



BENEFITS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION EXTEND TO TERTIARY STUDIES

PARENTS must become more open-minded about vocational education or risk limiting their children's career options.

The training and career choices of young people are highly influenced by their parents with research revealing 85 per cent of boys and 74 per cent of girls feel pressured to study at university.

The research, conducted by the New South Wales Government's Industry department in conjunction with post-schooling option website

Year 13, shows parents are failing to promote vocational courses, with more than a quarter having a negative opinion towards VET.

Skilling Australia Foundation general manager Andrew Sezonov says many parents fail to realise that VET graduates find work faster, and earn more in their first year, than their university counterparts.

He says parental bias is so great that SAF now focuses on the benefits of gaining vocational qualifications before going to university, rather than choosing VET instead of uni. "VET can be a very strong precursor to (successfully) undertaking tertiary

studies," Sezonov says.

"Those who do VET are better able to comprehend their (later) university studies due to first-hand experience in the workplace."

St Patrick's Technical College principal Danny Deptula says the belief that university is more prestigious than VET has led to many young people enrolling at uni as a means of "buying some time to keep their par-

ents happy while they try to work out what they really want to do".

"Vocational education is just as legitimate a way to a successful career and future as any other secondary or tertiary pathway," Deptula says.

"We know an apprenticeship or traineeship can lead to a very rewarding and successful career, both professionally and financially, and often leads to greater endeavours."

Training Services NSW executive director David Collins says VET employment outcomes are as high as 91

per cent for some graduates, providing a pathway to jobs in high growth industries such as healthcare and social assistance, construction and infrastructure and education and training.

He says parents must be proactive in identifying career opportunities and considering VET.

"Well-meaning parents and caregivers who push school leavers into university may actually hinder their child's career options as not everyone is suited to this path," he says.