

A collaborative approach to Australian School-based Apprenticeships



Group Training Australia

2009 winner GTA Partnership Award

An eleven year partnership between MEGT and vetEast (seven Melbourne schools) has facilitated vocational pathways for more than 1000 students. As the 2009 winner of the GTA Partnership Award, this program is being recognised for its collaborative approach where shared resources and close cooperation amongst partners ensures a seamless service to both students and employers.

The partnership began in 1997 with a pilot Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA) program to diversify the pathways offered to senior school students. Whilst the processes and strategies have evolved over the years the aim of the program remains the same – to increase retention of students until successful completion of their senior secondary certificate and to provide a vocational pathway into the full-time workforce when students exit.

Streamlined program

One of the great strengths of the program is the co-ordinated approach by the seven schools. The program is managed by a group comprising the principals of the partner schools and the executive officer they employ. This structure enables them to provide a streamlined program to their students with the executive officer working across all the schools. The program is unique in that several of the schools in the cluster release students to be in the workplace for three days per week.

The role of the Group Training Organisation (MEGT) is to source employment for the ASbAs and provide monitoring and support throughout their qualification. MEGT and the vetEAST executive officer operate as one unit. Together they manage student recruitment, orientation, the development of job seeking skills and securing employment.

Once employed, the trainees are visited every six weeks at work and twice a term at their RTO by both the vetEAST officer and the MEGT Field Officer. They also receive weekly school visits from the vetEAST officer. This level of monitoring enables the development of close relationships with the students and the ability to identify and address concerns at a very early stage.

Critical factor

Collaboration is the critical factor ensuring the success of this program with the two organisations sharing resources, effort and time. Wherever possible, students are employed through Group Training though there is the option of direct employment.

More than 90% of the students who participate in the MEGT/vetEAST ASbA program exit school to full-time employment. The vetEAST schools are known for their innovative program and have students transitioning from other schools to gain access. Alongside the successful employment outcomes are the increased retention rates that the vetEAST schools have achieved.

In addition to the regular consultations and review sessions, the partnership as a whole is reviewed and re-negotiated annually. This provides the opportunity to assess progress with a 'big picture' focus and to align strategies and activities for the following year to maximise success.

For more information about Group Training and the GTA Partnership Award email leonie.stanfield@grouptraining.com.au

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