



Pathways to Post School Success

Review of Western Australian Senior Secondary

The Western Australian Education Support Principals and Administrators Associations (WAESPAA) is pleased to see the release of the consultation draft for the Pathways to Post School Success review. We acknowledge the six imperatives outlined in Section 3, recognising them as crucial changes needed in schools. WAESPAA appreciated the chance to participate in the initial consultation and now looks forward to responding to the consultation draft.

WAESPAA represents education support settings across the state, including primary and secondary, education support schools, education support centres, endorsed education support programs, inclusive learning programs, and Specialised Learning Programs. We recognise the critical importance of providing secondary programs and pathways that meet student needs and help them become successful adults. Unfortunately, our students are often overlooked and lack successful pathways through high school and into the workforce. This is due to several factors:

- Data on student achievement is not collected at the system level, so their progress is not measured.
- Limited access to courses that lead to successful outcomes.
- Students often cannot pass OLNA, preventing them from gaining a WACE.
- Lack of access to vocational education opportunities such as TAFE.

Summary of the response

After reviewing this draft report, WAESPAA believes that it and its recommendations do not go far enough to make a difference for students with disabilities and neurodiversity. The report continues to support a two-tiered system where students with disabilities, neurodiversity, or an imputed disability are not treated equally with their neurotypical peers. In fact, some of the recommendations may widen this gap and reduce the opportunities available to our students.

The six key imperatives provide a framework for the report and broaden the perspective on senior secondary education. These themes introduce a new approach, given how they are all interconnected. However, WAESPAA would like to see a greater emphasis on student voice and the ability of students to make their own choices about how their education should be structured and delivered. This would ensure that the direction and imperatives are guided by the students themselves. In today's world, where various methods of accessing education are available, it is crucial that we allow students to guide us.

WAESPAA feels that there should be a clear statement in this report that validates the alternative pathways for student and that celebrates their diversity.



Please note when we are talking about students with a disability this incorporates students with neurodiversity, imputed disability under the National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) and marginalised students due to their location being regional or remote or from a low socio-economic environment. When one or more of these things combine the impact of the disadvantage is multiplied. For example, a student with a disability living in regional Western Australia is more likely to experience disadvantage than one living in South or North Metropolitan area.

Reframing the purposes of senior secondary education

Recommendation 1 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

Our concerns would be that this would need to be sufficient resourced and that the voices of all students are gain and taken seriously not just lip service. Frequently there is little consideration when resourcing decisions are made to consider our small education support settings who have few staff, which increased staff workload.

Recommendation 2 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

Our concern is that this recommendation when implemented needs to be structured so that it incorporates student diversity and our marginalised students.

Recommendation 3 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

We feel that School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) needs to have a clear directive to ensure that these changes are made. This will be incorporated in the legislation review of the School Curriculum and Standard Authority Act 1997 but needs to ensure that the focus is on change and not just a reflection of the status quo.

Recommendation 4 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

Although this is focused on senior secondary, WAESPAA feels that there needs to be further review that looks at the phases of learning prior so that the foundations are set before reaching years 11 and 12.

Recommendation 5 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

This recommendation should prioritise incorporating the voices of all students during consultations. Unfortunately, students with disabilities are often left out, as it is assumed that senior secondary courses, rationales, and aims do not apply to them. Addressing this issue is crucial to prevent perpetuating the current two-tiered system.

Recommendation 6 – WAESPAA **does not** support this recommendation in its current form.

Given the identified time frames, implementing this recommendation appears unrealistic. To ensure fidelity, effective measures must capture data for all students and translate it into actionable steps for schools. However, the current data collection process does not



adequately account for students with disabilities. Achieving meaningful change within an 18-month period may be too ambitious for schools.

The collection of data from students with a disability is identified in dot point 2 of the recommendation but WAESPAA has concerns that use of NCCD would not be sufficient to give any effect data on student achievement and progress. Data from the NCCD is not moderated or has sufficient rigour around its application to ensure the accuracy of the data.

Recommendation 7 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

Concerns that there is little, or no data collected for the process and achievement that students with disability or imputed disability make. The identification of how this can occur need to happen first before any strengthening and integration.

Recommendation 8 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

Recommendation 9 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

WAESPAA recognises that the discussion around the purpose of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools is generated because of some schools seeing VET as an engagement program. But for students with disability often VET courses are not accessible or available to them. This is sometimes due to the ability of schools to offer the courses in schools or TAFEs to be accessible to students with a disability. WAESPAA would recommend an amendment:

Recommendation 9. Department of Education and DTWD to work with the school system and sectors to strengthen delivery of career education and pathway planning, consistent with the principles outlined above in conjunction with appropriate course selection processes, where applicable, particularly for students with a disability or imputed disability and students in regional, remote, and lower socio-economic areas.

Recommendation 10 – WAESPAA **does not** support this recommendation in its current form.

VET courses serve as crucial pathways for students with disabilities. However, as mentioned earlier, these pathways are not consistently accessible to them. To promote equity, it is essential to enhance the availability of VET courses, especially for students in regional and remote schools.

WAESPAA expresses concerns about the ongoing work by SCSA regarding the WACE refresher. Unfortunately, the WACE refresher still does not address the issue of including the Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA) in the WACE, which has excluded many students with disabilities from obtaining a WACE qualification.

WAESPAA advocates for addressing this inequity, ensuring that all students can achieve a WACE based on their accomplishments or learner profile. While recognising the value of OLNA, WAESPAA suggests that it could be administered separately from the WACE. Ultimately, the WACE should celebrate a student's comprehensive achievement profile throughout their schooling.



Recommendation 11 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

WAESPAA has long recognised that the distinctions between General, VET, and ATAR courses create obstacles for students with disabilities. Consequently, WAESPAA strongly supports the recommendation to structure courses based on learning outcomes, which can then be linked to the WACE.

Recommendation 12, 13 – WAESPAA supports these recommendations in principle.

Recommendation 14 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

While removing the terminology of ‘General’ and ‘ATAR’ courses may alleviate barriers for students with disabilities, it could potentially increase teacher workload due to the diverse needs within the classroom. Additionally, if a class comprises both ‘ATAR’ and ‘General’ students, there may be a tendency to focus more on higher-achieving students, potentially leaving those who require greater support at a disadvantage. Careful implementation and robust support from the SCSA will be essential to navigate this recommendation effectively in schools.

Recommendation 15, 16, 17 – WAESPAA supports these recommendations in principle.

Recommendation 18, 19 – WAESPAA supports these recommendations in principle.

Recommendation 20 - WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle

WAESPAA supports the recommendation but does not feel that this goes far enough. The statement from the environmental scan- “Why are vocational pathways called alternative pathways? Why are they considered the poor cousin to ATAR? “sums up one of the societal barriers with VET and ATAR.

The review acknowledges that recognising VET achievements toward an ATAR is a critical issue. However, maintaining rigid distinctions between course types remains problematic. As stated above VET courses, are often considered secondary to ATAR courses. The delivery of VET course can be costly for schools particularly in regional settings. For some students with a disability or neurodiversity university preparation courses provide valuable pathways to higher education. While data collection and course consistency are important, we must avoid unintentionally limiting opportunities for smaller cohorts of students or those in challenging circumstances.

Recommendation 21 - WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle

WAESPAA supports this recommendation and the collection of data as enabling program would increase students with a disability ability to access university.

Recommendation 22 - WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle

Although WAESPAA supports this recommendation we are not clear if this is a role for SCSA or whether this sits only with universities. The WACE refresher does not overcome some of the issues within the senior secondary program as it still promotes a two-tiered system rather than celebrating all student’s achievement on the same basis.



Recommendation 23 WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle

The basis of this recommendation is sound, but WAESPAA does not feel that it is sufficient and need to be strengthened to give SCSA a clear mandate and direction for change. Education Support settings are often innovative and student lead in the way that they engage students. There is concern that without clear directions SCSA may limit or restrict differentiation and response to student needs.

Recommendation 24 and 25 WAESPAA **strongly** support these recommendations in principle

The use of learner profiles is something that education support settings leaders are familiar with, as these are similar to the individualised approach that is used for curriculum delivery through individual education plans. We fully support an approach where the experiences, skills, aspirations, and opportunities for all students are recognised and incorporated. For these recommendations to be fully implemented the process by which an endorsed program etc, is accredited into a WACE.

In particular WAESPAA supports the recommendation from the Shergold Report that argues that all students should leave with a learner profile as stated in the draft report.

Recommendation 26 – WAESPAA **strongly** supports this recommendation in principle.

SCSA should be given a clear directive to implement learning profile that allows for the celebration of all students' achievement.

Recommendation 27 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

WAESPAA feels that incorporating Complex Competencies into the learning profile and ensure that course contents allow for the delivery, assessment and certification would allow all students to have their achievements recognised.

There is a need to ensure that SCSA has a clear directive to review its policy and procedures for making reasonable adjustments. We currently have a system whereas adjustments can be made for students in years 7-10 which are accepted by SCSA, but the very same adjustments in year 11 and 12 are not accepted. The reasonable adjustments allowed need to support the accessibility of courses for students not be barriers to them.

Recommendation 30 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

Recommendation 31– WAESPAA **strongly** supports this recommendation in principle

WAESPAA welcomes this recommendation as it recognises work that already occurs in education support settings. But feels that this should not be limited to students with a disability but should be open to students where a life skills course would be appropriate.

Recommendation 32 – WAESPAA supports this recommendation in principle.

There is concern about this recommendation that if not applied with a holistic manner it will increase the gap between students with a disability and their neurotypical peers. WAESPAA



would strongly advocate for a WACE that celebrates all students' achievements and that all students as seem as equal. Given the position the WA government is taking with the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, WAESPAA feels that it is imperative that we have system that does not separate students with a disability but is inclusive of them. Naming conventions in this instance in very important, have a WACE Pathway Certificate would not be seen as a WACE. But to have an additional level within the WACE which accommodate for students with a disability means that there is no differentiation between them and their neurotypical peers.

Recommendation 33, 34 and 35 – WAESPAA **does not support** this recommendation in principle.

As stated in this submission WAESPAA feels that there needs to be separation between the WACE and the Literacy and Numeracy standard. But if Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA) is to remain then its accessibility need to be expended to allow for reasonable adjustments for students with a disability. Its current format is prohibitive. Only having an online version means that in some instants the adjustments needed cannot be applied.

In summary, WAESPAA recognised the handwork and consultation that has occurred in this draft report and feel that it has gone a long way in addressing some of the major issues within secondary settings in meeting the needs of all students within our system.

By embracing diverse pathways, our students will be able to navigate their post-School journey with confidence. Whether pursuing higher education, vocational training, or work opportunities, everyone's unique abilities and aspirations should guide their choices. Let's empower our youth to thrive!