

Kirwan Senior High School

What did the school set out to achieve?

Kirwan Senior High School has a particularly strong VET culture and a number of students from the school are the recipients of national and state awards. However, historically the courses offered at the school did not have strong links to the local labour market and some of the levels of competence were too simplistic.

At the school, approximately 600 students go on work experience, which is particularly useful for re-engaging those students who are losing direction and do not wish to be at school. Strong links with local industry partners had been established to make these work experiences possible for young people. Maintaining good relationships with industry partners was also critical to the program's ongoing success.

A major emphasis of the program was placed on providing realistic career options and practical experience for students, accompanied by skills that are recognised. It was felt that these factors were imperative for the future employability of young people in the school.

The aim of this school project was to develop classroom materials that link to the *Blueprint* competencies and performance indicators. Worksheets, activities and a set of resources (including videos and PC resources) were developed and incorporated into the school's Senior Education and Training plans for Year 11 and 12 students.

What did they do?

The client group for the project was year 11 and 12 students undertaking vocational education pathways. Twenty percent of this cohort was made up of Indigenous students. Year 10 students were also involved, working on those competencies dealing with career pathways.

The school's guidance officers focused on the three competencies in Area A, and the VET teachers concentrated on developing learning strategies and worksheets for Areas B and C. Ongoing evaluation and feedback by all team members concerning the learning materials was also a feature of the project.

The set of lesson plans and accompanying worksheets that have been developed are by nature generic and need to be modified for different client groups with specific needs (such as those with low literacy, those with little exposure / competence in Phases I and II of the *Blueprint* competencies, and for Indigenous and other cultural groups). The team believed that it is up to each school / teacher to modify the generic

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templates according to the needs of their client groups. (These and other resources are available to download from the *Blueprint* toolkit).

Did the school find the *Blueprint* useful?

The school found that the *Blueprint* provided a tangible structure for their Vocational Pathways Program.

It was, however, felt that in its prototype form the *Blueprint* was cumbersome and overwhelming. Flexibility was seen as crucial to any successful implementation of the *Blueprint*:

Flexibility is the key. Use existing resources and modify and/or adapt them to particular client groups. Resources should be treated as 'living documents' that are modified and adapted each year to suit group dynamics and the level of understanding of the cohort.

On the whole the *Blueprint* gave the trial participants a greater ability to articulate the learning outcomes of their career development activities, and could provide the basis for a national qualification.

