**VET Teacher Insights video transcript**

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VET studies are a critically important part of senior secondary qualifications in Victoria, both the VCE and VCAL. VET studies have been part of the VCE for more than 20 years, and have always been a part of VCAL.

VET studies provide students with access to specific knowledge and skills, and this is really important because it can be that subject, that study, that area of learning that excites students’ passion or interest and sets them on a path to future employment, future work, future life that they might not otherwise have had. But the other reason that VET studies are so important is that they provide an opportunity in a way that is different from all other VCE studies and from the other VCAL strands for students to develop the capabilities that employers say they’re most looking for. And these are things like self-reliance, self-organisation, but also working in groups, working in teams and problem solving. These are things that VET studies are able to help students develop in a way that is different. And this is really important because the way in which those attributes, those skills are developed are because every bit of knowledge and skills that students learn in VET is learned in an industry context. That gives students access to understanding how what they learn is going to apply in the work they’re doing now, in the job they might do in the future. It’s a critical part of what VET is and it’s why VET is unique.

I understand that I’ve got a particular passion about VET, but I think it’s more important that people hear from the teachers who are delivering VET to students day in day out, so let’s hear their stories.

**Why do you offer VET to your students?**

**Kait Kelly (VET Health Teacher, Student Engagement Coordinator, Bendigo Senior Secondary College):** One of the incentives for having VET subjects at our school is that we do capture a wide range of students with a wide range of interests and given that we have that commitment to being, trying to enable all students to an education it really allows us to be able to make sure that everyone’s needs are catered for.

**Elizabeth Gubbins (VET Business Teacher, VET Coordinator, Methodist Ladies’ College):** Our principal and head of senior school truly back VCE VET subjects as an option from the perspective of gaining a terrific study score, which can be included in a student’s ATAR score, but also the opportunity for girls to get that vocational training and come out of school with not only a VCE certificate, but soft skills.

**Simon Cameron (VET Sport and Recreation Teacher, Director of Student Management & Engagement, Frankston High School):** So it gives our students a greater understanding and, um, of what’s required in the workplace and workforce in particular industries so really connects what they’re learning in the class into a real-life setting.

**Raffaela Galati Brown (Principal, Northern College of the Arts & Technology):** I think VET makes NCAT really special. Ah, we offer as broader range of VET as possible in terms of the specialisations that we offer and the unique facilities that we have and it enriches what the students are able to do here.

**What do students enjoy the most about VET?**

**Simon:** It gives them a more authentic learning experience so they are not just learning inside the classroom, they have to learn in a simulated work environment so they need to go out and show that they can be, show competency-based skills in a variety of settings. And I think they also like to get the nationally recognised qualification as well, develop those soft employable skills, which employers are asking for.

**Raffaela:** What they enjoy most about VET is the hands-on nature of it. The fact that they actually get their hands dirty. They are doing projects all the time. But even in their theory stuff, it’s all related to industry.

**Rowena Archer (VET Community Services Teacher, VET Coordinator, Braybrook College):** I think the students actually benefit from doing a practical hands-on subject. They really enjoy the fact that there’s not a lot of essays to write in these subjects but in fact they’re learning real life skills that they can transfer to anything straight away in any aspect of their life.

**Malcolm Beasley (VET Creative & Digital Media and VET Business Teacher, Learning Specialist, Wonthaggi Secondary College):** When communities and schools interface, when reality and clear instruction and real outcomes occur, that’s when kids are the most successful. So that’s why I think they enjoy it. I’d say they see the real.

**Norm Lawler (VET Electrical Industry Teacher, GOTAFE):** The other thing they like about coming to TAFE for the VET course is the comradery with the other students. They’ve all got the same focus, they all want to get into the industry, and they seem to have this bond with what they’re doing and I think that helps their learning enormously.

**How does VET challenge your students?**

**Sonya Seehusen (VET Hair and Beauty Teacher, Stawell Secondary College):** Definitely by the different units that they have to achieve. Some of them come and they’re not really sure about how to even deal with money, how to actually make contact with people, how to talk to people with the phone, dealing with people in the reception area, general communication, having to actually care in a different way for other people, that they’re actually giving a service.

**Raffaela:** It does challenge young people. I mean whether it’s, say, for example you take Plumbing, or you take Certificate II in Engineering, you have to do something and when you do it you’re either competent or you’re not. So you really have to be persistent and you have to be able to in the end be precise.

**Norm:** We try to challenge the students to think about their future, to think about what career they really want to get into, and to think how it will affect their lives and the way they lives their lives.

**How does VET prepare your students for the future?**

**Rowena:** VCE VET prepares our students really well for the future because we want to see them employed and we want to see them in training and all of our students that are undertaking VET we know they’ve got those opportunities to learn really useful skills within the program and to get networking opportunities out in the community with other employers, and of course when they’re doing their structured workplace learning they get a lot of skills, they get a certificate from doing that time with an employer, and they get to learn what actually goes on in the workforce.

**Malcolm:** And it’s very important that kids get that entrepreneurial bent, that they’re not passive, they’re actual active producers, and I think that’s a really important part of VET.

**Sonya:** A lot of the students come out a lot more mature at the end of the course. It certainly gets them ready for the workforce. I find that their knowledge broadens definitely, like with things as far as like unions, fair work, where to even go to see whether they’re being paid correctly. Talk to them about superannuation and just things like that that they wouldn’t generally get from their everyday schooling.

**What successes have your VET students enjoyed?**

**Rowena:** So we have had a student that undertook VET Fashion, through Kangan Institute. And he’s actually now studying in the fashion industry at RMIT. And he completed a portfolio of fashion items last year that was highly recommended by his trainers and that was as a result of the work that he did in his VET.

**Sonya:** So the first year it was very hard, I was setting up a lot of the program. So I got one student through in the first year who looked like she was leaving school, and she went on to do Cert III. So that was a lovely first reward for my first year. The second year I ended up with three or four students go through, and this year I’m looking at probably five or six students going through so every year it’s growing.

**Norm:** The majority of the students that come through with us go on to become electrical apprentices. There’s a number that go on to do apprenticeships in refrigeration, we have had some of our VET students that have gone on to become linesman, working for companies like Powercor and the line companies, and there’s a few students that have also gone through with the VET program with us and decided that they’ll go on to university and do electrical engineering.

**What makes VET a success at your school?**

**Elizabeth:** I think the VCE VET program is successful because it’s backed by everyone here at the school, our principal, head of senior school, the staff, heads of departments who have a VCE VET subject perhaps in their portfolio of other relevant subjects really acknowledge the addition to the depth of and richness of our VCE subjects.

**Kait:** I think it’s a really big success because collegially we work so well as teams. Like we have, each of our VET subjects, although they’re small subject areas, we have wonderful working relationships with our colleagues and we work really really hard to try and keep up with industry currency, to try and stay in the know about what’s new and we work really hard on maintaining our own professional currency as well.

**Simon:** I think we’ve been able to tailor our program to our students’ needs, so based on the demographic we have, every year we tweak our program on the skills and interests and abilities of our students. We’ve been able to develop strong partnerships with the local primary school, local gyms, making sure that our students get exposure to those sort of industries, and also package little qualifications along the way such as First Aid, officiating and coaching qualifications so it gives them more employability skills on top of their Certificate III nationally recognised qualification.

**What is unique about the way you deliver VET?**

**Kait:** I think one of the unique things about the way Bendigo Senior offers VET is that we are our own RTO, which allows us a lot of flexibility to put programs on our own scope, which is really good. But one of the biggest benefits I think that the students really see the most is that it’s a program that we offer and we have teacher trainers so many of our staff are teachers and they are also VET trainers and that enables us to be able to offer our programs as part of our regular curriculum, so they’re not missing full days out of school. It’s integrated as part of their timetable and their program.

**Simon:** This is my third school teaching VET Sport and Recreation and each school I’ve taught it at you try and tap into the resources of your local area and with Frankston you know we’ve got the beach and the bay just down the road and we’ve got a whole range of different outdoor recreation fitness environments, sporting clubs that we tap into so it’s also trying to create those industry links, community links, you know, get the students out into the community, and make them feel that they are part of the bigger picture of the sport and rec industry, not within Frankston High School but also, you know, the city of Frankston itself.

**Rowena:** One of the really unique aspects of the way we run VET at Braybrook College is to offer one of our subjects as an accelerated subject, so students actually get to undertake a VCE subject in Year 10 and finish that subject in Year 11. We actually offer this particular subject to students who are academically minded and as a result those students are very motivated to do really well in the program.

**What excites you about VET?**

**Raffaela:** It’s exciting because it’s just so engaging, it’s so different, it adds so much to young people’s experience in schools and I really think it would be so drab to be at a school that just didn’t offer VET.

**Elizabeth:** I love that it’s always changing and I love its uniqueness, I love the passion of the staff that teach VCE VET, they genuinely teach because they love the subjects.

**Simon:** As a trainer we have to obviously keep involved in the industry at all times, making sure we are keeping updated with the industry trends from a professional development point of view so we can give our students the best possible opportunity to understand what the demands are.

**Kait:** The thing that excites me the most is that I love health, I love health care, I love medicine, I love all of that sort of stuff, I always have. And I really enjoyed being a nurse and working in midwifery areas and in surgical areas and I love teaching as well and I just the thing that excites me the most is that I get to blend both of those things together and be able to teach what I love to people that I love and really see some wonderful growth and development.

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