do with those young people coming in, they came out to WesTrac one day a week—the morning was theory; the afternoon was practical. Then one week at the end of each term, they came out for a full week in their school holidays and did practical work actually on the job. If you want to get the practical side of it from the schools, you have to have the school talking to industry to get those young people out there; otherwise it just becomes very theory based and not practical based. The other thing is it is an opportunity also for employers to see young people—the possibility, when they come out of school, to employ them as well. This connection between industry and schools is just not there, and that is information from there and also when you talk to other employers as well. If you do not get that practical background, I am not too sure in some cases how you could sign them off to say that they have actually done the practical experience to match the theory.

**The CHAIR:** With the WesTrac program that you were doing at Wesley and St Stephen's—and they did that—what sorts of areas was that in? Was it in fitting and machining?

**Mr WALKER:** Plant mechanic or heavy equipment fitter, which is the old term, but these days it is called plant mobile mechanic.

**The CHAIR:** Fitters have pretty much gone now, have they not?

**Mr WALKER:** That is what I was called when I did my trade.

**The CHAIR:** In terms of that aspect of work, is WesTrac still working with them now?

**Mr WALKER:** No, it is not, and I suppose —

**The CHAIR:** What happened there? What broke down in terms of that, apart from you leaving?

**Mr WALKER:** Part of it was—and also the downturn and the follow-up connections. By the way, those students paid for that training. It was a little “elite”, I suppose, because it was done as a private RTO and done through private schools. But there is still no reason, for example, if they are doing the theory training in the school, why industry would not take young people on to do the practical side and do that for free, because it is in their interests to do that because, as I said, you are still having young people come out and it is a great way to hire future employees.

**The CHAIR:** Did you do the sort of tracking on them to see if they came out and they got apprenticeships?

**Mr WALKER:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** What was the percentage that got apprenticeships?

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**Mr WALKER:** It was over 60 per cent.

**The CHAIR:** Was that done as a pre-apprenticeship?

**Mr WALKER:** No, it was just done as a Certificate II.

**The CHAIR:** WesTrac is not a trained RTO, is it?

**Mr WALKER:** Yes, it is.

**The CHAIR:** Does it have an RTO aspect to it?

**Mr WALKER:** It has had an RTO since the 1990s. For example, WesTrac had 400 apprenticeships, and most probably 300 of those under the mobile plant mechanic—all that was done on site.

**The CHAIR:** Those 13 people who were in the room in Kalgoorlie, they would not have had the capacity to have had RTO status, would they?

**Mr WALKER:** No, they did not have RTO status, but they would have been able to give them practical experience on the job.

**The CHAIR:** Are you able to say what sort of industries those people were in?

**Mr WALKER:** Yes, sure; cabinet making, heavy equipment fitting, boiler making—I think the term these days is machining, not fitting and turning. There was hospitality as well.

**The CHAIR:** Were they all keen to see young people get that sort of experience in their organisations? From that, did you connect? Did you do anything to be able to establish connections for them?

**Mr WALKER:** No, I did not, but we were lucky enough to have the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in there, and we also had a person from the Kalgoorlie–Boulder council, so they were going to come back and meet on how they could do that. We also had a meeting with TAFE in Kalgoorlie afterwards, and they were also going to follow up as well.

**The CHAIR:** So that might be more through the TAFE than the school aspect of it?

[9.50 am]

**Mr WALKER:** I still think it needs a combination of both. You have to get the high schools involved, because, from the point of view of all the paperwork to sign and also from talking to the young people first off, that has to start at the high school.

**The CHAIR:** Over your history, is there more paperwork involved that makes it more complex?

**Mr WALKER:** Yes. That was one of the complaints as well.

**The CHAIR:** For employers?

**Mr WALKER:** Yes. I cannot talk physically, because I have been up in a rarefied castle too long these days to see what the paperwork is. In the case of WesTrac, you have got so many people who can do it, so you should use WesTrac's example. But these people are small employers who are the grassroots and that was one of their early complaints—the amount of paperwork and red tape. Most probably, Alan, you could expand on that because you are closer to that than me.

**Mr DAVIS:** Yes, with what we are doing especially. We became involved in VET in Schools when the training council went to the Construction Training Fund in 2009. Industry came to us and said, "Start sorting schools out because we're not getting what we want." They were coming out, as Jim said, with certificate IIs that were worthless to the industry. Across our industry, we saw a variety of about 17 different certificate IIs they were coming out with. So when employers were interviewing them, they did not know which certificate II it was because they were all cobbled together. So they

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said sort it out. We have developed a program with industry, starting in 2009. It took us four years. We then developed that program in conjunction with one of the major associations for a paraprofessional pathway. I think we can say it in here. It was designed to attract young women into the industry. One of the streams was particularly to get young women in, in particular for the estimating, contract management and design, not to be sat on the office front desk. That is not what it was designed for. We put the two programs together. There was a trade pathway developed, so instead of the 17 different pathways, we ended up with four.

**The CHAIR:** What was the organisation that you worked with to do that?

**Mr DAVIS:** The HIA for the paraprofessional. We worked closely with the HIA, and that was over a number of years. It did not just happen overnight. We then developed a pathway for trades, which meant that in year 11, they had common core competencies, and in year 12, they could slip into streams across the trades and pick whichever they wanted or move between the trades. We started that in 2014 and now we have got a very healthy number of students who do work experience of 220 hours over the two years, because industry said that without work experience, it was not going to work. They insist that the delivery is by qualified people from the trades. It is delivered in school trade centres and, if they do not have a trade centre, a TAFE college or a private provider can provide that training.

We also put a pathway in for civil construction and plumbing. We now target year 9 and 10s with try a trade programs and exposure to the paraprofessional, and then in year 10, they actually get practice within a range of trades within school, and that is fully funded. Then in year 11, obviously they go into one of the two streams. It has been working very well, because in 2015–16, the Department of Training and Workforce Development wanted to streamline the pre-apprenticeships, so they have taken our VET in Schools program and that is now the pre-apprenticeship as well. We also established it as a traineeship and the HIA is just about to commence the first group of trainees, which will be commencing at either the end of this year or the beginning of next year. The program really takes them from year 9 through to year 12 and beyond.

**The CHAIR:** Just stepping me through, though, when they go into the streams into those areas, are they getting practical experience in the workplace or are they still just getting that practical experience at a trade training centre or a TAFE?

**Mr DAVIS:** They get both. They get 220 hours of on-site work experience.

**The CHAIR:** And that is with a worker in the workplace?

**Mr DAVIS:** That is it. That cannot be delivered in the schools or the TAFE college.

**The CHAIR:** I understand it cannot be delivered in the schools, but it cannot be delivered in the trade training centre or in the TAFE?

**Mr DAVIS:** No.

**The CHAIR:** You cannot be doing your bricklaying in the big Balga sheds there and call that the 220 hours?

**Mr DAVIS:** No.

**Mr WALKER:** And then next week you knock it over? No.

**Mr DAVIS:** In all honesty, the TAFE colleges that are delivering these programs are very, very well connected with industry, so they can get them the work experience, and that has been built up over this six or seven-year period. Now we have taken it one step further in that the Construction Training Fund has just built a purpose-built centre to cater for VET in Schools students to come and visit, rather than to have to go to the schools and deliver to them to show them what is in the industry.

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It is called the construction futures centre. It will open at the beginning of next year and it has all the latest technologies—augmented reality—to really get students early. There is talk of even going as far back as years 6 and 7 to give them exposure to the industry.

**The CHAIR:** Where is that based?

**Mr DAVIS:** That is located in Belmont. It has just been finished. The building is finished, but the equipment is not fitted yet.

**The CHAIR:** But that is just for the construction training area, is it not?

**Mr DAVIS:** It is for construction, yes.

**The CHAIR:** Does that go into mining as well or not?

**Mr DAVIS:** No, not at the moment.

**Mrs HOARE:** But it will have both the trade pathway and the paraprofessional pathway.

**Mr DAVIS:** It has every pathway.

**Mrs HOARE:** No matter who is in the class, they will be able to choose and find equipment and things. It opens their eyes to possibilities for the careers in the construction industry.

**The CHAIR:** Is there any discussion in taking that model into other industries?

**Mrs HOARE:** We are using the construction paraprofessional and trade pathway model basically to look at whether we can transfix that across other industries and really because it brings together the core competencies and allows kids—because a lot of kids do not know what they want to do—to explore the possibilities because they get a try a trade-type thing embedded in the program. We want to embed that into other industries so that we are getting the same sort of level of engagement for young people.

**The CHAIR:** The difference in construction and training is that you have got the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund, and that gives it the capacity to have resources. Is there a problem in translating that to other areas because you do not have that same sort of funding model?

**Mrs HOARE:** It is likely to be a problem, but we also have to recognise that the bulk of our apprentices are actually in the construction industry.

**The CHAIR:** Has the State Training Board ever considered having a policy debate or had a policy debate about extending those sorts of industry training fund models?

**Mr WALKER:** We do not get into that side of it at all. With regard to the facilities in the way the building is set up, we were using that as an example for other industries to look at. I think Alan was trying to explain about getting to the people in year 9, who do not really know what they want when they are that age. When you are in year 9, you are trying to select your subjects for years 10, 11 and 12, yet you do not know what you want. So with this, you can start to go out and see those sorts of places and are given the experience. A lot of this comes back to some of the root causes, I think—that is, the advice that the students get. Where do they get it from and where do they go and see things? We do vocational visits. Who is in the careers advisory and that sort of stuff? That is where a lot of the information has to come from. The other thing is that it is not easy to wind your way through the VET pathways, so how do the young students do that? I think in some cases the schools even struggle to find their way through that pathway. What Alan is offering through his organisation is a physical seeing of what is available and also being able to sit there with them and help them through those pathways and being able to work their way through the websites as well, which is very important.

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**The CHAIR:** When you say that the VET pathway is difficult to struggle through, is that because there are certificates and then there is the pre-app and then there is the apprenticeship and then there are the different industries?

**Mr WALKER:** And then there is the diploma.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, the diploma. Is that why it is difficult? What makes you say that it is a struggle-through? I am feeling that to have this construction futures centre, it is a bit like competing with the universities and their open days, when everyone turns up and it is all glittery and nice and they go, "I'm going to become a paralegal and have this great future" versus coming in and going, "Actually, there is a paraprofessional pathway here and I can have that great future in this way." How do you say that that pathway is difficult to struggle through?

[10.00 am]

**Mrs HOARE:** That is probably one of the things. The State Training Board has just released the WA "State Training Plan 2017–2020". One of the things that the board has actually picked up on is that the VET system in itself, as you rightly point out—universities advertise quite broadly. We do not advertise TAFE; we do not advertise the VET system. We used to have the ApprentiCentre bobble heads so people were aware that apprenticeships were a career to somewhere. We have lost that argument, particularly over the course of the last four years. It has been difficult for the VET system to actually respond. Fees went up. It has always been about fees. People kind of lose sight of the opportunities available there. There are 650-plus apprenticeships and traineeships that the board has actually established—classified apprenticeships and traineeships. The take-up of a lot of those is unfortunately very small because people are just not aware of them. Particularly for young people, they are bombarded with universities and parents, again, are bombarded with universities, thinking that that is the only way you are going to make yourself rich and powerful and all that sort of stuff. Whereas the VET system offers a lot of opportunities that we are just not selling, and that is the problem.

**Mr WALKER:** Also, if you just go back, the careers advisers in most cases do not know the VET system. They have been through university and gone back into a school application. They do not know the VET system; they do not see what it can do. It is an education program that we have to do with VET. One of the great things that Alan has got down there now as well is bringing the students in but, more importantly, bringing the teachers and the career advisers in so that they can understand. I know from my own practical experience at WesTrac, if we brought schools in there and had teachers in there, a lot of them thought workshops were dirty, filthy sweatshops, going back years ago. These places are clean, they are safe and all that sort of stuff. I can remember bringing some doctors through one time on a Rotary Club visit, and one of them said, "I think this place is nearly as clean as the hospital." That is the way it has changed and we are not selling that change. It is different today from what it was—where you can go and do the jobs, for example. One of the people I was talking to up in Kalgoorlie has a boilermaker job. He has robots up there physically doing the work. You can have a robot but you still need a tradesperson who understands how to weld to be able to operate it. I chair Austin Engineering, a manufacturing company here in Perth. We have robots there, too. You still need the tradesperson to understand the basics. The apprenticeships as we know them, instead of being trades—a lot of people are becoming technicians. That is part of the pathway as we go forward into technology, in building and all the trades going forward. There is a lot more out there today than there was 10 years ago and definitely when I did mine 45 years ago.

**Mr DAVIS:** If I could just pick up on what Kathy and Jim said, I agree entirely. I think that where we are successful with what we are doing is we have simplified the whole thing by taking out the

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plethora of choices that were there and simplifying them. They still have exactly the same choices but wrapped up so that we can see what they are. This is a bit out of date but it actually comes down to one small document for the school students and that is it. It tells me exactly what the pathways are and what the trades are. It is not aimed at the school; it is aimed at the student. Then we got them attached to a website and they can just get on to us and see what they want. It spells it out—this is your career in construction in the schools.

On industry liaison, I agree entirely with Jim. That is where bringing them into a centre is easier than sending people out to visit. One of the things that you did say was that the construction training fund has the advantage of the resources. The actual resources for delivery are still provided by the Department of Training and Workforce Development and the Department of Education. I think all we have done is really taken it and built a model. Yes, we have advantages now that we are going to have a futures centre but that is only just about to begin. We have done all the hard work over the last seven or eight years, which has led us to where we are now.

**The CHAIR:** You mentioned it, so I am going to mention it: What was the impact of the increase in fees that did happen over the last four years in terms of uptake of vocational education and training in schools?

**Mrs HOARE:** It was probably a perfect storm of raising the fees and the economy at the same time. Our numbers are down 25 to 26 per cent. We are still going to face skill shortages if we do not get people back into training. The decision to freeze TAFE fees is a good step but the board is of the opinion that probably more needs to be done really to entice people back into the TAFE system.

**Mr WALKER:** I suppose one of the things from my point of view with an industry hat on is, if you see the numbers in schools, they are in industries where not a lot of jobs are available. How disheartening is it when they have done their training and then they go out and there is a brick wall up? The VET in Schools has to be aligned to the priorities of the jobs that are going to be out. If you are going to put them into some of these courses just to be “babysat”, that is fine but we are not doing the right thing by students.

**The CHAIR:** Stop talking about it in a general sense. Which ones are the ones that are not valuable to students? Is it the arts courses, the hospitality courses, the business courses?

**Mr WALKER:** It is the arts, the sports, the business. If someone is really keen to go in there, that is fine, because there are going to be some jobs, but there are not going to be enough jobs to take them all.

**Mrs HOARE:** Those courses are actually easy to be delivered by a schoolteacher in school, and that is the perfect pathway to explore. You get all your employability skills and all the rest of those sorts of things, which are more general skills. But if you are on a pathway to a job, we would rather see the emphasis going on to vocational pathways actually going somewhere.

**The CHAIR:** Should the VET in Schools be confined to where they will go on and get apprentices or diplomas in those areas and not to university? If you do business or art or sport, you are more likely to go to university, are you not?

**Mr WALKER:** I will just come in as well. You might find some students who are doing ATAR courses will do the VET in Schools course as well to get some of the practical experience. For example, at WesTrac, with the mechanical side of it, some of those young people you have in there want to go to university to be engineers. That is fine, because it does give them a little bit of practical experience but you still want them to be able to get a job at the end of the day. If it is mechanics, boiler making, building construction where there are jobs available, what percentage is it—45?

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**Mr DAVIS:** We range between 38 at the worst and 48 per cent of all apprentices in the state who are in construction and electrical, which is in the same area, yet the funding, we get around four to six per cent of that. The construction industry employs about 10 per cent of the state's workforce as well. There is a mismatch. As Jim said, there is a lot of delivery because the schools find it easy to deliver and because also the students can then get a certificate II to comply with the WACE requirement. I think there are a few issues in there.

**Mrs HOARE:** We need to recognise also that for young boys who do not want to be in school, sport is a good outlet.

**The CHAIR:** But is it a VETiS course?

**Mrs HOARE:** We see that there are three VETiS courses. If you are targeted and you know where you want to go, we would say a certificate qualification in VET in Schools leading towards an apprenticeship is probably what we as the industry would actually prefer. When you are talking about the babysitting or those who do not want to be at school and have to be in school to year 12, we would rather see the emphasis on how to apply for jobs, how to go for an interview, all the employability skills, turning up on time, all those sorts of things that employers are looking for. We recognise that people mature differently, so you need to provide that throughout the two years, particularly in years 11 and 12. But then also you have the career taster programs where young people might not necessarily know what they want to do and there is a good way of exploring the different worlds of work. We would rather see that, but we do not want to see those career taster programs attached to a qualification. We would rather see that as part of general education rather than using a VET qualification for that purpose.

**Mr DAVIS:** If there is one major advantage with exactly what Kathy said there, when our programs were designed, the industry said, "What is the cost saving to us if we have a program that articulates to a trade?" We stripped the programs down to only delivering what articulates to an apprenticeship. Therefore, the Department of Training and Workforce Development does not have to fund that training again. In other words, if it is delivered in the VET in Schools program, that fully articulates and they take 230 to 250 hours with them into a qualification.

[10.10 am]

**Mr WALKER:** That is very important across the whole lot.

**Mr DAVIS:** Across all of VET, I think; I agree.

**Mr WALKER:** It is also important to the student as well. They have done their VET in Schools; then they have to go and redo it again. It is just demoralising.

**The CHAIR:** But that is only in construction. That is not in mining or hospitality or any of those other areas?

**Mr DAVIS:** There is partial articulation.

**Mr WALKER:** There is partial, yes.

**Mr DAVIS:** But when we designed this, that is why it took us so long to get agreement with everybody.

**Mr WALKER:** Industry was involved.

**Mr DAVIS:** Industry was driving it with us.

**Mr WALKER:** Yes, that is important.

**Mr DAVIS:** We listened to what was said. They said, "We don't want them doing something at school, but when they come to us they've got to do it again. If they have learnt how to do something,

it has to be to the standard that it would be in the workplace and then, when they come to us, we don't have to pay for them to go to a TAFE course."

**The CHAIR:** Do they have pre-apprentices in VET in Schools?

**Mr DAVIS:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** For construction?

**Mr WALKER:** Yes.

**Mr DAVIS:** It is the same program.

**The CHAIR:** And for any other industries?

**Mr WALKER:** Depending upon the school and what they can deal with.

**Mrs HOARE:** The Department of Training and Workforce Development and each of the training councils contribute to a VET in Schools qualifications register. It actually spells out all the qualifications that are suitable to be delivered in schools, although we have a flag system saying, "We don't want that VETiS category from an entry perspective because it is actually setting a kid up to fail." Or there are so many things that you would need to have in place, which most schools would not have, to actually be able to deliver it to a quality standard that industry expects. But the pre-apprenticeships are tagged in that VET in Schools register to actually say that is the preferred pathway for industry. We also have a lot of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships that are classified as the norm and you can start your apprenticeship at school. But, unfortunately, only 3.6 per cent of the delivery in schools is actually in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. We are in the throes of actually going out to industry. We are actually having a consultation starting this Friday to ask, "Well, what's the problem?" We are getting to employers to say, "Why aren't you using these products?"

**The CHAIR:** In your submission, you said that the industry is of the view that the VETiS program would benefit from some enforceable processes. What did you mean by that?

**Mrs HOARE:** The industry training councils are funded by the Department of Training and Workforce Development and they report to the State Training Board. One of their major levels of industry information is contribution to the VET in Schools register. They put in a lot of effort. They go out and consult with industry and consult with employers about what is industry's view about what is suitable to be delivered. So they will flag qualifications as either green, which is green light, go ahead; you deliver that quite well. Orange category, we are happy to be delivered but there are a few things in place that we would like to see before it can be delivered, and that is around auspicing—all those sorts of issues around teachers delivering it. Then there is this red category, for our purposes and the training council's point of view, industry does not support it being delivered to school-aged children because of various reasons. It might be that the industry actually prefers people over the age of 18. It might be that there are critical skills or risks and hazards for young people delivering that qualification. The problem is that because it is not enforceable at the moment, we are seeing those red categories still being delivered as part of the VET in Schools program.

**Mr WALKER:** I suppose hospitality is an example with over 18, with alcohol and liquor and serving that sort of stuff. It is a grey area, all right. You have VET in Schools and you have got people 17, and you have got to teach them about alcohol and liquor as part of the hospitality course. It is easier if they are over 18.

**Mrs HOARE:** Dealing with hazardous chemicals and all those sorts of things that we would not want for years 11 and 12 students, or there are supervision issues. The problem is with the VET in Schools

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program, particularly with the apprenticeship and traineeships, it is one day a week. That could be difficult for the employer to actually give the time and scheduling their work to make sure that the child has meaningful engagement when they are actually at work, rather than just being the traditional view of apprentices sweeping the floors and all that sort of stuff, where they are actually engaging in the work that they are trained to do. That becomes a critical issue for the VET system.

**The CHAIR:** You said in your submission that you thought you were confident that with the amalgamation of the two departments, that might address some of those issues, or do you think there are specific things that need to be looked at, when we are talking about that enforcement, making sure schools are delivering on those issues you talked about?

**Mrs HOARE:** It is probably more the fact that we had two ministers before and it was a joint ministerial statement that sort of developed the qualifications register and neither side was sort of able to enforce it.

**Mr WALKER:** It fell between.

**Mrs HOARE:** VET in Schools has always, unfortunately, had that —

**The CHAIR:** Didn't have a relationship?

**Mrs HOARE:** Yes, that relationship.

**Mr WALKER:** I was going to say it fell in between.

**Mrs HOARE:** It is always the problem child that sits between the two parents type of thing, because it is a VET program but it is also an education program. Schools think they are doing the right thing. We see industry thinking it is doing the right thing.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Two ministers!

**Mrs HOARE:** Two ministers—it is kind of different priorities, different emphasis. But, for us, from the State Training Board point of view and particularly from the training council point of view, we are hopeful that having a single minister might be able to resolve some of those issues.

**The CHAIR:** We also understand that the State Training Board and the industry training councils are going to be revamped or renewed or reinvigorated under the new government? Have you got an understanding of what those changes will be?

**Mr WALKER:** Loud and clear.

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr WALKER:** It was very quick after the government came in that I was up the hill and told exactly what was expected of myself personally and also the State Training Board. Really and truly, it is about jobs. It is about the State Training Board finding out what is going on with industry, getting out there and having a clear and direct line to the minister, but also using the training councils to get a lot of that information for us. So much of that is happening right now; for example, these consultations we have got—the one I had last week in Kalgoorlie and this week we have got one on Friday and then two on Monday—it is getting to industry and finding out what they really want. You can see the example of that in building and construction, where industry has driven what they wanted, so because they have driven it, they are doing it and they are using it and that sort of stuff. It is no good us going out there and designing courses or bits and pieces for the future and saying to industry that we have got it, come and get it. You have got to design it around what industry wants. If you do that, then they will use it. So, it is getting that consultation, getting that work, and then getting that back directly to the minister so she can hear very quickly and move things along. But part of that revamping is not changing lots; it is actually revamping from the point of view of being

out there, and also giving the State Training Board the resources to do those sorts of things going forward. It is the same with the training councils. The work that I have seen—I am not picking on Alan here because he has been very focused on it. But at the end of the day, if you are not creating jobs for us going forward, then you are not doing your job, because a lot of other things the training councils do sometimes do not add anything to the bottom line of creating employment or creating better quality employment, and that is where the focus has to be. That has been the revamp. That has been the message going forward, and there is no misunderstanding. The great thing about it, too, was the new director coming in. The first thing that Ian did after he had a meeting with the minister listening, “I’ve been told what you’re doing. How about you tell me what you’ve been told so we can compare notes?”, which is good. What it has really done with this whole revamp is put the State Training Board and also the department on a better understanding of what is required. It has also made us work a lot closer together. For example, a lot of this work on Friday and Monday is done in collaboration with the department, so we are working on the same thing, not trying to do different things. We are working on the same thing, with the same end. That allows us to get more resources. At the end of the day, when we come up with a result, we have come up with that result together. We are not trying to then go back and then trying to convert or engage with the department, saying this is what is what; they are on the same platform.

**The CHAIR:** How does that differ from what was occurring? One assumes you were out doing community consultation sessions in the last four to eight years. How does that differ from what occurred in that space before? So it was that separation, was it, and the two ministers were causing the complexity?

**Mr WALKER:** No. It was very hard to get to the previous ministers.

**The CHAIR:** There you go.

**Mr WALKER:** I have a six-weekly meeting with the new minister.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** What are some of the key differences or problems in terms of the metro picture as opposed to the regional picture? I note you go on regional visits. Are there clear differences, when we are having this conversation, that will be different when we are talking metro versus regional?

[10.20 am]

**Mr WALKER:** I think the basic side, from the point of view of apprentices in regards to coming out of schools et cetera, would be the same, and the red tape that they have to go through is very similar, but the biggest difference is, for example—I will give an instance in Kalgoorlie, but I will not name any names—one of the companies up there is only very small, but they have got to send their apprentices down here for training, and they get a week’s notice to do it, yet they have got a whole pile of work. They have got to come down here. The other problem we have got is young people coming down to Perth, so they can get led astray very easily and they have not got those contacts. So those sorts of things are different, and therefore the completion rate sometimes in the country is not as good, especially in first year. Once you get through the first and second years, they are fine. It is being able to deliver some of that basic training in the regions, rather than having to always come down to Perth, which is one of the biggest issues. And they are small, and they need a lot more flexibility with the TAFEs to be able to get more warning so they can plan their work going forward. In Perth here, if you have an apprentice go off, it is pretty easy to get another tradie, or a part-time tradie to come in and help out. You cannot do that in the country. That is where a lot of the issues are occurring. That is more about the TAFEs.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, I was going to say, it is not so much about the schools.

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**Mr WALKER:** It is not about the schools, yes.

**The CHAIR:** Are there trade training centres in some of the regional schools? Is there not one in the Pilbara?

**Mr DAVIS:** I think there was one put into the Pilbara, yes.

**Mr WALKER:** Yes, there is, yes.

**Mrs HOARE:** The high school in Karratha is actually co-located with the TAFE, so the students actually use the TAFE facilities, and I think there is one also in Bunbury.

**Mr DAVIS:** And there is also one in the Peel.

**The CHAIR:** So one in Bunbury and one in Peel, so there is not a lot of—the trade training centres were paid for by the federal government were they not?

**Mr WALKER:** Correct, yes.

**The CHAIR:** I should know this, but the federal government also set up alternative TAFEs at one stage.

**Mr WALKER:** They were federal TAFEs. That is a fair way back.

**The CHAIR:** That has all gone now has it not?

**Mr WALKER:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** In terms of the model of the VETiS and the trade training centres, or even just the trade training centres, in terms of providing it, my understanding is that there is three modes. There is one where the teachers are providing the professional education training. There is an RTO who works to deliver it in there, and then there is the RTOs. What is the view, in terms of the State Training Board, about a mix of that, or the effectiveness of that, or where that goes forward, and how that goes forward?

**Mr WALKER:** I suppose it does not matter how it gets delivered, as long as the quality and the outcomes are right.

**The CHAIR:** And how do you ensure that then?

**Mr DAVIS:** One of the things that we specified within these qualifications that industry wanted was that if somebody is going to be delivering this, if it is for the trade qualification in particular, they have got to be a trade qualified person that has current industry experience to deliver it. It should not be a schoolteacher. That caused a lot of friction at first, and the friction is around who pays for VET in schools. Is it funded by the school, or is it funded by the Department of Training and Workforce Development? DTWD has a small amount of VET in schools funding that they can put out, but it is probably not enough to cover what wants to be delivered. So the quality has got to come from the delivery person, and one of the things that is not supported is auspicing arrangements for these particular courses. That is where a teacher will deliver it, but an RTO will sign off to say that the delivery was up to standard, because there was a lot of problems with that a couple of years ago, where there was a lot of delivery that was not of a high enough standard. By ensuring that the RTO that is delivering it is either a trade qualified person in school, where they do have some trade qualified teachers, or it has got to be delivered by a TAFE or private provider that has got those qualifications. You build the quality into the delivery, because if you do not get the outcome, when they come out with the qualification, the industry will pick it up straightaway.

**The CHAIR:** Are there any restrictions on that in terms of—I know there are restrictions on the TAFE. If you go into a TAFE as someone who has an industry qualification, you have to reach a certain level in terms of your teaching qualifications as well.

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**Mr WALKER:** Yes, it is the same with RTOs. RTOs do a lot of that as well, even though they do not have to, but they do as well.

**The CHAIR:** And what is the level of teaching qualification that they need?

**Mr DAVIS:** Unfortunately it is known as a TAE; there is no requirement anymore for a formal teaching qualification above that certificate IV, whereas previously the minimum requirement was a Diploma of Teaching or a Bachelor of Arts. That was done away with, probably, 25 years ago, and then they just put in that it had to be this certificate IV in training and assessment, which became the TAA, and that was being delivered in a very short time frame, but that seems to have been tackled—that the ASQA is looking at the duration of what was actually delivered, so I think you are going to get a bit of quality coming back in again within that area. But within the TAFE colleges in particular, although they are effectively self-regulating, we do not really have any problems from our perspective with the people who are delivering in our industry. I cannot speak for the other industries, but ours are very well respected in the industry. TAFE lecturers have got a very high respect.

**Mr WALKER:** It is the same for my side, with the mechanical trades. TAFE is a requirement for that. As you say it is a certificate IV, and I know in WesTrac that people teaching out there—teaching the trades as RTOs—that is all done on a certificate IV.

**The CHAIR:** And that is the same in the school thing?

**Mr DAVIS:** They would have to have a cert IV.

**Mr WALKER:** I think they would, yes.

**The CHAIR:** They do not have to have a teaching degree; they can have a cert IV to deliver the —

**Mr DAVIS:** Training and assessment.

**The CHAIR:** For the VET assessments.

**Mr DAVIS:** To be able to deliver, they would have to have a trade qualification and the certificate IV, yes.

**Mr WALKER:** You would be well aware of that. They are doing sport at schools and the sports teachers can do it anyway.

**The CHAIR:** I am the member for Mirrabooka, and 54 per cent of the community are born outside of Australia. One of the things that often gets spoken about in the committee—this will probably be the last question, unless you have got one—is that they tend to focus on going to university, like they think that is the pathway to success. It is an issue that we talk to community leaders about, but in your promotion, have you thought about how you are going to promote to those different Australian communities, not just the traditional people, either born here with parents born overseas, or born overseas in terms of those ideas?

**Mr WALKER:** For me personally, it is testimonials. Let us find some people who have actually come out here from another country, and English is their second or third language, and they have actually made it in life through the VET system, so how to use those people as examples? It is not just people who are coming to us, even for our local people as well, because part of the problem, you are right—this is metropolitan and regional—the issue is still, from the industry, that the schools are pushing the ATAR subjects, and they are not pushing the VET side. So how do we get those examples up there where people can see where this person has gone with VET? Dale Alcock is a good example of a local person—tradie, gone right through. There are lots of other people out there, but how we also find people who have come out from other countries, and use them as testimonials. That is the way I sell earthmoving equipment, and I think it is the same from the point of view of trades as well.

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**Mr DAVIS:** And some of the students who have gone through to WorldSkills come from very diverse backgrounds. They are not what you would class as born here or brought here by the parents. They are just people who respond and make their way in life, and when you see these people at the WorldSkills competitions, you have got the full range of people.

**Mr WALKER:** A good example is our apprentice of the year a couple of years ago, who does not mind getting up and talking in open space. He went through school and he suffered depression, so he did not really finish year 12, even though he was there. He went out and he was a bandie, so he did band for a period of time, but still had depression. He realised there was no money, so he went into retail, and realised that was not his future, and then went and did an electrical apprenticeship, got his cert IV, and now he is doing a diploma. He is a success story. He is quite happy to talk about what he has been through, and how he has pulled himself through. These people there should just grab him and use him. Jared Stone is the name of the young guy, but he is excellent.

[10.30 am]

**Mrs HOARE:** There are a couple of other examples of people who have gone on to university, and then have gone back for their passion to go into hospitality. So we had the chef apprentice of the year, who was a mature-age guy. He had gone through work for his own self, gone to university and decided, no that was not for him. He had a passion for cooking. He did his chef apprenticeship, and became apprentice of the year. We have also had a young lady from a Chinese background. Her parents had forced her into accounting, and she found that was not for her, so she decided to take a VET pathway, and became apprentice of the year. There are some great stories out there.

**Mr WALKER:** There are some good examples out there.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much. We are hoping that we will get our report out at the beginning of November.

**Hearing concluded at 10.31 am**

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