

# **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, 6 SEPTEMBER 2017**

### **SESSION TWO**

#### **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 10.51 am**

**Mrs MARY GRIFFITHS**

**Principal, Armadale Senior High School, examined:**

**Mrs JANICE SANDER**

**Principal, Mindarie Senior College, examined:**

**Mrs JANETTE GEE**

**President, Western Australian Secondary School Executive Association; Director, Australian Secondary Principals' Association Board, examined:**

**Mr DOMENIC CAMERA**

**Principal, Australind Senior High School, examined:**

**Ms MELISSA GILLETT**

**Principal, John Forrest Secondary College, examined:**

**Mr IAN JOHNSTON**

**Principal, Greenwood College, examined:**

**The CHAIR:** On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for agreeing to appear today to provide evidence in relation to the inquiry into the delivery of the VET in Schools program. My name is Janine Freeman, I am the chair of the Education and Health Standing Committee. I would like to introduce the other members of the committee: Bill Marmion, who is the deputy chair, and Sabine Winton. We have an apology from Shane Love and Josie Farrer. It is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of this 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.

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

**The WITNESSES:** No.

**The CHAIR:** Did you want to make a brief opening statement?

**Mrs GEE:** I think our submission probably covers anything we would say in an opening statement. I guess the only thing that I would like to say is that we quite welcome a review into VET in Schools. After attending a forum last week on building opportunities for school-based traineeships and school-based apprenticeships—I was in a room at a forum of about 100 industry leaders, and only myself and one other person was from a school—I realised the lack of correct information that is out there. I welcome any information that comes through, after this hearing, that can be disseminated, because there is a big disconnect between what industry feels schools can do, are able to do, have the funding to do and have the will to do, as to what industry thinks the reality is.

**The CHAIR:** Who had organised the forum?

**Mrs GEE:** That is a good question. Sorry, I will have to get back to you on that.

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**The CHAIR:** That would be great. It would be great to know. If we can probably have a look at some of their outcomes, that would be good to know. I am going to hand over to Sabine. Sabine apologises, but she will have to leave in five minutes' time, so she gets the opening question.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** I apologise for that. I get the opening question, and to me it is the big question. It is the theme running through many of the submissions that we have received so far. I am a primary teacher, so having to learn this whole sector has been a real eye-opener for me—the complexity of it. Where we are at the moment seems to have started with the decision that was made to mandate cert II as being part of the graduation certificate. The big question is: some feedback or some comment on what would happen if it was not mandated.

**Mr CAMERA:** I would like to answer that. As an engagement tool, I think, in ensuring that students remain within education. I think to ensure good outcomes for students is a really important part of that mandated process of making sure that the cert IIs really are a pathway and an opportunity for students to access training and some incredible experience within the community as part of workplace learning, and for employers to see the value of our youth as well. There are a lot of benefits within that framework where we actually have the opportunity for students to do some meaningful activities that will actually take them beyond school, extend their life experiences and allow for better employability skills. In terms of not having that mandated, I think that there will still be an appetite in relation to some of that happening in schools, but I dare say that it is more hit and miss. That agenda of making sure that all students are engaged really drives our schools as part of our policies. That policy component is really important. Our schools are measureable around those performance outcomes, which becomes a really important part of our drive as well. It is not the only thing. I think schools will still do the right thing anyway, regardless of that.

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** I do not think it is completely around the mandate in any shape or form; it is about the fact that the students stay at school until the year they turn 18—and 17. We have got a lot of students who would have left school prior to this. To have them leave school without any qualifications is not what we want to do as teachers and as educational institutions. To have them leave with a minimum of a cert II, whether it is mandated or not, is something we were doing anyway, or are on the pathway to doing. It is not something that was suddenly mandated and we all decided, “We better get on to the cert II thing.” At my school, for instance, we have a very small ATAR cohort and all of our kids go through—except for the small cohort of ATAR students—a VET program. If we did not have that VET program and we did not have strong VET programs, then they would just be sort of wafting off into the ether.

**The CHAIR:** Our question is not that you do not have the VET program, okay?

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** That is not our question.

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** If you said about the mandate.

**The CHAIR:** Yes. Our question is about cert II.

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** I am saying it is not about the mandate; it is about the fact that kids need that when they leave.

**Mrs SANDER:** You are asking what would happen if it was not mandated.

**Ms GILLETT:** I would argue it is not mandated. I have got kids that are not doing a cert. The top ATAR kids that have got six ATARs do not have to do it.

**Mrs SANDER:** No, but what she is saying is it is mandated to get your WACE, one or the other. At my school, I have 400 do a VET course. We are a year 11 and 12 senior college with 870 kids, so the

greater majority do it, so it does give them that qualification prior to the mandating of it. It was the stage 1 courses and I think that did not lead the students anywhere. That is why I think it came about. It has really given that focus and pathway for some of the students. Of course it can lead into other things, not just into going into TAFE, but into work and into portfolio entrance to university. It is a qualification that we have spent a lot of time and resources developing at our college, with 11 courses we offer at our school, plus we partner with lots of others—auspice with other companies.

**Mrs GEE:** One thing I can say is that it has raised the profile of non-ATAR pathways, which I think is probably the most important thing. Parents can now see that there is a viable alternative to doing ATAR. Students could come out of school with a general ATAR and a reasonable score not knowing what they wanted to do, not necessarily prepared for a university course, but definitely not prepared for a work-type course either. This has raised the profile of non-ATAR courses and it has actually brought them into line as a viable alternative. It also means that parents are not fighting their kids with, “You have to do ATAR, it is the only thing.” It has given an opportunity for industry to link closer to schools. That was happening before, but not in the same way and not to the same extent. I think it actually values our entire cohort of students and says, “Whatever you choose to do is a good thing and we will support you on your way.”

[11.00 am]

**The CHAIR:** Did you want to add into that? You are the only person who has not spoken yet.

**Mr JOHNSTON:** Janine, I need to say something, do I not?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr JOHNSTON:** Sabine, I am curious to know if you have asked them why a cert II, why not a cert I or a cert III? I think a cert II is the appropriate academically rigorous level for a graduation, and that is why it was set at a cert II and not a cert I. It was something to do with the level of requirement of meeting that standard. Then you have got two groups of kids who do it. You have got the kids who are doing an ATAR program and a certificate. They have got a dual pathway possibly when they leave school, and they need that for their WACE requirements, and then you have got the VET students who then need to meet that standard to get into TAFE.

**The CHAIR:** The question for us is: why do you need to have the cert II for WACE? Why has WACE made it necessary? Why could they not have just completed some vocational education and training?

**Mr JOHNSTON:** Cert 1 or something like that.

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr JOHNSTON:** I think that cert II has got that rigour that you need in terms of the standard they are trying to establish.

**Ms GILLET:** I guess if you come philosophically: why are we educating? And sadly, on a philosophical lesson, we are educating for university entrance; we are not educating for education's sake. We have not been educating for education's sake for decades. Why should the non-university bound students have any less of a selection process on the way through as the TAFE-based kids? We have already been running a process that is entirely driven by the universities, so now we have just added TAFE in there as well, so we are covering all kids rather than just the high academic kids.

**The CHAIR:** The VET sector, because it is broader than TAFE.

**Ms GILLET:** Yes.

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**The CHAIR:** Just in terms of that, there have been submissions—I cannot point to who said this; I have read it—that there are some employers who say that they come out with a certificate II and they cannot employ them because suddenly they have a qualification that means that they have to pay them more and therefore they are not going to employ them. That goes back to what you are saying about that mismatch between industry.

**Mrs GEE:** It is a really interesting mismatch. At that forum, which, by the way, was run by the State Training Board, with Jim Walker as the chair of the State Training Board, there were three sessions and they all had over 100 people in them. It looked like over 100 people anyway; it was a big room full of people. As I say, in the session that I was in, there were only two school-based educators in there. We had that view, “We would rather get students in that are green and know nothing about workplace.” But a lot of them said, “No, that’s not what we want. We want students that know how to learn, that know how to inquire, that know what it means to turn up to work on time, that know how to dress appropriately for a workplace, that know that going to work doesn’t mean that you stop studying,” because that is a really important part of it as well, “And we don’t really mind what qualification it is.” However, other people said, “Oh, this is ridiculous. A lot of them are coming out with a cert II in IT, a cert II in business studies, a cert II in sport and rec, and that doesn’t mean anything.” Then there was a big hue and cry from a whole lot of other people who said, “You are forgetting—schools aren’t preparing those students for your particular workplace; they are preparing them to be work ready. They are not trained electricians when they move out of school. They are trained to be training electricians and that is the difference.” I think we have to have that differentiation in place. We need to prepare them to be good lifelong learners and to be good people in a workplace. I think that is what a cert II will do for them, whatever the cert II is in.

**Mr CAMERA:** The industry partnership is essential, too. My previous school was Collie, where we had Premier Coal, Verve, Transfield Worley and South32—they were all there. We had a very strong partnership and relationship. The understanding was everything that Janette said: they were preparing students to employ locally and to meet local needs. That was a really important part of that conversation as well, because they got to buy into the training and were actually able to have some input into that development, into our programs, and how we went about educating those students for a very important workforce.

**Mrs GEE:** There are specific workforces that do that, such as in the Pilbara. If I look at a school like Sevenoaks Senior College, they have a really—I am sure this is true; it was last time I looked—strong partnership with the motor trade industry, who supplies all of their cars for them to work on and all of the computer technology so that they actually have had access to all of that before they even go into a workplace learning situation. They have it all there in their trade training centre. That is essential that we have that, but not every student will have that opportunity to be so skilled when they leave.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Just to follow up on that: how can we be sure that all secondary schools—you hear wonderful stories—but how can we ensure that it happens at a system level, if that connection with industry is important?

**Mr CAMERA:** There is a complication, because generally there is a local will for that to happen. I look at the schools in the regions, and their connection to industry and business is extensive. I do not know about the metropolitan scenario. When you look at Margaret River’s offerings, Albany and Australind, those areas are very much working towards the partnerships with local industry. They are very unique. They are not always in shortage areas, as DTWD might dictate in terms of where the dollars might go in relation to training. There needs to be a very broad arrangement of payment and access to training, auspicing RTO access or local RTO schools to be able to embrace that variety

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in training, which is available. From a system perspective, I believe it is too broad. Just like prior to SCASA actually requiring the cert II, completion was part of what WACE was about—hours and not necessarily completion of cert IIs. I think they then pushed this completion of the cert II, because prior to that a certain number of hours would trade off a C grade. Kids were sort of jumping around between two or three different certs with no real completion, which I think is part of that risk of saying, “We need a cert II.” But in the bigger picture some are 220, some are 360, some require work placement as part of training, and some require only a career start. It is such a broad range of cert IIs that funding becomes a problem. How do you fund a cert at 220 or 360 hours, which I think is part of the previous issue around how they are actually funding schools in relation to training. I suppose the disparity between user pay, STP, access in shortage areas, and other arrangements that schools might have is part of this dilemma that we are in as to how we fund, what we offer, what regions are offering, and the local appetite for funding. It is an enormous area. I think part of the inquiry is the enormity of that complication that it does not fit into a neat box. It is really quite tricky. I want to say complex. If you live it, it is not complex, but if you are looking from outside it is very complex.

**Ms GILLET:** I think equity of access, though, is a key issue. If I was to have my old Balga Senior High School hat on, where you have got high rates of transiency, if you have not got equivalent certificate courses offered in different schools and the kids are moving from one place to another, that is a really key issue, and so is the funding. I am fortunate where I am now, I have got a trade training centre with kids from across the metro area, one of whom is from Balga, and the school pays his fees. There is no way that the family would be able to pay the fees for that young man to access the program, so Balga covers it. They are not funded to cover that part of the fees. That is an issue across the board for those low socioeconomic disadvantaged kids; they just do not have the same access to the programs. And for a lot of them, they need it earlier. The kids are starting to disengage in years 8 and 9. We can do the equivalent of the course, but they get no recognition for it, so there is no funding for it. It cannot count towards their year 11 and 12 cert results, other than by redemonstrating it again at that point, but half of those kids might have moved from one school to another. To demonstrate it then is virtually impossible.

**The CHAIR:** Did you want to add something?

**Mrs GEE:** I was just going back to Sabine—she asked how we know that it is okay across all schools. The fact that it is in our submission, we noted that it is drawn from nationally recognised training packages or accredited courses that everyone has to comply with that, and they are assessed within the competency-based assessment framework. The assessment is pretty rigorous and the RTOs do have to jump through quite a few hoops in order to be registered. I would say even though the courses vary quite considerably from school to school and region to region, the actual quality of them probably does vary as well and some of the assessment does vary. The fact that they are governed by strict national criteria should ensure pretty good comparability on that stage.

[11.10 am]

**The CHAIR:** We have had evidence given to us that because of the private RTOs, there is significant risk. We have also seen recently the failure of an RTO. So when you say that there are all these boxes they have to tick and capacity to operate, demonstrably that is not the case. We also got a letter from VETiS Consulting telling us, a parliamentary committee, not to use VETiS in the title of our inquiry, which is a private RTO. A private RTO telling a parliamentary committee, “Please don’t use our trademark, because it confuses people”, which is not their trademark—VETiS is what you use. I suppose my question to you is that whilst I understand it is important to operate VETiS in schools,

how appropriate is the private sector in doing that in terms of risk? Are we better to form greater relationships with TAFE and where are the synergies with that?

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** You are quite right, because it can be high risk with some RTOs, as you say. Specifically, having partnerships with TAFE works, but it does not work across all areas either, it just depends on what the TAFE has available. At our trade training centre, our partnership there is with TAFE, so we have TAFE lecturers come in and lecture our students. That is just another form of partnership as opposed to an industry partnership. But with the changes in TAFE as well, the longevity and the security of that partnership is not necessarily clear either. It is a bit like an RTO because they have had a lot of financial changes over the last couple of years, too. Each year, we line up to sign up again for our building and construction, and we are going into hospitality as well with them. It is not always so straightforward with TAFE at the moment either.

**Ms GILLETT:** I would make a couple of points. One is that TAFE is great for some kids, but TAFE is an adult learning environment and there is a large group of kids that just cannot cope in an adult learning environment, they need the structure and the teacher-directed side of it. Again, particularly the low-SEI kids that affects. Certainly the risk is there. Both of the last two that have collapsed we have had programs that had them as our RTO at John Forrest. I would be very happy if we had the department as an RTO. I think that is something that would provide more opportunity because you know what courses would be offered. Currently with the privates, it is so individual based. I have shared with this group that I can remember back as a deputy asking at a deputies meeting, “Who knows a good mob that do cert II sport and rec?” They all said that it was that one there, and then someone said “Yes, but John is moving from that place to that place.” We worked out that John was the good RTO, not the RTO. If you had the department as an RTO, you would then get all the checks and balances to make sure that schools are delivering properly—they would still be subject to ASQA or TAC—and you then have more offerings potentially available across all schools, so there is an accessibility —

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Just explain for me, because I am not a teacher: with the education department, are you saying that the coordinator of the RTO would be contracted in?

**Ms GILLETT:** Or they could be the RTO themselves.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** They would have to have all the skills.

**The CHAIR:** No, you just register federally.

**Ms GILLETT:** If you look, using VETiS as an example, and I probably should not be commenting on them when I do not know, they are not people who have skills particularly in IT or business; they have just got the units that they are offering through their own registration process. It is not as if you are getting somebody who is an expert in that area when you have got a private RTO; it is simply a business.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Are you saying the Department of Education registers and they are the broker? “Broker” is the word I should have used.

**Ms GILLETT:** I am not sure that they even need to be the broker. I think that they would be the provider; they would be the direct overseer of the courses that we would be running.

**The CHAIR:** So they tick all the boxes that say that they meet all the criteria.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** And they have the experience because they have already done it.

**The CHAIR:** Just think about in health; when you register, it is like health becoming the registering organisation.

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**Mr CAMERA:** Currently we are an RTO at Australind Senior High School. Our teachers actually deliver, and TAC comes in and does its audit about delivery processes, communication. There are occasions when we cannot or we will not put certain things on scope and we may go towards an agreement with an RTO just to provide the documentation—we still deliver for quality assurance. We actually do not buy delivery in most cases unless it is in specialist areas like electrotechnology, construction; possibly those areas where you need that buy-in from a tradesman.

**The CHAIR:** And you are the same?

**Mrs SANDER:** No, we are not. I like the idea of the department being it, because then there would be the equity and also those checks and balances are in place, because you have to find those, sometimes through difficulty, that somebody is seen not to deliver what they say they will. That would all be managed at the system level, and then teachers could deliver because they are already trained because they are doing the cert IVs.

**Ms GILLET:** I think we all have the commitment with TAFE. It is another service provider; the same as we are. Trying to mix the two together can be really challenging because cert is one subject out of six and you cannot easily run a timetable with everything else on a four-day timetable and the kids out on a Friday, because all the kids that are not doing that on a Friday, or it might be a Wednesday, and it becomes organisationally really challenging to have it across the board. Sure, if you had the TAFE on-site, it would be brilliant, but that is just not practical.

**Mr CAMERA:** The other option is that the state training providers are bolstered significantly to be able to access a variety of service, because I suppose they are covered by legislation and already have very clear parameters under government in terms of the legislation and all the bits that go with it. The state training providers probably would be the best people because I dare say that to move down the road of the Department of Education, would mean it would be a long process to become an RTO given the variety of sites, the risk management around delivery as well, because it becomes a site management issue for the RTO.

**The CHAIR:** You would know—did you go through it yourself or did you come to Australind?

**Mr CAMERA:** I came to Australind, but we became an RTO when I was in Collie and Australind was already an RTO. We could not access the STP; it was too far away from the school. Anything east of Collie, anyway, there is very limited access to a range of courses and certs because of the distance factor. The STP had very limited capacity to actually provide service because they were contracting as well around funding.

**The CHAIR:** I suppose I do not think of Collie as being remote, I have to say, but in remote and regional areas in the north and areas like that, would they be better placed if they were RTOs for those schools or if the education department was an RTO as a whole? We have had evidence that VETiS is very difficult in those remote and regional areas.

**Mr CAMERA:** The barriers are more the people who can deliver and the fact that they move. You can set up a program that can rely very heavily on one person delivering and they move all their training and then actually move out of the region. That is part of the issue. Again it comes back to industry. If, in the regions, you have very strong industry support, that changes the state of play because they may provide the training and they may provide the recurrent funding for trades training centre facilities because there is a requirement for facilities as well that are at industry standards. There is certainly a partnership aspiration, I think, if you talk about the north west. I would not say Corrigin way, but east of Collie, when you push through to Katanning and that place, it is very difficult. They are sort of caught between Bunbury and Albany and they do not quite sit right with anyone, and it does make it difficult for them to access a range of quality training.

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**Mrs GEE:** I would agree with what you are saying, Domenic. The other thing I would point out when you are talking about, for example, let us say the Pilbara, is the number of high schools up there—probably four plus a couple of district high-type situations. At one stage they tried to set up a program where all schools ran a common certificate. Melissa was talking about the problem of transiency. In the metro area it is big, but in those areas it is huge, especially with Aboriginal families that move with their family from school to school. They start at one school and then suddenly enrol in another school for a few weeks and then another school. If you have a cert II in, let us say, something like business, which is reasonably transferable, and all the schools are delivering, and if they use some smart technology to ensure that kids are up with the same part of the program—it may be delivered partly online or partly through teleconferencing or whatever—at least you have the opportunity for those students to have continuous delivery and obtain a qualification at the end of the time.

[11.20 am]

**The CHAIR:** Do you know if that operates at the current time?

**Mrs GEE:** It was operating and I am not sure whether they have been able to keep that going. I was up in the Pilbara last week and they were complaining about VET possibilities again and transiency being an issue.

**Ms GILLET:** Transiency of teaching staff is an issue in most settings as well because of the qualifications. For me, sitting in the luxury of a city school, if I get two people who apply for a job and one of them has got a cert IV, they are the one I am going to take. But it means that some other poor school is the one that is paying all the money to train the teacher up and keep their currency, and then I pinch them when times are good. That happens enormously.

**The CHAIR:** I am going to come back to that question about teaching but Bill wants to ask a question.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I have a fairly open-ended question, so the chair will try to bring you back online. I grew up in Bunbury—Australind and a few kids who lived in Australind came to Bunbury Senior High School. I have also been to the graduation ceremony at Armadale Senior High School—I think one or two got an award in terms of ATAR. My question is about the needs of the people. It probably relates a lot to the kids at Armadale high school, I have to say, because they are probably just about all in that place doing VET. What should we be providing for the kids who are now compulsorily doing years 11 and 12? In my day you did not; at Bunbury high school you only did years 11 and 12 if you were going to go to university, basically. I know all the guys and girls that got jobs and did trade stuff, and TAFE probably had a lot more younger people at TAFE because that is where they went. Then things changed. What should we be doing? I suppose the first question is: should kids that do not want to do years 11 and 12 be compulsorily doing years 11 and 12? Then we try to find what we can best deliver at the schools. Should the schools be better equipped to do more VET or should it be outsourced? It is all sort of there but it is all over the place. It is complicated in the country; let us not go to the country. In the metropolitan area, if you had a blank canvas for the year 11 and 12 kids, perhaps the cohort mainly in Armadale, and you could provide something for them, what would you provide?

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** Well, what we provide now. We provide about 13 different certificates. One of the issues is the training of staff, as Melissa said, and holding on to that staff because we are not up at the top of schools that staff necessarily apply to go to. Our kids have lots of pathways to go through, but it is a very expensive exercise, VET. It is not just about training teachers because of the amount of machinery and on-the-ground things that we need for VET qualifications. For our hospitality, we had to have a high-class hospitality centre—a commercial kitchen—which we just had built. It is an expensive exercise, and every time we enrol a kid in a certificate, it costs a lot of money. That is one of

the things. We have the capacity of supplying these certificates, but we are not a very big school. Let us say, for instance, that we have cert II in IT. We have that happening with a really fabulous teacher. He is quite young and he has been at our school from a graduate right through. We have trained him up and he has got his cert IV and he can deliver that. If he decides, "I've been here five or six years; it's time I had a look around to see what else is happening" and he goes, we do not have the capacity to have a backup. At our sort of school, we cannot have two teachers for everything. In hospitality we have got an ex-chef. If she goes, we do not have somebody else.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** And if he is doing a really good course, he will be poached by another school.

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** That is right.

**Mr CAMERA:** We are listening.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Domenic has already got him in his sights.

**The CHAIR:** Can we just talk about the teaching aspect of the teaching question. I probably have three parts to this question, however you want to answer it. One part is that they have to have a VET qualification—a cert IV. My first question is: is that really necessary? Can secondary school teachers deliver VET with university qualifications? The second part is: to be a teacher in a school you have to have a university education and then a certificate IV. Is that necessary? Could you have somebody who just has a certificate IV delivering a VET course? The problem is that to be in the education department they have to have their teaching qualification. Actually, there are only two parts to that question. Let us talk about the difficulty of all that and explore that a bit deeper.

**Ms GILLETT:** For me, the easiest answer would be to have the universities include a cert IV as part of the units that they offer to become a qualified teacher.

**The CHAIR:** It fixes it really, does it not?

**Ms GILLETT:** It fixes it completely.

**Mrs GEE:** It fixes it for a while because they keep updating the cert IV qualification, and then you have to requalify.

**The CHAIR:** Where do you qualify for that? Is that a private RTO that delivers that training?

**Mrs GEE:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** It seems surprising to me that they would have to update that.

**Mrs GEE:** You do not have to learn anything new really, and it costs you quite a lot of money and time to do that.

**The CHAIR:** Part of the problem is that certificate IV training of trainers to become a certificate IV trainer is set by private RTOs. Are there any public RTOs that deliver training so that you can become VET trained?

**Ms GILLETT:** Fee free do you mean?

**The CHAIR:** It is not about the fee. Call me cynical, but it seems to me that if you are in a profit-based industry and part of it is about turning through your capacity to deliver training, the fact that you can change your training requirements and people have to come back and update their qualifications —

**Mrs GEE:** You can change them quite late in the year, so people are not qualified to teach the following year. That has happened on occasions—suddenly you are not qualified.

**Mrs SANDER:** It is really bad.

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** It is the cert II bit; that is the problem.

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**The CHAIR:** Someone has their hand up.

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** The other thing to add to that, Janine, is currency. Like I was saying, for example, I have a person teaching hospitality who is a trained chef. That is not good enough. She has to maintain currency; she has to show each year that she is going back and she is working in that industry. The expectation that she works full-time at a school but also is maintaining the currency in that particular industry is going up and up every year, too. Does that make sense?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** That is becoming more difficult each year—that expectation of our teachers—and some of our teachers go and spend their holidays working in the industry so they can maintain currency.

**The CHAIR:** Can we please come back to something that seems to me to be completely mystifying, perhaps. A qualification for a student is a certificate II. That does not lead them to a qualification to operate in that profession; it just leads them to have a base qualification to go into further education to get a certificate IV or diploma or advanced diploma. But the people who are teaching them are required to have a certificate that is in addition to their education degree—a certificate that is operational all the time in terms of their profession.

**Ms GILLETT:** So the home economics teacher has to go and show every couple of years, literally, that they know how to cut a sandwich—that is a real one—in 12 different service settings.

**Mrs GEE:** That is one of the tick boxes, how to make a sandwich.

**Ms GILLETT:** My home economics teachers would go out 12 times to a restaurant and donate their time to serve people.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Who polices this?

**Ms GILLETT:** The RTO that you are paying the money to—you are paying them to get them to certify it. They will often say that in sport and rec —

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Who looks after them?

**The CHAIR:** It is federal.

**Ms GILLETT:** It is private, yes.

**Mr CAMERA:** Coming back to your question, the cert IV really gives them the ability to work through the packages. I think it is giving them those skills which a university trained person can do, because they run curriculum all the time. I think in relation to the need to have a cert II, well, they can read the package and they are trained anyway. The broadbrush approach is taken by TAC and ASQA in relation to how they judge the RTO and how they judge the compliance aspects. As an example, we have just been audited and one of the comments in relation to that linked around the advertising of our RTO. We do not advertise because we do it for our schools only. Taking a broad brush to this trainer arrangement is causing us enormous barriers for our delivery, and really giving us some issues in relation to what we have got in our staff—the skills. When you take a broad brush to it, they are relating it to people who are untrained, but then they are taking the same brush and applying it to people who are in education—that is all they do.

[11.30 am]

**Mr JOHNSTON:** Janine, the difference between a university degree and a cert IV is very different in the way you assess, and the cert IV trains our teachers to assess in the way of their programs, which a degreed person does not fully understand. That is why you have it. The challenge is to keep them up to date with the changes in the competencies required for the cert so that they can assess. If you

are going to cut a sandwich diagonally rather than square across, you have to have retraining in that, and that is where we get squeezed because of those minor changes in the competencies et cetera.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Just to comment on this, I am an engineer, and if I have trained and design a bridge and it falls down and people get killed, provided I can show that I am still designing a bridge or still working in that profession, I do not have to be retrained. If I do something wrong and the bridge falls down, people die; if you cut the sandwich the wrong way, it is not going to be that significant, is it?

**Ms GILLETT:** It is also accepting what is appropriate training. My two cricket teachers are both level 3 qualified coaches; they can coach at state level and above. Peta Verco has played for Australia. She has to requalify to prove that she can teach a kid how to bowl—to teach a cert II sport and rec. It is not as simple as saying, “Here’s my coaching certificate.”

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I have just been advised that they are both federal organisations.

**Ms GILLETT:** Yes.

**Mrs SANDER:** I just think teachers are very accommodating and that is why—we want the best for our students. It is all about the best outcomes for the students. But I do agree with everything; it is just making us jump through hoops. We have university-trained teachers who could pick this up.

**Ms GILLETT:** And it relies on goodwill.

**Mrs SANDER:** It does.

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** On the other hand, again, just addressing what you were saying about training, as we are a hard-to-staff school in the metropolitan area, similar to country areas, we have our automotive teacher who left, so we have employed a TAFE lecturer. Remember I said we had a partnership; that is different. He is still TAFE, and he comes onto our campus, but we have employed, as a member of our staff, an automotive teacher. Every year we have to reapply that because he actually cannot get permanency at our school because he is not a university-qualified person, but he teaches only practical at our school. That is another one that we have had to do, not because we wanted to, but because there was nobody out there who could do it except for him, and we were bloody lucky to get him, actually. We just thought, “Oh, he can do anything he wants so he doesn’t go!”

**The CHAIR:** You have to give him that bit of transcript!

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** Yes! So there is that, as well. I do not know whether you have that at Australind, too, where you have —

**Mr CAMERA:** In Collie, we have employed a limited authority teacher, where we advertise, cannot find a place—so we then are actually able to employ someone, they need to show their qualifications—their trade qualifications.

**The CHAIR:** They have to do that on a year-to-year basis, do they not?

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** Yes, year to year.

**The CHAIR:** Okay.

**Mrs GEE:** I was just going to summarise the information that we collected across the state from people on that topic. While people did complain the same as everybody has here, and they were all indignant that their four or five-year university qualification was ignored in the delivery of the packages, I would say that the majority of people also said that they understood, as Ian has said, that there is a difference in delivering competency-based courses as to the sort of courses we deliver in schools, and that the assessment part of it, doing the cert IV, was not an issue. They would all say

that keeping the cert IV current was ridiculous in the way that it changes quite quickly, and they have all said that having to have a cert II level is also ridiculous, in the case of, for example, a chef who is running a home economics—or you have beauty therapists who are running hair and beauty courses that are also trained teachers and yet they have to go and work in that industry too. So that part of it we think is ridiculous as a general rule across the state, and the part for the cert IV, yes, we believe, I think en masse, that that is probably not a problem, but the frequent changes to it and the cost to update it is ridiculous.

**The CHAIR:** What is the cost?

**Mr CAMERA:** The one unit we just updated for all our staff in the region, the south west—I think the one unit was about \$200 and we did a mass training; it was a morning. So that is just one unit plus teacher relief.

**Mrs GEE:** So you would have \$200 per person plus about \$250 teacher relief in the school as well per person.

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** Is it \$600—\$250 —

**The CHAIR:** Anyway, it is a lot.

**Ms GILLETT:** It is also very disruptive to the other kids who are not doing VET to have a teacher change, and that is an issue. The teachers might teach one or two classes of VET out of the six or five classes they teach, so every training day they are out, those other three classes have a relief teacher coming in. Ignoring the cost, if that was just by the by, it is a disruption to everyone else's learning program as well.

**The CHAIR:** Just remind me: a cert IV is eight units?

**Ms GILLETT:** Five days' training is basically the program for qualified teachers.

**The CHAIR:** So not particularly difficult for the university sector to bring into their four-year training for a teacher.

**Mr CAMERA:** Once you learn to read the packages and how the packages work and, as you said, the assessment structures, other than that it is about the actual work of how you teach, and that is what people do.

**The CHAIR:** Has any approach been made to the university sector?

**Mrs GEE:** Yes. I am on quite a few of the university advisory groups for teacher training and it is something we have brought up often with them. Some of them are starting to look at integrating it now. ECU, I think, is leading and Curtin I think will follow soon.

**Mrs SANDER:** It is on a voluntary basis and I think they have had mixed results, but if it was something that was part of their course because they have to be a secondary teacher, that ought to —

**The CHAIR:** Can the education department make that part of the—At the moment they say, "If you're going to teach in our public system, you have to have your" —

**Mr CAMERA:** Teacher registration.

**Ms GILLETT:** They could. If the pure mathematics teacher does not have that, then that is another mathematics teacher who will go to PLC or Scotch instead of a government school. You would not want to —

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** So, you get an extra \$500 a year if you have it. Would that be like an incentive—another bonus package?

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**Mr CAMERA:** Possibly.

**Mr JOHNSTON:** Not all our teachers are teaching certificate courses.

**The CHAIR:** No, that is right. Most of your teachers are not teaching certificate courses.

**Mr CAMERA:** But the knowledge is a reasonable expectation, just like IT knowledge. A lot of our UK-trained teachers have a significant level of skill in IT and that type of delivery in classrooms. Our teachers come out without that. You look at the skill base and you say, "What's a reasonable skill base for a starting teacher—cert IV, knowledge of IT, knowing all the processes around the requirements of their particular trade." There is a whole lot of baseline stuff you could say that would be reasonable for a teacher to have, because they might work in the north west or they might work in the south west or in the metro. Were they more versatile? It is a possibility.

**Mrs SANDER:** They could because we specify learning areas, so if you are going to be a T and E teacher or an arts teacher or one of those areas where certs are offered, that would be what you would do as part of your course. Obviously, if you are going to be a maths or English teacher, you would not. You could actually differentiate.

**Ms GILLETT:** I think one of the other things that would be helpful is, when you go back to Mary's example, she has clearly got someone that —untrained teachers are not well paid; teachers are on a much better wicket. To have to go through that paperwork with TRB every year and prove that she has advertised, that she has tried to get a fully qualified teacher—because you can imagine how many car mechanics become teachers; it is just ridiculous—pay all of the fees that are associated with that, and there are quite a few, just to get him approved to do what Mary is quite competent and capable as a principal to judge that he is good enough to do it, so he still has working with children and all the things to make sure that he is safe. Leave it to the schools to say, "This person does not have a teaching qualification, but are they actually the best person here?" Again, at Balga, we had a chef who is an ed assistant, so we cannot leave him in a classroom on his own. We can leave him in another classroom environment, but not in that particular one. That ability to make a decision at a local level, country and rural, that would be enormous.

**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** And hard to staff.

**Ms GILLETT:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** I have one last question to throw in there. It has been suggested that courses such as business and sport and recreation are the most popular because they are the easiest for schools to deliver in terms of equipment and facilities. Do you want to comment on that? The suggestion is that that means for sport and rec that the kids are not coming out with something that is useful in terms of further training. I will start with you, because you talked about sport and rec.

**Ms GILLETT:** It is hard to argue against that in some ways. As a school that has three approved specialist programs in sport, it is enormous because our kids are looking at careers in tennis, netball and cricket, so it does actually give them something to get towards. Coming back to the engagement side of things, sport and rec engages them. That keeps them at school so we can get them into everything else. When you look now, especially years 11 and 12, you do not get phys ed as a normal subject anymore. You do six subjects. They are still young guys and girls who want to run around, the boys particularly. It is about preparing them for the next part of their learning journey, and if business helps do that, yes, it is easier to deliver than a lot of the others, but it still has occupational health and safety, communicating in the workplace. They are skills that fit across all of them, so I think to cut them out on that basis would be damaging across the board, and it would mean less offerings, in reality, to get teachers who are able to teach in other areas.

[11.40 am]

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**Mrs GRIFFITHS:** I agree with Melissa; it engages the kids. If they want to do that, they will stay and they will do other things. But this one is a slightly different story, because quite often you see these certificates are over two years, or expand over two years, so if a student is failing one or pulls out of one of them halfway through those two years, then picking up another certificate limits them to business. So there are those things about business. You can do that in one year. The other thing is that it is cheap. It does not cost a lot. You do not have equipment and stuff that is attached to it, but being able to do it in a different sort of time, because when the kids have to pull out of something after two years, really they cannot pick up too many other certificates at all. So there is that about business as well.

**The CHAIR:** One of the things that Ian might want to answer for me is—what happens when you have a student who excels so much in a VET area —

**Mr JOHNSTON:** You would be thinking music, I would imagine.

**The CHAIR:** No, I am talking about in the business sense, so that they finish their competency ahead of time, because it is all competency based, they just churn through it, so by year 11 they have done their certificate II, but want to continue on, my understanding is that schools do not then offer certificate III. Is that right?

**Mr JOHNSTON:** No, you can offer a certificate III, and in fact you can do a certificate II and then use some of the competencies there to complete your certificate III. So there are students who will start a certificate II in year 11, and when they have finished it, endeavour to get through a certificate III, and they get the benefit from both if they are good enough and sharp enough, and business is one where they try to do that.

**Ms GILLETT:** We have got a couple that we have got at certificate III.

**The CHAIR:** But anything beyond certificate III?

**Mrs GEE:** Some schools are offering certificate IV in some things.

**Mrs SANDER:** There are not many, I think.

**Mrs GEE:** Sorry? Have you got any cert IVs?

**Ms GILLETT:** No.

**Mrs GEE:** I am pretty sure Kath's aviation program is up there, and they are not your typical kids, in an aviation program. The aviation certificate is equivalent to the beginning of a uni course, and it actually is really, really high. You really need top-quality academic skills to get into that, and the cost of delivering it is huge. So there is the next problem.

**The CHAIR:** You have just reminded us about the cost, because we have had a submission saying that in some cases parents are meeting costs, and your example of the kid coming to John Forrest, and someone else having to meet that cost. You want to make any comment about costs in terms of this?

**Mr CAMERA:** Just quickly, in the south west we have got a regional trades training centre. A student who studies Electrotechnology pays \$2 500 for a private RTO. The student at Collie pays nothing under the STP, and that is sort of 50 kays away. There is a real disparity. They can have the instruction at school with me for \$100, they can have the trades training centre for \$1 000, or go to TAFE for nothing. That is within a 50-kilometre radius of delivery, which is where TAFE offers 350 training places only. The region has had to look for other alternatives and these are definitely more expensive, because we are using private RTOs. There is another option. And I think, just coming back to your previous question, school-based traineeships are another opportunity for employers, where the students are very able. They can be in the workplace, continue study,

probably best over two years with a view that they get some really good experience in the workplace, get paid and train. That is probably a more realistic model for our schools, rather than leaving it at IIIs and IVs in their certs.

**Mrs SANDER:** But is that not limited? The choices for kids in SBTs are really limited. I doubt that person was advertising for parents and said, “This is across the whole state, you’ve got to be top of” —the TAFEs only offer a small number.

**Mr CAMERA:** There are other RTOs that will actually sign people up in terms of that training, but under a profile arrangement. There is some access, but then I have got RTOs that will take on more training places as well.

**Mrs GEE:** I will just say one last thing about funding. I think it is important to understand, which I think a lot of industry people do not understand, and I found that out at the forum I was at last week, that in the past we were funded for each student that we had enrolled in a VET course, so when you put your census numbers in you would put all the students you are going to enrol in VET in, and you would get the money for each of those students. Now, they fund you on students loosely around a model that is based on sort of their NAPLAN results. So they take the kids that are lower on the NAPLAN scale and say, “You’ve got roughly this percentage kids in your school with a NAPLAN below this level, and we will give you about this amount of money. Make it work, stretch it as big as you can.” Before, you could enrol even 100 per cent of your students in VET and you would actually get funded for all of them to do, maybe, a cert I. Now you get a bucket of money, and you have to spread it as best as you can. Industry does not understand that. They still think we get funded per student, and they should be able to come to us with a fee and just say, “Why aren’t you sending them to us. We will offer this and this and it is only \$2 500. We are told that schools have the money for it.” I had that conversation with an RTO yesterday in fact, who cannot fill his spots.

**The CHAIR:** An RTO that cannot fill their spots.

**Mrs GEE:** Well, you know, he has got a 96 per cent employment rate straight out of his course, which is fantastic. He offers a great course. I think it is in civil construction. They are on the train line; they pick the kids up from the train line, so there is space for kids to go, but over two years it’s a \$2 500 course.

**Mr CAMERA:** And our top boys and girls are not often going to uni, because there is a real barrier for them in the regions, and they are going into training, so they are not cut out for those students, who are very capable students who can do top maths and are really able, but there is a huge barrier in accessing universities, so they go in to training. They go into high-end training. I think in their mind there is a limit to what girls—some of that access to some of the courses—they can access everything. They see the barriers and what is available in terms of the training.

**The CHAIR:** This man has got to be on his feet at 12 o’clock in the Parliament, so if you want to leave, you can leave. I can stay a little bit longer.

Thank you very much, it has really been great. It has been very entertaining watching you all. I would love to be in one of your committee meetings. I can imagine that they are extraordinarily entertaining. If there is something you feel that you wanted to add to the conversation coming out from today, please feel free, and if there is something that we are interested in we will certainly get in contact with you. It has been an interesting process for us. I understand quite a bit about VET, and some of our members a bit less, but it is clearly a system that is in flux and needs tweaking for the benefit of students. So it has been great talking to you today. Thank you very much.

**Hearing concluded at 11.49 am**

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