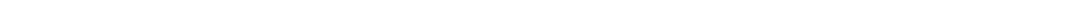




Western Australia

**Skills for Post-Secondary Education Curriculum  
System Bill 2021**



## **Explanatory Memorandum**

The school curriculum, particularly the ATAR system, has been criticised for lacking education regarding life skills. The curriculum's focus on academics neglects the importance of producing young adults who have skills ensuring that they are ready to leave the sheltered confines of their school. This means that many students have limited understanding of their career interests and often have little financial literacy. Without acquiring these skills, students navigate the stressful transition into adult life through trial and error or seeking external support.

An 'Educator Australia' study found that life skills are the most important feature missing in the education system. Of the participants surveyed, nearly two in three students agreed. Career support from schools is a particular concerning area, with about half of pupils reporting a lack of formal career guidance offered at their school. The provision of vocational guidance for young people is given high priority in other OECD countries, such as Denmark. The Danish Ministry of Education have made it a goal by 2030 to ensure 90% of young people complete a youth guidance program. A youth guidance program is conducted at centres to provide advice about career options, allowing citizens to make realistic career decisions. A 'life skills' education system should be adopted in Australia.

The Youth Committee has created a bill that will introduce important legislation to attempt to eliminate 'life skills' education deficiencies in Western Australia. The bill establishes the content, implementation and operations and oversight of an education initiative focused on fostering skills about becoming job ready, attaining financial literacy, accessing services and garnering a competent awareness of Australian voting systems. The life skills program will be delivered to students from years eight to 12. Each year level will focus on a different area of life skills, in line with what the Youth Committee believes is important at different ages. All high schools within Western Australia are obliged to integrate the life skills program into their educational system.

This program's obligatory nature will hopefully alleviate the post school stress of navigating adult life. It will also hopefully bring a new meaning to education and address key deficits in our current system. Gaining life skills is a process that should allow young people to become more conscious of their abilities, interests and possibilities, enabling them to make pragmatic life decisions. Not only will this benefit individuals, but it will benefit society holistically.



Western Australia

# Skills for Post-Secondary Education Curriculum System Bill 2021

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Western Australia

A Bill for —

**An Act to introduce a life skills program to schools for years 8 -12, to equip students with necessary skills and knowledge for post-secondary education life**

## **Part 1—Preliminary**

### **1. Short title**

This Bill may be cited as the *SPECS Bill 2021*.

### **2. Commencement**

This Bill commences on the day on which this Act receives Royal Assent.

### **3. Interpretation**

In this Bill, unless the contrary intention appears —

**Financial literacy**” means the ability to make informed judgements and to take effective decisions regarding the use and management of money;

**“Industry professional**” means a person who has comprehensive knowledge of their field of work and has relevant qualifications;

**“Job ready**” means having the skills and capabilities that an employer is seeking so that one can step into a job with little or no support;

“**Morrisby Test**” means an assessment which helps individuals make better decisions for their career pathway, based on a series of tests;

“**Politically neutral**” means the person(s) teaching the content must not provide any bias or favouring towards any political perspective and/or, but not limited to, any Member of Parliament, political party or organisation and representative, that may result in the influencing of a particular political perspective onto a student;

“**Presenter**” means a qualified third-party representative or school teacher;

“**Private School**” means any non-government primary or secondary school, including Catholic schools and independent schools;

“**Public School**” means a government funded and operated primary or secondary school;

“**Qualified third-party representative**” means a person that works in a government or non-government organisation who has the qualifications referred to in the relevant clauses or subclauses;

“**School calendar year**” means the period of time in which students attend school as determined by the Department of Education;

“**Session**” means workshops or events;

“**Soft skills**” means character traits and interpersonal skills that characterise a person’s relationship with other people;

“**SPECS**” means the Skills for Post-Secondary Education Curriculum System;

“**Year group**” means the year a student is enrolled in, out of thirteen years, from kindergarten to year 12.

## **Part 2 — Content**

### **Division 1— Job Ready Skills**

#### **4. Program Delivery**

- (1) Students in Years 9 and 10 will attend sessions aimed to advance their skills, which make them more employable.
- (2) The program content will be delivered by a presenter(s) with qualifications and experience outlined in Part 2 Division 1 of the bill.
- (3) The number of presenters required to deliver the sessions will be determined by the school.
- (4) Resources will be provided to the presenter(s) delivering the session(s), with the mode of delivery to be determined by the same person(s).

#### **5. Program Topics**

- (1) The content discussed in this section of the program will be—
  - (a) Job ready workshops; and
  - (b) Networking events.

#### **6. Job Ready Workshops**

- (1) The topics students will be taught in the workshops will be—
  - (a) Professional interview skills; and
  - (b) Resume writing structure; and
  - (c) Cover letter writing structure; and
  - (d) Soft skills development.
- (2) Presenters will be—
  - (a) Qualified third-party representatives; and/or
  - (b) Qualified educators who are authorised or employed by the Department of Education; or
  - (c) Career and Enterprise teachers, if the school offers the subject.

- (3) The number of students attending each workshop will be determined by the school.
- (4) The content will be delivered as up to four (4) workshops over the course of one (1) term in Year 9, the scheduling which will be decided by the school.

**7. Networking Events**

- (1) The events will be in the form of—
  - (a) A volunteer exhibition; and
  - (b) Panel discussions.
- (2) Presenters will be—
  - (a) Qualified third-party representatives; and/or
  - (b) Qualified educators who are authorised or employed by the Department of Education.

**8. Volunteer Exhibition**

The volunteer exhibition will—

- (a) Be organised by the Department of Communities once during the school year;
- (b) Held in the same term as the job ready workshops;
- (c) Offered to students between years 8 to 12 to attend;
- (d) Invite qualified third-party representatives from not-for-profit organisations to present;
- (e) Allow students to learn about the benefits of volunteering and any available opportunities;
- (f) Students will have the opportunity to express their interest in any vacancies advertised by participating organisations; and
- (g) The date and venue of the Volunteer Exhibition will be chosen by the SPECS Committee.



**9. Panel Discussion**

The panel discussion will—

- (a) Be organised for students from years 10 to 12;
- (b) Connect students with representatives from universities to give insight to what a degree looks like there;
- (c) Connect students with industry professionals to outline what work at their company looks like;
- (d) Describe what TAFE and VET courses entail;
- (e) There will be up to two (2) panel discussions;
- (f) Each panel discussion will either be university focused or industry related, but not both;
- (g) Students will gain communication skills by speaking to several people from different fields; and
- (h) The date and venue of the Panel discussions will be chosen by the SPECS Committee.

**Division 2— Financial Skills**

**10. Program Delivery**

- (1) Students in Years 9 and 10 will be taught about financial skills to improve their financial literacy as they enter the job market.
- (2) The program content will be delivered by a presenter(s) with qualifications and experience outlined in Part 2 Division 2 of the bill.
- (3) The number of presenters required to deliver the sessions will be determined by the school.
- (4) Resources will be provided to the presenter(s) delivering the session(s), with the mode of delivery to be determined by the same person(s).

**11. Program Topics**

The content taught in this section of the program will be —

- (a) Payment and taxation;
- (b) Saving Money; and
- (c) Superannuation and Investment

**12. Payment and Taxation**

- (1) The topics covered in “Payment and taxation” will be-
  - (a) Types of work; and
  - (b) Payment and award rates; and
  - (c) Tax file numbers (TFN); and
  - (d) Tax returns.
- (2) The content will be delivered by a presenter(s) who-
  - (a) Is a representative for the Australian Taxation Office (ATO); and/or
  - (b) Works for an Australian accredited accounting firm; and/or
  - (c) Has a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) or equivalent, with experience in accounting; and/or
  - (d) Are qualified educators who are authorised or employed by the Department of Education.
- (3) The content will be delivered as up to two (2) workshops over the course of one (1) term in Year 9, the scheduling will be decided by the school.

**13. Saving Money**

- (1) The topics covered in “Saving money” will be –
  - (a) Budgeting;
  - (b) Expenses;
  - (c) Banking; and
  - (d) Scams.
- (2) The content will be taught by a presenter(s) who –
  - (a) Has a Bachelor of Business (Financial Planning) or equivalent; and
  - (b) Are certified by a recognised organisation such as the Financial Planning Association of Australia (FPA); or
  - (c) Are qualified educators who are authorised or employed by the Department of Education.
- (3) The content will be delivered as up to four (4) workshops over the course of one (1) term in Year 10, the scheduling of will be decided by the school.

**14. Superannuation and Investment**

- (1) The topics covered in “Superannuation and investment” will be-
  - (a) Superannuation; and
  - (b) Investments.
- (2) The content will be taught by a presenter(s) who-
  - (a) Is a representative for the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC); and/or
  - (b) Works for the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX); and/or
  - (c) Has a Bachelor of Commerce (Finance) or equivalent, with experience in superannuation and investment; and/or
  - (d) Are qualified educators who are authorised or employed by the Department of Education.

- (3) The content will be delivered as up to two (2) workshops over the course of one (1) term in Year 10, the scheduling of which will be decided by the school.

### **Division 3— Accessing Services**

#### **15. Program Delivery**

- (1) Students in Year 11 will be educated about the operation of government services and how to access government services.
- (2) The program content will be delivered by a presenter(s) from Services Australia.
- (3) The number of presenters required to deliver the sessions will be determined by the school.
- (4) Resources will be provided to the presenter(s) delivering the session(s), with the mode of delivery to be determined by the same person(s).

#### **16. Program Topics**

- (1) The content taught in this section of the program will be -
  - (a) Medicare;
  - (b) Centrelink services; and
  - (c) MyGov

#### **17. Medicare**

- (1) The topics covered in the “Medicare” section will be-
  - (a) How Medicare works;
  - (b) Eligibility requirements of Medicare; and
  - (c) Enrolling in Medicare; and
  - (d) Using Medicare.
- (2) Schools will assist students in enrolling in Medicare, provided that-
  - (a) The student is eligible to enrol in Medicare; and
  - (b) The parent or legal guardian of the student provides the school written consent to do so.

- (3) The content will be delivered as two (2) workshops over the course of one (1) term in Year 11, the scheduling of which will be decided by the school.

**18. Centrelink Services**

- (1) The topics covered in the “Centrelink services” section include-
  - (a) The purpose of Centrelink services;
  - (b) The different Centrelink services offered;
  - (c) Eligibility requirements of the different Centrelink services offered; and
  - (d) How to apply for Centrelink services.
- (2) The content will be delivered as two (2) workshops over the course of one (1) term in Year 11, the scheduling of which will be decided by the school.

**19. My Gov**

- (1) The topics covered in the “MyGov” section includes-
  - (a) The purpose of MyGov;
  - (b) The governments services and departments able to be linked to MyGov;
  - (c) How to create a MyGov account;
  - (d) How to link services to a MyGov account; and
  - (e) How to access services through MyGov.
- (2) Schools will assist students in creating a MyGov account, provided that the parent or legal guardian of the student provides the school written consent.
- (3) The content will be delivered as two (2) workshops over the course of one (1) term in Year 11, the scheduling will be decided by the school.

### **Division 4— Democracy**

#### **20. Program Delivery**

- (1) Students in Years 11 and 12 will be educated about the Australian democratic system.
- (2) The program content will be delivered by a presenter(s) with qualifications and experience outlined in Part 2 Division 4 of the bill.
- (3) The number of presenters required to deliver the sessions will be determined by the school.
- (4) Resources will be provided to the presenter(s) delivering the session(s), with the mode of delivery to be determined by the same person(s).

#### **21. Program Topics**

- (1) The content taught in this section of the program will be -
  - (a) Government; and
  - (b) Voting

#### **22. Government**

- (1) The topics covered in the “Government” section will be –
  - (a) Houses of Parliament;
  - (b) Parliamentary Process; and
  - (c) Levels of Government.
- (2) The content will be taught by a presenter(s) who-
  - (a) Is an authorised Electoral Officer; and/or
  - (b) Has a Bachelor of Political Sciences or equivalent; and
  - (c) Are qualified educators who are authorised or employed by the Department of Education.
- (3) The presenters(s) teaching the content must at all times remain politically neutral.

- (4) The content will be delivered as up to three (3) workshops over the course of one (1) term in Year 11, the scheduling which will be decided by the school

**23. Voting**

- (1) The topics covered in the “Voting” section will be -
  - (a) Registering to vote;
  - (b) Registering to vote;
  - (c) The electoral system; and
  - (d) Referendums.
- (2) The content will be taught by a presenter(s) who-
  - (a) Is an authorised Electoral Officer; and/or
  - (b) Has a Bachelor of Political Sciences or equivalent; and
  - (c) Are qualified educators who are authorised or employed by the Department of Education.
- (3) The presenter(s) teaching the content must, at all times, remain politically neutral.
- (4) The content will be delivered as up to two (2) workshops over the course of one (1) term in Year 12, the scheduling which will be decided by the school

## **Part 3 — Implementation**

### **Division 1— Schools**

#### **24. Eligibility**

All high schools within the area of Western Australia are eligible for this program.

#### **25. Participation**

- (1) The program is compulsory in all public and private high schools within the Perth Metropolitan Region.
- (2) Students undergoing online education or home-schooling are strongly recommended to participate online, or at their closest school.
  - (a) The SPECS Committee may request that a school with appropriate facilities record their workshops to become an online resource for students not physically attending school
- (3) Student participation in the program will commence at the beginning of Year 8 and continue through to Year 12, as seen in Table 1.

#### **26. Allowance for Rural, Regional, and Remote Areas**

Rural, regional and remote schools partaking in the program will be able to receive, from the Department of Education appropriate monetary support up to the value of \$3000.

#### **27. Student Exceptions**

A student may be exempt from partaking in the program following a parent/guardian informing the school of –

- (1) Medical conditions and/or illness;
- (2) Wishes of the parent/guardian for the student to abstain from participation based on ethical or religious grounds; or
- (3) Any other appropriate issue that may prevent the student from participating in the program.



**28. Rights and Responsibilities of Schools**

- (1) It is the responsibility of the school to communicate with the SPECS Committee when they will run their workshops during the prescribed year.
- (2) It is the responsibility of both the school and the SPECS Committee to coordinate the workshop with the availability of third-party facilitators.

**Division 2— Program Administration**

**29. Program Coordinator**

- (1) The coordinator may be chosen at the discretion of each individual school.
- (2) The role of the coordinator is to -
  - (a) Manage the program's implementation in their respective environments; and
  - (b) Facilitate/organise workshops for students; and
  - (c) Seek support from relevant authorities if needed; and
  - (d) Ensure student participation and adherence to the program curriculum; and
  - (e) Liaise with the SPECS Committee; and
  - (f) Conduct a survey of participants upon the completion of the program and send the data to the SPECS Committee; and
  - (g) Teach content when required.
- (3) In order to deliver the program, coordinators must -
  - (a) Participate in at least one professional learning workshop; and
  - (b) Have a teaching/education degree; and
  - (c) Currently be registered with the Teacher Registration Board of WA; or
  - (d) Have a certificate IV in training and Assessment to deliver the program.

**30. Professional Learning Workshop**

- (1) Professional learning workshops must be available across Western Australia for coordinators and educators to undertake.
- (2) Professional learning workshops must be -
  - (a) Freely available to educators from public and private schools;
  - (b) Available in face-to-face format or online/webinar format; and
  - (c) Able to be customised to suit the specific needs of a school and its students.
- (3) Professional learning workshops must equip coordinators to deliver the program, utilise resources and provide adequate support to students.
- (4) The professional learning workshop must -
  - (a) Set out clear expectations on what is required from the coordinator and students; and
  - (b) Provide the means to seek help and support in the coordinator of the program.

**31. Program Curriculum and Resources**

- (1) The program curriculum and syllabus should be developed by the Department of Education and the Department of Communities in conjunction with qualified educators, and industry professionals.
- (2) Program Resources must be developed in accordance with the topics outlined in Part 2 - Content.
- (3) Resources should be developed by the Department of Education in consultation with third-party representatives, program coordinators, and qualified educators.
- (4) Resources should be freely available to all presenters, program coordinators, and participants.
- (5) Curriculum schedule should be adhered to as outlined Table 1.
- (6) Adherence to specific requirements for program delivery as outlined in Part 2 – Content is required.

**32. Student Workshops**

- (1) Workshops run by external organisations completed by students under the SPECS must be certified/recommended by the Department of Education.
- (2) Information regarding certified/recommended organisations must be made available to coordinators at the Professional Learning Workshop.
- (3) It is the coordinator's responsibility to organise any external workshops for the students.

## **Part 4 — Operation and Oversight**

### **33. The SPECS Committee**

- (1) A SPECS Committee is to be established.
- (2) The SPECS Committee is an agent of the State and will thus have the status, immunities, and privileges of the State.
- (3) The SPECS Committee will be a corporate body with perpetual succession.
- (4) The SPECS Committee is eligible for proceedings to be taken by or against their corporate name.

### **34. Membership of the SPECS Committee**

- (1) The committee will consist of eight (8) members appointed by the Minister for Education. On the committee there will be –
  - (a) One (1) Chairperson;
  - (b) Two (2) members of the Department of Education;
  - (c) Two (2) members of the Department of Communities;
  - (d) Two (2) members with at least ten (10) years of experience working in secondary school education; and
  - (e) One (1) member of The State School Teachers' Union of W.A. Inc.
- (2) Unless otherwise instructed, the members will act in their positions for a period of two (2) years, after which the Minister for Education may choose to appoint a new member in their stead.

**35. Presiding Officer**

- (1) The Minister for Education will select a Chairperson.
- (2) The Chairperson must have at least fifteen (15) years of experience in education.
- (3) The Chairperson will preside over all meetings of the SPECS Committee.
- (4) In the event of the Chairperson being absent from a meeting, the present members of the SPECS Committee will elect an acting Chairperson to preside over the meeting.
- (5) The Term of the Chairperson is four (4) years.
- (6) A Chairperson may only be appointed for a maximum of two (2) terms.
- (7) Once a Chairperson has exceeded their eight (8) year term limit, they may still be elected to be a member of the SPECS Committee.

**36. Members Unable to Act**

- (1) If a member is unable to act due to illness, absence or insolvency for more than one meeting, then the member must appoint a proxy to attend meetings in their place.
- (2) In the instance that a member is unable to appoint a proxy to attend a meeting in their place, that member must send apologies to the SPECS committee at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.
- (3) If that member is unable to act for more than two subsequent meetings, the Minister for Education will nominate another person to fulfil a similar capacity, whether that be the original proxy, or another person considered suitable for the position.
- (4) In the event of a conflict of interest arising, the member or members of the committee to whom it relates must inform the Chairperson in writing, within in two (2) business days of the conflict arising or becoming known to the member(s).
- (5) The Chairperson must determine the actions to be taken in the event of a conflict of interest. That is, whether the member or members in question will be permitted to contribute to and remain in the discussion from which the conflict arose.

**37. Role of the SPECS Committee**

- (1) The SPECS Committee will perform the following functions -
  - (a) Provide monetary support and grants to schools under Part 3, Division 1, Clause 5; and
  - (b) At the approval of the Minister for Education, to hire additional staff to assist with the implementation of the bill; and
  - (c) Construct methods by which schools and program facilitators may contact the SPECS Committee by establishing a website and email address; and
  - (d) Conduct reviews of efficiency and relevance of content taught in the program; and
  - (e) Review surveys of student feedback and constructive criticism.

**38. Minimum Meetings of the SPECS Committee**

- (1) The SPECS Committee must have a minimum of eight (8) full meetings per year. That is, two per term.
- (2) Extra meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chairperson.

**39. Quorum**

Five (5) members of the SPECS Committee must be present in order to constitute a full meeting.

**40. Remunerations**

- (1) Members of the SPECS Committee will be paid such remuneration and other allowance as determined by the Minister for Education on recommendation of the Public Sector Commissioner.
- (2) The Chairperson is to be paid a further 10% of the remuneration and other allowances determined for the members of the SPECS Committee

**41. Termination of Members**

Members of the SPECS Committee will be paid such remuneration and other allowance as determined by the Minister for Education on recommendation of the Public Sector Commissioner.

- (a) Misbehaviour; or
- (b) Illegal behaviour; or
- (c) Incapacity; or
- (d) Non-compliance with Clause 20.

## Part 5 — Review

### 42. Review

- (1) A review of the SPECS will occur every one (1) year by the SPECS Committee.
- (2) A report is to be submitted to the Minister of Education by the SPECS Committee within one (1) month of the conclusion of each review.
- (3) The SPECS Committee may determine any necessary additional reviews for the bill.

### 43. Review Content

The SPECS Committee's review will contain details concerning the progress, efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation and content of the bill.

### 44. Committee Review

- (1) The Minister for Education and the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training will conduct an annual review into the SPECS Committee, concerning the Committee's -
  - (a) Productivity; and
  - (b) Efficiency; and
  - (c) Effectiveness; and
  - (d) Membership composition; and
  - (e) Any contemporary concerns associated with the content taught under this bill; and
  - (f) Any other matters which are deemed appropriate for review in order to ensure the success of the program.

### 45. Review Period

- (1) The SPECS Bill 2021 will be subject to review a minimum of once every twelve (12) months, for a minimum of ten (10) years.
- (2) The SPECS Bill 2021 may also be subject to review at the discretion of the Minister for Education, Minister for Youth, or Premier, in addition to the compulsory review.