



Reshaping Queensland's senior education and training system

FROM 2006 Queensland's education and training system is changing to give students more flexibility and better prepare them for the future.

New laws and a fresh approach to senior are set to make this stage of schooling more flexible and provide more choices for students.

The changes are part of the State Government's "learning or earning" philosophy that will see young Queenslanders in education, training or work until they are 17.

Students starting Year 10 next year will be the first to be affected by the *Youth Participation in Education and Training Act 2003*.

There are a number of key changes under the new Act, including:

- **Compulsory schooling requirements**
From 2006 students will have to stay at school until they finish Year 10 or turn 16, whichever comes first. At the moment, students can leave school when they turn 15.
- **Compulsory participation phase**
When a young person has turned 16 or finished Year 10, he or she must stay in education and training for a further two years, or until:
 - they have gained a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) — the QCE will replace the current Senior Certificate from 2008; or
 - they have gained a Certificate III vocational qualification; or
 - they have turned 17.

Young people who are working a minimum of 25 hours a week are exempt.

- **Learning accounts**
Before a student completes Year 10 or turns 16, he or she will be registered with the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA). Once registered, the QSA will establish a learning account for the young person. The learning account will allow students to 'bank' learning achievements during their senior phase of learning that can count towards their QCE or Certificate III vocational qualification. This means students can make the most of the new options and choices available to them during the senior phase of learning and schools will be able to monitor their progress and achievements. On registering students, schools will provide the QSA:
 - the young person's name, address, date of birth
 - their intended learning options for the Senior Phase of Learning
 - the setting in which that learning will take place — school, TAFE or a private provider — and the name of the provider.

In 2005, Queensland schools are trialling an online registration system. The trial will



A new television advertising campaign that features students in simulated work roles is helping to raise awareness of the changes to senior schooling. Pictured (from left) Carlin Beattie, from Brisbane State High School, and Tia Scott and Samantha Walker, from Flagstone Community College, were among 170 students from 18 schools who gave their time and talents to be part of the advertisement. The students will also feature in billboard advertising throughout the state.

ensure registration and banking systems used by schools and other learning providers are compatible with the learning accounts system. To find out more about the registration trial and how to take part visit <https://etrtrial.qsa.qld.edu.au/>

Planning the learning journey

The journey through Queensland's new Senior Phase of Learning begins with the development of a Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan in Year 10.

Through the SET planning process, young people start to think about and plan for their study, training and career options during the senior phase.

Schools will work closely with students and their parents to help identify learning and career options and develop SET plans. Through this process, students will develop a pathway through the senior phase tailored to their abilities, interests and long-term career goals.

For schools, this means working with students to help them document their abilities

and ensuring they are aware of the different options available to them in senior.

The SET plan may include learning at school or TAFE, through an employment program, an apprenticeship or traineeship, or a combination of these.

The *Youth Participation in Education and Training Act 2003* includes flexible arrangement provisions for all students.

Since the beginning of 2004, this provision has enabled schools to arrange programs for students that may be delivered off-site.

From 2006, Year 10 will become an important transition year when young people start to plan for their future.

By developing a SET plan, young people will be able to identify their individual strengths and interests and map out education and training options that will ensure they make the most of the senior phase of learning and achieve success in later life.

The QSA has guides to help in developing and implementing Senior Education and Training (SET) Plans. These guides can be found on the QSA website at www.qsa.qld.edu.au/

Working in partnership

The new approach to senior schooling and the need to provide students with access to greater flexibility and more opportunities means that schools need to work closely with other learning providers including TAFE, private Registered Training Organisations (RTO) as well as with local business and industry.

To help them achieve this, schools can refer to their District Youth Achievement Plan (DYAP) — a local plan of action to develop, coordinate and implement key reforms for 15 to 17 year olds.

Local DYAP management committees — made up of local education and training leaders and other stakeholders — are the key body for developing and implementing the plan in collaboration with stakeholders.

The purpose of the DYAP is to coordinate programs and services at the local level, across state and non-state schools, vocational education and training providers and other services to cut duplication, use resources more efficiently, and close gaps in service.

The DYAP:

- outlines the goals and key priorities for young people in the local area
- provides a summary of the key strategies and actions the local area will take to improve the learning and employment opportunities for young people, including:
 - innovative local initiatives for improving the participation, retention and attainment of young people in learning (supported by ETRF grants funds)
 - strategies for flexible resource usage
- outlines management and accountability structures.

Working in partnerships with other learning providers and their local communities, schools will be better placed to provide young people with access to more opportunities during the Senior Phase of Learning.

More support for students

During the Senior Phase of Learning, students will be offered more career guidance and personal support to help them make sound decisions about their future.

Across the state, 113 Youth Support Coordinators are being employed to help students deal with school and personal issues and to help them stay at school.

For students thinking about leaving school, new programs, such as Get Set for Work, are in place to help them. Get Set for Work is an employment program aimed at early school leavers and young people at risk of disengaging from learning.

It is designed to re-engage and prepare young people to enter employment or return to learning. Approximately 600 places are currently available and this will increase to 1500 this financial year.

More information on the Get Set for Work program is available from the Department of Employment and Training or local DET regional offices.

To further support students, the QSA has established an online career and information service that can be accessed at <http://www.cis.qsa.qld.edu.au>

A free-call telephone service to follow shortly that will provide further guidance and support for young people.

Queensland Certificate of Education — a new passport to the future

Students starting Year 10 in 2006 will be the first to work towards a new senior qualification, the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE).

The QCE is more than a record of achievement; it is a passport to work, training and further learning. It confirms that a young person has achieved a significant amount of learning at a set standard, and met literacy and numeracy requirements. The QCE will be issued from 2008.

The QCE recognises more learning options and offers greater flexibility in what, where and when learning occurs.

Students working towards the new qualification can count a broad range of learning. This can include school subjects, vocational education and training certificates, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, university subjects, International Baccalaureate, awards and certificates including music, dance and sport, and community, workplace and job readiness programs.

Different types of learning attract different credits. As activities and studies are completed, the credits are banked in a learning account created with the QSA. The learning types and their credit value are explained in a credit table at www.qsa.qld.edu.au/etr/qce/docs/qld_cert_education_summary.pdf

A young person is eligible for a QCE when they have banked 20 credits in their learning account. If they have not banked enough credits by the end of Year 12, the learning account remains open and they can continue to bank credits until they achieve their QCE.

All students will be issued with a Senior Statement at the end of Year 12, regardless of whether they achieve a QCE or not.

Students will continue to receive the existing Senior Certificate in 2006 and 2007.

For more information on the Queensland Certificate of Education, visit the Queensland Studies Authority website at www.qsa.qld.edu.au

Resources for schools

A number of resources are available on the department's intranet site to assist state schools to communicate with their communities about the changes to senior schooling.

These resources include:

- a letter to parents
- a letter to Year 9 students
- an information sheet for parents and carers
- an information sheet for young people
- a guide to the *Youth Participation in Education and Training Act 2003*
- a principals' PowerPoint presentation for parents
- a principals' PowerPoint presentation for school staff.

These files can be accessed on Edinfo at: <http://www.qed.qld.gov.au/etr/iseniorinfokit.html>

Emerald initiative gives young people a fresh start

The Fresh Starts project in the Emerald ETRF trial area is bringing positive changes for 15 to 17 year olds and helping them to actively participate in learning or earning.

In response to the Emerald District Youth Achievement Plan, and with funding from the Access to Pathways grants scheme, integrated Youth Learning and Support Centres have been established in nine major communities to offer Fresh Start programs.

Centres are located at Blackwater, Capella, Clermont, Dysart, Emerald, Gemfields, Middlemount, Springsure and Woorabinda.

The project is successfully building on existing community services and partnerships and the appointment of a Fresh Starts Coordinator— Ms Cathie Flint — has improved the coordination of youth services.

Ms Flint has called on her previous experience to build on existing networks with communities, schools, local businesses and support services.

"I had a good understanding of several local community agencies and how the education and employment and training departments worked," Ms Flint said.

"As a resident of the central highlands for the past 10 years, I was also able to build on the relationships I had established as a head of department at Emerald State High School," she said.

The positive working relationships formed by Cathie with young people, the community and other agencies have been the foundation for the program's success.

A major priority for the Fresh Start Program has been to help disengaged young people overcome the barriers keeping them from moving successfully into learning or work and actively participating in the community.

Intensive assistance is given to participants on a case-management basis. This individual approach helped Kiera Fenner, a young person who had left school and was unemployed when Anglicare Central Queensland referred her to the Blackwater Fresh Start Program.

"I met with Kiera to discuss her current work and personal situation and look at possible strategies to help her find a suitable career pathway and employment," Ms Flint said.

"Kiera had a strong desire to work in the hospitality industry so an action plan was developed to help her work towards this goal.

"With no training facilities offering hospitality in Blackwater, I organised for Nu-Path Training Services to deliver a Certificate 2 in Hospitality Operations.

"The training was advertised in the local paper, through flyers in the community and at Blackwater State High School so other young people in Blackwater had the opportunity to access the training.

"Twenty-two young people successfully completed the course and four are now working in the hospitality industry in Blackwater," she said.

Once Kiera completed the three-week course she volunteered for one day at a local sporting club and was offered a full-time position.

"I've been waiting for a job for so long and I've always wanted to do bar work," she said.

"It was amazing that I did the training, then volunteered for one day and they hired me."

Over the past year, the Youth Learning and Support Centres have identified 147 young people across the Emerald district in a similar situation to Kiera, either disengaged or at high risk of disengaging from learning or earning.

Some of the key challenges for the Fresh Start Program have been to build relationships and encourage a whole community approach to meet young people's needs.

Ms Flint said she met these challenges by focusing on what the community and other agencies wanted to achieve for young people and tying in the Fresh Start objectives to create a cohesive whole-of-community approach.

"By finding common ground and working together, the Fresh Start Program is providing options for young people that meet their different interests and needs," she said.

"From 2006, the Fresh Start project will be broadened to help all young people in the Senior Phase of Learning to achieve their full potential.

"At the moment the Fresh Starts Program meets the individual needs of young people who are disengaged from learning through the Fresh Start Centres in each community," Ms Flint said.

"In the future, the focus of the program will evolve into a brokerage of programs to cater for a wider range of target groups in the Senior Phase of Learning.

"We need to recognise that each individual has a different set of circumstances and aptitudes and that every pathway should be valued equally," she said.



The Emerald Fresh Start Program helped Kiera Fenner realise her desire to work in the hospitality industry.