

College Community Forum at Claremont College 9 July 2007

Communiqué

On 9 July 2007 from 3:00 to 4:00, the Minister for Education, David Bartlett MHA, hosted a forum at Claremont College about the new model for post-Year 10 education and training outlined in Tasmania Tomorrow. The purpose of the forum was to provide the college community with the opportunity to raise their top 10 or so concerns about the model directly with the Minister.

At the forum, the Minister committed to placing the issues raised on the record, providing information and answers to each, and distributing them to college staff and forum attendees. The questions below are a summary of the issues raised with responses to each provided.

This forum was one of a series of forums held around the state at college and TAFE campuses; part of the consultation phase of the project which runs from July to September 2007.

Feedback is also being sought through the website <http://tomorrow.education.tas.gov.au/consultation/your-feedback>, by email to tomorrow@education.tas.gov.au and by phone (1800 469 997). Feedback received during the consultation phase will inform the implementation of the model.

Questions and answers

1. I am happy with current provision at Claremont and concerned that the changes will diminish this.

The new model will increase student access to learning options and pathways, not diminish it. Which institutes are located at which sites and which courses are provided where will be determined as the model is implemented, a process that will be informed by stakeholder consultation. It is possible that in the region serviced by Claremont College, both the polytechnic, academy and training enterprise could coexist and between them provide an even wider range of options than is currently available.

2. Has there been enough research done in the local context about what Tasmania Tomorrow means for students in Tasmania?

Detailed studies about Tasmanian young people have informed the development of the Tasmania Tomorrow model. For example, the *2006 Mission Australia: National Survey of Young Australians* showed how young Tasmanians differ significantly from their national counterparts. Young Tasmanians, especially young men, seek work rather than study for reasons of economic independence. This group shows significantly higher unemployment rates although few of them actually choose not to work. Unfortunately, their quest for economic independence is frustrated by their lack of post-school qualification.

The Tasmanian government's destination surveys are comprehensive investigations into the characteristics of early school leavers and the personal consequences. The studies followed all

students in Year 10 in 2001 and tracked their 'destinations' in terms of education, training and work or otherwise to 2004. The research examines the reasons why young people left school early and what happened to them after school. The analysis of the data concluded that while early leaving is shaped by family background factors, institutional and organisational factors also have a profound effect. If we are to encourage young people to engage in education and training, there is a need to offer a range of program options that is inclusive and attractive. More detail on the destination studies is provided on pg 18 of the *Tasmania Tomorrow* document and the reports can be found at:
<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/vet/systemtas/research/yr10survey2001>

3. What about the transition period for students in Year 10 this year?

The two year program of students who will be in Year 11 at a college in 2008 **will not be affected**. Even though the organisation in which they are enrolled in 2009 may change, their courses and venues will not. Careful planning and provision for all transition issues will be undertaken.

4. A lot of students don't want an education after Year 10. Shouldn't we be helping them find employment?

We know that 86% of jobs in Australia require a post-Year 10 qualification. Less than 40% of young Tasmanians have a post-Year 10 qualification.

Continuing on with education and training will ensure our young people have life choices available to them. Without skills and qualifications it is very difficult for young people to access the jobs that will meet their aspirations.

If, however, after working with pathway planners through high school, a student makes an informed choice that employment after Year 10 really is their best option, they will be supported in that pathway. Should this person decide at any time that they would like to continue with education and training, the new model will be flexible in enabling re-entry.

5. How will making structural changes increase retention?

Evidence suggests that where a broad tertiary sector that genuinely includes vocational education and training is created alongside the academic sector, where both the range of courses available and the supportive culture of the new tertiary institution is improved, and where a strong, applied learning style connected to work is developed, then there will be an increase in retention, participation, and qualification rates. In other words, being able to achieve a qualification that is meaningful for their career goals in a supportive environment will encourage student participation.

Increased retention is the focus of a range of strategies including the Pathway Planning Officers and Youth Learning Officers who work with high school students to build the bridge to education and training beyond year 10. *Tasmania Tomorrow* will ensure that when making choices about their future, there is a variety of courses and modes of learning available for students to choose from.

By utilising our TAFE and college facilities, Tasmania Tomorrow will not only ensure the number of courses available is increased, but also the number of locations providing education and training for Years 11 and 12 students around the state. This will increase access, particularly in rural and regional areas which will be further expanded through options such as:

- Academy courses offered in selected high schools and district high schools (e.g. Smithton, St Helens and Queenstown). The academy would be responsible for quality assurance of the programs, with schools offering a Year 11 program with year 12 options. It is likely that in Year 12 some students would need to transfer to an academy campus for specialist interests.
- Polytechnic delivering and quality assuring applied courses through local skills centres established at many district high schools, TAFE centres and Huon Linc.
- Community Knowledge Network of online access centres, Adult Education and regional libraries will improve literacy and numeracy access at a basic level.
- Online strategies and flexible delivery for all students will be a key part of the initiative.

The accountability of both the academy and the polytechnic for regional outcomes will ensure that partnerships with district high schools are meaningful and enduring and that students can have full year 11 programs closer to home. Further work currently being undertaken on accommodation issues should be available by the end of the year.

The new institutions will be active in promoting the cultural change that will support their course delivery. However, it is important for us all to work together to improve community attitudes towards continuing education and training which in itself will have a big impact on student retention.

6. How will students who need to transfer between campuses or co-enrol be monitored ?

Consultation through the working groups would need to ensure that these pathways are available to students and that students are supported in any co-enrolments or transitions they need to make. It is intended that the excellent pastoral care and other student support currently provided in colleges will be extended across the academy and the polytechnic.

In the current system some students need to make transitions between institutions (college to college, college to TAFE, intra and inter-state transfers, etc). Students making these transfers are strongly supported by staff at both exiting and receiving institutions and we would expect this to continue to be a strong aspect of the new model.

It is also possible in some situations that academies and polytechnics may be on the same campus or in the same area.

This project is about providing meaningful opportunities for every student and investing in every young person. The solution needs to be inclusive and needs to provide opportunities and outcomes for all students, including students with special needs.

7. What will happen if this doesn't work?

There is a very high level of confidence from the education, training and enterprise commentators that these changes will contribute to significant increases in post-Year 10 retention and qualifications.

The model is based in sound research from local, national and international sources. The consultation phase of the project will seek local input to the implementation to ensure that individual communities' needs are responded to during implementation. Once the learning organisations are up and running, performance measurement and continuous improvement will be key to their ongoing operation.

While structural reform is essential for improving retention and qualification rates, it is only part of the strategy. The other elements are: pathway planning for all government school students in Years 8 to 10; the Guaranteeing Futures legislation which essentially requires students to continue with education or training until they are 17 or have achieved a certificate III level qualification; extending the Year 10 school year to reduce the break between Years 10 and 11; and improving accommodation options for students living away from home.

It is also important for us all to work together to improve community attitudes towards continuing education and training so that participation rates will improve. This is not an easy or short term task!

8. Will all three institutions have flexible working hours?

How the institutions will offer their educational programs will be determined by the institutions in response to the needs of their clients. Regardless of how the institutions will operate, The Minister is clearly on record as having stated that no employee will be forced onto an award or working conditions less than what they are employed under currently (see the Parliament of Tasmania, House of Assembly Hansard, [Thursday 21 June 2007 - Estimates Committee A \(Bartlett\) - Part 2](#)).

9. The big decision has already been made so why is consultation happening now?

The consultation period runs from July to September 2007. During this time, the model will be developed further and we will spend time explaining and exploring the model with stakeholders. The Minister will host a number of forums at TAFE and senior secondary college campuses, like this one, which will enable him to talk with students, teachers and parents and listen to them about the opportunities (and challenges) that the initiative presents. He will also host forums for business and enterprises.

The project team is also receiving feedback through the email address tomorrow@education.tas.gov.au and 1800 number (1800 469 997). All feedback, information and advice received during the consultation phase will inform the implementation.

Communities are being encouraged to assess their local needs and provide input into the implementation of the model at a local level. Formation of a local community working group would be beneficial to enable coordinated input into the process.

Consultation will also happen through the working groups being established for key areas of the project.

The results of these consultations, and the feedback and information they provide, will inform the detail of the model and contribute to a smooth and effective transition.

10. Why aren't resources being targeted specifically to retention in those areas most affected rather than having an overall restructure?

This restructures aims to ensure that all students in all areas have access to meaningful education and training to provide them with skills and qualifications relevant to today's world of work. Further, this is not only for our young people, but for mature-age learners and for enterprises intent on upskilling their workforces.

Tasmania *Tomorrow* is just one of a number of strategies currently being implemented to improve education and training outcomes for all Tasmanians. See question 7 for the range of initiatives in place that will complement Tasmania *Tomorrow* for young people.

11. Will students wherever they live have access to a full range of opportunities?

By creating 'polytechnics' and 'academies' from the senior secondary colleges and TAFE Tasmania, there will be more areas around the state providing Years 11 and 12. While it is yet to be determined which of these locations will house the polytechnic and which will house the academy, it is highly likely that in some locations both organisations will coexist. A working group will be convened to progress this process which will be informed by consultation with stakeholders as well as data regarding current enrolment patterns.

A range of options to further improve access for students close to where they live will also be supported by the model (see question 5).

12. Will the new system be flexible enough to enable options such as the Bridgewater Annexe to continue?

Yes. Including more young Tasmanians than ever before in our education system post-Year 10, no matter what challenges they may face, is key to the goals of the Tasmania *Tomorrow* initiative. Flexible and innovative approaches to service delivery such as the Bridgewater and New Norfolk Annexes will continue to be provided.

13. Have students been consulted including those that aren't at college?

Student input is valuable to the implementation of the model and is being sought during the consultation. The project team is working on ways to best achieve this in collaboration with the Guaranteeing Futures staff and through forums with college students around the state. We are also working to ensure that students are fully informed about what is happening and what it means for them.

The Minister has written to parents of high school students and current college students as well as mature college students to advise of the changes. He has also scheduled three regional student forums in late July and early August as part of the consultation process, with further dates/venues to be advised.

I4. Will we lose visionary leadership at Claremont.

No. To meet the challenge of dramatically improving the retention and qualification rates for all young Tasmanians, no matter what their challenges may be, will require more visionary leadership than ever.

Also, even though the institutes are intended to be state-wide bodies, local innovation and leadership will be very important. Each site will need to be meeting the needs of their local community within the state-wide context.