

Student Pathways



CAREER EDUCATION AND PATHWAYS STRATEGY

Supporting every school student on
their pathway to lifelong success

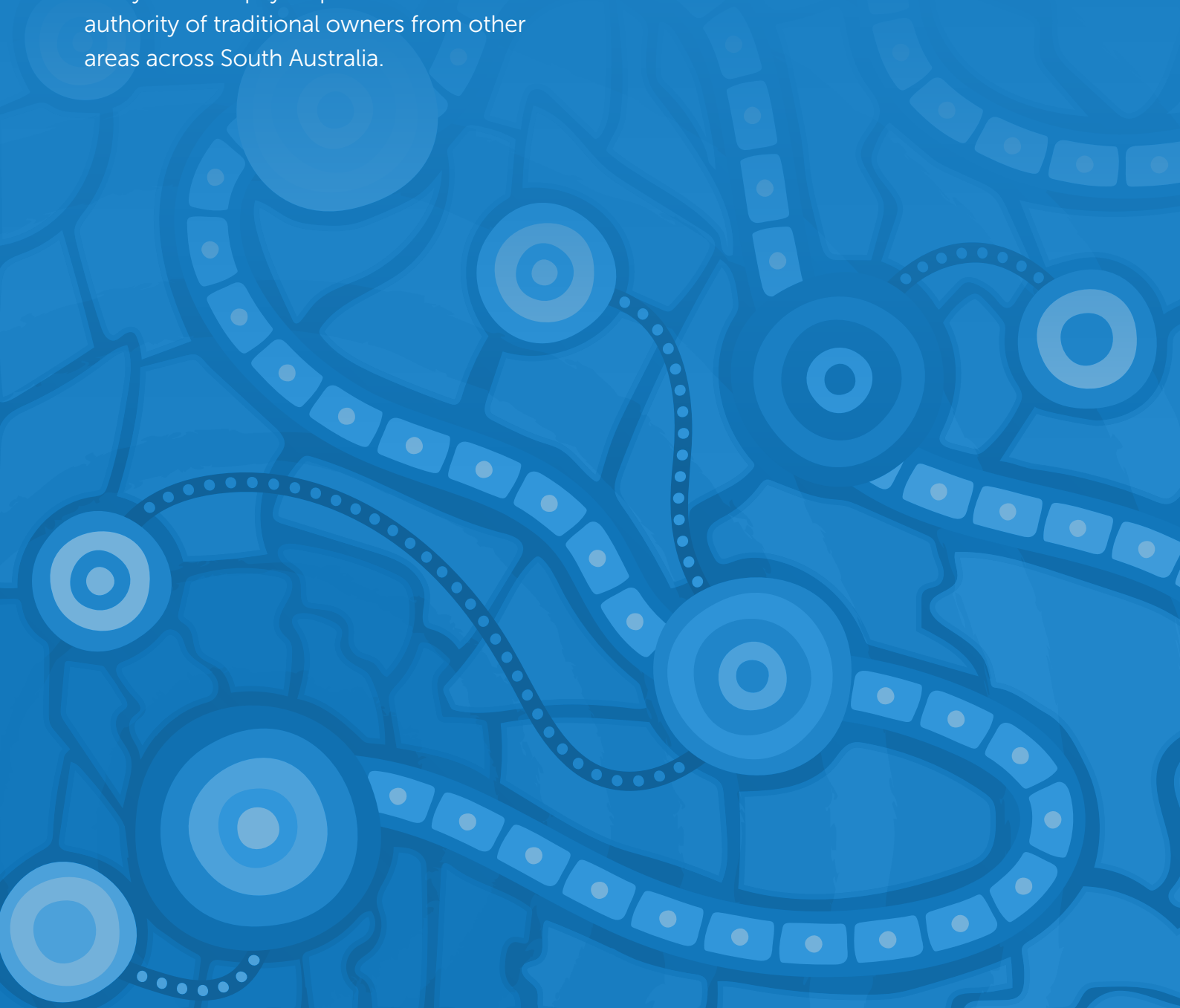


Government
of South Australia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge that work undertaken to develop South Australia's Career Education and Pathways Strategy took place mainly on the traditional lands of the Kurna people, and we respect their spiritual relationship with their country.

We also acknowledge the Kurna people as the custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kurna people today. We also pay respects to the cultural authority of traditional owners from other areas across South Australia.



MINISTER'S FOREWORD

This Career Education and Pathways Strategy is part of our efforts to improve the education, training and skills outcomes for South Australian students.

Every young person should be supported to understand the full range of opportunities available to them, to learn from employers about work and the skills that are valued in the workplace and to have first-hand experience of the workplace.

We want to challenge perceptions and raise the profile of Vocational Education and Training (VET) as a valuable option for all students, to help them develop a broad base of skills and prepare them for a range of post-school and employment pathways.

We want every school student, no matter their background, to be able to build a rewarding career in South Australia, ending the generational cycle of disadvantage and reversing the brain drain to other states and territories.

It is an exciting time for South Australian students to choose their career. Whether it be AUKUS and the job opportunities that will come with this unprecedented investment, the introduction of universal 3-year-old preschool and the chance to educate generations to come, or investments in hydrogen and other renewable energies, just to name a few, there are incredible opportunities for South Australian students to find their passion.

Better careers education and equal support for vocational and university pathways is critical to ensuring students unashamedly follow their interests.

We know that career education and guidance in schools alongside quality VET programs raises the awareness of all pathway options and transforms students' engagement, completion and transition outcomes.

Underpinning this important strategy are significant investments to:

- Build five Technical Colleges to provide access to high-quality vocational education programs that prepare school students for the workforce in areas of high skills demand.
- Update the Australian Curriculum to ensure that vocational education is embedded from primary school alongside the academic curriculum.
- Provide better careers education for students.
- Change perceptions of VET amongst students and parents to recognise it as an equal and just as rewarding pathway as university.

Our government is committed to investing in the future of young people to provide them with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to pursue successful and fulfilling careers – and to contribute to the economic growth and development of South Australia.



Hon Blair Boyer MP

Minister for Education, Training and Skills



Australia's space structure



Astronomers and space explorers:
Looking out and listening from Down Under.

Australia has a unique view of the sky. As the Earth rotates, we face parts of the solar system that are below the horizon for others. This makes Australia a vital part of the communications network for missions to the Moon, Mars and beyond.

Down here in the Southern Hemisphere, our astronomers can also peer into the heart of the Milky Way. This perspective has helped Australia shape our growing understanding of the universe.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

We want every school student to thrive and prosper.

There is a strong correlation between good student outcomes and quality career education and guidance. Research across many jurisdictions demonstrates that students are more likely to continue to be engaged in their schooling and transition into a post-school pathway aligned to their passions and interests if they have had quality career discussions and experiences.

Students that complete secondary education have a greater likelihood of continuing with further education, entering the workforce, and having improved living conditions across their lifetime.

Our public education system must prepare all young people both for active citizenship and for purposeful engagement with the labour market. Students have told us how important it is for them to be supported by their school to become successful adults who can make their way in the world.

Students who are empowered to develop a sense of identity and responsibility are more likely to positively influence their own lives and the world around them, by actively participating in the classroom, school, community and workplace.

The world is changing rapidly, and to navigate this change, requires resilience, adaptability, and perseverance. Developing the necessary knowledge, skills, and capabilities for the workforce has never been more crucial.

Quality career education and guidance plays a vital role in this process. By supporting students in developing career management competencies, we empower them to take charge of their own futures. When they acquire the skills, attitudes, and mindset for lifelong learning and remain adaptable, flexible, and confident, they can succeed in any future path they choose.

“Staying in education longer than ever and facing a turbulent labour market undergoing radical change due to automation and the coronavirus, it has never been more important for young people to effectively prepare for the working world.”

Andreas Schleicher
Director for Education and Skills
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

OUR OPPORTUNITY

The Career Education and Pathways Strategy presents an opportunity to address skills shortages, enhance VET and SACE participation and completion rates, and prepare young people for the complexities of the modern world.

South Australia currently is the lowest skilled economy in Australia, with 38% of the population lacking a post-school qualification. Many young people struggle to complete school and transition into a post-school pathway. In 2022, 64% of government school students finished their South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), and approximately half of those aged 15 to 24 who left school the previous year were fully engaged in education or employment.

Some regions also face high levels of youth unemployment and under-employment, while simultaneously experiencing acute skills shortages. With the rapid changes brought about by globalization, technological advancements, and automation, merely completing school is no longer sufficient. It is predicted that 9 out of 10 jobs will require a post-school qualification.

However, these statistics present a unique opportunity for South Australia to invest in targeted programs and initiatives that focus on improving attainment, skill development, and creating pathways to success for young people, ultimately driving the growth and prosperity of the state.

Vocational qualifications are in demand for many jobs in South Australia. Vocational education and training (VET) equips students with practical skills, knowledge, and industry connections necessary for success in the workplace. It offers a valuable and flexible education and training option, developed by industry experts, to prepare students for their chosen careers.

Despite evidence to the contrary, VET is often perceived as a less prestigious or valuable pathway compared to the academic route leading to university, both by parents and carers and students themselves. This perception needs to change. Through improved career education, guidance, high-quality VET programs, and industry engagement for career opportunities, we can reverse this perception.

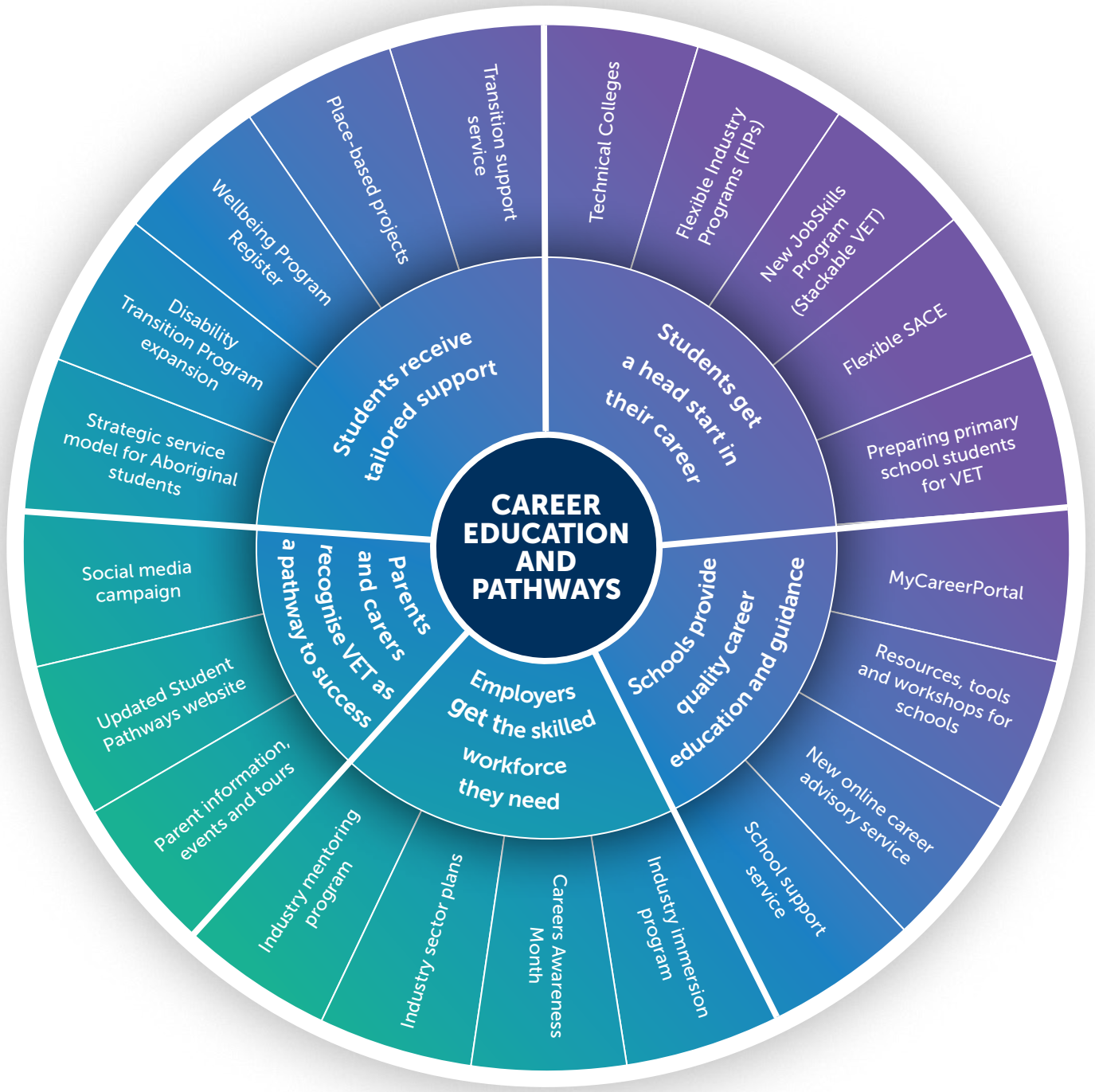
Secondary schools play a vital role in preparing young people for their future and it is imperative that comprehensive and high-quality career education and guidance form an integral part of secondary education. By embracing this opportunity, schools can actively support all students, regardless of background and individual circumstance, to pursue their aspirations, be it through higher education and university pathways or VET pathways.

The Career Education and Pathways Strategy aims to strengthen the existing career education and pathways programs in schools, ensuring that all students have the knowledge, skills, competencies, and capabilities to thrive and prosper in South Australia regardless of the pathway that they choose to pursue.

Many young people said they felt they would have been more engaged if they could see clearer links between their studies and their future career and employment prospects. Others wanted learning content to be more practical and relevant to their lives, and to cover the things they need to know to live past school.

High Stakes High School. A report examining the experiences of South Australian Year 12 students (2023) The South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People

THE INITIATIVES IN THIS STRATEGY



1



The bottom line: students who actively explore, experience and think about their futures in work while still in secondary education can expect better employment outcomes in adulthood.

How youth explore, experience and think about their future. OECD (2022)

STUDENTS GET A HEAD START IN THEIR CAREER

Our students get a head start in their future career when schools provide engaging education that aligns to a student's strengths, values and aspirations, and prepares them for their post-school pathway.

All secondary students should have access to quality vocational learning to cultivate a diverse range of capabilities including strong communication skills, critical thinking abilities, adaptability, collaboration, and digital literacy to help them effectively transition to careers and thrive in the modern workplace.

By offering students a senior secondary program that aligns with their chosen post-school pathway, whether it be higher education and university or VET, schools can provide valuable opportunities for students to develop their skills and gain a head start in their career while still in school.

This approach emphasizes the importance of delivering high-quality VET courses through reputable institutions such as TAFE SA and other Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), which not only raises and upholds the value of VET but also garners the support and confidence of parents, carers, employers, and schools.

Providing respected options through VET as well as higher education and university provides student choice.

Technical Colleges will set the standard for vocational programs in senior secondary education. The co-designed industry training programs and innovative project-based learning, delivered in partnership with employers, guarantees students their first job and will put South Australia on the global stage in bridging the gap between education and employment.

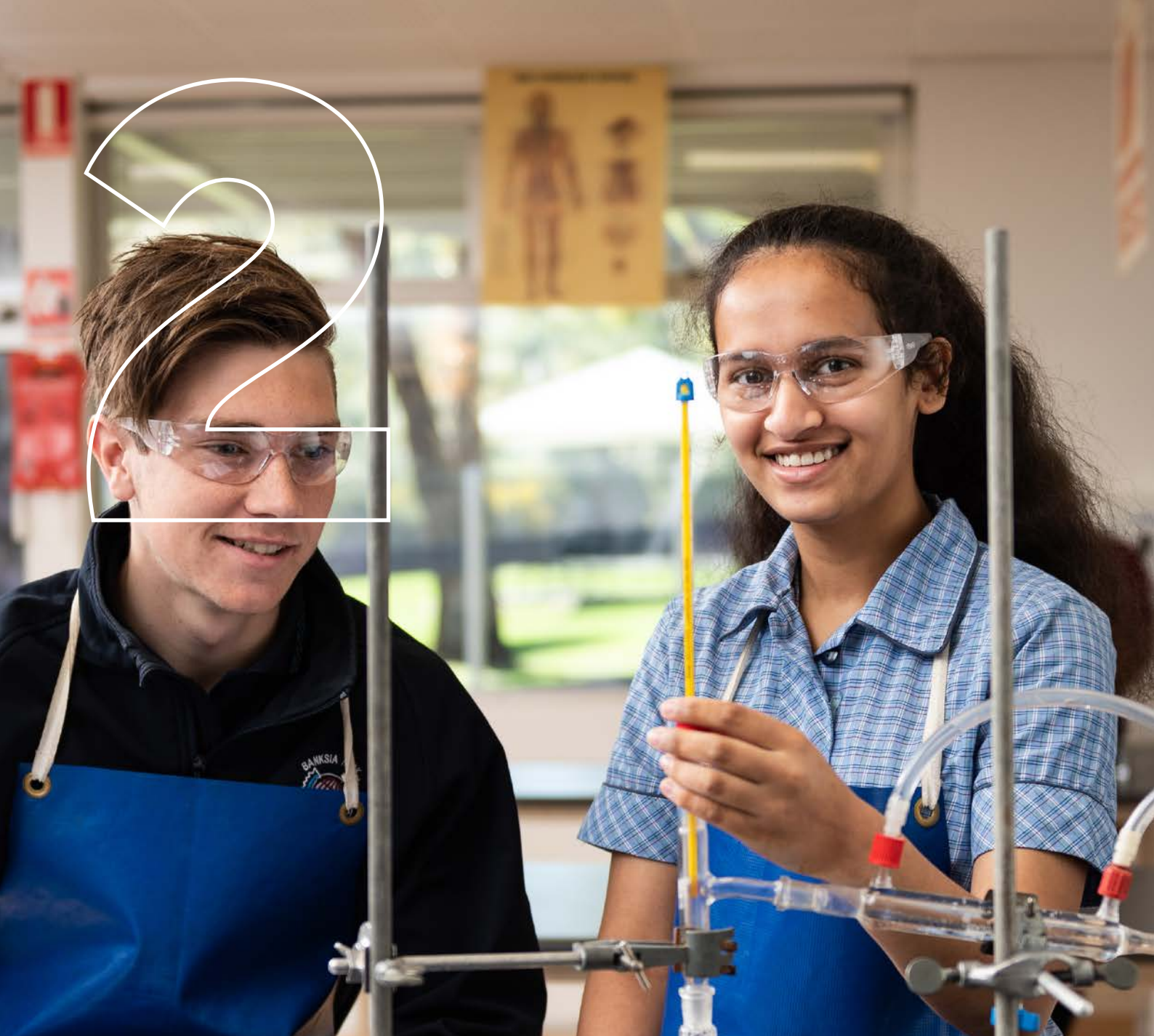
Students across the state will continue to have access to **Flexible Industry Programs (FIPs)**, that include quality VET courses, endorsed by industry and suitable for school-enrolled students. In 2022, there were over 4,500 students enrolled in FIPs, gaining the skills for

jobs in key industries in South Australia. These will continue to be improved and expanded in line with industry demand.

A new **Job Skills Program** will be introduced that will fund Stackable VET, particularly Skills Clusters and short courses that develop employability skills and prepare young people for employment.

The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) is a qualification that all senior secondary students must obtain to showcase their knowledge, skills, capabilities, and other attributes relevant to various industries and post-school pathways. With the new SACE subjects of Exploring Identities and Futures, and Activating Identities and Futures students, will explore who they are and take greater ownership and agency over their future. **Flexible SACE** subjects are available and complementary to VET, like Industry Connections which provides students who have an interest in a particular industry area to develop and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding about that industry. We will collaborate with schools to assist in the implementation of these subjects.

Students in primary school can start to develop their skills, competencies and capabilities for lifelong success right now. They don't need to wait for secondary school. We will work with primary school leaders to provide **primary school students with greater connections with employers** and awareness of jobs and careers. This will help to raise the profile of vocational careers, broaden the options and challenge some of those biases that often form before secondary school.



Supporting students' career development in school helps young people make effective decisions about:

- Subject choices
- Pathways through school
- Post-school destinations including further education, training or work

Bringing schools and employers together through quality vocational learning and VET programs can help school graduates meet the higher demands of the workplace and a globally competitive environment.

www.yourcareer.gov.au National Careers Institute, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

SCHOOLS PROVIDE QUALITY CAREER EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

Our students participate in careers exploration and discovery, they access information and guidance and they have the agency to make an informed decision on their desired post-school pathway.

We will support schools to provide the highest quality career education programs, based on international career development theory and best practice. The Gatsby Charitable Foundation has brought together the best national and international research to define excellence in careers provision through the Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance. These have been adapted for the Australian context in collaboration with the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) to establish 6 Best Practice Elements which serve as a comprehensive guide for embedding career education programs in South Australian government schools.

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development is a framework that identifies the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that an individual needs to make sound choices and effectively manage their own career. This has been used to develop a Career Learning Outcomes Framework for teachers to use in their classroom.

In addition, secondary schools will have free access to a nationally recognised online career education platform, called **MyCareerPortal** that provides opportunities for students to explore their interests, values and aspirations, explore careers and the world of work through virtual work experience, and plan their future career journey.

We will continue to provide **resources, tools and capability-building workshops** to increase expertise in this area. This includes the best advice series, self-assessment tools and resources that guide teachers in the classroom on how to support students to develop their career management competencies including personal management, learning and work exploration, and career building.

Taking advantage of the latest technology and promoting access for regional and remote students, we will introduce a new **online career advisory service** accessible to every student in every school from 2024.

To assist schools and remove the burden of additional work, we will provide a **support service** through Pathway Advisors to work with every secondary school leadership team to help plan and embed career education and pathway programs in their school. This service will be localised and tailored to the needs of the school, the community and the local opportunities.





Young people who have developed and can explicitly demonstrate skills such as communication and problem solving, and who have significant workplace experience, make the transitions to work quicker than others.

Foundation for Young Australians. (2018).

The New Work Smarts: Thriving in the New Work Order

EMPLOYERS GET THE SKILLED WORKFORCE THEY NEED

Our students understand the full range of career options available to them, learn from employers about what work is like, develop the skills that are valued in the workplace and have first-hand experiences of the world of work.

Connecting industry and employers with schools is vital to showcase what it is like to work in the jobs available here in South Australia and ensure students pursue pathways to career success. Schools often cannot do this without the right connections and networks.

Partnerships with employers of all sizes, and from all sectors, will inspire students and give them the opportunity to learn about the job opportunities, what work is like and what it takes to be successful in the workforce.

Employers signal the capabilities young people need to thrive in the workplace, including communication, critical thinking, adaptability, teamwork, and digital skills. They can also create problem-based opportunities for students to develop these skills.

The Master Builders Association (MBA) Born to Build program provides hands-on advice to school students about careers in the building industry. The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) Doorways2construction program is proactively engaging school students to prepare them for careers in the industry. These are examples of a number of career preparedness initiatives that we will promote to schools.

The **industry immersion program**, which is available to all schools, will be expanded to include more work experience, on-the-job learning, workshops or talks run by employers, career videos and other activities that develop career awareness and prepare young people for the world of work. Access to workplace experiences has been made easier with the introduction of the new, streamlined Workplace Learning procedures.

After the success of career events in 2022, we will run an annual **Careers Awareness Month** for school students every year that enables employers to showcase the careers and jobs in their industry. Students across the state will be supported to attend.

We will continue to build on the relationships with Industry Reference Groups and the Industry Skills Councils to develop **industry sector plans** that expand the opportunities for school students for industry immersion, career awareness and FIPs.

Mentoring has been shown to have a significant impact on completion rates and transitions of young people into work. To complement the industry engagement activities and work with the Industry Skills Councils we will introduce a new **industry mentoring program** to connect industry volunteers to school students.

In recognition of the defence industry workforce needs of South Australia, we will continue to roll out targeted activities to attract young people and prepare them for the jobs in the defence industries, as this is a critical priority for the South Australian economy.





PARENTS AND CARERS RECOGNISE VET AS A PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

Students, parents and carers are supported to have career conversations and plan their career pathways so that they can make informed decisions about the future.

Career information and guidance must be accessible to engage young people in learning about different skills and career paths and ensure the main influencers on students' decisions, their parents and carers, are informed and aware of the possibilities.

We will continue to run **career events, information forums and workplace tours** for parents and carers so that they have the opportunity to see the broad range of options available and to understand that VET is a valued pathway that can lead to career success.

The many websites on career information can be confusing, difficult to navigate and overwhelming. To address this, we will provide a single digital route to reliable and trusted career information for school students by updating the **Student Pathways website**. This will simplify and streamline information available for school students, their parents and carers, schools and employers.

The website will be tailored for school students from year 7 so that they can start to prepare well in advance of leaving school. It will provide a simple and user-friendly point of access for information from nationally trusted sources which covers hundreds of job profiles developed with industry experts to give a clear picture of what a job involves and the salary, qualifications and experience they need to enter and progress in their chosen careers.

The website will provide single-sign-on access to the new, engaging and inspiring career education platform MyCareerPortal, which is being rolled out in 2023. The platform takes school students from year 7 through career exploration and planning journeys with:

- fun, interactive games
- exploration activities
- diagnostic tools: assessment of aptitudes, aspirations, learning styles and preferences
- Curriculum Vitae preparation
- planning for careers and jobs of the future.

The website showcases the VET in school opportunities in senior secondary years, including FIPs and pathways into apprenticeships and traineeships for school students. It also provides an online noticeboard where employers post work experience, apprenticeships and traineeships, and career awareness activities.

A **social media campaign** will promote the website so that the community knows the trusted place to go when career planning for school students.





5

Effective guidance and support needs to level up the playing field and address inequalities.

*How youth explore, experience and think about their future.
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2022)*

STUDENTS RECEIVE TAILORED SUPPORT

Our students receive the tailored support they need to access and fully participate in their pathway of choice.

For some students, tailored support is necessary as the transition from school onto employment, further training or higher education can often be more challenging, particularly for those facing greater complexity during their years at school.

The Aboriginal Education Strategy highlights the need for a **strategic service model for Aboriginal students**. In order to develop this model, there will be broad consultation with Aboriginal community and stakeholders to ensure that all areas of the state, including the APY Lands, are supported so that more Aboriginal children and young people can complete school and transition into a meaningful post-school pathway.

A commitment has been made to further expand the existing programs of the Workabout Centre and the South Australian Aboriginal Secondary Training Academy (SAASTA) so that more Aboriginal young people can access the opportunities and receive the support they need.

Disability transition programs provide extra support to students with disability to transition from a secondary school environment into the workplace or community. Currently the program is limited to 3 sites in metropolitan Adelaide. We will expand the **transition programs for students with disability** from 2024 so that more students with disability can access the services and receive the support they need.

A list of **wellbeing programs** for secondary school students is available for schools to access. We will work with schools to ensure the options available meet the needs of wellbeing, mentoring and student support as part of pathway planning, completion and transition from school.

It is acknowledged that there are unique challenges in some regions that require a targeted response so that students remain engaged and connected to school. A targeted, place-based approach will be adopted where needed to trial different approaches and identify what has the greatest impact on students for transition. As part of this approach, we will fund some **place-based projects with local schools** and pilot a new **transition support service** aimed at students that need extra help to move from school into their next stage of learning or earning.

We are committed to eliminate barriers to opportunity and to support every school student on their pathway to lifelong success.





STRATEGY GOALS



VET is recognised as an attractive alternative to university.



More young people are transitioning from school to employment, further training or higher education.



VET and school retention and completion rates are improved.



Young people are skilled for the jobs needed in South Australia.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1

Improvement in **student retention rates**

2

Improvement in **student completion rates**

3

Improvement in **student transition rates**

4

Improvement in **participation, completion and transition rates** at cohort level



Student Pathways



Government of South Australia
Department for Education