



**VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM  
22 August 2002**

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** The Vocational Education Training program of the Department of Education, Training and Employment has been a resounding success. I take this time to bring the VET program to the attention of the house so that all members are aware of the program and its practical success in steering students into apprenticeships and employment. VET is a way for students to experience the world of work in a range of occupations while still at school, thus enabling them to choose a career pathway that suits their skills, abilities and interests, and to engage students in work-related learning built on strategic partnerships between schools, businesses, industry and the wider community so that they gain practical work skills and nationally recognised qualifications.

By adding VET subjects studied at school, the students can claim credit to many different TAFE courses upon leaving school. While at school, students can enrol in TAFE with no charge. When modules are successfully completed, results are passed onto the TAFE. Accreditation for TAFE courses can also be gained automatically by stating what subjects were studied in year 12. Some examples of subjects that fall into this category are information processing, physical education and small business management. School-based apprenticeships are a part of VET. In this program students gain national training qualifications, being paid for their learning time in the workplace while still completing the South Australian Certificate of Education.

School-based apprenticeships on Eyre Peninsula are currently available in the following industries: aged care, agriculture, automotive, business studies, child care, cookery, electrical, engineering, equine, information technology, media, panel beating, spray painting, refrigeration, retail, seafood, aquaculture and tourism. VET builds on the attributes that enterprise and career education programs develop in students at Eyre Peninsula schools and preschools. Those characteristics are using initiative and drive, being creative and innovative, being positive and flexible, making decisions and solving problems, planning and organising, communicating and negotiating, managing resources and people, working cooperatively and reviewing and assessing. I am sure that all members will agree that not only is this a wide range but also these are valuable life skills.

Not all students are academic. The VET program acknowledges this and gives students with a more practical approach the necessary pathways to employment and a fulfilled life. A news item on 19 August 2002 referred to a Mount Gambier skills centre designed to put high school students into building apprenticeships. It was reported as one of the most innovative education programs in the nation. That is what VET is: the most innovative, education program in the nation, and it has been quietly assisting students into careers.

The 2002 Eyre Peninsula field days at Cleve had a focus on education as reported on the ABC. Greg White, Assistant Principal at Cleve Area School, which is noted for its focus on agriculture, said all the schools were displaying their different wares in an enterprise theme. The report quoted him as saying:

What we are looking at is enterprising education all the way through so students can develop a lot of different skills that will assist them in their future careers. The theme was developed in a debate by students on the relative merits of enterprise and education in life.

The Enterprise and Vocational Education Eyre Regional Management Group has begun a three year program to attract students after they leave school. This is an essential component of ongoing evaluation of the program. It is proposed that the data gathered will be used in identifying future needs for future secondary students and for future pathways. It would be nothing short of criminal if this program was curtailed. The government has allocated funds towards the cost of students staying longer at school. It would be a good move to use some of

this funding to ensure the continuation of the VET program.

The Australian National Training Authority provides \$20 million towards VET in-school funding, and that is guaranteed until 2004. I ask the Minister for Education and Children's Services and the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education to ensure the continuation of the VET program, funded to 2002, on Eyre Peninsula, together with continued salary support for the two staff. These excellent staff members are Betty Pearce, the regional VET coordinator based at Lock, and Sally Richardson, the regional enterprise coordinator based at Tumby Bay.