Busselton Senior High School is a co-educational public school located in the popular South West resort town of Busselton.

The school's purpose is to provide opportunities for all students to enable them to realise their full potential.

Busselton Senior High School was established in 1958 and has been delivering Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools for 15 years. The school became a registered training organisation (RTO) in 1999.

**School profile**

- Approximately 540 students
- Years 8 – 12
- Year 11 students enrolled in VET in Schools programs approximately 67%
- Year 12 students enrolled in VET in Schools programs approximately 79%

Busselton Senior High School is committed to providing its students with a challenging, stimulating and safe environment to enable them to realise their full potential. Delivering VET in Schools is an integral way for the school to achieve this. VET in Schools is promoted as an equal and valid pathway.
Busselton Senior High School is also a Department of Education Teacher Development School for senior secondary pathways. The school provides statewide support to teachers, schools and networks to:

- collaborate to improve teaching and learning practices in Year 10 to 12 classrooms;
- maximise the number of students who leave school being eligible for university or having completed vocational qualifications; and
- meet the current and future requirements of the Western Australian Certificate of Education.

**Program background**

Busselton Senior High School acknowledges it has different cohorts of students who require tailored programs to meet their individual needs.

The school offers two models of VET in Schools delivery for its mainstream Year 11 and 12 students, an off grid model and an on grid model. It also offers a senior secondary engagement program which incorporates the delivery of VET qualifications.

The off grid model is a ‘wrap around’ model. Students are enrolled in a discrete VET in Schools program which has its own unique structure and timetable. The school offers three off grid programs – manufacturing, recreation and business. Eligible students enrol in one of these programs in Year 11 and complete it over two years.

The on grid model enables the school to offer a number of qualifications that are integrated into the normal timetable. Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) students and those students who are on a vocational pathway but may not yet be work ready can choose to enrol in these qualifications as part of their normal subject selection process. Students complete these qualifications over two years.

To support its VET in Schools delivery Busselton Senior High School is an RTO school. It is scoped to deliver:

- Certificate II in Engineering;
- Certificate II in Hospitality;
- Certificate II in Business; and
- Certificate II in Sport Coaching.

In 2013 Busselton Senior High School, as the lead school in a consortium of six schools, opened the Busselton Trade Training Centre (BTTC) onsite. A range of engineering, building and construction, and hospitality qualifications are delivered through the BTTC either in partnership with external RTOs or by Busselton Senior High School in its capacity as an RTO school.
Program partners

Busselton Senior High School is committed to developing strong partnerships with a range of stakeholders to support its VET in Schools delivery, status as an RTO school and the operation of the BTTC.

Employer partners

As a regional school, Busselton Senior High School recognises the importance of developing strong and longstanding partnerships with local businesses and ensuring that its students are work ready prior to undertaking workplace learning. The school has an established database of over 400 local and regional employers who:

- provide workplace learning and employment opportunities for the school’s students;
- assist with the assessment of units of competency in the workplace and the validation of delivery and assessment methods used by the school;
- enable teaching staff to maintain their industry links and currency;
- assist the school to meet its compliance as an RTO; and
- provide project based and career activities to support the delivery of VET qualifications and assist students to develop employability skills.

These relationships have been developed over time, as the school has a long history of placing students on workplace learning.

The school acknowledges the valuable contribution of these employer partnerships through employer recognition programs including thank you functions and certificates of appreciation. Employers are also invited as guest speakers to the VET induction days and on an ‘as needs’ basis for individual programs.

Industry partners

Busselton Senior High School has developed strong industry partnerships to support the delivery of its VET in Schools programs.

The school actively participates in a regional industry reference group for sport and recreation, which includes representatives from the South West Institute of Technology, regional service providers, the Department of Sport and Recreation and Service Skills Australia. A key aim of the group is to develop regional pathways into further education and training in sport and recreation.

The school also partners with the Australian Sports Commission to train its Certificate II in Sport Coaching students as ‘Active After School’ community coaches. This partnership provides the school with access to Regional Sport Development Officers who assist staff to maintain industry currency and advise on industry standards and best practice.
Trade Training Centre partners

As the lead school in the BTTC consortium, Busselton Senior High School partners with MacKillop Catholic College, Cape Naturaliste College, Cornerstone Christian College, Geographe Education Support Centre and Nannup District High School to ensure the BTTC is helping to meet the training needs of students in the region.

A Partnership Management Plan guides the governance structure of the BTTC. It details the strategic, operational and financial management processes for the BTTC. An Executive Management Group (EMG), Operational Management Group (OMG) and Operations Manager ensure the BTTC is managed effectively on behalf of the consortium.

The EMG comprises the principals of the consortium schools. It meets at least once a term and is chaired by the lead school principal. The Operations Manager is the Executive Officer. Key responsibilities include:

- determining the strategic direction of the BTTC partnership;
- overarching governance of the BTTC including approving the use of the BTTC shared facilities, operations, resourcing and funding;
- developing educational and training opportunities to meet the needs of the region;
- reporting against the Australian Government Department of Education performance indicators;
- maintaining stakeholder communication channels; and
- establishing and maintaining the role of the Operations Manager, including negotiating the contributions of the consortium schools to staffing this position.

The OMG is chaired by the Operations Manager and is comprised of the consortium school VET Coordinators and representatives from partnering RTOs. It meets at least once a term and its responsibilities include:

- management of the daily operations of the BTTC;
- implementing the strategic directions of the EMG;
- determining timetabling, course development and resource sharing usage for the consortium partners and community groups;
- undertaking BTTC development planning, evaluation and annual reporting; and
- developing industry partnerships to ensure the BTTC is meeting industry standards and to enhance its programs.
Employed by Busselton Senior High School on behalf of the consortium, the Operations Manager is responsible for:

- overseeing the daily operation of the BTTC, including BTTC bookings;
- the induction of all students and trainers accessing the BTTC;
- liaising with the EMG, OMG, BTTC users and other stakeholders as required; and
- maximising the use of the BTTC and facilitating the running of activities and events that promote the BTTC to all students and the wider community.

An Advisory Committee comprised of the VET Coordinators and RTO, community and industry representatives also supports the BTTC. Its role is to:

- advise on industry directions and training;
- make recommendations to the EMG on industry standards and trends as appropriate;
- promote the BTTC to the wider business and training community, and investigate sponsorship or other arrangements with them; and
- identify potential trainers.

Around 16 businesses in the local and Bunbury districts provide ongoing support for the BTTC and assist with its long term sustainability. Their support includes industry advice, financial assistance, supplies or resources, resource sharing and a commitment to the ongoing servicing of equipment. A sponsorship board located in the BTTC acknowledges the valuable assistance of these businesses.

**Program features**

*Course structure*

Each off grid program has a similar structure. Discrete groups of students are enrolled in one of the three programs on offer and attend school four days a week and workplace learning one day a week. Students complete one work placement per semester and, if available, can also undertake a school-based traineeship as part of the program.

Students in the:

- manufacturing program are enrolled in the Certificate II in Engineering and Certificate II in Building and Construction (Pathway – Trades);
- recreation program are enrolled in the Certificate II in Sport Coaching; and
- business program are enrolled in the Certificate II in Business.

The students remain in their program group during their four days at school. They study English and Maths and one or two courses which complement their VET qualification/s. For example, students in the recreation program also study physical education and outdoor education. This structure enables English and Maths courses to be contextualised and responsive to the needs of students. Students from these programs can also be placed in combined Maths and/or English classes if they require additional or specialist support.
Where possible, students are also taught in the same room or area of the school, with the subject teacher coming to the class rather than the students to the teacher. As part of this ‘wrap around’ model, students are taught by fewer teachers. This enables strong and positive relationships to be developed and facilitates higher levels of communication between staff involved in the program.

Each off grid program is managed by a dedicated Program Coordinator who is responsible for:

- program administration, including timetabling and maintaining student records;
- delivering the program’s VET qualification/s;
- developing, reviewing and improving assessment and delivery plans and assessment tools, and conducting annual assessment validation and moderation processes;
- undertaking compliance, continuous improvement and audit activities;
- coordinating and supervising student workplace learning placements and undertaking workplace learning site visits;
- assessing units of competency in the workplace; and
- providing pastoral care to students.

The off grid programs have their own unique and flexible timetables. This enables courses to be delivered over three or four periods, in blocks and using a project based model of delivery. Timetables can be adjusted to allow for excursions and external or ad hoc projects to be undertaken by the program group, without this impacting on their capacity to complete their other courses.

Vocationally bound students undertaking an on grid VET qualification are co-enrolled in English, Maths, Applied Information Technology, Career and Enterprise and have the choice of enrolling in either Food Science Technology or Materials Design Technology (Wood). ATAR students can enrol in an on grid VET qualification and their choice of available courses on the other grid lines. Students undertaking on grid VET qualifications also have the option of completing work placements in blocks. These are planned for Country Week and the two weeks following exams/instruction in term four to ensure students do not miss regular class delivery.

Student entry requirements

Students who want to undertake a VET program need to apply to participate in the program in Year 10, have a minimum of a C grade in Maths and English or the potential to achieve C grades, and demonstrate they have a good attendance record, attire and attitude.

Students must attend an interview with their parents in Year 10. They prepare a job file for this interview as part of their Year 10 Careers/Society and Environment program. During their interview, students must discuss why they want to study the VET program, their long term career goals and their commitment to the program.
**Student selection process**

Student selection interviews are conducted by the Program Coordinators, who also use attendance and behaviour summary information and Year 8 to 10 data including National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA) results, to determine the student’s suitability to participate in their preferred program. Students are also assessed on their work readiness during the interview.

Following the interview stage, students are ranked according to their performance in the interview and their suitability for the particular program they have chosen. The capacity for students to achieve successful outcomes in their chosen program is a key selection criterion.

Students who are not chosen for their preferred course are referred for a second interview in another area.

Busselton Senior High School provides students with a range of activities to assist them to choose the most suitable VET qualification and career pathways including:

- a Careers Education program in Years 8 to 10 during which students explore potential career options and establish individual education pathway plans;
- exposure to future school VET and ATAR pathways as part of the Year 7 and 8 transition program;
- attending regional career expos where universities and RTOs are invited to attend;
- presentations by universities and RTOs, and field trips to regional university and State Training Provider campuses;
- subject information evenings showcasing each vocational program and learning area, with the VET Coordinator, Program Coordinators and teachers available to answer student queries;
- career advice and counselling to students commencing in Year 8; and
- Try a Trade days (when there are enough students).

**Parent liaison**

Busselton Senior High School recognises the important role parents play in helping their children succeed at school, make effective post school transitions and choose viable career pathways. The school engages with parents through:

- holding a VET in Schools induction day at the start of the year, in which parents and students are informed about the VET in Schools programs, the nature of competency based assessment and what the students can achieve;
- inviting parents to attend their child’s subject counselling session, end of semester awards ceremonies and a range of career activities hosted by the school;
- celebrating student success through letters of commendation for strong attendance and/or performance; and
- regular newsletters and emails giving updates on their child’s progress and any other relevant information such as open days and excursions.
Program results

In 2013 Busselton Senior High School had a certificate II or higher completion rate of 97% for Year 12 students.

In 2014 Busselton Senior High School won the Western Australian Training Awards – School Pathways to VET category.

Busselton Senior High School was a finalist in the 2011 and 2012 Western Australian Training Awards – VET in Schools Excellence category.

In 2009, Busselton Senior High School won the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) Community Sector Award (Recreation).

Two students were among the Western Australian recipients for the 2007 and 2009 Australian VET Student of the Year.

Lessons learnt

• High quality, sustainable VET in Schools programs in a regional setting depend on developing strong links with industry through a well supported workplace learning program.

• It is essential to recruit staff with highly developed interpersonal skills, dedication, capacity and desire as VET Coordinators and Program Coordinators to ensure quality programs are developed and sustained.

• It is in the school’s interest to ensure staff members delivering VET qualifications are committed for the longer term, given the significant resources invested in getting their qualifications and keeping them up to date.

• Aiming for excellence in fewer offerings is more desirable than committing to a wide range of offerings that may not be sustainable.

• The Year 10 student/parent interview provides a valuable opportunity to establish strong, positive relationships between the student, parents and Program Coordinator, educate parents about VET requirements and set clear expectations for participation in the program.

• All VET in Schools programs provide a range of pathways for students in seeking employment, traineeships or further training. For some students, the key to their success is in their initial engagement, and the qualification in combination with workplace learning is a vehicle for this.

• The process for educating students about VET options in senior school needs to start in Year 8.

• VET in Schools staff need to be flexible and open to making changes to programs as part of a continual improvement process.
## Critical success factors

### Leadership, continuity and partnerships

- A leadership team that values and supports the selection of suitably qualified and skilled staff to deliver the VET in Schools programs.
- The VET Coordinator is an integral part of the senior leadership team.
- Dedicated Program Coordinators ‘drive’ the delivery of a qualification in the school and play a central role in ensuring successful outcomes for students; enabling the school to meet RTO compliance requirements; and fostering strong and mutually rewarding partnerships between the school, employers, industry and the local community.
- Two teachers are involved in the delivery and assessment of each qualification offered by the school in an effort to ensure continuity and succession planning.
- The school has developed a culture where entry into a VET program or qualification requires the same standards and commitment as those required for entry and success in an ATAR pathway.
- VET results are applauded in both the school and local community as being equal to ATAR performance and excellence.

### Student cohort and parent liaison

- Year 10 students who are at risk of disengaging are mentored by a VET teacher or Year 12 student to help re-engage and refocus them to support their eligibility for entry into senior school VET programs.
- Students in the off grid program are supported with high levels of pastoral care and monitoring to assist them to complete their programs.
- Students are assessed to determine if they are work ready before they undertake workplace learning. Those deemed not work ready participate in individual, specific activities to assist them to become work ready before being sent out on workplace learning.
- The school has established strong relationships with a number of employers who provide work placements for students with high needs.

### Vision, place and configuration

- The school uses regional workforce development plans to assist with the selection of qualifications offered by the school to ensure VET in Schools programs are meeting local and regional training and employment needs.
- Workplace learning visits to each student are undertaken every three to four weeks to ensure linkages with employers are strong.
- The school provides a high level of support for employers and ensures early intervention and resolution of any issues arising in work placements.

### Flexibility

- Workplace learning is scheduled to ensure students do not miss out on regular course work or assessments.
- Strategic placement of the certificate grid lines for the on grid VET qualifications to facilitate blocks of delivery for practical sessions.
- Staff are released to undertake regular workplace learning supervisory visits to enable them to develop ongoing support with employers and industry for the delivery of VET qualifications.
- Staff can accumulate time in lieu for any formal before or after school delivery they undertake.

### Course content, structure and evaluation

- Students are surveyed at the completion of their program on areas including the quality of delivery, support provided and resources. Student feedback is evaluated and used to continually improve courses.
- Employer feedback is collected as part of the workplace learning program.
- The school conducts a post-school destination survey to track student data and inform future decision making and continuous improvement processes.

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