

*Winterbrook Avocados*  
*KJ & CT Skoss*

9<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Dear Committee,

I have been a VET Coordinator at Manjimup SHS for the past six years following four years in the Warren Blackwood Education District Office as an Enterprise and Vocational Education Coordinator. At the end of the year I am leaving the Education Department to be full time on the farm but would like to make a submission to the VET committee from the perspective of someone who has been in a VET operational role in a regional area

I would like to outline some of my concerns regarding Senior Secondary Schooling as it relates to Vocational Students and the impact that the changes to the criteria for gaining a WACE has on school resourcing smaller country schools.

Manjimup Senior High School where I am the VET Coordinator is a very successful school given its size, location and demographics. We are in the fortunate position of having strong experienced school leadership, experienced staff and a very supportive community.

- Relevance

Changes to the WACE in 2016 stipulate that student must achieve an ATAR or complete a Certificate II which has led an increase in the VET uptake in our school. The swing to VET has been compounded by many of the SCSA developed courses in the practical areas being written to a standard formula with a heavy emphasis on the theory component rather than the more engaging practical elements. It seems the fundamental needs of the learners who are predominantly “hands on learners” are being ignored. I find many employers are also perplexed by some of the content the student is covering in school subjects which they see as not contributing to employability skills. I do not believe that this is being addressed in the move towards National Curriculum. In some of the SCSA developed design courses students are required to develop design briefs without having the hand-skills necessary to carry them out. These higher-level thinking tasks are at odds with the job role they would face post school in an entry level position.

- Meeting SCSA deadlines

This has several implications for schools. VET programs require additional resourcing when compared to SCSA developed courses. At Manjimup SHS we auspice 5 programs with a private RTO and it is an ongoing battle to meet their compliance requirements and ensure that their resulting meshes with the SCSA reporting deadlines. This RTO has 17000

students enrolled in VET programs across the state and have been totally overwhelmed in processing the results. Many schools have had to upload their VET results to SCSA without receiving verification from the RTO which breaches the School/RTO Memorandum of Agreement.

- Cost

The RTO that we are dealing with also stipulates that the trainer must hold the exact qualification that they are delivering. They will provide a Recognition of Prior Learning process at the cost of \$1250 per qualification. For 2017 we had three new staff delivering a qualification requiring them to complete this RPL process over the holidays at a cost to the school of \$3750. If we do not meet this requirement we will not have our MOA signed off. This will be an ongoing process every couple of years due to constant qualification updates due to training package changes or ensuring that we have adequately trained staff to cover long service leave, teacher transfers and retirements.

- Risk

Our school offers 9 different Vocational certificates mostly under the auspices of external Registered Training Organisations. Maintaining these agreements is an ongoing process the RTO is answerable to the Training Accreditation Council and the compliance requirements are kicked down the lines to the schools. Students are at risk of not graduating if the RTO with holds certification at the years end. This year Manjimup SHS has had to seek new auspice arrangements for their Furniture and Hospitality courses after State Training provider indicated that they would not continue in 2018. Several large RTOs that operate in the school sector have collapsed in recent times or had major noncompliance issues resulting in students not attaining a Cert II and in some cases not achieving WACE.

- A Positive

School Based Traineeships work very well in rural areas. My wife and I have recently commenced a year 10 boy on a Cert II Horticulture SBT on our property. Employment based training is very well regarded by students and the community alike. We like the fact that the training program has been tailored to suit our enterprise. I believe there is tremendous potential for growth in this sector though it is dependent on RTOs being adaptable to this type of training. Students often add value to their existing part time jobs or expand on a successful work placement. Many traineeships transition into full time employment. They do cause disruptions to a normal school program but these are outweighed by the benefits in terms of student engagement.