ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19



#POWEROFTAFE





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# INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report reflects the activities and achievements of TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) for the period July 2018 to June 2019. TDA will move to calendar year reporting from 2020 and will publish a report covering the six-month period from 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019 in 2020.

# **ABOUT US**

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) is the national peak body incorporated to represent Australia's technical and further education (TAFE) providers. The public provider (TAFE) network delivers a diverse and integral series of technical and further education services for individuals, enterprises and communities in the tertiary education sector in Australia. TAFEs operate in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations, providing vocational and higher education programs and services on campus, online, in workplaces and increasingly in international markets. TDA's core business is to support its members with policy and advocacy for TAFE's important role in meeting Australia's need for increased productivity, participation and workforce skills. TAFE also has an important role in meeting community obligations, particularly across regional, rural and remote Australia. Our purpose is to:

- Provide services for members to meet current and emerging priorities;
- Position TAFE nationally as the major provider of high-quality skills training;
- Advance technical and further education policy in Australia;
- Lead advocacy for improved outcomes for students, both domestic and international; and
- Facilitate opportunities for growth, collaboration and partnerships in national and international settings.



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# Vision

TDA will serve the interests of its members by advocating for higher quality outcomes for learners and employers in competitive vocational education and training markets, by leading policy development for the TAFE sector and by providing value-added products and services.

## Mission

TDA will promote the development, resourcing and growth of TAFE institutes in all jurisdictions across Australia and will promote TAFE institutes as leaders in the provision of high quality technical and further education.



# NATIONAL BOARD

#### Members

Mary Faraone | Chair (appointed October 2016; member since 2015) CEO | Holmesglen Institute

**Leanne Cover** | Deputy Chair (appointed January 2019; member since January 2016) CEO | Canberra Institute of Technology

**Christine Robertson** | Deputy Chair (appointed November 2017; member from November 2015 to December 2018) Pro-Vice Chancellor (VET) | Charles Darwin University NT

**Duncan Anderson** | Board Member (appointed May 2016) CEO | South Regional TAFE, WA

Mary Campbell | Board Member (appointed November 2017) CEO | TAFE QLD

**Terry Charlton** | Board member (appointed January 2017) Chair | TAFE NSW

**David Coltman** | Board Member (appointed May 2019 replacing Joanne Denley) CEO | TAFE SA

Joanne Denley | Board Member (appointed March 2018 to May 2019) Board | TAFE SA

Jenny Dodd | Board Member (appointed March 2018) CEO | TAS TAFE

**Ashar Ehsan** | Board Member (appointed January 2019 replacing Christine Robertson) Pro-Vice Chancellor (VET) | Charles Darwin University NT

**Craig Sloan** | Chair of TAFE Chairs Council (appointed October 2017) Chair | Canberra Institute of Technology

#### **Executive staff**

**Malcolm White** | Ex Officio, CEO TDA November 2014 - September 2015) Currently Chair | National Scholarship Foundation (appointed May 2015)

Craig Robertson | CEO TDA (April 2017 - current)

# THE CHAIR'S REPORT

## Message from Mary Faraone

I am pleased to present the TAFE Directors Australia 2018 - 2019 Annual Report. The 12-month period has been particularly busy and challenging in relation to finalising the Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS) issues with the Australian Government Department of Education. The matter was finally resolved in April 2019. I wish to take the opportunity to thank CEO, Craig Robertson, and the secretariat staff for their professionalism and diligence in bringing this matter to a close, and to thank my fellow board members for their wise governance during this period.

TDA continued its role in advocating on behalf of the TAFE sector and is recognised as the national voice for TAFE. Through the newsletter and other forums TDA has reinvigorated public discourse about the sector and TAFEs' role as anchor institutes in our local communities through skill development, industry engagement and workforce development.

TDA in conjunction with the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics (WFCP) held a successful convention in October 2018. The WFCP World Congress 2018, Preparing for the Skills Future, Now, had over 850 delegates from 29 countries. It was a huge undertaking by TDA and I thank them for their work in putting together a successful program of events.

The Board composition changed significantly in 2018 - 2019. Retiring directors in the reporting period included Christine Robertson (Northern Territory) and Joanne Denley (South Australia). I thank them for their contributions.

TDA continues to work for its members in positioning TAFE in the VET sector and advocating on behalf of the sector. The Board and CEO regularly meet with Commonwealth departmental representatives and appropriate ministers, and TDA continues to be invited on a number of ministerial and departmental committees.

The last 12 months has seen increased exposure for TDA through media and other channels and we look forward to greater engagement and advocacy with key stakeholders in the future.

I thank the CEO and the dedicated team at TDA, and thank the directors for their time, commitment and continued passion for the sector.



Mary FARAONE Chair



# THE CEO'S REPORT

## Message from Craig Robertson

Some say a year is a long time in politics, and it appears no different for TAFE Directors Australia and for TAFEs in Australia.

The 2018 - 2019 financial year has featured several key achievements for TDA complemented by some political stability nationally, although not in the way most Australians predicted.

TDA hosted the 2018 Congress of the World Federation of the Colleges and Polytechnics (WFCP) as part of the annual TDA Convention. Held in October 2018 in Melbourne the Congress program included a day and half leadership institute activities for WFCP leaders from around the globe, meetings of the Federation's affinity groups, a gala awards night, a residential youth retreat alongside the mainstream program. The capacity of TDA and our TAFEs was stretched but the Congress was a great success with over 850 delegates, including 293 from overseas. We are very grateful for the support of many sponsors, particularly the Victorian Government. As I have said many a time to government officials, it helped cement the standing of Australian TAFEs internationally. Importantly, as the organisation which underwrote the initiative, the event broke even!

In May 2019 TDA organised, with sponsorship assistance from CISCO-OPTUS, a study tour to Canada and Washington DC to investigate the latest in the technology revolution and its impact on training and teaching. The tour's report, Capitalising on the Blue Tech Opportunity, outlines a range of actions for TDA and TAFEs to accelerate the skilling agenda in this area. The tour also included engagement with Canadian and US officials over skills, applied research and tertiary education.

Of major significance to TDA as a small operation, all matters of tuition assurance with the Commonwealth Government were settled in early April 2019. This ended a major piece of work for TDA which started in April 2017 and which dominated staff time and drained resources. We are delighted that we were able to protect the interests of students who had been caught out by the closure of several private colleges.



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Of course, of major interest to a national representative body like TDA, the May 2019 federal election promised a new era, regardless of which party won. Prior to the election the Morrison Government had commissioned a major review of VET (the Joyce review) and announced some potentially useful reforms in its April 2019 Budget. The measures, which are mainly focused on structural issues such as governance of national training arrangements, are now underway and TDA will work to represent TAFE views in their further design and implementation.

I have enjoyed the year immensely, despite the challenges. The opportunity to put the case for TAFE through the weekly newsletter, speaking engagements and news comments has been a privilege. Being chair of the WFCP (on behalf of Australian TAFEs in my role as CEO of TDA) opens speaking and engagement opportunities in a global context to promote Australian TAFEs.

TDA's priorities have moved more to policy development and advocacy to advance the distinct role TAFEs play in the Australian education landscape, as far more than just registered training organisations. There is still disquiet in the education community and the broader populous about the loss of TAFE capacity due to funding cutbacks and a slavish adherence to an open-door policy for some providers to access public funding regardless of their educational credentials. The task for TDA is to harness the passion and capability within TAFEs and their networks to drive change. TAFEs, quite properly and appropriately, should be treated as the anchor institutions for the VET system, particularly in developing the core skills for key and emerging industries and enterprises that will foster Australia's prosperity. These skills underpin our high value-add, high wage economy.

The TDA secretariat still operates as a small unit, producing outputs for the benefit of TAFEs domestically and internationally. Longer term outcomes need the full sector operating together. More work is required to garner more resources to assist with this task. I thank the staff who work amazingly hard and well together and with the TAFE network. I also thank the TDA Board, which as ever, has provided great support and encouragement of what we do.



Craig ROBERTSON Chief Executive Officer



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## NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS FOUNDATION – CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

## Message from Malcolm White

Last year in my report I noted that directors had resolved to conduct an orderly wind-up of the Foundation during the 2018 – 2019 year. Subsequently a TAFE institute expressed interest in acquiring the Foundation and continuing scholarship operations.

During the year in review the Foundation has worked closely with this TAFE institute in support of their due diligence process, which continues and will not be finalised until December 2019.

In the event the acquisition does not proceed, the Foundation will be wound-up in an orderly fashion.

During the year, scholarships continued to be disbursed and I thank the TDA Secretariat for their ongoing operational support. I would also like to acknowledge Ms. Rachael Axford for providing accounting services to the Foundation in an honorary capacity.

Since the end of the financial year, the Foundation has sold its equity portfolio and repaid the loans to TDA.

In concluding I would like to acknowledge the work of my fellow directors who all give of their time and expertise in a voluntary capacity.



Malcolm WHITE Chair TAFE Directors Australia National Scholarships Foundation



# **MEMBER SERVICES**

## The 2018 WFCP World Congress

The 2018 World Congress for the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics (WFCP), held from 8-10 October 2018, saw international VET leaders from across the globe converge on Melbourne to discuss, debate and share the role of professional and technical training in Preparing for the Skills Future, Now.

The Congress is, in part, a story told through numbers:

- 850 attendees
- 293 international delegates
- 30 countries represented
- 208 Congress speakers and facilitators
- 46 exhibition booths
- 44 concurrent sessions
- 12 site visits to TAFEs across Victoria
- 9 Awards of Excellence at one spectacular gala dinner with 505 attendees
- 7 days of Congress events
- 7 affinity group meetings
- 1 Young Leaders Camp, hosted by Box Hill Institute, attended by 36 VET students from across the globe
- 1 leadership dialogue, co-hosted by the WFCP and PwC Skills for Australia
- 1 policy roundtable for international VET leaders, hosted by the Victorian Government
- 1 'broke even' Congress budget.







The Congress story, however, cannot be told in numbers alone. It is a story of commonality, with shared experiences from China, Chile, Canada, the UK, South Africa and Australia. It is a story of diversity, as attendees from all continents discussed what makes them unique. It is a story of partnership, both renewed and beginning, as attendees committed to working together moving forward.

The Congress would not have happened without the considerable support of TAFEs across the country. Who could forget the transformational Young Leaders Camp, organised and hosted by Box Hill Institute, capped off by the moving video to close the Congress? Or the guerrilla fashion show at the gala dinner, organised by staff and students from Holmesglen and Bendigo Kangan Institutes? Congress attendees were wowed by the capabilities of TAFEs by site visits across the country, including to regional TAFEs in Warrnambool and Shepparton. Likewise, Congress sponsors, including our education partner, the Victorian Government, proved invaluable to the success of the event.

The legacy of the Congress continues to show itself, not just by cementing Australian TAFEs as leaders in professional and technical education across the globe, but also as TDA and TAFEs engage in ongoing partnerships with many Congress attendees.



## TDA CISCO-OPTUS study tour

The need to look outwardly is even more important given TAFEs now operate in a globalised economy and in the world's largest growth market of Asia. By understanding what's happening in other countries, Australian TAFEs can better anticipate the massive labour market shifts that are occurring, and gain insights into how they can respond.

The 2019 study tour to North America in May was organised by TDA, and supported by its global industry partners, CISCO and OPTUS, to better understand the Canadian and US contexts. It provided the 14 participants (TAFE leaders and senior business executives) with an opportunity to capitalise on connections made at the 2018 WFCP World Congress, and to strengthen ongoing partnerships with Canadian and US counterparts. The tour focused on the Niagara, Toronto and Washington D.C. markets and included visits to institutions, quality assurance bodies, government and industry. The latter was spearheaded by CISCO and OPTUS, who provided backing for the study tour and access to its global network and expertise.

As a result of the May 2019 study tour, strong collaborations were forged with George Brown College in Toronto and Niagara College. In early 2020 TDA will commence work with Canadian colleagues to examine in depth how the colleges undertake applied research in vocational education and training. Lessons learned will be shared with TAFEs and policy makers.



### International engagement

Australia's TAFEs are valued and recognised global skills development partners, and the 2018 - 2019 annual reporting period saw this confirmed with TDA invited to engage actively across a myriad of international activities.

While TDA's international engagement in 2018 - 2019 was certainly centred around the Congress, this did not represent the limit of engagement during the year.

TDA continued to nurture relationships with key strategic partners, with the aim of supporting TAFEs to engage in meaningful and sustainable international partnerships. Boosted by the strong representation at the Congress, TDA elevated its partnership with the Chinese Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE). Under this partnership, TDA and TAFEs in Queensland and Victoria hosted visits from senior representatives from Chinese polytechnics to explore Australian TAFE delivery in advanced diplomas and degrees of applied learning, as well as better understand the nature of industry engagement. TDA CEO, Mr. Craig Robertson, travelled to China in October 2018 to represent all TAFEs at the annual CEAIE conference. In February 2019, President Xi Jinping announced once in a lifetime reform to China's VET system, and in May 2019, TDA International Director, Ms. Jen Bahen, travelled to Beijing and worked with the CEAIE to better understand the implications of this reform, both domestically and for Australian TAFE engagement in China.

In addition to this deep engagement in China, TDA engaged in the following areas of work to nurture and create opportunities for Australian TAFEs:

- Ongoing work with the Taiwanese Government, through the Workforce Development Agency (WDA). This has seen TDA and TAFEs engage in supporting the WDA in its role as the Chair of the APEC Capability Building Network, demonstrating the power of global standards in skilling;
- TDA was awarded a two-year contract by DFAT to undertake a capacity development project in Bhutan and has partnered with Australian Industry Standards to deliver this project, alongside two TAFEs;
- Ongoing support to the Chilean and Brazilian Governments on VET reform, including in country workshops;
- Working with the Indonesian Government and DFAT to finalise the skills development chapter of the Indonesian Australian Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.





Delegations continued to come and go, perhaps in greater numbers as the impact of the Congress continued. This included groups from India, Korea, Argentina, Finland, the UK, Colombia, the US and many others.

TDA also continued to engage with the Australian Government on policy and system issues related to international education. Highlights include:

- Participation in Australian Government led taskforces, including the Australian India Education Council, the China Working Group, the India Advisory Group, the Latin American Working Group and the International Skills Training Courses Advisory Group;
- Active representation on the reference group to guide ASQA's strategic review of international education in VET and ELICOS, where TDA tabled issues such as risk, reputation and sustainability;
- Supporting Austrade in the development of market action plans for Indonesia and Vietnam to ensure the history of TAFE delivery was recorded and expanded;
- Continued participation in the Australian Government Department of Education's International Education Stakeholder Forum and in the Department of Home Affairs' Education Visa Consultative Committee, where issues such as equity in support for higher education and VET were signalled, as well as issues with implementation of Australia's student visa program;
- Delivery of free trade agreement seminars through Australian TAFEs and funded by Austrade, highlighting the role TAFEs can play in facilitating greater export opportunities for their industry partners.

TDA also continued to advocate to the Australian Government for international education policies that can better support TAFEs, including the implementation of the Simplified Student Visa Framework appraisal, and the inclusion of a TAFE representative on the National Council for International Education. 14

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## National Scholarship Foundation (NSF)

Working with TAFEs in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, the Foundation awarded 82 TAFE National Scholarships with a total value of \$198,000 during the 2018-19 financial year. These scholarships included:

- 65 Mick Young scholarships for TAFE Qld valued at \$170,000
- 4 scholarships to TAFE NSW from the Sisters of Charity
- 1 scholarship to the Gordon from Sisters of Charity
- 12 scholarships to TAFE SA from Bondor Funds

TAFE National Scholarships are prized for their national significance and local accomplishment and TDA is proud to support the operations of the Foundation.

#### **Tuition assurance services**

For TDA, April 2019 brought to a close the fallout from the troubled Commonwealth VET FEE-HELP student tuition loan scheme, through a final settlement between TDA and the Commonwealth Government.

The settlement with the Commonwealth, for TDA's refunding to the Commonwealth for some displaced students' loans for open units of study, and the third-party costs incurred by TDA in managing displaced students was, in the main, underwritten by TDA's policy with QBE Insurance Group Limited. There was a lot of work involved by TDA to extract itself from the risk of forced closure by the Commonwealth. This had a material impact on TDA's financial reserves and on its operating capacity throughout most of 2018 - 2019.

TDA's Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS), for both TAFEs and for private sector registered training organisations, closed on 31 December 2017. This resulted from the Commonwealth Government deciding, in late November 2017, to take in-house tuition assurance arrangements for Commonwealth FEE-HELP student tuition loan schemes, including for VET Student Loans. TAFEs and dual sector universities, which accessed Commonwealth FEE-HELP schemes from 1 January 2018, need to be members of the Commonwealth's in-house tuition assurance scheme.



# **Corporate affiliates**

TDA acknowledges significant support from our corporate affiliates: the Australian Institute of Sport, CISCO, OPTUS, TechnologyOne and Year13.

TDA, as an Australian national representative organisation, has a truly national and global reach. By partnering with TDA, corporate affiliates benefit from TDA's national and international brand and profile, and gain access to the Australian and global vocational education and training sector and to the sector's leadership. At the same time, TDA and its members gain industry contacts and insights to the latest trends and developments in industry locally and globally.

Corporate affiliates and TDA work together for the promotion and skilling of a global workforce with productive capabilities that meet local industry and firm needs and that contribute to global logistic supply chains.





### **Member communications**

TDA communicates regularly with members, partners and stakeholders using a variety of platforms, including emails, newsletters, meetings, publications, surveys, submissions and press releases. Members are provided with information and support via the TDA weekly newsletter, and email correspondence from the TDA CEO, and the secretariat team.

The weekly newsletter distribution has increased to over 2,000 member and non-member subscribers, including TAFE and industry leaders, international partners and government policymakers. It shares TDA's national and international ventures, and updates members on the latest industry news, government policies, training reviews and upcoming events. The newsletter has a 56% engagement rate compared to the industry standard of 16%. TDA has also increased its engagement through LinkedIn, tripling its number of connections in this reporting period.

Communications materials, including TDA newsletters, media releases, submissions and policy documents can be accessed through the TDA website: <u>www.tda.edu.au.</u>

TDA has continued to consult regularly with members to shape TDA's position on a variety of national policy areas, through a range of strategies including:

**TAFE representation** – TDA members or their nominated representatives will continue to represent TDA on a number of key external committees and forums, hence providing a TAFE voice. Regular reports to the TDA Board support TDA collaboration with stakeholders and support TDA work on implementation of VET reform processes.

**TDA public presentations** - TDA CEO and Secretariat staff have delivered presentations to a range of audiences, both domestic and international. These engagements add to the VET knowledge and debate and hence contribute to VET policy and ongoing conversation/discussion regarding the VET sector.



# PERFORMANCE ACROSS TDA'S STRATEGIC PLAN (2016-2018)

## Introduction

The strategic priorities for TAFE Directors Australia for 2018 - 2019 have been drawn from the TDA

2016 - 2018 Strategic Plan: TAFE – Quality and Trust. The 2019 academic year has been a transition year for TDA's strategic plan, with a new plan scheduled to commence in 2020.

The strategic focus areas were: advocacy, stakeholder relationships and brand clarity; trust and quality in tertiary qualifications and service provision to engage and support members. Performance against these priorities is described below.

# Strategic focus 1: Advocacy, stakeholder relationships and brand clarity

TDA's major achievements during 2018 - 2019 financial year have been the successful conclusion of tuition assurance arrangements for VET FEE-HELP and the success of the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics Congress in October 2018. The success of these issues is described elsewhere in this report.

The TAFE Meets Parliament event in August 2018 gave the opportunity for TAFE leaders to interact with federal members of Parliament. This is an important part of advocacy work and aims to raise awareness and understanding about TAFEs' contribution to the economy and society.

From August 2018 the regular Monday TDA newsletter was augmented with a specialist column from the CEO. The column has been designed to ignite interest in issues facing TAFEs. Feedback from the sector indicates the newsletter has found increased readership and reaction to its content. On occasion, the column is reported in other media and through press clipping monitoring services in government agencies. The messages seek to put a distinctive view of TAFEs in tertiary education and also pursues a progressive agenda for vocational and higher education in Australia.





The CEO is also receiving increased media exposure on broad education matters, including many radio interviews and some TV interviews. A full list of TDA media releases is provided below.

The latter part of the 2018 - 2019 financial year was dominated by the preparation for the federal election, which was held on the 18 May 2019.

Both major political parties were committed to increasing support for vocational education and training but with different emphases. During the election period TDA advocated actively on behalf of TAFEs. With the re-election of the Morrison Government, TDA has continued to represent TAFEs' views by participating in the myriad reviews and government processes now taking place.

# Strategic focus 2: Trust and quality in tertiary qualifications

TAFEs continue to be subjected to commentary claiming, in some instances, poor quality of delivery of vocational education qualifications. This needs to be contested on the basis of quality assessments by the national regulator, the Australian Standards and Quality Authority (ASQA). Findings of non-compliance are just that – some minor aspect of a training requirement not being documented or met. Recent registration renewals for several large TAFEs, which operate as comprehensive providers, is evidence of the quality dividend of TAFEs. They provide much greater diversity and higher quality qualifications than do providers which have much smaller scopes of practice.

Nevertheless, regulation reform is high on TDA's agenda. TDA worked closely with ASQA on the strategic review of international education during 2018 - 2019 and will monitor the Australian Government's response and its subsequent implementation. TDA continues to outline changes to the overbearing compliance approach to TAFEs which is misaligned to their obligations as premium public providers and representative of their state and territory governments. To this end, TDA was a member of the reference committee for the review of regulation conducted by Professor Valerie Braithwaite which resulted in the report All Eyes on Quality in January 2018. During 2018 - 2019 TDA continues to advocate with the Australian Government for implementation of its recommendations.

TDA participates in regular stakeholder meetings with both ASQA and the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) to represent TAFE views.



# Strategic focus 3: Service provision to engage and support members

TDA offered a range of important services to members during 2018 - 2019. In addition to regular communications to CEOs about policy reforms and issues, TDA also brought members together to share information on policy and practice on international education matters and higher education issues.

The primary form of member engagement is the annual TDA convention, which in 2018 was held as part of the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics in October 2018 in Melbourne. The exposure to high calibre international speakers and the opportunity to share experiences with education leaders from across the globe was of great benefit to members.



# Media releases 2018 - 2019

TITLE	DATE
TAFE welcomes new strong protection for students	17/08/2018
TAFE for Australia	22/08/2018
Global education leader Charles Fadel to address Australia's workforce skills challenge	21/09/2018
Preparing for the Skills Future, Now - The world's experts in vocational education gather in Melbourne	04/10/2018
Tertiary education sector needs to re-think how it prepares students for the jobs of the future	10/10/2018
Morrison Government doesn't back its own skills system	07/11/2018
ANAO audit of VET student loans program totally misses the point	13/11/2018
TAFEs will engage in review of vocational education and training	29/11/2018
Budget points to a new, positive future for VET	02/04/2019
Funding switch raises questions over Budget skills package	04/04/2019
TAFE rejects claims it won't be able to deliver skills training under Labor	08/05/2019
Productivity Commission report exposes the cost of an uneven tertiary education playing field	17/06/2019

TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA

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# **TDA NATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

Craig Robertson | Chief Executive Officer Ronald Jackson | Director, Strategy and Tertiary Financing Jennifer Bahen | Director, International Engagement Andre Diez de Aux | Director, Quality Services (finished December 2018) Lyndal Manson | Policy and Project Manager (on leave July 2018 to June 2019) Malcolm White | Chair, TDA National Scholarships Foundation Rachael Axford | Chief Financial Officer (finished January 2019) Janine Clark | Office Administrator (finished December 2018) Melinda Fischer | Business Manager

#### Contractors

Andrea Newton | Chief Accountant (commenced March 2019)

John Barbour | Free Trade Agreement Project Manager (between August 2018 and May 2019)

Bob Bowden | Media Contact

# **ASSOCIATION INFORMATION**

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# **OUR MEMBERS**





















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SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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