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Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry WA

T: (08) 9365 7555

E: [membership@cciwa.com](mailto:membership@cciwa.com)

W: [www.cciwa.com](http://www.cciwa.com)

Emeritus Professor Bill Loudon AM  
Chair  
Pathways to Post-School Success Review Expert Panel

Via email: [Post-School.Success.Secretariat@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:Post-School.Success.Secretariat@education.wa.edu.au)

Dear Professor Loudon

### Pathways to Post-School Success Review

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia (CCIWA) is the peak body advancing trade and commerce in Western Australia. We are fundamentally committed to using our insights to develop and advocate for public policies that will help realise our vision to make WA the best place to live and do business. We also operate WA's largest Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (ASSN) service, with deep connections with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), employers, and industry across the State.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important area of policy. The significance of robust post-school pathways extends beyond the realm of student success; it profoundly influences the economic landscape by facilitating the growth of industries and opportunities within our community. It also ensures we remain competitive on a global scale. As we navigate an era characterised by swift technological advancements and shifting workforce demands, the need for a robust senior secondary education system becomes increasingly important. In particular, the system should effectively prepare students for a diverse array of post-school endeavours including further academic pursuits, vocational training, and employment.

To this end, we have identified key areas that we believe require urgent attention to optimise student training and employment outcomes across Western Australia. These are as follows:

- **Addressing concerns around School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships:**  
The utilisation of School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs) holds immense potential in facilitating successful transition into post-school pathways. However, there is considerable concern and confusion among educators regarding who is responsible for the Duty of Care of students undertaking SBAT on school grounds, which discourages their support and promotion within schools. To rectify this, the State Government needs to clearly communicate that the onus of responsibility falls with parents to encourage greater participation in SBATs, without burdening educators unnecessarily.

- **Addressing the gap in math skill level and capability:** the school curriculum currently provides two maths options (ATAR and non-ATAR). Feedback provided by training providers has identified that students who complete the non-ATAR option are not able to meet the numeracy requirements for entry into some key in-demand VET courses, including Certificate III Electrotechnology (Electrician) apprenticeships; mechanical trades; carpentry, plumbing and other construction qualifications that require strong mathematical capability (but not ATAR-level).

To this end, we recommend the development and implementation of an industry-aligned math course into the school curriculum. This alternative to ATAR maths should be promoted positively, particularly for students aiming for apprenticeships in technical trades. Further, to ensure its relevance and practicality, the establishment of an Industry Advisory Board guiding curriculum design and ensuring real-world applications of mathematical and technological concepts into the classroom would be highly beneficial.

- **Mitigating challenges with Certificate III/IV enrolments in schools:** Feedback provided by industry has identified an evident disconnect between the skills, capabilities and workforce readiness of students completing Certificate III/IV qualifications, and the expectations of industry. Employers' expectations of individuals holding these qualifications is high, expecting individuals to have extensive experience in managing people, and be able to undertake supervisory roles. However, this clashes with the limited practical experience that secondary school students have in this regard, which devalues the qualification.

In addition, should an individual need to re-enrol in the same qualification post-school for on-the-job experience, this students' competitiveness in the workforce is limited, because employers are unable to apply for government incentives due to eligibility restrictions.

- **Better preparation for university:** While alternative pathways into post-school study offer flexibility, our engagement with universities has also identified gaps in the preparedness of students to adequately meet the demands of undergraduate study. Enhancing support structures to build student-readiness for the rigors of university-level study within these pathways is imperative for their success.
- **Inclusive alternative WACE program:** In advocating for inclusivity, particularly for students with disabilities, we would encourage the State Government to explore the feasibility of developing an inclusive alternative WACE program that recognises and certifies students' abilities and achievements throughout their secondary schooling, aligning them with their peers. This alternative pathway

would aim to provide a holistic representation of their capabilities and bridge the gap in recognition and certification.

- **Career promotion:** In addition, parental guidance plays a pivotal role in shaping students' career choices. A more focused dissemination of information on post-school pathways, in-demand careers in WA and optimising subject selection would immensely benefit students in making informed decisions about their future.

### **Concluding remarks**

In recent times, there has been a noticeable shift in the recognition and support for VET pathways within the education system. Schools are now more receptive to including VET in their career information events, which signifies a positive shift towards acknowledging the value of vocational pathways. This is critical as it will build the pipelines of skills that will underpin WA's future economic opportunities.

However, there are some key issues that need to be addressed, from clarifying duty of care for SBATs to refining pathways, supporting university preparation, parental guidance, and inclusivity. This is necessary to create a robust and equitable senior secondary education system that adequately prepares all students for their chosen post-school pathways.

CCIWA remains committed to supporting this review and collaborating towards the betterment of the senior secondary education landscape in Western Australia. Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Aaron Morey, Director of Policy via [aaron.morey@cciwa.com](mailto:aaron.morey@cciwa.com).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CR', with a horizontal line underneath the letters.

Chris Rodwell  
**Chief Executive Officer**