

National Conference for
TAFE Directors Australia

2015

INSPIRE

Occasional Paper One 2015
Fourteenth in the series

*"Set your life on fire.
Seek those who can fan your flames."*

Jalal ad-Din Rumi, Persian poet and mystic

INSPIRE

2015

TDA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Wednesday 9 – Friday 11 September 2015

Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

TDA 2015 Corporate Affiliates Members





This Occasional Paper, the fourteenth in the series, brings together papers and summaries of presentations from the 2015 TAFE Directors Australia national conference, INSPIRE, which was held at The Grand Chancellor Hotel, Hobart from 9–11 September.

In framing the conference – with its title, INSPIRE – we were guided by the words of Jalal al-Din Rumi a 13th century Persian poet and mystic who wrote, ‘Set your life on fire. Seek those who can fan your flames’.

The 380 delegates at this year’s conference were inspired by a stellar line up of conference speakers whose presentations included topics related to industry engagement; a market approach to vocational education and training; quality and accountability, diversity of higher education providers, internationalising vocational education qualifications; emerging technologies, and Australia’s partnerships with countries abroad. The majority of the papers from the conference plenary sessions are included in this Occasional Paper.

We were delighted that Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham, then Assistant Minister and now Minister for Education and Training, outlined the Australian Government’s priorities for vocational education and training and that the Hon. Sharon Bird MP, Shadow Minister for Vocational Education, identified key areas of interest for the Federal Opposition.

TDA’s annual national conference has become a hub for engaging with international colleagues and we were pleased to welcome delegates and speakers from Canada, the USA, India, and China.

A highlight for this year was the Sino-Australian VET Forum, involving a delegation of 30 Chinese vocational education and training officials from Eastern China. The Forum was planned to maximise the impact of President Xi Jin Ping’s 2014 visit to Tasmania and ran parallel to the plenary conference program. The Hon. Jeremy Rockcliff MP, Deputy Premier of Tasmania and Minister for Education and Training, welcomed delegates and officially launched the Forum.

We acknowledge with gratitude the valuable input of each of our presenters and facilitators. The support of our sponsors is invaluable and we acknowledge their generous and ongoing involvement which is integral to the success of our conferences.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Pam Caven'.

Pam Caven

Director Policy and Stakeholder
Engagement National Secretariat
TAFE Directors Australia
Conference Organiser

Some common messages

92% of delegates strongly agreed or agreed that the sessions 'contributed to my understanding of the issues'; 83% strongly agreed or agreed that the Conference 'delivered on its aims'; 92% agreed that 'I made some valuable connections to other people in this field'.

Well organised. Good thought behind the program. Good opportunities to network. MONA was a highlight.

Especially liked the sessions where key speakers were daring enough to propose solutions, rather than simply re-state the problems.

The marketplace sessions were very informative.

Listening to colleagues, networking, being involved in sessions, and meeting some of the keynote speakers made the Conference very special.

The informal break-out sessions and dinners where the speakers were present gave us all the opportunity to chat and explore ideas.

The whole Tasmanian experience was a strong, positive theme that ran through the Conference.

TDA is always a great conference and not to be missed. It's the networking, the like minds and the opportunities to partner and share ideas. Well done!

Dear Colleagues

On behalf of the Board of TAFE Directors Australia, we are delighted to extend a warm welcome to you, our Australian and international speakers and delegates, to the 2015 **TAFE Directors Australia annual conference**.

The title of this year's TDA National Conference is **INSPIRE**.

In framing the conference we have been guided by the words of Jalal al-Din Rumi, a 13th century Persian poet and mystic, who wrote **"Set your life on fire. Seek those who can fan your flames"**.

We hope that there will be much to inspire and fan your flames at this year's conference, beginning with the Welcome Reception at the iconic Museum of the Old and the New (MONA), a stellar line-up of engaging and inspiring speakers, singers and dancers (particularly Tasmanians), opportunities for networking, a conference dinner with sparkling Tasmanian wine and food and concluding with a reception at the historic Tasmanian Government House hosted by the Governor of Tasmania Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AM and Mr Richard Warner.

We are delighted that Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham, Assistant Minister for Education and Training, has accepted our invitation to deliver the Ministerial Address and that the Hon. Sharon Bird, Shadow Minister for Vocational Education, will deliver the Shadow Ministerial Address.

The conference has been designed to fan your flames, with speakers who have been asked to be provocative in presenting a range of topics including: industry engagement, the case for STEM, a market approach to vocational education and training, quality and accountability, diversity of higher education providers, internationalising vocational education qualifications, emerging technologies and Australia's partnerships with countries abroad.

You will be able to choose topics from pre-conference workshops and concurrent sessions and to discuss your particular interests by choosing three sessions from a rich menu of twenty-five marketplace sessions.

The annual TDA conference has become a hub for engaging with international colleagues.

This year we are welcoming delegates and speakers from New Zealand, Canada, the USA, India and China.

A highlight of this year's TDA conference will be the Sino-Australian VET Forum, involving a delegation of between 40 and 50 Chinese vocational education and training officials from Eastern China. The Forum is planned to maximise the impact of President Xi Jin Ping's 2014 visit to Tasmania and will run parallel to the plenary conference program.

The Hon. Jeremy Rockcliff MP, Deputy Premier of Tasmania and Minister for Education and Training, will welcome delegates and officially launch the Forum.

Our thanks go to the conference's Official Sponsor, the Tasmanian Government, our Gold Sponsors: TAFE NSW, YourTutor and Cisco & Optus; and to our corporate affiliates: Global Learning Support, ProLearn and TechnologyOne.

We also thank our TAFE sector commercial products and services sponsors and exhibitors for supporting the 2015 conference.

We acknowledge the contribution of Gail Eaton-Briggs, Executive Manager Education Services, TasTAFE, chair of the conference planning committee and the members of the committee.

We hope that by the end of this conference that you have indeed been inspired and that you have valued and benefited from your attendance and participation, and maybe, have come a little bit closer to the words of Jalal al-Din Rumi.



Dianne Murray

Dianne Murray
Acting Chair,
TAFE Directors
Australia Board



Martin Riordan

Martin Riordan
CEO, TAFE
Directors Australia

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Martin Riordan, CEO, TAFE Directors Australia; Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham, then Assistant Minister for Education & Training; Dianne Murray, Acting Chair, TDA Board & Institute Director, TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute



Her Excellency Professor the Hon. Kate Warner AM, Governor of Tasmania with Chinese delegates

Pre-conference workshops

Wednesday 9 September 2015

Workshop 1

Embracing the shark – risk governance = value creation

Workshop 2

Commonalities and differences in higher education practices

Workshop 3

Servicing regional communities

Workshop 4

Increasing staff capability to drive organisational performance: inspiration based on evidence

Pre-conference workshop 1

Embracing the shark – risk governance = value creation

Workshop 1: Embracing the shark – risk governance = value creation

For a successful business, risk management is not a conformance activity but a builder of resilience and a driver of performance.

- What does it mean in practice to conduct a forensic risk analysis of an organisation's business model?
- How can strategies be identified to mitigate the risk?
- How can an organisation manage risk in a competitive environment?

Facilitator

Mary Campbell

TDA Board Member; General Manager,
TAFE Queensland SkillsTech

Speakers

Greg d'Arville

Norman Gray AM



Greg D'Arville

*Compliance, Governance and Risk
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TDA Risk Suppositional

Part 1

Ordonia Institute of Technical and Further Education is an imaginary TAFE located in northern Australia. Inspired by the Draft National Strategy for International Education – excerpts below – its Board has agreed in principle to pursue growth (in student numbers and revenue) through the delivery of education services and courses to international students.

Ordonia TAFE already boasts a relatively high number of international students in its campus population: about 11% of its 12,000 students are of foreign origin. It aims to expand its footprint substantially by reaching beyond its current “bricks and mortar” boundaries to engage in offshore delivery, but recognises that it is a late arrival to this competitive market sector.

The Chief Executive Officer was asked to consider what opportunities might be available in the Asia-Pacific Region and to put forward a range of options for Ordonia TAFE's expansion. His strategy paper outlined the following models:

1. Twinning and Auspicing/Joint Delivery model – in broad terms this is a fee-for-service arrangement with a foreign institution, whereby local students are enrolled in both the local and Australian qualification and are taught by Australian and local teachers (the latter having earned an Australian Certificate IV in Training and Assessment).
2. Membership of an international network wherein some 80 campus-based and online institutions offer programs to students around the world – each operates as its own brand, but relationships among the institutions are enriched with shared curricula, faculty, programs and student exchange opportunities.
3. With support from the target country's government, develop and operate an overseas campus that provides both local and Australian qualifications – Ordonia TAFE would adapt its programs to local needs, engage local staff and collect its own fees. The campus would have its own brand but would maintain an affiliation with Ordonia that includes shared curricula, programs, exchanges, and so on.

On the home front, Ordonia TAFE is concerned about some aspects of the examination performance of its international students. At two of its peer institutions, students from non-English-speaking backgrounds experience significantly higher failure rates than at Ordonia. Also, students of Taiwanese origin seem to perform exceptionally well at Ordonia TAFE.

There is no discernible difference in the levels of language and other support provided by the three institutions. While the comparative success of Ordonian students has had a positive impact on enrolments it has also attracted some questions at professional gatherings.

Consider the following questions:

1. **Compare and contrast the risks applicable to each of the three proposed models for overseas expansion.**
2. **Identify the potential risks associated with the performance of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds at Ordonia TAFE.**
3. **What, if any, measures might you put in place to address these risks?**

Excerpts from Draft National Strategy for International Education, April 2015

Australia's vocational education and training is well regarded, particularly its industry-directed content and nationally recognised qualification system. While there are no international comparisons that benchmark VET systems, an indication of a system's effectiveness is its ability to meet skills needs. Improving our system's capacity to produce work-ready employees, meet industry needs and lift completion rates is critical to meet the future skills needs of Australia and our global partners (p. 16).

Institution-to-institution partnerships provide the foundation for Australian international education. Australian higher education and vocational education

institutions and schools support a significant range of international partnership activities, including student and teacher exchanges, policy dialogues, leadership or shadowing exchanges and jointly delivered qualifications. Australian providers bring to these partnerships distinct areas of excellence in student experience and research and education capabilities. Partnerships are underpinned by a growing number of arrangements that support mobility, credit transfer, fee waivers for students and access to research grants (p. 21).

Eighty per cent of Australia's international student enrolments are from the Asia-Pacific region, enabled by strong institutional partnerships. This region will continue to be central to Australia's business, trade and economic prosperity into the future and we must maintain our competitive advantages in this region. We must remain mindful of the evolving policies, needs and aspirations of governments and societies in the region and continue to provide educational offerings to help meet them. We should also pursue diversification through engagement in Latin America and other regions (p. 22).

Institutions in northern Australia are well placed to form new partnerships in Asia. The growing number of middle-class households in Asia, their desire for a world-class education and Asia's proximity to northern Australia all position institutions well to increase their partnerships and the number of international students they host.

Part 2

In October, Ordonia TAFE announces that it has been selected to operate a “greenfields” campus-based institution in Laos that will, when fully operational, have a student population of 35,000. Its proposal was regarded as superior to those submitted by five major institutions from Australia and the United States.

In November, the following stories break:

1. The *Northern Advertiser* reports that a number of former Ordonia TAFE teachers and students have accused it of altering international student exam papers to ensure a pass. They also allege that cheating has occurred but was not investigated. The story was linked to findings in an Australian Education Union survey that 54 per cent of TAFE teachers felt pressured to pass students who might not be competent.
2. An investigation into academic misconduct at Subteria TAFE finds that the internet and smartphones have made it easier for students to cheat in exams. Social media helps students share stolen exam papers and questions quickly, and the average level of cheating on multiple choice exams stands at about 5 per cent. The report states that the problem is especially prevalent in students of Taiwanese origin.

3. The US Department of Justice has invited Ordonia TAFE to ‘answer questions voluntarily concerning possible breaches of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act’ in the negotiations that led to its selection as the Lao campus operator.

Consider the following:

1. **Develop a crisis management plan to address these developments so as to bring about the best outcome for Ordonia TAFE.**
2. **Are there any further measures you would have introduced in Part 1 had you known these events would occur? What are they?**

Pre-conference workshop 2

Commonalities and differences in higher education practices

Workshop 2: **Commonalities and differences in higher education practices**

This workshop will be a discussion of higher education practices in Australian TAFE institutes and American community colleges.

Facilitator

Andrew Williamson

Executive Director,
Victorian TAFE Association

Speakers

Mike Hansen

Ili Pelletier



Ili Pelletier

Director, TAFE NSW Higher Education

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Higher Education in TAFE

Equity and opportunity for all

Higher education programs developed and delivered by TAFE NSW have recorded a higher uptake by low socio economic status (LSES) students than those reported in the university sector. The delivery of profession-ready degrees and their delivery at rural and regional campuses have extended higher education opportunities for students from a range of backgrounds across NSW.

It is well recorded that there is a 'persistent underrepresentation of low SES'¹ students undertaking higher education at universities in Australia. The development and delivery of higher education programs at TAFE NSW deliberately aims to support LSES students in having access to and completing quality higher education programs.

According to the SEIFA Educational and Occupation Index, a quarter of the population aged 15–64 is classified as LSES. There are many impediments and factors that inhibit these LSES students from undertaking higher education programs. The lower than state average completion rates of year 12 within LSES areas and the fact that rural and regional students are less likely to be engaged in higher education are some of the identified barriers limiting LSES engagement in higher education. In addition, it has been identified that students from LSES areas have increased participation in VET programs, in an inverse ratio to their engagement in higher education. Other factors such as lack of university aspirations, peer and family expectations may inhibit an individual from studying a higher education program.

TAFE NSW Higher Education commenced delivery of TAFE NSW degrees in 2011. The degrees were developed specifically to provide opportunities to students who were attracted to the applied learning approach delivered in TAFE and to those living within rural and regional centres in NSW. The degrees have attracted a distinctly different cohort of students compared to those studying higher education at a university. TAFE NSW undergraduate students on average are 85% mature aged, at university in 2014² mature-aged undergraduate enrolment was 25%. However, most significantly, TAFE NSW has successfully attracted LSES students to commence and complete TAFE NSW degree programs. Some TAFE NSW courses attract up to 56% LSES students and the more city-centric programs such as the degrees in Interior Design and Fashion, average 19%. The average LSES for all the higher education programs offered at TAFE NSW is 31%. The 2014 national average of LSES undergraduate enrolment was 15.7%,³ nearly half that of TAFE NSW.

TAFE NSW has recognised that there is a social responsibility to provide greater access to high quality, industry-focused higher education to equity groups by developing appropriate admission processes that break the nexus between year 12 results and course entry. TAFE NSW also has selected appropriate industry-relevant and accredited programs for delivery in rural, regional and relevant urban locations to ensure the programs are available to often isolated low socio-economic groups. In addition, TAFE NSW has ensured that students can transition smoothly from VET programs into TAFE NSW degree programs, with appropriate support and small class sizes to ensure they are geared for success. Through the direct VET to higher education pathways offered at TAFE NSW students can develop aspirations that previously did not seem possible. They feel supported and academically comfortable in a familiar TAFE environment and are provided the opportunity to be transformed through their higher education experience at TAFE NSW.⁴

Notes

- 1 Centre for the Study of Higher Education 2008, Participation and Equity, University of Melbourne.
- 2 Universities Australia datacard 2015, viewed 12 August 2015, <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/australias-universities/key-facts-and-data>.
- 3 National equity data 2014, viewed 12 August 2015, www.education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2014-student-data.
- 4 TDA Higher Education Student Survey Report 2015.

Pre-conference workshop 3

Servicing regional communities

Workshop 3: Servicing regional communities

Can TAFE institutes in regional locations help the business communities be more innovative?

Facilitator

Karen Dickinson

Managing Director,
Kimberley Training Institute

Speakers

Associate Professor Ruth Schubert

Professor Janelle Allison

Trevor Schwenke

Workshop 3: Servicing regional communities



Trevor Schwenke

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Can TAFE institutes in regional locations help the business communities be more innovative?

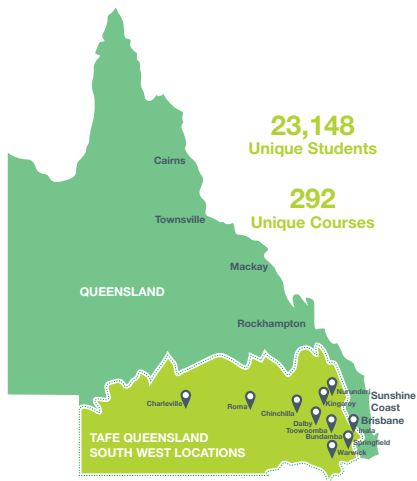
Servicing Regional Communities

- The catch-cry for Australia to innovate dominates many business discussions as the economy moves from a resources boom to more sustainable value add activities.
- Let me start by giving you some credentials about myself and then some context from our region, to assure you that I can answer categorically, yes, we do have a role to play in helping business communities be more innovative.

Regional communities

- My name is Trevor Schwenke and I am the General Manager of TAFE Queensland South West.
- South West is one of six regions making up the TAFE Queensland Statutory Authority that was formed in 2014.
- Apart from being born in a regional community (Kingaroy), I have worked as an Institute Director in four of the former TAFE Queensland institutes before taking on my current role of General Manager for TAFE Queensland South West.
- I continue to live in a regional centre (Toowoomba) and engage regularly with our industry representatives and businesses.

The economy of Queensland South West



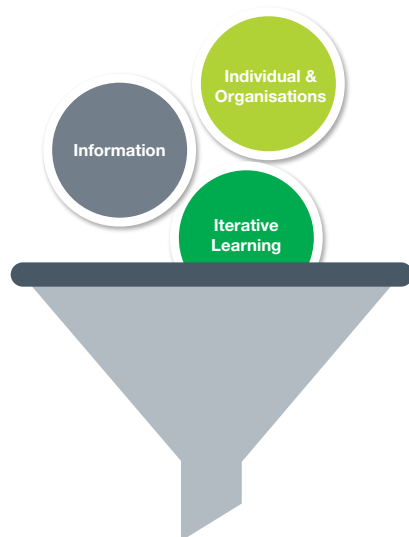
- The TAFE Queensland South West region covers a third of the state, from the western edge of Brisbane to Roma in the west, north to Kingaroy and south to the border of New South Wales.

**A GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTPRINT
ROUGHLY EQUIVALENT IN SIZE
TO FRANCE!**

- We have been at the centre of the gas resources boom, giving us one of the highest productivity rates in the country and delivering a potential \$180 billion energy industry, which includes more than 60 major projects expected to be in operation over the next 20 years.
- We are now also at the centre of the anticipated agricultural boom as the region moves from **mining to dining**. China in particular buys into the **fresh, clean, green Brand Australia**.
- The Surat Basin has some of Australia's finest soils allowing the region to successfully farm a broad spectrum of industries, including grains, livestock, cotton, dairy and horticulture.
- The region has a very strong existing agriculture and food processing sector. The region supplies amongst the best Wagyu beef in Australia and is peppered with feedlots and abattoirs.
- But our region needs to innovate to remain competitive, take advantage of the Asian Century and ensure skilled workers for jobs that have yet to be invented.
- The region is home to over 600 thousand people and last year we had 23 thousand students enrolled across nearly 300 courses.
- We are governed by 32 electorates across three tiers of government:
 - 15 local government areas
 - 12 state government electorates
 - 5 federal government electorates.

How does innovation happen?

Entrepreneurship & Technological Innovation



- Innovation happens when a group of individuals and organisations interact to realise new information from different sources and achieve collective learning iteratively.
- This learning stimulates entrepreneurship and produces technological innovations.
- The more productive groups are often co-located because face-to-face interaction produces higher levels of trust and engagement more so than remote interactions.

[Images of Slides 5 to 11 are available on the TDA website, www.tda.edu.au]

The role of regional TAFEs

- Since innovation is to a large part bringing people together, exchanging information and developing collective learning, we are in a position to connect, transform and inspire for innovation in regional Australia.
- This is especially true when in many of our locations we are one of the larger organisations in town and have often been part of the community for decades.
- Many of our staff are also long term, even lifelong residents and well known members of these communities.
- What TAFE is doing is often a common topic of conversation and as such I see it as an obligation on our part to contribute to the sustainability and growth in these communities.

We can do this by:

- Connecting with business, government, schools and community to facilitate conversation and collaboration.
- Transforming industry by partnering to develop solutions that grow opportunities for regional business while developing commercial workforce development programs for our organisation.
- Inspiring by bringing new information, insights, networks, and relationships to stimulate participation and creativity.
- We work with organisations to help them realise their goals. Often these conversations lead to new ideas and new opportunities to partner in the future.

Unique regional challenges

- Our region is the size of France and the tyranny of distance is a daily operational challenge.
- Our teachers are often on the road, driving to outlying areas to deliver on-site training.
- The imperative to innovate is reflected in the downturn in our region:
 - Over 25% of the energy sector labour force is in Queensland and a significant proportion in the Surat Basin of our region. Employment has dropped around 20% since 2013–14.
 - Heavy and civil engineering construction employment fell by 14.02% in the 12 months to February 2015.
- We also operate in regions affected by drought. The impact of the longstanding drought in central Queensland continues its devastating effects and the presence of a large El Nino event looms.
- All businesses need to be able to adapt to change quickly – this is probably even more of an imperative for regional communities.
- But there are significant challenges different to the metropolitan areas.
 - There is the regional isolation.
 - Lack of physical infrastructure in part due to lack of population density
 - Lack of institutional infrastructure for training, research and development and innovation support.
 - Lack of a deep pool of qualified and skilled workers.
 - Scarcity of knowledge-rich industries, particularly in the absence of value added industries.

Facilitating a regional innovation ecosystem

Over such a big region and with such diversity, what needs to be in place for us to engage and facilitate innovation in regional businesses?

How can we help create a regional innovation framework?

- Reference is made to a model “adapted from the Council of Science and Technology of Quebec in 2001” which shows the ecosystem needed for regional businesses to thrive.
- The role of research is well known, but equally associated with this is technological transfer, something that TAFE can do well.

TAFE can also provide:

- Innovation support by facilitating conversations and collaboration.
- We can also assist with technological services – in the regions, internet access is limited, but all of our campuses have education-grade internet.
- We can obviously also provide teaching and training, very much our core business.
- Our ability to facilitate networks means that we can network businesses with venture capitalists and regional economic development organisations. For example, the Department of State Development and Innovation is co-located on one of our campuses.

Regional innovation in practice

The sorts of things we are doing ...

Let me start with **Innovation Support**

- We provide insights and analysis through industry forums, breakfasts and lunch events, often on our campuses, hosted and catered for by our hospitality students.

- We are also actively involved and in some cases provide rooms for the Start-Up communities.
- In terms of regional economic development organisations, we are actively involved with setting and contributing to the regional agenda through the RMCN. We have board representation and active membership of the regional Chambers of Commerce.
- We meet regularly and have planning workshops with a range of Economic Development branches in Councils and other economic stimulus bodies like the Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise.

Technology services and support

- Our Open Days showcase newer technologies and demonstrate how they work for business, including most recently drones and 3D printers, for example.
- Our last Open Day in Toowoomba had a fleet of drones and a collection of 3D printers on display, with people on hand to talk about their application.
- Our students benefit from technology in their learning environment and our digital learning hubs provide an environment of technology support.

Venture capital funds

- In addition to hosting angel investors at Start-up bootcamps, our contracts team works closely with smaller organisations and not for profits, to assist in application writing for funding, be that training funding or funding for innovation.
- We also help regional businesses gain profile by nominating them for a range of awards and in some instances, assisting with the award submission. The profiling and recognition assists organisations with attracting funding and also profiling them to a wider audience.

Teachers and training

- I am sure, like your staff, our teachers remain current and abreast of the needs of business.
- We are developing a data-driven culture where the organisation uses deep insights from our data, displayed in dashboards to make decisions.
- Our innovative approach to flexible learning and onsite delivery means that our teachers train on state of the art equipment used by industry.

Research and technological transfer

- TAFE Queensland is developing its credentials in research and research application.
- Current work in South West has us engaging with the CSIRO to understand small business resilience through the sudden downturn that the region is experiencing.

Addressing the challenges

We address the challenges through:

- Regional isolation and lack of population density through face-to-face contact by regional staff and hosting subject matter experts to speak and provide workshops periodically through most of our campuses.
- For example, in conjunction with the Kingaroy Council, we are facilitating 6 x 2-hour workshops to help local businesses with their business planning, after providing research and insights into the economic trends affecting their region and outlining potential opportunities.
- In Warwick, we are facilitating the framework for the Council to set up and support a start-up ecosystem.
- TQSW recently hosted the TAFE Queensland Board over two days in Kingaroy. Board members engaged with and exchanged ideas with a wide range of industry and government stakeholders.

- We work particularly hard to maximise the use of our campuses. In many of the locations we are one of the largest businesses and the community has a sense of ownership of our campuses.
- In all our locations we host business chambers events, hold thought leadership and executive briefing functions, bringing local businesses and individuals together. Often the conversations that happen and the insights and information that is shared can only be accessed through large organisations.
- Many of our campuses have training restaurants which similarly host events and activities designed to bring people together to exchange ideas.
- Recently, the Toowoomba ICT community hosted an event on our campus for over 100 people with a special representation from Microsoft, profiling the innovations and technology roadmap that Microsoft is enacting.
- Feedback from the workshop indicated that most people left with ideas on how to improve their businesses and many had new ideas to implement.
- Our Toowoomba campus is also a home for the Start-Up Toowoomba community, which hosts Start-up Bootcamps and the Start-Up Apprentice.
- These bring people to our campus to collaborate and engage, often with teachers who can share their practical insights on how to achieve tasks and activities.
- As a result of these events and weekend Hackathons, we frequently have angel investor celebrities from Shark Tank for example, visiting, exchanging ideas, providing advice and interacting with individuals and businesses.
- Our region is aggressively pursuing value-add opportunities for export centred around agriculture and food processing, transport and infrastructure and business services.

- We are helping by engaging with industry to identify what are the skills of the future and re-imagining the world of work.
- With the CEDA report suggesting that around 50% of jobs will be lost, we need to be leading the development of the skills of the future for emerging jobs market.

Our people-centred approach

For all the talk about models and technology, we are in the business of people. A human-centred approach invested in developing the social capital of the regions is our shared responsibility and so we work within the 5 Cs.

- **Connections** with people and organisations.
- **Culture** – creating a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship for ourselves and our region.

This is reflected in our values:

- Commerciality, Accountability, Teamwork and Innovation.
- Innovation is entrenched in our operating agenda, our conversations and our actions.
- **Creative Conversations**
 - Thought leadership lunches, innovation workshops, Start-up support, leaders from outside the region showcasing emerging ideas.
- **Capability**
 - Processes that favour innovation.
 - We recognise that we need the right people who understand regional Queensland and the needs of communities and businesses.
 - And co-creation, deep engagement with our clients, our students and active promotion on world stages, like WorldSkills.

Evidence of our regional innovation

So, as I conclude, what are the results?

- We are an integral part of our communities. We have good infrastructure and are well connected.
- Given the imperative for Australia to innovate, our region is playing its part, and we are proud to facilitate it.
- We are home to Australia's newest airport, privately built and a state-of-the-art modern facility that will become the epicentre of an emerging transport and logistics hub, connected by some of Australia's biggest infrastructure projects:
 - the range by-pass, the second range crossing – a \$1.6 billion project currently underway, and
 - potentially, the inland rail.
 - The region has attracted significant investment to develop food processing manufacturing plants, e-commerce gateways connecting our region to Asia, increased mechanisation and automation as we emerge as a smart region.
- Within our region, Ipswich was the only Australian city identified as being the most digitally advanced community.
- Sometimes the path is laid out clearly before us but often it isn't.
- We are responding with agility and so if you ask, are we a part of all this? Absolutely!
- And I would love to hear what some of you are doing to be part of the innovation imperative.



Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham, then Assistant Minister for Education and Training



The Hon. Sharon Bird MP, Shadow Minister for Vocational Education; Member for Cunningham, NSW



Jenny Dodd, General Manager TAFE Gold Coast, poses a question

Pre-conference workshop 4

Increasing staff capability to drive organisational performance: inspiration based on evidence

Workshop 4: Increasing staff capability to drive organisational performance: inspiration based on evidence

This workshop will focus on how TasTAFE acquired and used an evidence base to plan targeted capability in order to drive organisational performance and business growth. The lessons in the Tasmania case study are relevant to every organisation.

Facilitator

Associate Professor Dr Steve Shanahan

TDA Board Member; Acting Pro Vice Chancellor – VET,
Charles Darwin University; NT

Speakers

Dr John Mitchell

Gail Eaton-Briggs

Workshop 4: Increasing staff capability to drive organisational performance



Dr John Mitchell

Lead Consultant, ACER JMA Analytics

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Gail Eaton-Briggs

*Executive Manager Education Services,
TasTAFE*

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Increasing staff capability to drive organisational performance: inspiration based on evidence

Every organisational leader would relish an evidence base upon which to plan targeted capability development in order to drive organisational performance and business growth. While this workshop focused on how TasTAFE acquired and used such an evidence base, the lessons in the Tasmania case study are relevant to every organisation.

The workshop at the TAFE Directors Australia conference in Hobart on 9 September 2015 showed how TasTAFE, over an eighteen-month period from early 2014, used a set of seven capability analysis tools (CATs) provided by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) JMA Analytics to engage staff, build capability, develop a unified culture and set new goals based on evidence about the existing and potential strengths in its staff.

TasTAFE implemented seven CATs as set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Implementation timetable

Capability analysis tool (CAT)	Focus	Target group	Date implemented
1. ADMINCAT®	Capability data to upskill the administration workforce	All staff in administration or support roles	February 2014
2. COMPLETIONCAT®	Capability data to boost student completion rates	All staff	February 2014
3. MANAGECAT®	Capability data to improve management performance	Managers, from supervisor to executive level	April 2014 (repeated 2015)
4. VETCAT®	Capability data to enhance training and effectiveness	Teachers	May 2014
5. CURCAT®	Capability data to maintain industry currency	Teachers	May 2014
6. GROWCAT®	Capability data to grow your business	All staff	March 2015
7. LEADCAT®	Capability data to increase leadership effectiveness	Leaders, from Band 7 to executive	July 2015

This case study will be of interest to all organisations seeking to 'turn around' their organisations, with the active support of their staff, based on concrete data about staff strengths, potential, gaps, motivations and learning styles, patterns and preferences.

To commence the workshop, the background context for this organisational rejuvenation was provided by Stephen Conway, TasTAFE CEO.

Then Dr John Mitchell, ACER JMA Analytics lead consultant, discussed how TasTAFE's leading edge approach to using the CATs data built on the implementation

of the CATs by 32 TAFE Institutes nationally over the last six years. John showed how TasTAFE has not only built on that national foundation, it has invented new practices in HR Analytics in VET.

Explanations about how TasTAFE implemented the CATs so effectively and is now using the data generated by them to obtain multiple benefits were provided by Gail Eaton-Briggs, Executive Manager Education Services, TasTAFE.

Excerpt from interview

Following is an excerpt from an interview with Gail Eaton-Briggs conducted by Dr John Mitchell in March 2015 on the topic of “Using seven CATs to grow the business”. The interview was conducted two weeks after GROWCAT® was launched and before LEADCAT® was implemented. The full interview is available at this site: <http://jmaanalytics.acer.edu.au/user-benefits/client-interviews>.

(Dr John Mitchell) **TasTAFE is the first organisation in Australia to implement seven capability analysis tools. What lies behind TasTAFE’s commitment to capability analysis?**

(Gail Eaton-Briggs) When TasTAFE was first established the Board agreed on the inaugural corporate plan but it was very clear that there were a number of areas in that corporate plan that we were not going to be able to achieve if we did not build on the current levels of [staff] capability. Some of those areas were the decision to put student needs at the centre of our activities, making a priority of organisational growth based on student/client needs, undertaking a staff benchmarking exercise and ensuring that we met the performance management framework around our funding contracts.

So we decided that we couldn’t just expect that building of capability to happen: it can’t really be a hit and miss approach to capability building because all those corporate goals underpin the sustainability and the success of the organisation. Adding that to the fact that we have a very strong reputation to uphold as well, as deliverers of high-quality VET, we decided that we would commit to building capability and of course to do that we needed to know where our staff capability actually was, hence the implementation of the analysis tools.

You have implemented the CATs at a time of some upheaval, first with the amalgamation of the Skills Institute and the Polytechnic, then with funding challenges and now with an organisational restructuring. Many other organisations say that they cannot implement CATs until conditions are settled. Why did you go ahead with the CATs in this time of great change?

In recent years the public training provider here in Tasmania has undergone a number of iterations that have been created through government reforms. About six years ago, TAFE Tasmania was split into two organisations, a Polytechnic and a Skills Institute and over the next five years each of those organisations developed their own culture, their own norms, their own capabilities, based on the student cohorts for whom they were delivering vocational education and training.

When TasTAFE was created by legislation in July 2013 it was clear that the capabilities were patchy, depending on where staff had come from and what their experience had been over the previous five years. So we needed to build capability, but as well as that we also needed some kind of tool to bring two groups of staff together – as a bonding exercise if you like – and that needed a planned approach.

We needed to form brand new teams at TasTAFE and we could have done that in a whole range of ways and we used a number of strategies, but one of the keys was to get people working together on the capability analysis tools (CATs), the related surveys and the follow-up.

Staff response levels to the CATs have been exceptional, compared with national trends. Why, do you think, staff have been so responsive?

Our staff love an opportunity to get together and work on something that is across the organisation and so we've not had trouble getting people to attend the face-to-face launches of CATs for example and being able to come and sit together. You've probably noticed when you've been here that every time you stop talking they start talking to each other because it's one of the things that they like to do.

We had our communication and marketing team involved really early on and they came up with a professionally designed logo for the CAT projects and some collateral such as mouse pads and posters and also the CEO promoted it through his regular 'staff update'. We made the capability analysis project really visible, we made it a key strategy for the organisation and the staff. The staff would have seen some evidence that the CATs were on the way well before we actually made the survey available to them.

To maintain that momentum one of our young women in the marketing team really embraced the CATs and promoted them internally. She has been very creative and very persistent in the way that she has targeted various strategies for different CATs. The CATs have had different audiences and she has been very creative around how she targeted them. We haven't had an enormous budget for marketing but it hasn't stopped her from being able to run competitions, give away morning teas, and give away TasTAFE goodie bags to individuals and groups.

The other thing that we've done is convene a group called the Continuing CATs Conversation Committee (CCCC). At TasTAFE we don't have a large department that can manage this whole of organisation capability building approach so I've been able to secure the

commitment of people who are genuinely interested in taking their CATs forward. We've formed this CCCC group of people who are keeping the follow-up work alive through individual projects and updates in the 'staff update' that goes out fortnightly. The CCCC group is keeping the CATs visible and when something new occurs we put it up on the intranet so that people know that this has happened as a result of the CATs.

In your experience, what are the immediate benefits of using the CATs?

One of our TasTAFE values is being connected, so by default just having these CAT surveys means that we've got email going out talking about the CATs, they're mentioned in the staff update, and it's helping us form that one TasTAFE, one team approach. And we have started to use the data as an evidence base upon which to design tactics, programs and strategies; so there are very immediate benefits for us.

What long term benefits or advantages do you believe will emerge for TasTAFE from using the CATs?

One of the things that we do need to do as TasTAFE is to develop a workforce development plan. We don't have that yet but I do think that the CATs are going to enable us to have an evidence base on which to build the workforce development plan. I do think that the benefits that we get out of paying attention to the COMPLETIONCAT® data will see us in better financial shape: we will get more completions and that is going to translate into dollars.

I think what's starting to emerge at TasTAFE is a new respect for teachers as professional practising teachers, so a focus on VETCAT® and CURCAT® data and many of the aspects of COMPLETIONCAT® is going to impact directly on the professional development that the teachers receive and access and are inspired to access.

As well as that, as a result of MANAGECAT®, our managers are going to be more respectful of our core business. In some of the skills sets in MANAGECAT® that you would expect managers in an education environment to be really strong in, they themselves, say they aren't, so we need to flip that around and work with them on that because our core business is vocational education and training and we need to be great at managing it.

Is there anything else about the CATs that you would like to comment on?

I would like to say to other organisations that are thinking about using CATs my instinct is always to look at how you stack up against the national averages for CAT skills sets and I had to tone myself down in relation to that because, even if we had a low score (across the organisation), some of the national averages might have been low as well. I needed to recognise the message "don't beat yourself up, take the CAT information for what it is and then aim to build on it and improve".

One of the things that I've noticed that has been terrific for me is that the corporate plan that was developed by the TasTAFE Board has a number of priorities that

are actually supported by the data that's coming out of the CATs. The data supports the reason why an organisation would need to do something or act in a particular way. It also gives you the impetus to say to the staff whom you need to get on board not just that the TasTAFE Board has a corporate plan that says you need to have a need to work in partnership, we actually have data that comes out of COMPLETIONCAT® that says if we can work much more strongly in partnership with others we will have better outcomes for our students.

That is a powerful conversation to have with staff. I think that the suite of capability analysis tools enables you to join the dots if you're smart enough to look out for where those connections are.

The final thing I would like to say is that the capability analysis tools are completely defensible: I love the fact that they are psychometrically tested, they provide an evidence base and they are not just done and dusted within a couple of weeks, it is a long-term process and we are looking forward to using them again in a couple of years to see how the capability of the TasTAFE staff has grown.

Welcome reception

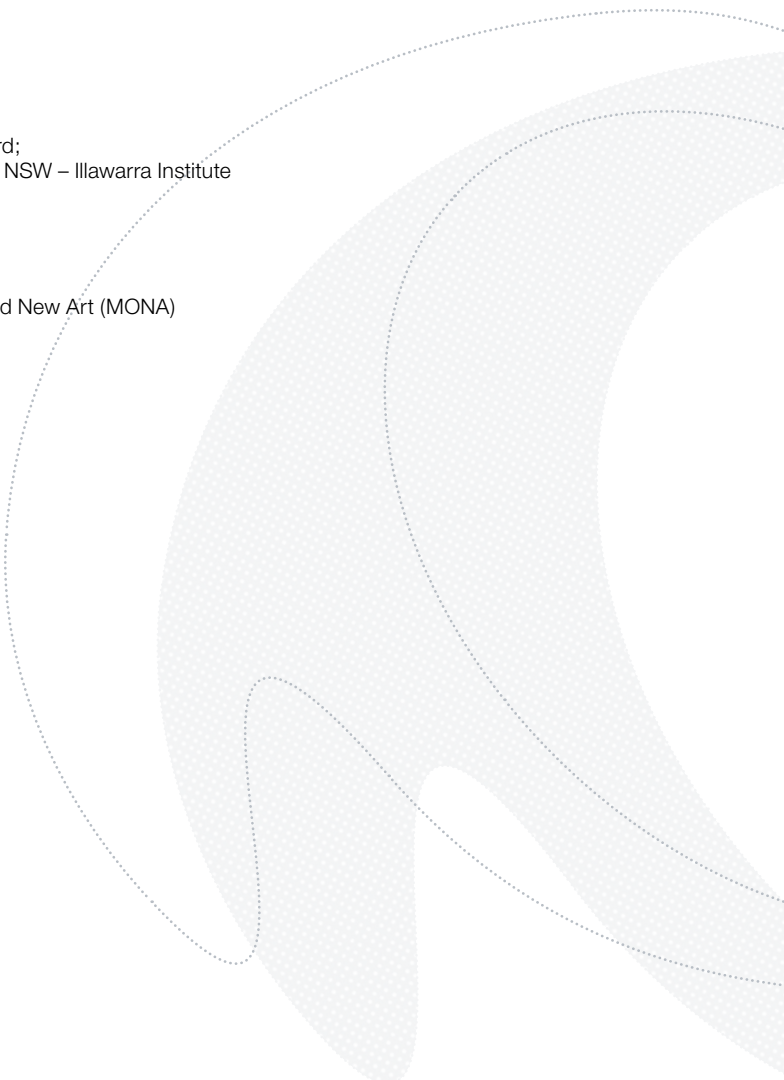
Welcome to national and international delegates

Dianne Murray

Acting Chair, TDA Board;
Institute Director, TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute

Guest Speaker**Marc Wilsdon**

Business Manager,
The Museum of Old and New Art (MONA)



Conference Day 1

Thursday 10 September 2015

INSPIRE

“Set your life on fire. Seek those who can fan your flames.”

Jalal ad-Din Rumi

Persian poet and mystic

Welcome

- to Country by Alison Overeem, Palawa Woman
- to national and international delegates to the TDA Conference

Dianne Murray

Acting Chair, TDA Board; Institute Director, TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning

Award-winning current affairs journalist

2015 TDA Conference Dinner

Guest speakers

Jo Cook

Local Food Curator at MoMa, and the Dark Mofo Winter Feast

Matthew Evans

author, presenter and smallholder

Speakers and panellists

Professor Peter Noonan

Pam Christie

Kate Carnell

Denise Boyd

Chris Robinson

Jodi Schmidt

John Wall

Kathryn Shugg

Dr Peter Coolbear

John Anglely

Beth Hagan

Mike Hansen

Donna Meyer

Bonnie Heckard-Farmer

Dr John Daley

Brad Davies

The Hon. Jeremy Rockcliff MP

Professor David Walker

Warren Tapp

Jan Davis

Mark Ryan

Professor Perry Samson

Sino-Australian VET Forum

Robert Adams

Yanwei Ma

Dr Melissa McEwen

Martin Riordan

Tim Gilbert

Paul Lennard

Jianxin Yang

Ma Yunsheng

Zhigang (Rick) Zhao

Marketplace sessions

Professor David Walker

Professor Peter Noonan

Denise Stevens

Brad Polak

Associate Professor Ruth Schubert

Adam Mostogl

Brad Davies

Dr Don Zoellner

Dr Bernardo A León de la Barra

Cheryl Underwood

Sara Caplan

Peter Hurley

David McLean

Emeritus Professor Berwyn Clayton

Jen Rodger

Allyn Radford

Leanne Drew-McKain

Dr Glenys Drew

Jodieann Dawe

Russ Francis

Tim Bambrick

Tony Maguire

Rod Cooke

André Diez de Aux

Linda Condon

Donna Meyer

Kanishk Kumar

Dianne Murray

Conference Day 1

A Conversation: what could be the big leap forward for Australia's policy on skills?

"We as policy makers, in particular, but also industry, the VET provider sector and analysts need to be mindful of the sometimes enervating effect of constant changes to and attempts to re-make the VET system. A restless, seemingly ceaseless search for perfection seems to characterise the official mindset about the vocational education and training sector. At any one time it is almost certainly likely to be that one or other or several of Australia's nine government jurisdictions will be inquiring into VET and or have in train a process of skills reform."

(Brendan Sheehan & John Maddock, LH Martin Institute, University of Melbourne, February 2015)

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning

Speakers

Professor Peter Noonan
Pam Christie



Professor Peter Noonan

*Professorial Fellow, Mitchell Institute,
Victoria University*

Email: Peter.Noonan@vu.edu.au

A Conversation: what could be the big leap forward for Australia's policy on skills?

Introduction

Before considering the next big leap forward for Australia's policy on skills, perhaps we should take a step back and first ask some fundamental questions about the objectives of skills policies in Australia and whether they are currently being realised.

The current objectives are set out in the separate National Partnership Agreements for Skills and Workforce Development and Skills Reform.

The objectives are broadly framed and include: improved workforce participation, raising skills levels, meeting the needs of a changing economy, addressing disadvantage and improved intersectoral relationships. These are all unarguable and long standing objectives for the national VET system. They are in large measure to be achieved through a VET entitlement.

In practice however these objectives are being increasingly reduced to an increasingly narrow set of outcomes. VET course funding models and subsidy levels are increasingly linked to priorities based on dubiously assessed public and private value as a rationing mechanism within a declining funding base.

The continuing incapacity of the sector to properly address major quality issues and the continuing problem of poor completion rates adds to the poor alignment between system objectives and system level outcomes. Outcomes for many students fall well short of what should flow from an well constructed, properly funded and effectively delivered entitlement.

So my first leap forward is in fact to take a step back; to critically assess the effectiveness of current funding, regulatory and pedagogical approaches in VET against the current national objectives.

However, this is not an argument for a return to dated approaches – on the contrary ambitious thinking is required, including in the areas outlined below.

Critical areas

1. The nature of skills

The kinds of skills, knowledge and capabilities required for the modern labour market, and for effective economic and social participation, are presently not well represented in Australia's dated model of competency based training.

As some of us have long argued, we need to move beyond a conception of competence as just a set of occupationally related skills to one where those skills are embedded in a broader notion of individual competence (or capability).

This is not just about individual outcomes or a re-run of the tired industry versus educational needs debate. Its about the kinds of skills and capabilities employers themselves have continually identified in

studies on key competencies, generic and employability skills.

Individual competence is inherent in the effective integration of theory and practice for specific occupational roles and is essential for more successful and sustained workforce participation, for the acquisition of new skills and to innovation in the workplace.

2. Funding

As the Mitchell Institute has demonstrated in successive reports,¹ there is a growing gap between VET funding on one hand and higher education and schools funding on the other which must be addressed.

However, there is no point in just putting more money into the current VET funding model: it needs to be realigned with broad VET policy objectives.

If we are really serious about improving workforce and social participation, we need to think much more carefully about the purpose of public funding. We need to re focus funding to help individuals to acquire and renew the skills they need in the modern workforce (on a similar basis to the Schooling Resources Standard) rather than on the dubious assessments of public and private value that increasingly drive the allocation of VET funding.

There is also a need for a resolution of the renewed debate about Commonwealth and State roles in VET funding including serious consideration of the Commonwealth assuming full funding responsibility.

However, there is little point in just transferring VET funding to the Commonwealth under the current funding model. We need to move to an integrated tertiary education funding model, including a common and consistent system of income contingent loans to ensure equity of treatment across different learner cohorts.

3. Reconceptualising tertiary and vocational education

Perhaps the biggest leap forward in skills policies is to re-assess the nature of VET as it now constructed. Is VET just a set of defined qualifications delivered through a specific sector, or could VET be a broader construct encompassing vocationally oriented qualifications in schools, VET and in higher education?

We could quite radically re-think qualifications spanning upper secondary VET and HE and the ways in which students transition through senior secondary and the early years of tertiary education. These transition points are historical in nature and bear little relationship with how young people want to engage in learning, can acquire new knowledge and actually engage in the labour market.

The VET sector could play a crucial role in delivering a broader span of vocational qualifications either as a full provider in its own right or through partnerships with schools and higher education.

4. Redefining the role of public providers?

Too much of the rhetoric about the role of TAFE as the public provider is based on assertions about its value and roles and its legacy reputation.

Rightly or wrongly, institutions of all kinds have to earn and continually re-earn their reputations, be they public or private organisations, brands or social institutions. I strongly believe in the intrinsic value in public institutions in terms of their capacity to meet public needs and the public interest. But we must first understand what these public interests are, ensure they are met and demonstrate how they have been met.

The public value of TAFE can't just be reduced to a set of community service obligations purchased by government. But nor can the public interest just be a series of assertions, based mainly on the values and assumptions of who work in TAFE or by peak bodies. The same holds true for the other sectors of education.

Individual institutes must be very clear about their purpose and their distinctive contributions in clear and tangible terms to the communities and industries they serve. This requires more than just facile stakeholder engagement and template mission statements. Where it is relevant, we must also be clear about how TAFE systems add to this value, as it is at the individual institute level that public value is actually delivered.

This does not mean that the role of TAFE is purely reactive to current community and industry needs and perceptions or that it can't drive its own future. On the contrary a key aspect of creating public value is challenging, stretching and changing perceptions and creating new, different and dynamic organisations.

This includes new roles and new organisations for TAFE in a reconceptualised tertiary education system and in reconceptualising vocational education itself.

Note

1. <http://www.mitchellinstitute.org.au/reports/expenditure-on-education-and-training-in-australia-update-and-analysis/>

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A Conversation: what could be the big leap forward ...?



Pam Christie

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A Conversation: what could be the big leap forward for Australia's policy on skills?

Introduction

As the outgoing Managing Director of Australia's largest TAFE system I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect on my experiences navigating the skills policy landscape over recent years.

From where I've been sitting, as a provider operating both in the skills and higher education sectors, the policy landscape has felt a bit like being on a merry go round where the same issues are revisited and recycled with no real destination.

The endless reviews and tweaking of policies has resulted in our system being extraordinarily complex and almost unnavigable by employers and students. And I believe we are at a point of complexity where we are no longer able to clearly articulate our policy objectives.

So perhaps the essential question for discussion today is how we take a big leap off the policy merry go round and think about where we want to land in the future?

Our current policy landscape

The VET system has long been regarded as the sector most closely connected to and driven by the skill needs of the economy. But system wide policy solutions in Australia over the past decade have hindered rather than supported training institutions like TAFE innovating and adapting to the changing skill needs of our economy.

For too long VET has been internally focused and distracted with debates about market design, contestable funding models, funding subsidies and regulatory reform.

Skills policy has lagged to address ongoing quality and funding issues, and despite endless efforts we face many of the same problems today as we did a decade ago. Poor quality practices and unscrupulous providers are still a blot on the VET sector landscape and attempts to lift the quality bar have done little more than add to the complexity and already burdensome compliance costs for providers in the sector.

The complexity of our funding and regulatory environment has also hindered our ability to innovate to address the skill needs of tomorrow. Many of our most successful industry partnerships such as the Lend Lease Barangaroo Skills Exchange or the Hunter Komatsu partnership have happened in spite of, not because of specific policy settings.

And despite the vision during the Bradley Review¹ for equal status for the VET sector with higher education, we are still seen as the poor cousins to the schools and university sectors when it comes to funding policies.

A big leap forward is certainly needed to turn this around.

Looking forward

The recent headline in *The Australian* on 24 August “two-thirds of students training for jobs that won’t exist” is a wakeup call for the VET sector and for us all.²

Digital disruption of our economy is real and we are running out of time to respond. We now know that in 10–15 years’ time, 40% of jobs today are at risk of no longer existing, due to forces such as automation.³ We need to ask ourselves, how well are we preparing our students today for this reality?

And it’s not just the industries we serve that are being disrupted by technological change. The impact of digital disruption on the education sector itself is described by recent CEDA research as “the long fuse with the big bang”.⁴

Our students now have more choices and are demanding more flexible approaches to learning. The growth in demand for on line enrolments in our sector is growing rapidly but completion rates are poor. If we don’t address these issues today with more sustainable and pedagogically sound approaches to flexible learning we’ll end up being part of that ‘big bang’ at the end of the fuse.

Redefining the issues

For me, the big leap forward for Australia’s policy on skills would involve a shift in our thinking away from the internal issues that have dominated our thinking in the past and to start focusing on the skill needs of the economy in the future.

From teaching competencies to capabilities:

For a starting point I would recommend a long hard look at our approach to qualifications.

The model of competency based training that Australia adopted in the late 1980s is still in use today. Yet the nature of work and

employment has changed significantly in the last 35 years.

Competencies within training packages tend to be functional and task-based, built on the old industrial model of employment which is less and less relevant. Recently, Greg Craven wrote in *the Australian* on 5 August that “Courses have in the past been designed according to history or industrial muscle.”⁵

Skills policy needs a new way of aligning our training priorities with the country’s economic and workforce needs.

The narrow definition of competencies in training packages has distracted us from our important role as educators in shaping new and more relevant pedagogical approaches to up skilling our workforce to remain competitive as a nation.

Rather than narrowly defining job competencies we should be working closely with our industry partners and shifting our thinking and teaching to more broadly defined capabilities. A focus that equips our students for an environment where jobs are rapidly evolving with advances in technology.

We also need a greater focus on our capability as educators to address critical Language Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills to equip the workforce of tomorrow.

Moving away from tinkering with ‘market design’

The sector also needs to get over its total obsession with market design and contestability. Contestability is not policy objective in its own right and the VET sector in Australia is an artificially constructed market.

TAFE’s role as the public provider needs to be recognised upfront in designing funding models rather than being used as a mechanism to address market failure.

TAFE has real capacity to add value to industry and communities by addressing areas of social and economic disadvantage and specialist skill needs especially in rural and regional Australia.

The focus on contestability as a policy driver has also resulted in endless tweaking of pricing and funding approaches. This adds costs and complexity for providers and barriers for students trying to navigate the system.

We also need to move away from trying to design an effective regulatory framework that treats all RTOs the same and recognise that TAFE has an important role to play in a healthy training market. TAFE sets the benchmark for quality teaching and learning, we have deep academic, curriculum and pedagogical capability, and a lot to contribute to designing training products.

Instead of dumbing down the VET sector with minimum qualifications for trainers and assessors, quality providers such as TAFE should be acknowledged and recognised for their capability and expertise.

From a separate vocational sector to a seamless tertiary sector

A great leap forward would also see serious consideration given to VET's secondary status and position within the broader schools and tertiary education sectors.

A recent comparative analysis of expenditure on education across the three sectors by the Mitchell Institute shows a continuation of the existing trend. While spending on schools and universities has risen significantly over the last decade, there has been a much lower rate of growth in VET spending, and now even a decline, as the other sectors continue to grow.⁶

Without careful consideration, the prospects of further higher education funding reforms will be the next policy tsunami to have unintended consequences for the VET sector.

If we want student pathways to be effective, we need to use the student as the focus of policy and funding reforms to achieve equilibrium across the sectors. Despite the uncapping of HECS funding for universities, lower socio economic status students are still underrepresented in university higher education unlike in TAFE.

Conclusion

We've all been guilty of jumping on that merry go round and joining the debates about skills policies over recent years. But change is real in our economy and our sector and it's time for a new mindset.

We need to open our thinking to transformative approaches to skills policy. This includes moving away from an endless focus on market design and embracing a more seamless and future focused approach to thinking about skilling our workforce.

No industry sector today will survive the digital revolution without innovation, and its innovative thinking we need for the big leap forward for Australia's policy on skills.

Note

- 1 Review of Australian higher education: Denise Bradley, 2008.
- 2 Two-thirds of students training for jobs that won't exist, *The Australian*, August 2015.
- 3 The New Work Order report, Foundation for Young Australians, June 2015.
- 4 Australia's future workforce, CEDA research report, June 2015.
- 5 Vocational training: The system is in urgent need of repair, *The Australian*, 5 August 2015.
- 6 Mitchell Institute Expenditure on education and training in Australia: Update and analysis. August 2015.

How can vocational education and training contribute to the next wave of economic growth?

Keynote speaker

Kate Carnell

Chief Executive Officer,
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)

Introduced by

Peter Vaughan

Chair, TAFE SA Board

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning



Concurrent Session A1

The Regulator, the RTO, the broker and the lawyer – *with apologies to Peter Greenaway*

Issues for discussion

- Regulation – shining light into dark places
- “A course is a life decision, not a gym membership” (Gerard Brody, Chief Executive Officer, Consumer Action Law Centre, Victoria, *The Australian*, 1 April 2015)
- “About 40% of all money lent to students in vocational courses will never be recovered” (Andrew Norton, Higher Education Program Director, Grattan Institute).

Panel

Denise Boyd
Chris Robinson
Jodi Schmidt
John Wall

Facilitator

John Ross
Higher education journalist with *The Australian*



Jodi Schmidt

Chief Executive Officer, TAFE Queensland

Email: Jodi.Schmidt@tafeqld.edu.au

The Regulator, the RTO, the broker and the lawyer – with apologies to Peter Greenaway

Regulation – shining light into dark places

"A course is a life decision, not a gym membership" – Gerard Brody

"About 40% of all money lent to students in vocational courses will never be recovered"
– Andrew Norton

The concept of 'shared responsibility' and shared reward is one that is readily applicable to the vocational education and training (VET) sector. Regulators, providers and third party operators all have a role to play, albeit at differing levels.

The recent focus of VET reform on contestability combined with deregulation of the market has led to a greater onus on the role of our regulators. Some commentators see greater regulation as the answer to the increased prevalence

of quality issues and unethical practices within the sector. There are, however, only so many rules and restrictions which can be applied and policed. It can be argued the answer lies in front-end, targeted auditing of our RTOs whose primary focus must be quality and completions rather than enrolments and quick returns.

The recent realignment of ASQA's responsibilities, particularly in the VET FEE-HELP space, is in accordance with this approach. Enhanced information services for new market entrants and greater self-regulation for the proven players allows ASQA to focus on critical areas and operations, unburdened with an onerous auditing regime.

Some see the solution in a return to a TAFE dominated VET market. The public provider certainly has a key role to play. The final report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Employment into TAFE and its operations conducted in 2014 advocated for COAG to develop a value statement for TAFE which would recognise that the *'affordability and accessibility of the training market is underpinned by a strong public sector provider'*¹. The Statement would also acknowledge the unique elements TAFE provides to the VET market including coverage of thin markets, foundation skills, second chance training and the delivery of community service obligations across all population centers and groups.

Interestingly, the recent review of VET funding conducted in Victoria acknowledges that *'if properly implemented, contestability has the ability to drive innovation, efficiency and improvement...'*² with the review outcomes predicated on the continuation of the contestable system.

What has been evident both in recent Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) projections and the Competition Policy Review is there will be an ongoing decline

in our terms of trade with the levels of government spending experienced over the last decade simply unsustainable.

This has particular reference to the human services sector which, by its sheer size, means even small gains in productivity, driven by competition, provide substantial benefits and savings to government. The clock can never be fully rewound. Contestability and competition for VET are here to stay and as the market continues to develop and mature and appropriate levers are applied by government, through regulation, or consumers through choice, the issues which have inevitably arisen through these reforms will be managed and rectified to ensure the right outcomes can be achieved.

Key to effective market outcomes for the VET sector is well-informed, discerning consumers through access to relevant and timely information. Ongoing improvements in information services are continuing at both a federal and state level in recognition that VET students are now required to navigate a highly competitive further education and training market. Students are being given a greater voice through the publication of their training experience and employment outcomes on the *my.Skills* website from December this year. The Victorian review is also recommending a star rating system for RTOs. This will provide students with clearer, relevant information, including the identification of poor, low quality operators. Students are purchasing a product and in this regard it can be seen as a similar exercise to obtaining gym membership. Choice will be based on lifestyle, reputation, quality and price. The consumer, if their decision is to be sound and long-term, must take the necessary time to research and compare all relevant products and select that which best suits the outcomes they are seeking.

There are lessons to be learned from the ongoing reforms of the VET market. Regulation has a role but is not the cure-all – all elements of the market must be accountable. What has been evident is that market expansion needs to be conducted in a measured and considered way. The Australian VET sector has a proud history and enviable national and international reputation. The actions of a few rogue operators cannot be allowed to colour the entire system.

Accordingly, should there be a role for the 'lawyer'? Many would argue if the lawyers are involved there will be no winners, only more, very painful lessons to be learned. If poor and/or unethical operators are unable to flourish within the market, there is no role for the lawyer. Far better to have a system which will not enable the likes of Vocation than to undertake costly litigation which will not alter the fact that government, students and the sector as whole have lost.

The importance of education cannot be understated and opportunities to access training cannot be wasted. It is therefore the collective responsibility of all players to do their part to ensure the sector provides training which is accessible and of high quality and which will lead to the successful attainment of the right skills and qualifications for excellent employment outcomes.

Notes

- 1 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Employment Report on the inquiry into TAFE and its operations TAFE: an Australian asset, forward xvii.
- 2 State Government Victoria VET Funding Review – Issues Paper p. 1.

Concurrent Session A2

Training products

Australia has an appetite for good food and fine dining. Do we have a similar appetite for good skills and fine training?

Issues for discussion

- Have competency-based training (CBT) packages outlived their “use by date”?
- In New Zealand, Vocational Pathways provide new ways to structure and achieve an entry level qualification and provide a coherent framework for foundation VET. What can we learn?

Speakers

Kathryn Shugg
Dr Peter Coolbear

Facilitator

Jenny Dodd
General Manager,
TAFE Gold Coast



Kathryn Shugg

*Branch Manager, VET Reform Taskforce,
Department of Education and Training*
Email: kathryn.shugg@education.gov.au

Review of Training Packages and Accredited Courses

In April 2014, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council agreed that the time was right to take a broad, comprehensive look at training packages and accredited courses to ensure they are still fit-for-purpose and to investigate whether they can better meet the needs of Australian industry, employers and students, now and into the future.

In October 2014, the *Review of Training Packages and Accredited Courses Discussion Paper* was released for public comment. It was aimed at engaging directly with a range of stakeholders to determine how well national training packages are responding to contemporary stakeholder needs.

Consultations revealed strong support for the fundamentals of the current training package system, but stakeholders also identified areas for improvement. A summary of the responses to the

Discussion Paper can be found at: www.vetreform.industry.gov.au/publication/summary-national-consultations.

Following the consultation process, on 8 May 2015 the COAG Industry and Skills Council (CISC) agreed to 'investigate a number of reforms designed to strengthen the system and better prepare students for changing workplaces and jobs in a modern economy, reduce complexity in the system, including rationalisation of qualifications, and place a greater focus on resolving systemic issues around the quality of assessment.'

Better preparing students for changing workplaces and jobs in a modern economy

The decision of the CISC to investigate training package reforms that better prepare students for changing workplaces provides an opportunity to consider whether the design of qualifications is providing the most efficient match of skills with jobs. It is also timely to consider how to address any barriers to developers' ability to design qualifications and training providers' ability to develop learning programs which meet learner needs in relation to skills and knowledge that:

- underpin workplace competencies and effective performance in the workplace
- provide flexibility to meet the needs of local employers, industries and labour markets
- enables occupational mobility at a local or regional level.

There are examples of qualifications in existing training packages which support occupational mobility and pathways within and between industry sectors. Consideration is being given to ways of encouraging broader adoption of qualification design principles which support flexible choices for learners and their employers.

Reducing complexity and improving efficiency in the system

Removing or retiring qualifications is an issue for systems where there has been a proliferation of qualifications. For example, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have implemented systematic review processes which target removal of qualifications that have experienced zero or very low uptake over a specified period of time (usually two years).

At their meeting in May 2015, the CISC agreed that rationalisation of the number of qualifications on the National Register should be undertaken in consultation with industry and other stakeholders.

A combination of approaches to implementing the CISC decision is being considered. Ultimately, the rationalisation of training products on the national register aims to:

- minimise duplication and proliferation of qualifications and units to ensure that the national register is easier to navigate for users
- target products on the national register that no longer reflect skills needed in the economy
- increase cost efficiencies, as government and industry more efficiently spend time and resources on the maintenance of skills standards which are useful to learners, graduates or industries.

Placing a greater focus on resolving systemic issues around the quality of assessment

A fundamental premise of Australia's training system is that an individual can demonstrate vocational competence regardless of how the required skills and knowledge have been acquired. In line with this concept, training package units and qualifications focus on what is expected of a competent individual in the workplace as an outcome of (formal and/or informal) learning, rather than on the learning process itself.

In a competency based system, assessment becomes the lynchpin of quality and validates the whole learning process that comes before it, including:

- the quality of the training delivery
- the capability of the trainers and the training providers
- the design of the course.

The inclusion of Assessment Requirements in the 2012 Standards for Training Packages strengthens industry's capacity to specify requirements for assessment where a need is identified. However the Review highlighted there are ongoing concerns about the quality of training delivery and assessment.

New arrangements for development and review of content

Concurrent to the *Review of Training Packages and Accredited Courses*, the Australian Government has announced new arrangements for training package development which are designed to be more responsive to the needs of industry and employers, drive efficiencies, and deliver high quality training packages that are nationally endorsed and continue to be internationally regarded.

It is expected that the outcomes of the Review could complement and leverage opportunities afforded by the new contestable development arrangements, for example where there are cross-overs between industry sectors in production and service structures (including access to global supply chains) giving rise to emerging industries and new skills.

Next steps

A suite of reform options is being prepared for Ministers' consideration at the COAG Industry and Skills Committee meeting in November 2015. Further information, including the outcomes of the Review, will be available on the VET Reform website following the meeting.



Delegates at the Welcome Reception, MONA



Lion Dancer performed at the TDA Conference Dinner



Sino-Australian VET Forum



Pam Caven, TDA Conference Organiser, and Kathryn Shugg, Branch Manager, VET Reform Taskforce, Department of Education & Training



Dr Peter Coolbear

Director, Ako Aotearoa, New Zealand

Email: P.Coolbear@massey.ac.nz

Good skills and fine training in New Zealand – we think we have all the ingredients but do we have the recipe?

It is important for me to be clear at the outset that I am presenting a personal view here.¹ From the advantaged position of working for an independent centre, I am privileged to be party to a wide range of discussions about effective skills training and engage with some very intelligent, highly committed people who are struggling with some highly complex issues. I am very excited by some of the work being done, by some of the ingredients being assembled, but I'm far from convinced that everything is ready to plate out.

Why the focus on skills and training in New Zealand? There are three major drivers. Firstly the role tertiary education plays in supporting New Zealand's future prosperity – usually headlined as skills shortages. Secondly, the recognition that Māori and Pasifika are under-served by New Zealand's education system as a whole.² Thirdly, there is a growing concern that 74,000 (11.5%) of New Zealanders aged 15–24 are NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training).³ It is hugely important that any government addresses all three of these issues.

As a result, a wide range of interventions have been initiated within the New Zealand system over the past few years. These include setting explicit government targets (not to be under-rated), improving access, supporting learner choice and progression, increasing the accountability of providers and industry training organisations for educational performance and addressing literacy and numeracy barriers to success:

- Two of our 10 Better Public Service Targets are about boosting skills and employment
 - **#5:** 85% of 18 year olds achieve NCEA Level 2 or equivalent by 2017 – 2014 data: 81.2%, tracking to target from 74.3% in 2011, and
 - **#6:** 60% of 25–34 year olds will have advanced trade qualifications, diplomas and degrees (at Level 4 or above) by 2018 – 54.2% in 2014, from 52% in 2011, but now showing signs of plateauing.⁴
- Fees-free tertiary education for learners up to the age of 19 who have not gained NCEA level 2 or equivalent
- Māori and Pacific Trades Training initiatives
- Vocational Pathways: supporting students' choices in schools.

- Review of all pre-degree qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF), reducing the number down from ~6,000 to less than 1,500 and making each qualification explicitly outcomes focussed
- Career Education Benchmarks
- Engineering: Education 2 Employment; ICT Graduate Schools
- Increased accountability for Educational Performance for tertiary education organisations
- Rationalisation of industry training organisations and concurrent initiatives such as NZ Apprenticeships
- A self-evaluative quality assurance system that focusses on outcomes
- Continuing strategic investment in literacy and numeracy education at study Levels 1–3.

All of these are potentially exciting initiatives. Some, in a New Zealand context, are radical and some, I believe, are ground-breaking. They potentially cover the bases well: so we do have all the ingredients on the kitchen bench. Why, then, am I less than overwhelmingly optimistic about the meal in prospect?

Firstly, each of these initiatives seems to have been developed in a relatively piecemeal (no pun intended) fashion. New Zealand government officials will reasonably assert that all these work streams cascade down from our Tertiary Education Strategy. However, this document (and their predecessors) are, as you might expect, high on aspiration and very brief on implementation. We have leapt straight from macro-level strategy to micro-implementation without a co-ordinated implementation plan in between.

Secondly, I think there is an underlying assumption or presumption that this is a problem (or range of problems) that education can ‘fix’ by itself – if we just get the education sector to do things better, then all our problems will be solved... Keep and James (2010)⁵ talk forcefully about the fact that to incentivise NEETs to succeed, interventions in education will have limited success unless the labour market itself recognises, rewards and incentivises educational achievement. These external incentives are just as important as intrinsic adjustments to make the education system more accessible and more inclusive.

But it is by no means all an externally driven problem – parts of our system are innately conservative and resistant to change. There is a great deal we can do to make our vocational programmes more attractive to students, to engage and maintain their enthusiasm and build their confidence towards becoming highly skilled and innovative trades people or professionals. At the nub of this is how we think about vocational education. All too often we refer to it solely as training (and work within a competency-based model) when we should be talking about both education and training and focussing on helping learners build the essential capabilities they require for successful careers as well as the competencies which provide an essential platform for their skill set.⁶ In a very real sense we tend to work to stock-pile the skills identified today, at the expense of equipping our learners with the capabilities to develop the skills of tomorrow.

Then there is the problem of uneven funding across the initiatives I've listed. While New Zealand has had a strong history of investment in Adult Literacy and Numeracy, our Vocational Pathways, and to some extent our qualifications reform have been developed on a shoe-string. There has been little investment in the capability or capacity of the various parts of the education system to pick up and run with the initiatives – however good they are. You can't run the system by glossy brochure. People will go where the money is.

Finally, we are, I'm sure, starting on the back-foot by confounding two separate problems: we are looking to improve successful access to tertiary education and strengthening vocational education as though they are the same problem. A priori they are not. To conflate the issues makes some damning (and incorrect) assumptions about the status of vocational education as somehow the default choice for those not succeeding academically. Practice shows they are not one and the same issue either. We are now finding we that we still have a significant progression problem from Level 2 on the NZQF to higher levels of study.⁷ Are we trying to prepare two dishes that don't entirely go together on the same plate?

Notes

- 1 I would like to acknowledge Nyk Huntington (Ako Aotearoa) for his critical and constructive review of an earlier draft of this presentation.
- 2 Ministry of Education 2014, 'Education counts: course completion rates for courses completed in 2013'. At Level 4, Maori, Pasifika and European Course Completion rates are: 77, 72 and 80 per cent respectively; over all levels, the equivalent percentages are 77, 73 and 86 per cent respectively.
- 3 Statistics New Zealand 2015, 'Household Labour Force Survey: June 2015', Tables.
- 4 State Services Commission 2015, 'Better public services: boosting skills and employment: better public services snapshot'.
- 5 E Keep & S James 2010, 'What incentives to learn at the bottom end of the labour market?', SKOPE Research Paper No. 94, Oxford and Cardiff ESRC Centre on Skills Knowledge and Organisational Performance.
- 6 See, for example, M Fullan & G Scott 2014, 'New pedagogies for deep learning whitepaper: education PLUS', Collaborative Impact SPC, Seattle, WA.
- 7 Ministry of Education 2015, 'Monitoring the Youth Guarantee Policy 2013', New Zealand Government, Wellington, N.Z.

Concurrent Session A3

Australian International Education 2025

AIE2025 is a market development plan for Australian international education for the next decade.

AIE2025 aims to drive a paradigm shift in Australia's international education sector. The Trade and Investment Minister, the Hon. Andrew Robb AO MP has set down two key challenges to Australia's international education sector.

Issues for discussion

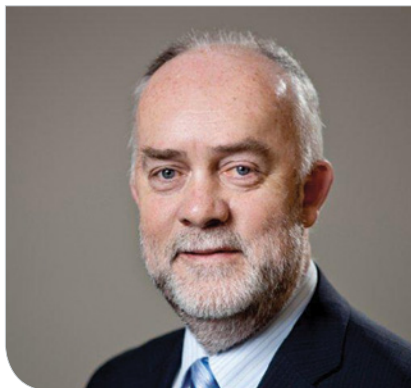
- Can Australia double the number of international students and visitors learning and training in Australia in a sustainable manner?; and
- Can Australia substantially increase (as measured in the millions) the number of people overseas learning and training via Australian-developed courses or content?

Speaker

John Angley

Facilitator

Dianne Murray



John Angle

General Manager, International Education, Austrade

Email: Tamara.Kearsley@austrade.gov.au

AIE2025

Background

The potential

International student mobility has become a defining feature of the 21st century. In 2012 at least four million students went abroad to study, up from 2 million in 2000. Not only have Australian education providers benefited from this massive movement of student across borders, communities across the country have been enriched by hosting a cultural diverse group of young people. Australia's people-to-people links have also been deepened with a significant cohort of influential international alumni, particularly in Asia. There is also the contribution international education makes to the Australian economy, with education exports generating \$17.6b in revenue in 2014. Demand for education and training globally is expected to increase over the next 10 years. Taking advantage of the opportunities for Australia requires fresh

thinking about international education onshore and offshore in order to leverage Australia's competitive strengths and strategic advantages to meet global demand.

Two reports in 2014 identified the international education sector as having high potential to drive Australia's future prosperity and international engagement. McKinsey Australia's *Compete to Prosper: Improving Australia's global competitiveness* categorises international education as an 'advantaged performer'. *Positioning for Prosperity? Catching the next wave* from Deloitte highlights international education as one of the 'Fantastic Five' sectors that will drive the next wave of economic growth in Australia post the mining investment boom.

[Presentation Illustrations are available on the TDA website, www.tda.edu.au]

These reports – and others like them – have received a great deal of attention from political and business leaders. Trade and Investment Minister the Hon Andrew Robb AO MP, wrote an opinion piece in *The Australian* on 25 March 2015 that highlighted this opportunity and set out two key challenges for Australia's international education sector. The Minister asked what would it take over the next decade for Australia to:

- Double the number of onshore international students and study visitors
- Reach millions of people via borderless education, skills and services.

The Minister asked Austrade 'to work with the international education sector this year, including with non-traditional players, to develop a long-term market development strategy out to 2025'. In asking Austrade to steward the co-creation of a bold new 10-year market plan for Australian international education, Minister Robb said that it needs to:

- start by changing mindsets, within the sector and beyond
- have a strong and engaging narrative about the future of the sector
- build on our strengths as well as consider new opportunities for the sector
- be long-term and shared across the sector, emulating Tourism 2020 and the tourism industry.

‘A spectacular opportunity lies before us ... the real test is working out ways to make the most of it.’ **Andrew Robb**

Austrade has been working with the education sector and others to develop AIE2025, a market development plan for Australian international education for the next decade. This initiative aims to drive a paradigm shift in Australia’s international education sector. The long term nature of the plan requires not only an expanded definition of what constitutes the sector but also mindset changes to ensure that it realises its potential to be a key contributor to the future prosperity of both Australia and our international partners.

AIE2025 consultation workshops

A key stage in the formation of AIE2025 was the consultation workshops held in all Australian capital cities, and Townsville, during April 2015. Over 800 people representing diverse perspectives from within and outside the sector attended these ‘town hall’ style meetings. The key questions covered during the workshops included:

- What could be the vision for this long-term market development plan?
- What are the strategic priorities that would contribute to achieving the overarching vision?

- What mindset changes would be required to drive sustainable growth onshore and the delivery of borderless education, skills and services?

Nexus between the Draft National Strategy for International Education and AIE2025

The development of a long-term market development plan for the international education industry (AIE2025) contributes to the work being progressed by the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. Christopher Pyne MP, in developing a National Strategy for International Education. That overarching strategy will support a modern, competitive and sustainable Australian international education sector and promote the internationalisation of Australian education.

The Hon. Andrew Robb AO MP hosted two international education roundtables in August and September. These were Minister Robb’s contribution to the conversations that his ministerial colleagues – Minister Pyne and the Assistant Minister for Education and Training, Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham – have hosted with stakeholders relevant to their portfolio responsibilities. Minister Pyne has held two roundtables on 18 June 2015 and 13 August 2015 discussing Australian international education at the highest level. Likewise, Minister Birmingham has hosted two Global Skills Training Forums on 19 May 2015 and 28 July 2015 focusing on the profile of vocational education and training in the draft strategy.

Concurrent Session A4

US Community Colleges conferring baccalaureate degrees: an update

Twenty of fifty US states now have community colleges that have traditionally been two-year institutions conferring four-year degrees. This session addresses the reasons that this trend continues, especially in the disciplines of health care and technology.

This session will provide a behind-the-scenes look at the when, why, how, who of America's comprehensive community colleges.

Issues for discussion

- How does a college receive the authority to confer?
- Is the culture of the college changed when baccalaureate degrees are conferred?
- What is the impact of the growing need for health care professionals?
- What is unique about the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, the BSN?
- Are there financial implications for the colleges?
- Why would anyone object to this?

Panel

Beth Hagan

Mike Hansen

Donna Meyer

Bonnie Heckard-Farmer

Facilitator

Robin Murt

TDA Board Member;

Chief Executive, TAFE SA

When do markets work in education – and when don't they?

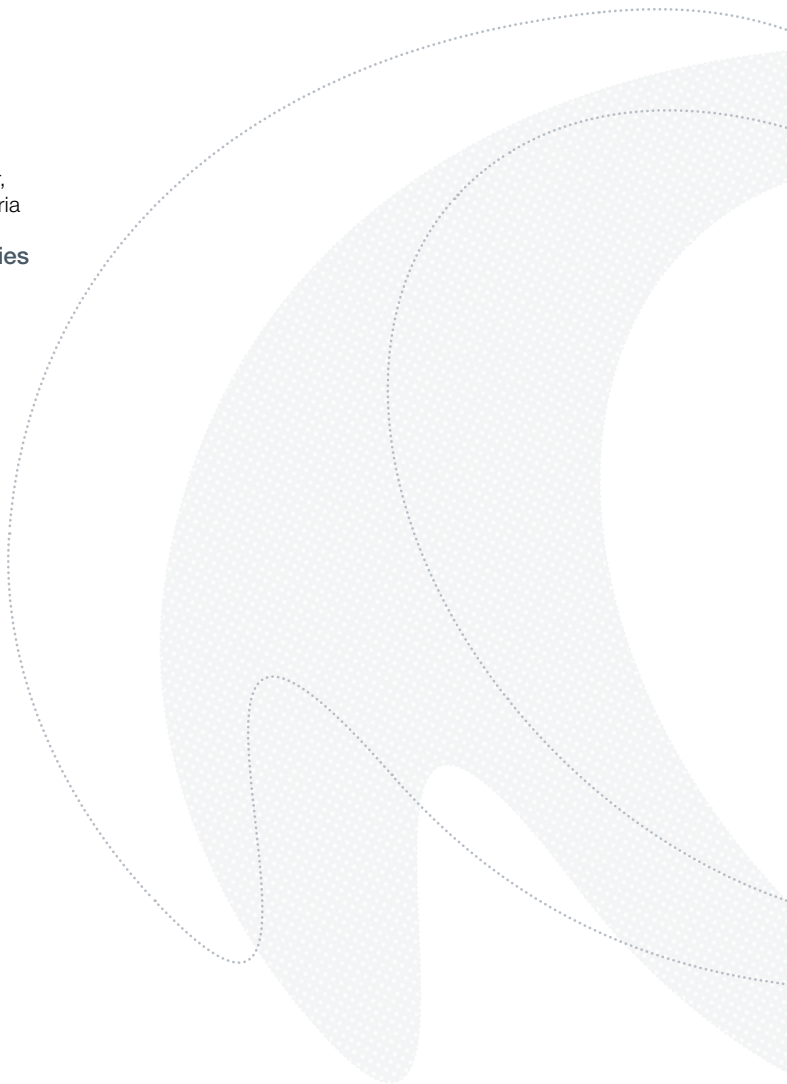
Keynote speaker

Dr John Daley

Chief Executive Officer,
Grattan Institute, Victoria

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning



When do markets work in education ...



Dr John Daley

Chief Executive Officer, Grattan Institute,
Victoria

Email: john.daley@grattan.edu.au

Markets in education

Market theory

- Why do markets work?
- Why do markets fail?
- “Working” and “failure” are questions of degree
- Government failure can be worse.

Education markets in Australian practice

- How competitive are education markets?
- What are education markets ‘working’?
- Where are education markets ‘failing’?

Policy lessons in market design

- Government subsidies require government controls on quality
- If prices are unregulated, outcomes need to be visible.

Why do markets ‘work’?

Focus producers on what consumers want

- Consumers often know better what they want than governments
 - e.g. students picking where the jobs will be
- Change institutional behaviour
 - providers focused on consumers, not farming the subsidy
- Change internal dynamics
 - Consumer preferences a counterweight to history
 - e.g. shut the under-performing departments.

Sharper incentives for efficiency

- Bureaucrat incentives are to build empires
- Commercial incentives are to maximise profits.

Encourage specialisation and value chain disaggregation

HR impacts

- Mindset shift: employee contribution not government privilege.

Why do markets ‘fail’?

Principal-agent

- Purchasers not spending their own money.

Information asymmetries

- Purchasers don’t know what they’re buying.

Lack of competition

- Barriers to entry, minimum efficient scale.

Under-provision of public goods

- Education has a public value, but purchasers would under-buy.

Government failure can be worse than market failure

- Jobs services network has issues, but was the CES perfect?
- Government schools
- University undergraduates
- Parents buying playing fields
- International students buying uni 'prestige'
- Lack of real competition amongst schools in practice
- Hence subsidies in most education markets.

Markets in education

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How competitive are Australian education markets?

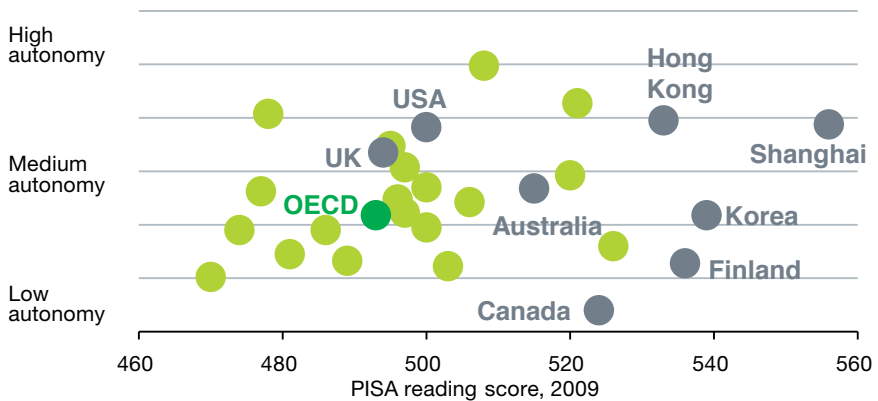
	Open to new entrants	Breadth of purchaser choice	Pricing discretion	Subsidy	Outcome visibility
School (gvt)					
School (ind)					
Uni (dom)					
Uni (i/nat)					
Voc (cert)					
Voc (short)					

What are the outcomes of education markets?

	Entry	Choice	Pricing	Subsidy	Visibility	Successes	Issues
School (gvt)							Little impact
School (ind)						Better staff management	Pricing for elite facilities and class sizes
Uni (dom)						Better demand match 2nd tier innovation	Little efficiency innovation
Uni (i/nat)						Very responsive to student demand	Pricing for research prestige
Voc (cert)						Rapid expansion of places	Some poor student outcomes
Voc (short)						Good outcomes with minimal regulation	

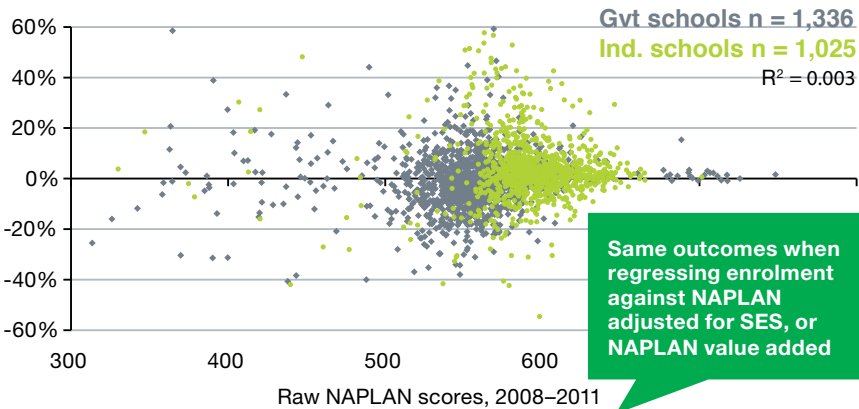
Internationally, good school outcomes do not require high levels of autonomy

School autonomy and PISA performance



Locally, good school outcomes are not reflected in choices

Enrolment change, %, 2009–11

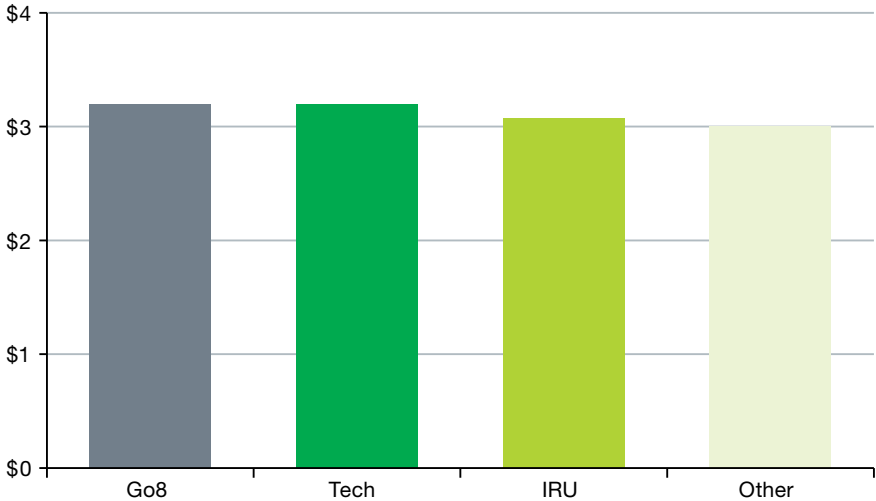


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Type of university attended makes little difference to lifetime earnings

Lifetime earnings premium relative to only completing year 12, \$ million

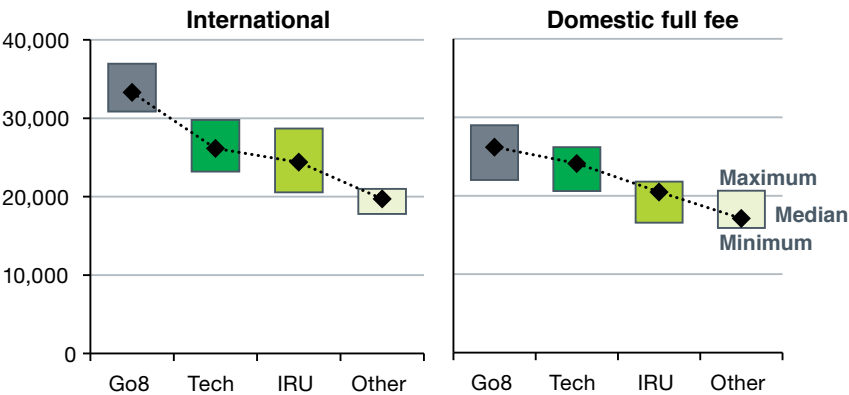


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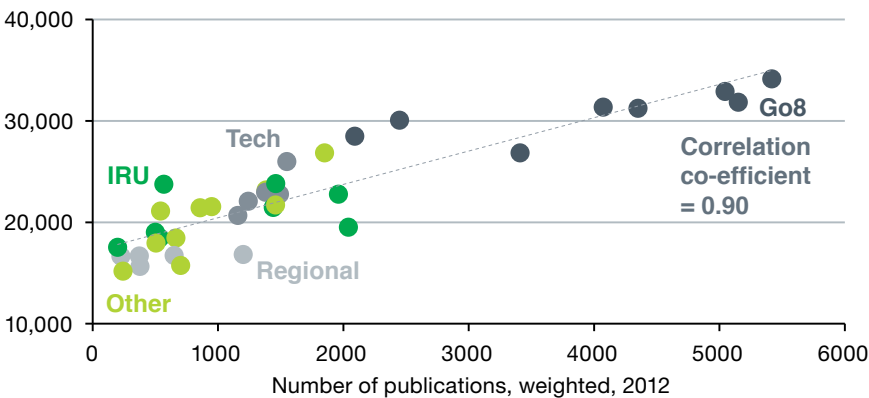
Group of Eight universities charge international students a bigger premium

Masters of commerce, annual fee, \$2014



Without other information, international university students pay for research reputation

International undergraduate Student fee, weighted average, 2012



What are the outcomes of education markets?

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Policy lessons in market design

- Government subsidies require government controls on quality
- If prices are unregulated, outcomes need to be visible.

What are the policy lessons?

A dangerous combination

- Government subsidy
- No cap on quantity
- Limited barriers to entry
- Limited quality control.



Significant bad apples

- Pink batts
- Individual savings accounts
- ? NDIS
- ? Vocational education.

Resolution

- Higher barriers to entry
- Bigger sanctions for failure
- E.g. doctors, universities.

Another bad combination

- No price controls
- Poor visibility of outcomes.



High prices for peripherals

- International students and research rankings
- Independent schools and sporting facilities.

Resolution

- More visibility of outcomes
- E.g. employer short courses, public exams.

How adopting a Smart Campus mindset can help TAFEs train people for the jobs of the future

Speaker

Brad Davies

Introduced by

Gail Eaton-Briggs

Executive Manager Education Services,
TasTAFE



Brad Davies

Director, dandolo partners

Email: braddavies@dandolo.com.au

Training for the global economy: trends in the Asian Region

Context

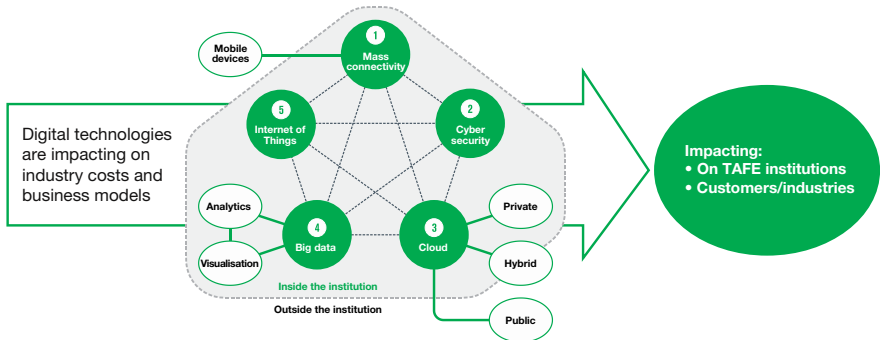
1. Genesis of this report: Asia as a supplier not just a market
2. The study tour and report development process
3. How we hope it is used.

A changing landscape

The global economy is undergoing fundamental change

1. Global economic power is shifting towards Asia: by 2030 the purchasing power of middle class of Asia will be double Europe /North America combined
2. Economies transitioning from low to high value activity: energy and environmental technologies, next generation IT, biotech, digital
3. Skill requirements are changing. In Australia up to 44% of jobs – or 5.1 million positions – are at risk from digital disruption.

Technology disruption is both a driver of and antidote to change across industry



Five major trends

Trend 1

Gearing VET to the needs of the global economy, not just needs of students

Major Focus Areas and Fast Facts

Prioritising skills required by the economy in the medium term by the economy – not left to the whim of student preferences. Nearly a third of job vacancies by 2018 will require some post-secondary qualification but less than a four-year degree.

Investment in STEM skills (75% of the fastest growing occupations require STEM-related skills/experience), broadening to STEAM

Examples

China has mandated mathematics study until the end of secondary school and 41% of all degrees awarded in Chinese institutions are in STEM subjects

“Consider the five-year employment growth rates for the following jobs: ICT business and systems analysts (19.1%), software and applications programmers (17.2%), and database and systems administrations and ICT security (21.1%). These projections don’t even account for jobs not yet invented.”

STEM

With a nod to the Chief Scientist in absentia...

The current picture is bleak and the sense of urgency not there...

Australia has experienced a decline in year 12 participation rates for STEM across the board.

Between 1992 and 2010, participation in Year 12 biology dropped from 35–24%, physics (21–14%), chemistry (23–17%) maths (77–72%).

- In maths 72%, only 10% of students were studying at an advanced level in 2010.

Chief Scientist: the achievement gap between best and worst performing states in maths is the equivalent of two years of schooling.

That “talent war” has a particularly acute focus in the STEM disciplines and is ramping up the importance of “talent security” as a major national policy imperative.

“If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.”

Derek Bok, Lawyer and educator

Trend 2

A relentless focus on job readiness

Major Focus Areas and Fast Facts

Embedding competencies in collaboration and problem solving

Creating job-like training experiences within institutions

Entrepreneurship – training people to create their own jobs

Examples

- Up to 20% of curriculum in some Asian institutions provides instruction in ‘methodologies’ (non-tech skills)
- Production-based learning in Malaysia with profits re-invested in the institution
- Bangladesh uses ICT to develop next generation of medicos across borders (exchange with Germany).

Trend 3

Integration with industry, not just partnerships

Major Focus Areas and Fast Facts

Integrating industry into all aspects of VET: signalling of demand, curriculum design, industry traineeships and feedback on graduate quality

Explicitly targeting firms with potential to transfer innovation to institutions – not just a supplier/customer relationship

An increased focus on the role of start ups at the dynamic edge of economies

Examples

- Meister Schools in Korea (including formal alliances with Samsung, Hyundai, KIA)
- Cisco Networking Academies in 170 countries.

"Relationships firms that are knowledge and innovation-rich firm offers two advantages: the opportunity to work with companies that will thrive in the global economy and those with the potential to transfer innovation to the institution."

Trend 4

Technology now driving pedagogy, not just an augmentation tool

Major Focus Areas and Fast Facts

82% of learners in Asia Pacific would prefer learning materials on a mobile device

Use of predictive analytics to drive personalised training, and better screening

Gamification of training: 50% of all organisations that manage innovation processes will gamify those processes by 2015

Blended environments and flipped learning models

Examples

Major education gaming platforms emerging in Korea:

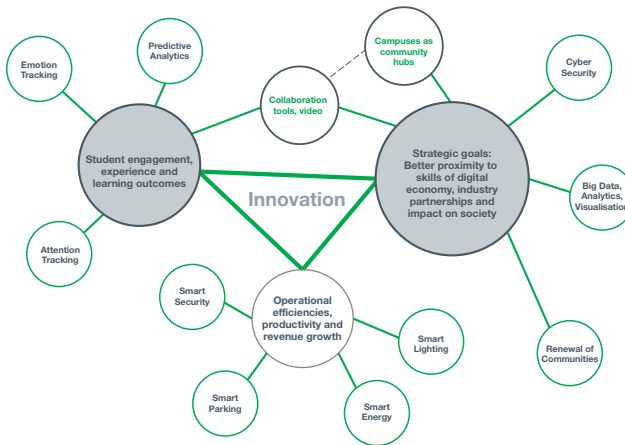
- Gamified
- Classting (mobile communities)
- Codetoki (employer to trainee matching).

"Traditional lecturing techniques ('sage on a stage') could increase the failure rate by a factor of 1.5 as compared with more active, progressive learning techniques."

Trend 5

Emergence of a Smart Campus mindset

Major Focus Areas and Fast Facts



Examples

- WiFi end points to capture smartphone data to monitor attendance in real time
- Predictive analytics to address disengagement earlier
- Emotion tracking experiments (using facial recognition software) at Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore.

"In the Australian VET sector alone the Value at Stake from the impact of IoE is estimated at \$1.7 billion over the next decade."

Where to from here ...

Dissemination of the report – www.dandolo.com.au/TAFE

Briefings with governments and individual TAFES

2016 Study Tour to Singapore/South Korea in April – braddavies@dandolo.com.au – to express an interest

Address by the Deputy Premier of Tasmania and Opening of the Sino-Australian VET Forum

Speaker

The Hon. Jeremy Rockcliff MP

Deputy Premier of Tasmania and Minister for Education and Training, Tasmania

Introduced by

Dianne Murray

Acting Chair, TDA Board; Institute Director,
TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute

Joint Session: Keynote

Three Years in Beijing: thoughts on China's Rise

Keynote speaker

Professor David Walker

BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies Peking University,
Beijing and Alfred Deakin Professor,
Deakin University, Melbourne

Issues for discussion

- The key determinants in the relationship between China and Australia?
- "Australia's continuing prosperity will be far more influenced by its success or failure in engaging the rapidly expanding economic community ... than it will by conceivable change in the tax mix or industrial relations." John Edwards "Beyond the Boom" 14 November 2014)
- What do Australians need to understand about the status of vocational education in China (in particular, vocational skills)?
- The potential of a VET/TAFE alumni organisation in China?

Introduced by

Martin Riordan

Chief Executive Officer,
TAFE Directors Australia

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning



Professor David Walker

*BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies
Peking University, Beijing and Alfred Deakin
Professor, Deakin University, Melbourne*
Email: david.walker@deakin.edu.au

Three years in Beijing: thoughts on China's rise

In 2012 the then Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced the creation of a new Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University, Beijing. Although there were other Chairs of Australian Studies in countries like the United States, the UK, Ireland, Denmark and Japan, our failure to have an established presence in China was considered a serious omission. This was all the more the case as there is now an extensive and significant Australian Studies network in China which has an interesting history.

In 1979, right at the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), and as China opened to the world, nine young Chinese academics were sent to Sydney University to study the English language and Australian literature. This group later became known as the 'Gang of Nine' and on their return to China they were influential

in establishing the first Australian Studies programs across China. In 1988, they also created a peak body, the Chinese Australian Studies Association, which from that time has hosted an Australian Studies conference every two years. The Australian Studies network continues to grow and diversify. At present, the network of Australian Studies Centres in China has close to forty Centres across China.

As wonderful as that growth has been, it created a problem. It proved difficult to provide all the support this growing network required. To solve this problem a new Australian entity was created: the Foundation for Australian Studies in China (FASIC). This is a unique, not-for-profit organisation was designed a) to support a newly created Chair of Australian Studies, at Peking University and b) to build the research and teaching capacity of the Australian Studies network across China. FASIC is supported by the private sector, notably by BHP Billiton as well as by Universities Australia and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Since taking up my position in February 2013 and after many talks with Chinese colleagues and students several images of Australia emerged. The Chinese have an almost unshakeable view that Australia is a pristine continent largely untouched by the social and industrial impacts of the last two hundred years. Whether earned or not, Australia has a fresh green image. This idea is driven by a comparison with the massive scale of China's development since the late 1970s with its inevitable effects on the environment. There are huge cities in China that retain virtually nothing in their built environment that is more than fifty years old. When I visit the capital of Mongolia, Hohhot, I can plausibly claim to be one of the oldest things in that city.

Along with environmental protection, heritage and heritage management are big questions for China. Enormous efforts are going into tree-planting programs, landscaping and development of environmental amenities and restoration of historical buildings. That said, the Chinese often do not have a great attachment to their countryside in the way that we know it. For many Chinese, especially older Chinese, life in the countryside brings harsh memories of poverty and privation. But that is changing. Our vast local German supermarket in Beijing now displays a considerable range of tents and outdoor camping equipment. The Chinese are becoming very environmentally conscious and the pivot towards renewable energy with the use of solar and wind power is very evident.

It is also very apparent that education matters in China. When we walk out the main gate of Peking University on any weekend, we pass very long queues of people lining up to come in and look over the campus. Often these are middle school students or parents and grandparents with a young child, showing them what a wonderful place the university is and confirming how proud they would be to have a child studying there. This emphasis on Tier 1 universities presents a challenge for the technical education sector as the Polytechnics and technical schools are often seen as second best. But there are opportunities here too to craft different messages about the importance of gaining premium skills. A Peking University graduate in mass communications told me recently that there were no good jobs in her field and not much money. So she had taken a course in jewellery design and is now doing very well indeed in the fashion industry.

China has now rehoused most of its people. So as the Chinese economy now moves from its massive obsession with rebuilding China, tower block after tower block, new questions are emerging about

how best to design and service cities for people with middle-class lifestyles and growing disposable income. There is a huge demand for new things, smart things, well-designed things and expensive things. Any idea we might have that cheap is the way to go in China is a mistake, whether it relates to wine or cars or anything else. In targeting products to China, including educational products, we need to remember that quality matters.

Surprisingly, history also matters. Whenever we visit a University one of the first things we are shown, even in quite small universities, is their museum. A guide tells us about the University history with evident pride and we are shown well-presented photographs and memorabilia. In a very good initiative, Australian Universities have made a commitment to managing their educational memory by setting up the Australia China Alumni Association (ACAA), the largest body of its kind anywhere in the world. This is network building on a very big scale with all the events, awards and ceremonies that such organisations create. Alumni is family and there is a large investment in family in China. Links, associations and friendships are essential to creating that insider group that Chinese will want to belong to.

It seems to me that there is an opportunity here for the TAFE/VET sector to create its own alumni organisation and its own family history for China. Such an organisation would provide incomparable opportunities for networking. It would also help create opportunities to address the important question faced by the TAFE sector of educational prestige. There are so many good stories to be told about the value of technical and vocational skills, about the creativity, ingenuity and foresight needed to build the new future we are entering. An Alumni Association would be an excellent way to do this.

Round Table – Hypothetical

TELSTRA, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Queensland Rail have all been “floated”. If TAFE were to be floated on the Stock Exchange, what would you want to see before you invested? What would you be looking for? What would be the business perspective?

This session is a facilitated examination/discussion of the issues faced by TAFE institutes as public sector bodies successfully operating and competing against the growing number of public company providers in the vocational education and training market.

Speakers

Warren Tapp

Jan Davis

Mark Ryan

Jodi Schmidt

Pam Christie

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning

Sino-Australian VET Forum VET Reform in China

The Australian vocational education and training system & VET reform

Robert Adams

Chief Executive Officer,
Transport & Logistics Industry Skills Council

Current developments in TVET in China

Yanwei Ma

Research Director,
National Institute of Education Science (NIES), China

Trialling Australian Qualifications in China

Dr Melissa McEwen

Branch Manager,
Governance and Engagement Branch,
Department of Education and Training

Responding to China's tertiary education reform: Collaborations and programs between Australia and China

Martin Riordan

Chief Executive Officer,
TAFE Directors Australia

Master of Ceremonies

Yin Wang

Director, Journalist and Host,
International Channel Shanghai



Dinner speaker Matthew Evans, author, presenter and farmer



Pam Christie, Managing Director TAFE NSW



Kate Carnell, CEO, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry



Dr David Ross, President and CEO, SAIT, Canada



Dr John Daley, CEO, Grattan Institute



Professor David Walker, BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies, Peking University, Beijing; Alfred Deakin Professor, Deakin University, Melbourne

Switching on students: Technology isn't enough!

Technology can provide a powerful boost to student engagement if it is designed and used in pedagogically sound ways that foster active learning.

Although Professor Samson is a leading meteorological researcher and teacher, he has become globally renowned for his teaching innovations which focus on increasing student engagement, extending learning opportunities for students, and creating tools to track student comprehension and success via comprehensive analytics.

Speaker

Professor Perry Samson

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning



Professor Perry Samson

Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, University of Michigan, USA

Email: psamson@echo360.com

Switching on students: Technology isn't enough!

Overview

There is widespread agreement that for students to be successful in college they need to be engaged in their learning. The role of technology in helping students engage remains controversial as it offers both opportunities for enhanced participation and opportunities for enhanced distraction from the learning goals. The position of this paper is that while technology isn't, by itself, enough to engage students it is an essential component of an engaged classroom. In this presentation we discuss how students in an introductory science course offered both face-to-face and online at the University of Michigan used a web application that allowed them to respond to questions, pose questions and take notes. The data from their participation were recorded, quantified and compared with their resulting grades on exams

to ascertain to what degree measures of student participation were related to student learning. These measures of student participation were augmented by data from the university's student information system, which provided background information. Data was also collected from a number of surveys administered over the semester. Analysis of the data revealed some strong relationships between grades and the degree and quality of student participation. Moreover the use of technology dramatically expanded student participation and, importantly, most significantly increased participation among student populations that have traditionally been less likely to participate.

1. Introduction

1.1 Motivation

Student engagement is widely thought to be a key predictor of student achievement (Freeman et al. 2014; Kuh et al. 2008; Pintrich & de Groot 1990; Tinto 1997). We all have a sense of what an engaged student looks like (Ainley 2012; Christenson et al. 2012; Finn & Zimmer 2012): they participate by asking questions, challenging assertions and completing assignments. As we are able to digitally measure more and more of how a student participates, to what degree will it be possible to identify a suite of measures that can quantify engagement so we can identify underperforming students earlier in the semester?

1.2 Background

Data on student behaviours used in this study originated from LectureTools that the author created to increase opportunities for active learning in a large introductory course (Samson 2010). LectureTools was subsequently commercialised and has since been revised and is now part of the Echo360 Active Learning Platform (Samson 2015).

Active participation is known to improve learning (Freeman et al. 2014; Fritschner 2000; Howard & Henney 1998) but typically instructors dominate class time with presentation and offer few opportunities for students to actively participate (Fischer & Grant 1983; Smith 1983). Verbal questions from students tend to be limited to a small percent of class participants (Karp & Yoels 1976) in these environments. LectureTools allowed students to respond to a wide

range of questions as a web-based replacement for clickers, view the instructor's slides, take notes synchronised with the slides, and pose questions to the instructor (Figure 1). Students could also respond to questions by texting their answers. All the student actions were recorded to a database and made available to the instructor.

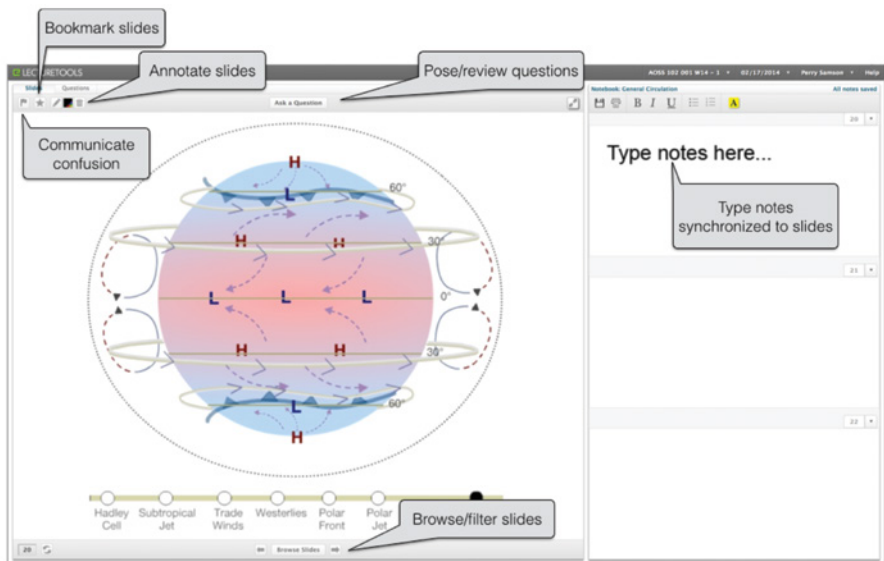


Figure 1. Student view of LectureTools identifying their ability to take notes, annotate slides, bookmark slides, note confusion, answer questions from the instructor and pose questions to the instructor.

2. Methods

2.1 Course Structure

The course studied, *AOSS 102, Extreme Weather*, is offered every semester at the University of Michigan and is offered for students as one of many “science distribution” courses to fulfil a science requirement. The course was offered in three one-hour blocks 10.00–11.00 MWF. It has been cited as one of “Ten Courses with a Twist” by the *New York Times* (Pappano 2014) and one of the “8 Coolest College Classes in the U.S.” (ZipCar 2015). In the winter semester 2014, the course was offered in a hybrid format that was simultaneously streamed in real time giving students the option to participate in person or remotely. LectureTools allowed students to participate synchronously either in person or remotely to answer questions, pose questions, take notes and/or indicate confusion.

2.2 Analyses

All the data were extracted and then linked to students' hourly exam grades. Processing was accomplished using Microsoft Excel for categorical frequency analyses and Weka (Hall *et al.* 2009) for statistical clustering, categorisation and linear regression.

3 Relationship of exam grades to student background, behaviour in class and motivation

3.1 Exam Scores vs Participation

3.1.1 Attendance and Grades

When students attend class they are exposed to presentation and/or discussion, which provides an opportunity to listen to and interact with someone knowledgeable in the topic. If they don't come to class, perhaps more importantly, they are declaring that other things are more important than this course on this day.

Attendance was defined as logging in during class and performing at least one task, such as taking a note or answering a question. A student could use an internet-enabled wireless device to participate or they could text in their answers and it was recorded if they registered their phone number in LectureTools. Also, students who chose not to use or did not have access to technology to participate in class could hand in their answers to questions on paper at the end of each class to receive credit for participation and attendance.

Students had the option of attending class in person or remotely via live streaming video. Those students participating remotely could answer questions and ask questions via LectureTools as if they were physically in class. Students' locations were collected by posing a question at the beginning of class in LectureTools asking “Where are you today?”. While the answers were not checked for truthfulness there was no penalty for participating remotely and the timestamp of the answer informed whether the student was answering during class time.

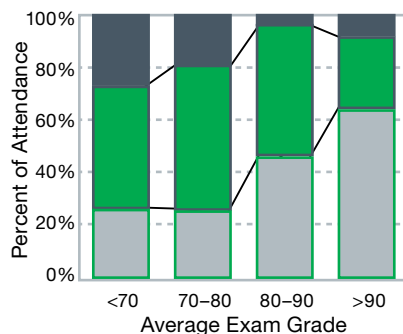


Figure 2. Average exam grades versus attendance characteristics. Students who got the highest grades tended to physically come to class. Students with lowest grades tended to either skip class or attend remotely.

Figure 2 shows that students with higher grades tended to physically come to class while students with lower grades were more likely to skip class and/or participate remotely. That said, the addition of the streaming option led to a higher level of student participation as measured by quantity of student answers to questions compared to other semesters when only face-to-face was offered.

3.1.2 Participation in Class Activities

Another measure of participation was how many of the instructor-posed questions did students attempt to answer. The hypothesis was that if students “attended” class but were not answering questions they were likely disengaged.

Figure 3 compares the fraction of total questions posed by the instructors that were answered by attending students over the semester to the average grade on exams. This result demonstrates that even when students do attend class their participation in class further affects their performance on exams.

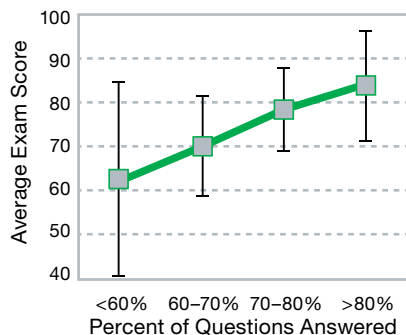


Figure 3. The average of the three one-hour exams versus the fraction of questions answered over the semester.

3.1.3 Correctness in Class Activities

Intuitively, a better measure of potential success is when students not only answered an instructor-posed question but also got the question correct. If a student got questions right during class it is reasonable to expect that they were more likely to get similar questions right on the subsequent exam. The fraction of gradable questions correctly answered was calculated for each student for each class session. Figure 4 plots the fraction of questions correct in class against the resulting exam grades and displays a positive relationship with R^2 of 0.46 between correctness on in class activities and average exam score.

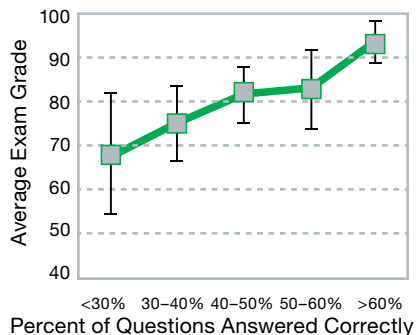


Figure 4. The average of the three hourly exams versus the fraction of gradable questions answered correctly.

3.1.4 Taking Notes

A student taking notes is obviously participating in class. The corollary is that not taking notes presumably limits the learning possible by limiting opportunities for reflection. That said, note taking by itself may or may not lead to learning.

In this study the students' notes were parsed into words and counted per student per class. Figure 5 shows that average grades generally increased with increasing volume of notes. The plot also illustrates a great deal of variability within each bin that probably represents the wide range of learning styles in the students. Some students also preferred to take notes by hand rather than type so the digital measure of note taking may not accurately represent the nature of note taking in this course.

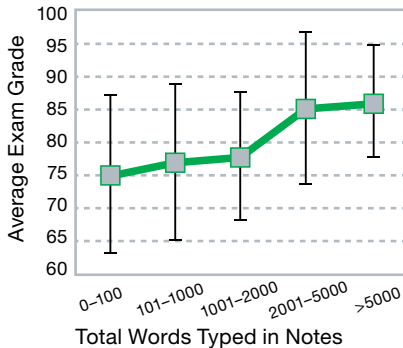


Figure 5. The distribution of total words typed over the semester as a function of average of the three hourly exams. The maximum number of words typed by a student was close to 12,000.

4. Conclusions

The results indicate student exam grades were related strongly to their incoming grade point average and how many questions students answered and got correct in class.

Student attendance was also somewhat related to grades but attendance in general was quite high with the availability of the remote feed. More interesting was the finding that those who chose to attend remotely tended to get lower grades.

As we learn more about how students are behaving in class and are able to identify patterns of behaviour in combination with their academic histories that portend poor grades, the vexing challenge will be what interventions to employ. In the absence of evidence the advice instructors offered was often variations on the theme of “work harder.” As evidence can be presented that is course specific and honed to the background and behavioural patterns of students, one assumes that this evidence will be more effective at initiating behavioural change. The real challenge will be to design feedback tools and interventions that reinforce good patterns of behaviour and motivate those with poor patterns of behaviour. But the key to all this will be collection of behavioural data before, during and after class to identify evidence-based relationships and quantify their value as a basis for designing feedback and interventions.

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Marketplace Sessions

The TAFE Directors Australia National Conference Marketplace Session will consist of 3 x 25-minute discussion groups conducted around round tables. This interactive session provides an opportunity for conference delegates to hear about new directions, discuss practical issues, share experiences and ideas, ask questions and make useful contacts.

1. Professor David Walker
in conversation

Professor David Walker

2. Professor Peter Noonan
in conversation

Professor Peter Noonan

3. Industry engagement in validation
of assessment – a model

Denise Stevens

4. Approaches that make us
a national leader in Aboriginal
Education and Training

Brad Polak

5. Profiling institutional diversity of
VET providers in Australia

Associate Professor Ruth Schubert

6. Inspiring entrepreneurs in
the classroom

Adam Mostogl

7. Changes we need to make to
prepare students for the jobs of
the future

Brad Davies

8. A new and compelling narrative
for the directors of Australia's
public providers

Dr Don Zoellner

9. STEM education and workforce
development are not the exclusive
domain of the university sector

Dr Bernardo A León de la Barra and
Cheryl Underwood

10. Higher Level Apprenticeships

Sara Caplan

11. TAFE practitioner researchers:
What can a TDA/AVETRA innovation
scholarship do for you?

Peter Hurley and **David McLean**

12. Competency progression in the
trades: fact or fancy?

Professor Berwyn Clayton

13. Tailoring training to jobs

Jen Rodger

14. Credentialing professional
practice as an alternative to
traditional education

Allyn Radford

15. Taking true command of change in TAFE: Integrating organisational values, words, actions and behaviours to raise results

Leanne Drew-McKain
and **Dr Glenys Drew**

16. Vet in 2020: Emerging markets and the importance of information

Jodieann Dawe

17. The importance of making student enquiries and enrolments easy

Russ Francis and **Tim Bambrick**

18. Student success – best practice is better business

Tony Maguire

19. Building business with industry

Rod Cooke

20. Quality and accountability – What can we learn from Ontario, Canada?

André Diez de Aux

21. A new “green” wave is hitting TVET in China

Linda Condon

22. Journey towards excellence: Crucial conversations in nursing education

Donna Meyer

23. A new model for VET growth in South Asia – Skills Development for GCC

Kanishk Kumar

24. Globally connected; globally committed

Dianne Murray

Sino-Australian VET Forum

Panel Discussion: Perspectives on running joint venture TVET programs in China

Compliance with Australian VET standards in China

Tim Gilbert

Manager of Transnational Programs in the Melbourne Polytechnic International Office

Working in China – the teacher's perspective

Paul Lennard

Education Manager, Cookery and Food Processing (South), TasTAFE

Developing joint TVET Venture programs

Jianxin Yang

Principal, Wuxi Institute of Commerce, China

Investing in vocational education in China

Ma Yunsheng

Chairman, Shandong Chambroad Holding Co. Ltd, China

Platform for Sino-Aus VET cooperation

Zhigang (Rick) Zhao

Director, International Business, Global Link China (GLC) International Group, China

Master of Ceremonies

Yin Wang

Director, Journalist and Host, International Channel Shanghai

“A taste of Tasmania” Conference Dinner

Guest speakers

Jo Cook

Local Food Curator at MoMa and the Dark Mofo Winter Feast

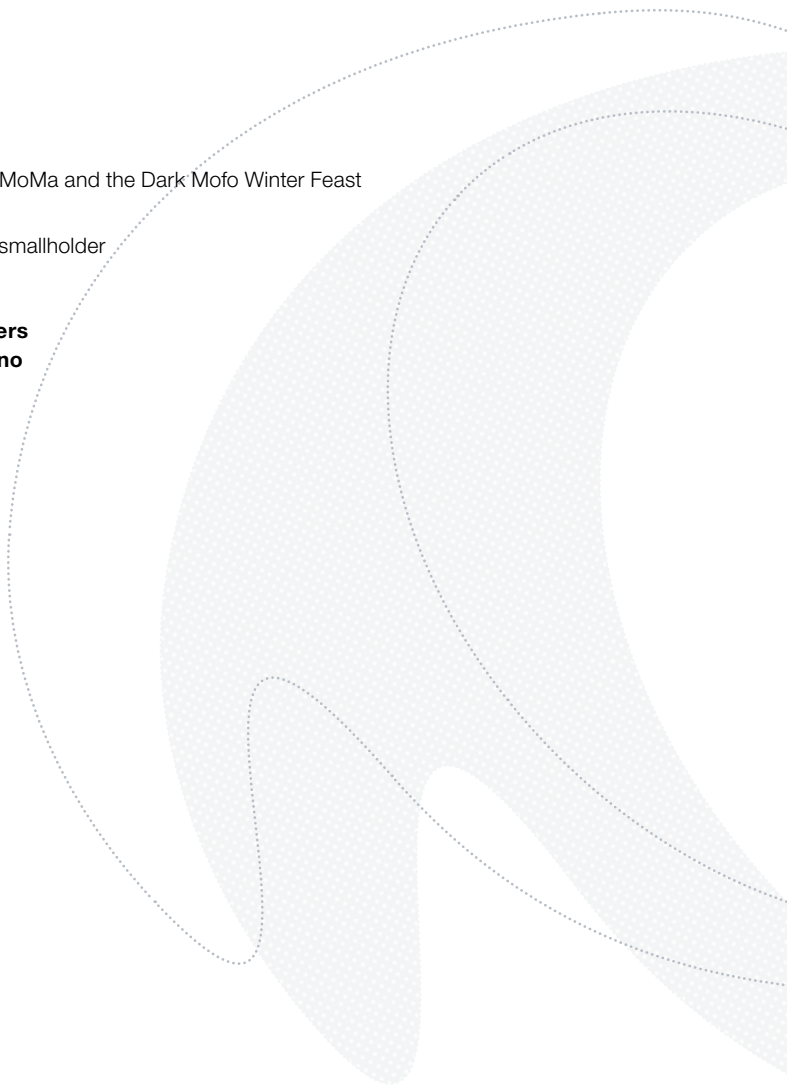
Matthew Evans

Author, presenter and smallholder

Entertainment

Buddhist Lion Dancers

Grace Ovens, soprano





Dr Don Zoellner

Research Associate, Charles Darwin University, NT

Email: Don.Zoellner@cdu.edu.au

A new and compelling narrative for the directors of Australia's public providers

Introduction

Australia's public providers of vocational training, still known in some states as Technical and Further Education (TAFE), are struggling for their very survival. According to Craven (2015) 'going into a meeting of TAFE directors is like entering the depressives' ward in a run-down hospital' due to chronic underfunding by governments and competition from an "infestation" of cut-rate private providers. This paper briefly examines some of the causes of this situation and suggests some positive ways for the leadership teams of the public providers to reposition their institutions in what is become a consistent bipartisan pro-market policy environment.

Competition policy

The state training systems were introduced to market forces as a result of the training sector specific Deveson Report (1990) and the more general Hilmer Report (1993) into Australian competition policy. These documents served as the modern incarnations of policies designed to give effect to capitalist markets as described by Adam Smith (2009) in 18th century Scotland. He believed that aside from a necessary minimum, state intervention stifles the equalising process of competitive exchange and creates monopolies, protectionism and inefficiency and 'that the road to equality and prosperity should be paved with a maximum of free markets and a minimum of state interference' (Esping-Andersen 1990, pp. 9–10).

In international comparisons Australia is an archetypal liberal society with traditional work-ethic norms where the state encourages the market either actively by subsidising private schemes or passively, by only guaranteeing a minimum level of support (Esping-Andersen 1990, p. 27). This positive view of market-driven approaches remains alive and well in the most recent national review of competition policy. It makes the following recommendation regarding the provision of human services:

Each Australian government should adopt choice and competition principles in the domain of human services. Guiding principles should include:

- User choice should be placed at the heart of service delivery
- Governments should retain a stewardship function, separating the interests of policy (including funding), regulation and service delivery
- Governments commissioning human services should do so carefully, with a clear focus on outcomes

- A diversity of providers should be encouraged, while taking care not to crowd out community and volunteer services and
- Innovation in service provision should be stimulated, while ensuring minimum standards of quality and access in human services (Harper *et al.* 2015, p. 26).

This market bias is underpinned by an unwavering belief in the power of consumer choice. Advanced liberalism believes managing the economy is not sufficient justification for government to be active in a range of social activities when it is possible for a market which maximises the personal entrepreneurial disposition of the individual (Miller & Rose 2008, pp. 97–98). And these distinct clients/customers/consumers are active, choosing, responsible, autonomous persons obliged to be free and to live life as if it were the outcome of choice (Miller & Rose 2008, p. 19).

Public training providers operate in an environment known as ‘new public management’ (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 110). The making of policy and allocation of funding is at the core of this style of governance while the actual production of goods and services is placed at a distance. One variant is known as the funder-purchaser-provider model. In the case of vocational education and training, the minister is the funder, purchasing is done by a government agency and providers can be sourced from an increasingly privatised market. In many areas of the economy, governments have progressively withdrawn from service provision as markets matured in fields such as air travel, banking, insurance and, increasingly, essential services. ‘From the perspective of the public taxpayer, there is a great reliance on market forces to regulate the activities of these for-profit providers and ensure efficient and productive use of public funds’ (Yu & Oliver

2015, p. 27). While the levels of political and community tolerance for the brutal efficiency of the share market to sort out the poor performance of stock exchange listed corporate training providers are not yet clear, the rapid destruction of Vocation’s shareholder value from \$3.35 to 8.5 cents (Loussikian 2015a, 2015b) serves to positively reinforce the views of those who advocate for markets in training.

Market failure: the rationale for public provision

On the other hand, there is recognition that markets are not perfect. Education is an activity that putatively yields positive externalities (benefits) for society at large in addition to the benefits directly derived by the recipient. These public goods provide a rationale for government intervention – through subsidy, direct public sector production or regulation – to compensate for the tendency of the market, if not prodded, to produce insufficient output (Wolf 1993, pp. 20–21). In particular, the Productivity Commission (2012, p. 60) recognises that an Australian vocational education and training free market would result in a number of ‘market failures’ and produce sub-optimal outcomes from a community-wide perspective thus justifying public provision. The pursuit of equity objectives can also warrant government intervention.

Non-market failure

However, the Productivity Commission (2012, p. 60) also recognises the possibility of ‘government failure’ in the provision of vocation education and training services. “Our understanding of the production technologies associated with education is remarkably limited and is associated with considerable uncertainty and ambiguity” (Wolf 1993, p. 53).

Public providers stand accused of 'non-market failure' due to:

- Disjunctions between costs and revenues
- Uncertain technologies
- Politically rewarded time discounts
- Distributional inequalities (unmet demand, lack of responsiveness)
- Single source production
- Absence of a termination mechanism
- Unanticipated side effects (Wolf 1978, 1993).

When all of these shortcomings are added together, the advanced liberal democracies around the world are continually attracted to individual choice in a standardised market as recommended by the previously mentioned Harper Review. In response, the federal, state and territory governments have created, mostly financed and regulated a vocational education and training market resulting in a 'policy disaster that makes the Charge of the Light Brigade seem well organised' (Craven 2015). The overwhelming policy appeal of individual's selecting between alternative providers has produced a system that provides choice without regard to if people wanted it, if they could exercise it effectively, provider sustainability or even links to industry/business demand (Shove 2003, p. 40). The various government bureaucracies that control funding, policy and regulation have produced a market where choice is the ultimate outcome rather than skills acquisition – a classic case of goal displacement driven by internal agency priorities (Wolf 1993, p. 109).

The contemporary training policy environment

Those who choose to invoke an appeal a bygone era between 1945 and 1990, when an 'Oxbridge-inspired' adult education sector was operating, face serious policy challenges (Marginson 1993). A number of key policy contributors believe that it is during this period that the middle class appropriated the 'working man's university' of TAFE (Kell 1994). This resulted in public funds being used to broaden the cultural and aesthetic horizons of the reasonably well-off at the expense of increasing the skills of those who would be able to make a greater economic contribution to the national economy leading to improved personal and community circumstances. Professor Peter Noonan, the long-experienced bureaucrat turned researcher, stated in an interview that any attempt to describe TAFE as educational rather than economic is 'ahistorical'. This appropriation of the vocational education and training sector ameliorated arguments in favour of non-market interventions in the name of equity. One result is that the role and need for large government-operated training systems has become subject to an increasingly strict economic analysis of costs and benefits.

While the recent electoral defeat of Victorian and Queensland state governments suggest that the conventional wisdom that training matters carry little weight at the ballot box may be changing, it does not provide the basis for complacency and a return to the 'golden era' of TAFE (Goozee 2001). The dominance of markets and individual choice at the macro-economic policy level will ensure the pressure on public providers will not subside. There may be some slight changes to funding arrangements, for example, we have recently seen the introduction of a levy on large employers to fund apprenticeship training in the United Kingdom (Evans 2015) and the extension of income contingent loans to

higher level qualifications in the Australian training sector (Ross 2015). However, both of these changes have been used to stimulate market-driven choice while simultaneously reducing public expenditure on training and shifting the cost to employers or individuals. In addition, public training providers should not rely upon the 'sunk cost fallacy' as the basis for continued support from state and territory governments, they are quite willing to close campuses and divest themselves of the land and facilities (Queensland Government 2013).

It is also important to note that state and territory governments, despite having a long commitment to owning and operating public training systems, do not necessarily have to be in this position. For example, the youngest state-level jurisdiction, the Northern Territory, has never established a public TAFE system preferring to contract arm's-length providers to deliver vocational training in a quasi-market. This has given that government considerably more training policy flexibility and less potential for conflicts of interest in Cabinet meetings (Zoellner 2013). The recent decision by the Council of Australian Governments (2015; Craven 2015) to actively investigate reform of the federation by handing over control of the national training system to the Commonwealth Government suggests that the states and territories are willing to explore different approaches to vocational education and training (VET).

There is one significant proviso included in this decision that reflects the importance of being able to deploy training as a public policy response to problems that face the states and territories:

Leaders agreed to consider a shift in responsibility for VET to the Commonwealth provided States and Territories could elect to remain TAFE providers within a national system (Council of Australian Governments 2015).

Quite simply, vocational education and training remains a 'common sense' response to most public policy issues that require government intervention. The state and territory leaders are clearly not willing to relinquish their ability to use the formal training system to achieve desired outcomes. It is in this space that TAFE directors need to develop a compelling narrative that will redress the continual decline of their institutions' fortunes witnessed in recent times.

Six positive actions to reposition public provision of training

The first action suggested is for public training providers to urgently shift from being perceived as just another public sector bureaucracy to being viewed as a friendly, responsive partner with those who rely upon a highly skilled labour market. This can mobilise a range of strategies, some of which will be much easier to implement than others. For example, every position description for jobs in the colleges could explicitly list a requirement to develop and nurture a relationship with important external friends. Possibly the most difficult area will be modernising industrial awards and enterprise agreements in order to make your institutions more flexible and creative in response to the macro-economic commitment to choice-driven markets. If these awards and agreements still resemble those developed for school teachers, there is a fundamental misfit of your organisational objectives and the operating environment. As described by the Victorian Auditor-General (2015), many of that states' providers have not been able to respond to funding changes in a timely and/or financially sustainable way. The development of a training labour force and work practices that meets the contemporary policy and funding environment is crucial to the very survival of many public providers – this will be very hard work indeed, but ultimately necessary.

This style of strategic discussion leads to the second area – moving to the demand-side of training. One way of helping government frame problems so that training is a solution is to identify ‘friends’ in business and industry and genuinely understand their workforce requirements. While sources of funding are becoming more diverse, governments will continue to be the major funder of skills training for the foreseeable future because of the tendency of the training market to under-produce. Governments will base their investment decisions upon the advice of employers who will also influence the choice of training provider. Having your industry-based friends advocate on your behalf with funding authorities when government decides how to allocate public funding is vital. While the traditional focus of most public providers has been on their relationship with funding agencies, the new narrative must involve employers advocating on your behalf. The old relationship with funders remains important, but it is no longer sufficient for future survival. Moving from the supply-side to the other side is the Holy Grail of training policy and developing a demand-side narrative as part of your institution’s value proposition helps to lead the conversation rather than just responding to agendas set by others.

Westminster-style government based upon ministers operating in Cabinet has evolved to include a massive publicity component that is used to get positive messages out to the public. The third area of strength for public providers is to ensure that a range of ministers can use your institution as a source of those politically important ‘good news stories’. As the former speaker of the US House of Representatives stated, ‘all politics is local’. Politicians are elected to deal with the mundane, everyday issues that confront electors. Providing ministers and local members with frequent opportunities to attend award ceremonies, openings of building and events and a steady stream of positive

news, if undertaken as part of an integrated strategy of engagement, helps promulgate a new narrative.

In the fourth area and continuing with the local theme, recent election results in Victoria and Queensland as well as the South Australian decision to direct funds away from the private training market to TAFE (Department of State Development 2015) can be interpreted as a demonstration that citizens did not vote to close down their community TAFE campus. The public provider has a brand value and serves as some sort warranty for quality training, particularly when compared to so-called ‘rogue providers’ in the marketplace (Birmingham 2015). Maintaining and critically mobilising the certainty of high quality delivery to underpin employers’ and employees’ faith in the training system gives public providers a crucial role that governments are willing to fund rather than risk having the entire national system collapse – TAFE is the benchmark and needs to continuously promote this important role.

Fifth, take every opportunity to challenge the uncritical and continual repetition of the aspiration to an industry-led VET system. There is more than ample evidence that industry has been in charge for at least several decades and has produced structures and procedures that are in constant need for so-called reform. The time has come to ask a different question – has industry leadership for the national training system worked?

Finally, there is a strategic imperative to either maintain or open a dialogue with state and territory politicians and senior bureaucrats about the capacity of public providers to achieve social and economic policy objectives across a wide range of policy areas. Actively assist these governments to frame problems in ways that inevitably positions training as part of the solution (Bacchi 2009). As pointed out by the Australian Public

Service Commission (2007), most modern public policies are aimed at changing the behaviour of citizens, mostly implemented by giving individuals the skills and knowledge to make 'appropriate' choices. The 'common sense' of training is very hard for policy-makers to ignore and having a responsive public provider is an important mechanism to ensure that the population does not make 'wrong' decisions in a totally free market. By making your organisation an important tool of government, there is likely to be greater support for TAFE. One need only look at the grand survivor of VET reform, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, to see how governments treat institutions they value.

If VET is handed over to the Commonwealth Government, as canvassed in the Reform of the Federation agenda (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 2014), your organisations become even more important to state and territory governments. You need to reposition your institutions and stories. This will involve changing from being a victim of cabinet decisions to having a narrative of strength, capacity and willingness to be one of the most useful organisations available to implement programs across virtually all public policy areas.

Conclusion

The appeal of the marketplace and the desire to have citizen's make choices will not disappear. For public providers of training this will require a new account of themselves that builds friendships and moves to the demand-side of the market to both meet governments' policy objectives and to retain faith in a national training system. There is a future for public provision because markets' fail and underprovide, but the leadership teams must explicitly address the issues that can lead to non-market failure. Public providers must have a compelling narrative that returns the major focus and intention of policy outcomes to skills and knowledge acquisition.

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Quality and accountability – What can we learn from Ontario, Canada?

Introduction

When I worked developing vocational education and training policy for the Ontario Government, we often looked to Australia for inspiration. The two systems were born at roughly the same time, out of a need to supply skilled workers for our booming industrial sectors. Reports from both jurisdictions from the 1960s and 1970s often referenced each other. Later on, Ontario borrowed ideas from Australia, like a qualifications framework; training packages and provincial program standards came about at roughly the same time, as did a shift away from awarding qualifications based solely on time spent in the classroom. In short, Australia's TAFE system looks very similar to Ontario's system of 24 colleges of applied arts and technology.¹

Below the surface, however, the differences between the two systems in terms of outputs and outcomes are quite profound. The goal of this paper is to provide some context about the policy and governance environment in which Ontario's colleges operate, and to highlight some exemplary practices that the TAFEs could consider borrowing. This paper begins with a brief historical and political context of the Ontario college system, and continues with a description of some key elements that distinguish it from the TAFEs. It concludes by highlighting some "easy wins", ideas that I believe could be made to work in Australia, even in the current policy environment.

Ontario's Colleges

Ontario is Canada's most populous province with 13.7 million inhabitants. It has typically been Canada's economic heartland, making up 36.5 per cent of Canada's GDP.² The province has a system of 24 publicly-assisted colleges, 22 universities, and about 600 registered private career colleges. In Canada, unlike in Australia – and other OECD countries – there is no federal oversight of education; it is solely the responsibility of each province and territory. The reason for this is primarily the fact that the country, at its formation, was made up of two linguistic groups, with two different religions. The result is that Canada boasts not one, but thirteen education systems.

Ontario's system of public colleges came into being in the late 1960s, when the provincial government decided that the education system needed to meet the skills needs of the province's booming manufacturing and service sectors. Researchers from Ontario studied a number of international systems, and judged that the new colleges of applied arts and technology should be a parallel system to the universities, with little permeability between the two. The first colleges opened in 1967, with a mandate

to deliver technical and applied education to communities across the province at the sub-baccalaureate level.

The system grew steadily until the late 1980s, when the provincial government decided to implement a series of initiatives aimed at driving the sector forward. One of the results was a process to develop provincial standards for programs of study offered in the colleges. To this end, the government established the College Standards and Accreditation Council, which adopted an approach based on learning outcomes. This approach, combined – perversely – with the budget cuts of the mid-1990s, was the key driver of change in the college system. The council was disbanded in 1996, with the responsibility of standards development transferred to the provincial government, which continued with a learning outcomes-based approach. In 2002, in a further devolution of responsibilities, the government enacted legislation making the college system self-governing. In exchange for this, the colleges were required to set up their own program-level quality assurance service, initially called the credentials validation service. This piece of legislation also enshrined advisory committees at the program level for each college, the credentials framework (a qualifications framework for sub-baccalaureate and non-apprenticeship qualifications in the province) and with it, the concept of outcomes-based – rather than time-based – qualifications, as well as the need for colleges to deliver in all programs of instruction, essential employability skills and a basic level of general education.

This combination of outcomes-based vocational skills, transferable essential employability skills, with a small general studies component has meant that the focus of learning at Ontario's colleges is firmly on the students, and what they are able to *do* with the knowledge and skills that they have acquired. This approach has

been reinforced by the quality assurance mechanism in place in the province and has become deeply embedded in the college system culture.

Two jurisdictions, two different systems

So what are the main differences between the TAFEs and Ontario's colleges? On the surface there don't appear to be many. Both are publicly-assisted, engaged with the needs of local enterprises, primarily sub-baccalaureate, and have similar social mandates in terms of admissions and support for under-represented groups. The credentials framework is even, to a certain extent, a reproduction of the original AQF. Moreover, competency-based and outcomes-based training don't seem to be too different either.

The differences lie with the outputs, the approach and the outcomes. At the output level, the most significant difference is that 51 per cent of all non-apprenticeship qualifications awarded by Ontario's colleges are at the 2-year diploma level (2012–13). A further 16 per cent were 3-year advanced diplomas, and 11 per cent are at the graduate certificate level. One-year certificates, the rough equivalent of a Certificate III in Australia, account for 26 per cent of the total qualifications awarded. Interestingly, graduate certificates are the fastest growing qualification for Ontario's colleges. What is most interesting is that this growth is driven by enrolment pressures of university graduates looking for practical skills. The number of university graduates enrolled in colleges has increased more than 40 per cent between 2009 and 2014.³

I have asked myself many times why this difference is so striking, and the best answer that I've been able to come up with is that because they are so closely engaged with the colleges and their programming, employers recognise the value of the qualifications, and are willing

to invest their time – if not their money – in their development and improvement. Part of this comes from their recognition of the value of learning outcomes, whose quality is tangibly manifested in the workplace.

Accountability

Rather than going into accountability to the government for how the colleges spend public funds it would be more expedient to discuss ways in which colleges are accountable for their outcomes to their individual communities. Each program is required through regulation to have a program advisory committee (PAC), composed of external stakeholders, employers and graduates. The quality of each program is reviewed annually by the committee which proposes changes to ensure continuous improvement and ongoing relevance. The program areas are responsible to each college's Board of Governors, who monitor performance throughout the institution. Similarly, it is the Board that determines the need for and ultimately approves new programs and is accountable for their ongoing success.

Development of programs and training material led by educators

As mentioned previously, the development of provincial standards for college programs of instruction began around the same time as the development of training packages in Australia. Private institutions have been largely excluded from this process in Ontario because the qualifications described in the standards are issued by the provincial government (with the colleges as proxies), and there has never been significant political will (or funding) for the government to establish a quality assurance mechanism for private providers. As a result, the target of the standards has historically been the publicly-assisted colleges.

In Australia, there is considerable emphasis on programs of study being relevant to industry and that this has been the main impetus for the current revisions to the process. I would argue, however, that industry involvement in Ontario is just as great but that it occurs at a different level than in Australia. Industry needs are determined by the PAC of each college offering a program. These are collected and collated by the project officer developing the standard, typically a college faculty member seconded to the government. Each PAC member, as well as industry experts external to the PAC is then given the opportunity to provide feedback on a draft standard. Prior to being finalised, the draft is submitted for validation to ensure that the level and scope of the learning is consistent with the level of the qualification in the credentials framework. The final process is then validated by the vice-presidents academic and a senior government official. Program standards represent the minimum learning requirement for a program, and are very often added to by colleges to meet the specific needs of its local employers. For example, a program in Mechanical Technology may be modified to suit local industries by adding foci such as "Industrial" or "Automotive". Similarly, some colleges have institution-specific learning outcomes that reflect their desired area of focus. These are often added to programs of instruction, and examples include sustainability and global citizenship.

Program standards express the learning expectations using vocational learning outcomes which are holistic, student-focused statements of attainment, and are able to express what graduates will need for success not just for a particular job but for a career in the area of study. Graduates must also meet the 11 (or, in the case of the French-language colleges, 13) essential employability skills learning outcomes (in communication, numeracy, critical thinking and problem-solving,

information management, and inter- and intra-personal skills). These are typically embedded in the college's vocational curriculum but may also be delivered through the general education courses. Like competency-based training, vocational learning outcomes are not time-based; they recognise that students learn at different rates. They differ in that they allow each college the flexibility to design programs of study to suit their needs and their student bodies. As such, curriculum is not prescribed by the government.

Not all programs have provincial standards, however those that do not are required, through both internal and external quality assurance processes, to meet the same requirements and rigour, in terms of mapping to the credentials framework and ensuring industry input.

Quality assurance

One of the most significant differences between the TAFEs and Ontario's colleges is the way in which quality is assured. Because the college system is self-governing, it has its own quality assurance service. This is important because it nurtures the needs of the system, and allows a focus on continuous improvement, not compliance.

Quality in Ontario's colleges is assured through by the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS); it is performed at two levels, the qualification and the institution. When the colleges were made self-governing in 2002, it was agreed that, in exchange for this autonomy, they would set up their own quality assurance service. Prior to this, new programs of instruction had to be approved by the ministry. By virtue of becoming self-governing, college boards of governors were authorised to approve new programs, but these would have to be validated against the Credentials Framework by the new Credentials Validation Service (CVS). New programs are validated if: (1) their

focus is vocational; (2) they are offered at a level consistent with a qualification in the Credentials Framework; (3) the curriculums can reasonably assure that the learning outcomes have been achieved; (4) they meet provincial program standards (where these exist) and (5) they meet the requirements of external regulating bodies, where these exist (as in the case of registered health professions, for example).

After one year of operation, the college presidents requested that an institutional quality assurance mechanism be put in place. This new model, called the Program Quality Assurance Process Audit (PQAPA), was piloted in 2006, and implemented formally in 2007, after having undergone an external evaluation. The PQAPA is based largely on colleges' ability to meet agreed outcomes in the manner they deem most appropriate, based on their size, student cohort, academic focus, and local community.

Result

As a result of having been given the responsibility to better respond to their local communities and student bodies, and being freed to a certain extent from government regulation, the colleges have become major innovators. A number of institutions, for example, have developed applied research programs that target the needs of local industry. Others, who have opened practice health clinics on campus, have become community hubs. Many have utilised their close connections with local employers to develop mandatory work placements, or to match apprentices with employers (which is a logical step, given that 90 per cent of Ontario's apprentices undertake their in-class training at one of the colleges).⁴

Conclusion

Ontario's colleges have demonstrated that self-regulation, with a focus on meeting the needs of local communities, is key to continuous improvement. A quality culture that places an emphasis squarely on student outcomes has allowed the colleges to develop a workforce that meets the needs of local industry.

The Ontario model of program standards is dependent on the input of local businesses in communities across the province. This bottom-up approach is able to account for the needs of both large and small employers, and because all employers contribute to the end product, and hire the students, they are engaged much more closely throughout the process. It will also help to build a degree of trust between local employers and educational institutions.

What can the TAFEs do?

1. *Push for a move away from competency-based training.* According to Wheelahan (2015): 'CBT is the curriculum that is used when institutions are not trusted ... This social settlement has delivered a fragmented VET system, with qualifications that are designed for specific jobs even though people do not end up working in those jobs'.⁵ A move to a student-focused model for learning will allow the learning experience to focus on careers, rather than jobs.⁶ This will eventually allow for deeper learning, and could result in increased enrolments in diplomas, rather than Certificate III and IV qualifications, as well as better opportunities for articulation into degree programs. A stronger knowledge base for graduates will also reduce the need for future retraining, resulting in considerable savings for students, employers and governments.

2. *Educate employers, starting at the community level* (and let them tell government what they learned). Each TAFE should use its industry reference committees to tell employers why they would be better served by employees with higher levels of knowledge and skill.
3. *Engage industry in applied research.* Research projects that meet the needs of local industry are another fairly simple way to engage local businesses more closely, and to create stronger ties between educators and employers.

Further reading

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Notes

- 1 For the sake of brevity, I'll use the term "college" to refer them, but that term, when referring to Ontario's system should not be interpreted in the same way as the in the American system, where it refers generically to all postsecondary institutions.
- 2 Ontario Ministry of Finance 2015, Ontario Factsheet, www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/ecupdates/factsheet.pdf
- 3 Colleges Ontario 2015, Environmental Scan.
- 4 Colleges Ontario 2015, Environmental Scan.
- 5 L Wheelahan 2015, 'The future of Australian vocational education qualifications depends on a new social settlement', *Journal of Education and Work*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 126–46.
- 6 This is evident not just in the Ontario model but in the northern European one as well.

Conference Day 2

Friday 11 September 2015

Sino-Australian VET Forum Business Breakfast (Optional session)

Opportunities for conference delegates to engage with our Chinese delegates

An opportunity to network with Chinese VET providers wanting to establish partnerships with Australian institutions. The breakfast tables will be organised into five industry sectors including Agriculture/Horticulture, Aged Care, Tourism/Hospitality, Children's Services and Nursing. Each table will have industry representatives and an interpreter to help the flow of conversation.

Welcome

Gail Eaton-Briggs

Executive Manager Education Services,
TasTAFE

Masters of Ceremonies

James Burrows

Marketing and Overseas
Development Manager,
Government Education and Training
International (GETI)

Yin Wang

Director, Journalist and Host,
International Channel Shanghai

INSPIRE

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning

Award-winning current affairs journalist

Speakers and panellists

Chris Medcraft

Melinda Lethbridge

Adam Mostogl

Bruce Mackenzie

Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham

Sara Caplan

Paul Roberts-Thomson

Catherine Murdoch

David Riordan

Rebecca Hall

Andrew Norton

Dr David Ross

Associate Professor Peter Whitley

Doug Ferguson

Nicholas Hunt

Dr Melissa McEwen

John Ross

Matthew Denholm

Laura Tingle

The Hon. Sharon Bird MP

Merrill Atlas

Maria Peters

Jodi Schmidt

Pam Christie

Neil Fernandes

Associate Professor Dr Steve Shanahan

Shane Kay

Gail Eaton-Briggs

Nicholas Gruen

Sino-Australian VET Forum

Jonathan Wang

John Angle

Sino-Australian VET Forum Welcome

Master of Ceremonies

Anne Ripper

Director, Tasmanian Government Education and Training International

Doing business in China: a hard-headed look at the rules of engagement

- What do you need to take into account?
- Practical information to guide you and avoid potential mistakes

Jonathan Wang

Director, Asia Pacific Desk of ANZ Corporate and Commercial Banking

John Angley

General Manager, International Education, Austrade

Master of Ceremonies

Yin Wang

Director, Journalist and Host, International Channel Shanghai

My inspiration – My passion – My future

Chris Medcraft

2014 Tasmanian ATSI Student of the Year

Melinda Lethbridge

Student, Swinburne University of Technology –
2014 Australian Apprentice of the Year

Adam Mostogl

Founder/Inspirer and Program Manager,
Illuminate Education and 2015 Tasmanian Young Australian of the Year

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning

TAFE the quality benchmark?

Keynote speaker

Bruce Mackenzie

Lead Reviewer, Victorian Education and Funding Review

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning



Bruce Mackenzie

Lead Reviewer, Victorian Education and Funding Review

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TAFE the quality benchmark?

In January 2014 the Minister for industry Ian McFarlane said of the VET sector in Australia that it was a convoluted mess and a bureaucratic nightmare. But for those working in this convoluted mess and living this nightmare there was hope because the Minister indicated that he would rescue VET by methodically and carefully restructuring the sector. He intimated that he had had an implementation program which could be rolled out in July 2014.

At a similar time a TAFE teacher (Jill) in Western Australia wrote, 'I work for TAFE and we have borne the brunt of a ridiculous, conflicted mess of rules, regulations and inconsistent audits now for many years. Creating document trails has become our core business, not training. She went on to say at the institutes highly experienced and skilled professionals are being hounded because they can't show evidence of consulting with industry (never mind that they are from industry) or they can't show how every part of their

training documents map to every dot point on national training package documents. Never mind that they have great relations learners and provide quality training.'

The Minister moved on to some other portfolio and I'm not sure of Jill's fate ... she may well have become an auditor ... but the ministers convoluted mess remained.

The quality benchmark conundrum in VET

Determining if an organisation is a quality benchmark is difficult in VET because as Philip Toner wrote, 'VET has multiple overlapping objectives and it's hard to align inputs with the achievement of those objectives'.

There are more than 5000 training providers including 59 TAFE Institutes. TAFE is well-known to the Australian community. Less familiar however are the thousands of private VET providers that include business colleges, industry associations, welfare organisations, et cetera. Adding to the complexity of the VET sector is administered by eight state and territory governments plus the Commonwealth. Whilst TAFE is the largest education and training sector with more than 1000 campuses its survival is constantly under threat by the continual reforms that Liberal and labour governments at Federal and State level have imposed. If TAFE is the quality benchmark it would seem given the continuous reform that occurs in the sector that the benchmark is a movable feast.

An important issue that confronted the review I undertook in Victoria was that the system apart from being racked by scandals and being perceived as a convoluted mess was murky in that no one knew much about the training organisations that operated in the state. This made it difficult for consumers, that is, students and industry to make informed decisions about the capability of an organisation.

Definition of terms

Quality is important because weak VET systems create problems by providing poor information to students, will at best specify vague or no outcomes, are accompanied by inadequate risk management, and the manipulation of naive consumers. This ultimately penalises students who are more likely that in the higher education sector to come from disadvantaged backgrounds. When economy is vulnerable, as it is now, the greatest source of social justice and economic security is employment. An effective vocational education and training system can be a significant factor in positive employment outcomes. The weakness of deciding what is a quality benchmark in the Australian system is that we have no outcomes specified by any government. The only standard is a compliance standard. Our entry standards are so pathetic that neither state nor Commonwealth governments have any legislative control over a private RTO once the RTO passes the registration test unless the RTO is using government funds. Compounding this difficulty at the State level or at least in Victoria is that the auditor general has no legislated capacity to audit private providers even if they are in receipt of in excess of \$600 million of taxpayers money.

Quality has many different definitions. For the purpose of this discussion I have defined quality VET as having the following dimensions:

That the users (students, employers, government, community) perceive that the:

- qualifications issued meet the prescribed standard
- a graduate is capable of performing a range of activities to a certain level
- system is safeguarding its standards (quality assurance)
- learning experience aligns with expectations.

Quality assurance is a function that sets provider and delivery standards by:

- inspecting monitoring and evaluating providers practices and outcomes
- protecting and supporting the rights of the users whether they be students,, employers, government or the community
- espousing a continuous improvement philosophy.

(Quality assurance in Australia relies on regulation, contracting standards, and information provision. It is a compliance based and risk based process. There is no incentive to continually improve.)

Benchmarking is a criterion or reference point by which to measure something.

The quality benchmark in VET

The VET system is designed with the student at the centre of the system so their choice of course and provider is crucial to the sector. In theory students are attracted to quality training, fuelled by competition between providers to deliver training that leads to new or better employment or other positive outcomes. The current system has encouraged a counter-productive cycle of provider behaviour and government responses that have created instability.

The result is that there is no effective quality floor in the existing VET market that can provide an assurance for students, governments or industry that the training being provided is of a consistent and appropriate standard. Perception is important. A small number of unscrupulous or poor quality providers can have a significant negative impact on the system. ASQAs recent reviews and the withdrawal of qualifications in Victoria reinforce the perception of a failing system.

In the original design of the system TAFE was to serve as a minimum quality standard. This has not occurred. There is a lack of confidence in VET throughout Australia.

Countries that have moved into a marketised approach have been forced to adopt different strategies to ensure quality. In the United States and New Zealand amongst a range of other approaches a provider classification system has been developed. ASQA has a risk assessment system. In Victoria one of the strategies that will be recommended to government to raise quality in the system is a "Provider classification framework".

The framework which has as an underlying premise a continuous improvement philosophy is part of a suite of reforms. The framework is based upon two axes:

- organisational and educational capability
- financial risk and sustainability.

It is a potential five-level classification structure (although we will use only 4) and is not dissimilar to some of the criteria used in structuring organisations. The organisational and educational capability of providers is determined by defining the purpose of vet and then applying those purposes to the organisations operation.

The financial risk and sustainability factors are based around traditional metrics but are influenced particularly by the experiences associated with Vocation which was over reliant on one form of financial income. In a comment on Vocation in the Financial Review on January 2015 it was written that 'any company that relies on a single source of income (80%) is a massive risk to investors'.

The classification system is designed to provide greater information to users, greater clarity for investors, that is, the taxpayer as to with whom their money has been placed, and for those responsible for quality assurance and funding to have some understanding of the capability of the organisation in which they are investing. It is underpinned by continuous improvement in that there is an incentive for organisations to become more capable

Organisation and educational capability criteria

The elements for these criteria were based upon a definition of the purpose of VET. That being a system that can:

- develop and maintain a skilled workforce that meets the needs of industry and an economy in transition
- contribute to the economic growth and productivity of Victoria/Australia
- act as an important social safety net or alternative education system to sustain those individuals in our community that have some form of disadvantage
- provide ongoing education for both skills deepening and broadening
- provide qualifications that can be a pathway to further and higher education.

A benchmark VET institution will be able to meet all purposes not just some. The type of organisational and educational capability measures that were considered for this axis of the framework arising out of the purpose were:

- the range of educational programs provided (certificate 1 to degrees)
- whether traditional apprenticeships were offered
- size of the organisation
- length of time as a VET provider
- mission of the organisation
- principle delivery mode (that is, online, fully workplace based, classroom/ workshop based)
- the range and scale of educational services available to students
- employer and student satisfaction surveys
- international education effort
- student diversity i.e. mix of students from differing backgrounds.

Financial criteria

Sustainable financial criteria included factors such as:

- reliance on state government income as a percentage of total revenue
- average operating balance over a three period
- percentage spent on staff in comparison with infrastructure
- evidence of investment in facilities and equipment
- ability to meet financial obligations
- cash flow in the 2014 period
- international student income as a percentage of total revenue.

Each of the elements that were chosen was then weighted multiplied together and then a score applied to each organisation. Organisations are then assigned a place in one of four quadrants. A difficulty of course was that there was a dearth of information available on some criteria for some providers. This reflects poorly on the quality assurance mechanisms used at both state and Federal level. It should also be understood that the auditor general has no legislative capacity to audit private providers.

How the classification system will be used

The classification system is one of a suite of reforms that are being recommended to the government. However a category one provider (that is our benchmark providers) will be invited to participate in a compact discussions with government in a on a three-year timeframe, take responsibility for all certificate4 the training and assessment, will initially be the only providers able to deliver preparatory programs targeting literacy and numeracy, will be responsible for providing access to disadvantaged groups in relation to a revised up skilling rule, will be expected to deliver agreed outcomes as well is meet input targets, and will be subject to reduced auditing.

Being a category one provider we believe brings with it substantial benefits. We would hope that all providers would aspire to become a category one provider.

Whether TAFE institutions are category one providers and thus the benchmark for providers in Victoria remains to be seen.

Conclusion

Quality is elusive and difficult especially in VET with its multiple objectives. What is unique about the sector is that it not only caters for a kaleidoscope of Australians but it is the one sector of education that embraces the concept of lifelong learning initially of course developed by our TAFE institutions. TAFE plays a pivotal role in our society. The benchmark institutions will be pivotal and develop a distinctive culture that enables students to explore ideas, learn about themselves and be astounded by their achievements.

Other countries use different methods to set quality standards. The United States separates and has particular roles and outcomes specified for its institutions, New Zealand users a self-assessment protocol and Canada has separate legislation for private providers and the public provider. The United Kingdom uses a continuous improvement model that is overseen by inspection regime known as OFSTED. Each of the methods have attractive features and seek to achieve the same goal and that is to give confidence to those who rely on a VET system that it is fit for purpose, continually improving and a good public investment.

Joint session – Ministerial address

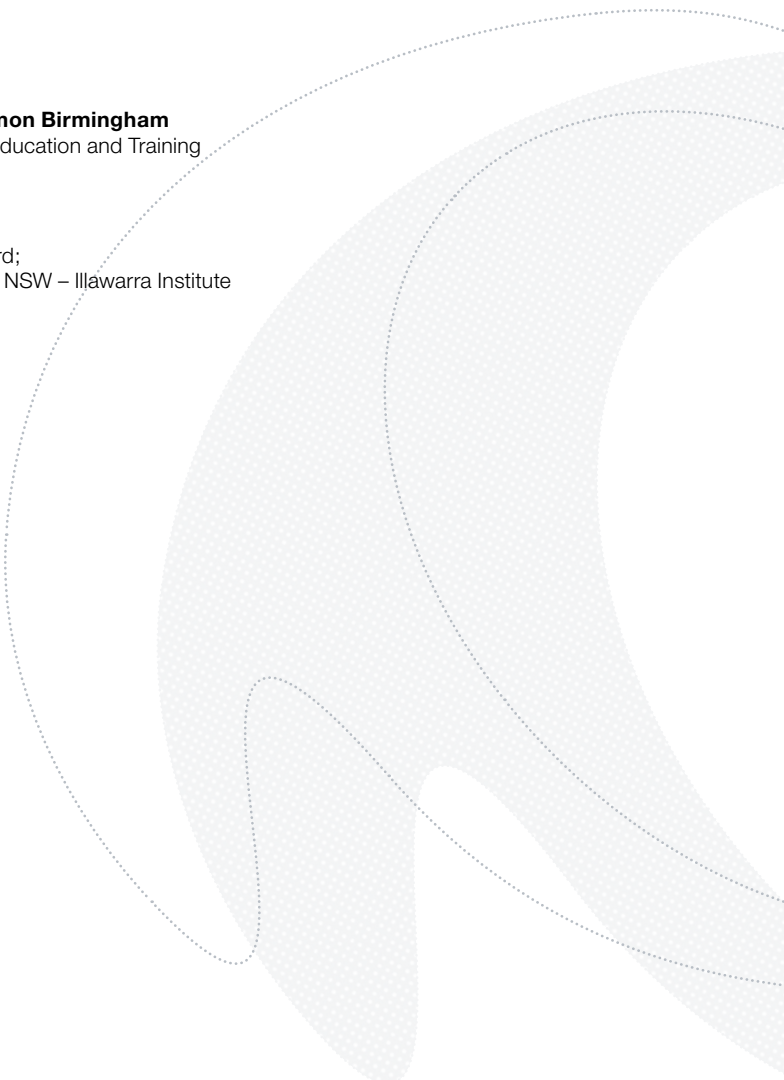
Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham

Assistant Minister for Education and Training

Introduced by

Dianne Murray

Acting Chair, TDA Board;
Institute Director, TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute





Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham

*Assistant Minister for Education
and Training*

[This speech is available at: <http://www.senatorbirmingham.com.au/Media-Centre/Speeches/ID/2823/Speech-TAFE-Directors-Australia-National-Conference>]

Ministerial address

E&OE...

It is a pleasure to join you on the final day of your national conference for my first of what I hope will be many addresses to this August gathering.

As you all appreciate, vocational education is central to Australia's economic growth, to our business productivity and to employment outcomes.

A strong and prosperous economy that delivers the jobs Australian families and businesses want requires a well-functioning VET system that delivers the skills we need. That's why it sits as one of the four pillars of our government's Competitiveness Agenda.

Giving people the skills they need for modern workplaces enables them – not only to pursue their choice of vocation – but to succeed in a rewarding and profitable career. It also gives Australian businesses confidence that they can get the highly skilled workers they need to innovate and compete in an increasingly global and competitive marketplace.

As a longstanding and valued part of the VET system, TAFE recognises this and has already, in many cases, changed and adapted in order to meet the demands of our modern economy.

I've been heartened to see VET feature so strongly in national commentary at the moment.

Just last month, 90 corporate, union, welfare, economic and academic leaders came together for the National Reform Summit. The 17 page document produced at the end of the Summit called for reform of tertiary education – including TAFE and vocational education and training – to provide qualifications relevant to current and future market requirements.

The mismatch between the qualifications on offer – and the qualified employees business needs – is a regular reference in public commentary and this summit was no exception.

This groundswell of public interest in the VET space coincides with some key milestones. The National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform is moving into a review stage in advance of its expiration in 2017. The spirit of contestability upon which that NPA is founded is being tested, as we have seen in South Australia. Simultaneously, a debate around Federalism continues and, as was clearly demonstrated in the communique out of the First Ministers Meeting of COAG, there is a mood toward change when it comes to the management of VET policy responsibility.

It is in this context that I will spend some time today looking at the current environment, the debate around federation and outline to you the benefits I believe can be garnered through a united, national approach. I'll start with an assessment of the current picture.

Our starting point, for the purposes of the federation debate, is the existing system where each state and territory has its own VET system with different rates of subsidy, different approved provider processes, different qualification lists and different funded programmes.

While it is important for states and territories to address local and regional skills needs and priorities, such a diversity of systems leads to confusion for students and businesses.

VET providers and employers that operate across jurisdictional boundaries must deal with different reporting obligations, different contractual requirements, different pricing and even different course duration requirements.

Public, community, private and enterprise RTOs are funded by eight increasingly-divergent state and territory VET systems with different fees, different rules for accessing government-subsidised places, differences in implementation of the 'national entitlement' to a training place, as well as different regulatory systems for those operating in Victoria and Western Australia.

The fact that the states run their different subsidy schemes and the Commonwealth runs programmes such as apprentice incentives, foundation skills programmes and VET-FEE-HELP, makes it difficult to align incentives and ensure coverage without duplication.

This year the Commonwealth is investing around \$6 billion in VET, including \$1.8 billion in direct funding to States and Territories to support their training systems, including TAFE.

The next largest source of Australian Government funding flowing into VET continues to be via income contingent loans that enable students to undertake higher level diploma and advanced diploma training through the VET FEE-HELP scheme, without up-front fees.

As is widely understood, the VET FEE-HELP programme has witnessed significant growth since changes were made in 2012. This is as true in the TAFE sector as in the private sector. Since 2009 with the number of TAFE students accessing VET FEE-HELP increased from 2,400 to just over 59,000 in 2014. This represents a total cumulative value in VET FEE-HELP loans over six years of \$770 million. The estimated 2015 funding for TAFEs via VET FEE-HELP is \$381 million – an increase of 433 per cent since 2011.

It is our shared job – as custodians of the VET sector – to ensure that every dollar invested into VET by state or federal governments, students, parents, employers or others is getting the best results for these students and the wider economy.

In 2013, 52 per cent employers used the VET system to meet their training needs. On current estimates around three million Australians each year choose to participate in vocational education and training – around one million of those through the TAFE sector.

We know that currently, around 1.4 million students are in government-subsidised training places, including around 300,000 apprentices and trainees. In 2014, around 240,000 students did VET courses as part of their secondary schooling, which helps many of them move successfully from school to work.

VET is also an important part of Australia's international education market with 150,000 overseas students studying vocational education in Australia in 2014. People choose VET because VET offers people more choice and mobility in the workforce. VET also supports people to move from industries that are being

restructured, to up-skill or to re-skill. The current package to support the automotive manufacturing industry includes \$30 million to recognise existing employee skills, complement them with new skills and help them take those skills to other industries in need of their expertise.

VET also helps fill gaps in people's foundation skills and offers a safety net for those who don't do so well at school and who disengage from the workforce.

It helps senior secondary students progress their post-school pathway; whether that be a head start in acquiring a VET qualification, a school-based apprenticeship or skilling them up for a direct pathway from school to work.

VET also plays an important role in supplementing higher education training — adding important technical and higher level skills that are extremely valuable in our modern job market. In 2014, six per cent of subsidised VET students already had a Bachelor degree or higher qualification, and more than eight per cent of higher education students had completed a VET qualification before commencing their higher studies.

At its heart, vocational education and training is about providing employees or potential employees with the skills for a job ... a pathway into employment or into enhanced employment opportunities.

Vocational education is also central to business start-ups. According to 2011 Census data around 23 per cent of business owners have a bachelor degree or higher, while nearly 40 per cent hold a certificate level qualification, diploma or advanced diploma. This demonstrates that VET helps to drive our national innovation, productivity and competitiveness.

Our Government is committed to creating more jobs and growth across our economy, which is exactly what a well-functioning VET system delivers Australians, helping more students on their path to successful

employment and more businesses to find the right employees with the right skills to meet the business needs of today and tomorrow.

Though there are already many strengths inherent in our VET system, we would all agree that there are challenges ahead — and that we need to strengthen the system if we are to meet these challenges and thrive into the future.

Perceived and real quality issues plague a number of providers. Although TAFE generally enjoys a reputation for dependable, quality training, businesses often tell me that it is not always agile enough to adapt to industry needs.

On the flip side, where some private RTOs are certainly agile — and most provide similarly high quality training outcomes — we have seen concerning stories highlighting an abuse of state subsidies or VET FEE-HELP amongst some. The recent and ongoing reforms I have announced to VFH will address many of these concerns, but I can assure you that I will continue to monitor the impact of our governments VFH reforms and that I will go further if needed.

Beyond changing a particular funding program here or there, or launching the odd new one, there is potential for us to make significant structural changes to how the VET system operates, so that it is even stronger and more responsive to the needs of the millions of people who use it.

The time is right for a serious discussion about how our Federation works and how reform of the Federation can secure an even stronger VET system.

That discussion has started. The Reform of the Federation White Paper process is underway. A number of issues and discussion papers have been released. A Green Paper is due to be released soon and the White Paper is due in the first half of 2016.

As clearly outlined in the Communique from the Leaders Retreat in July, the Prime Minister, First Ministers from each state and territory, and the President of the Australian Local Government Association, all agreed to consider a shift in responsibility for VET to the Commonwealth – provided that states and territories could elect to remain TAFE providers within a national system.

If we go back into the history books to the very beginning, it is clear that little has changed – Federation was born of a number of ideas and needs.

Though the very notion of a Federation was hotly contested leading up to 1901, it was Henry Parkes – often called the ‘Father of Federation’ – who in 1889 called for the colonies to “unite and create a great national government for all Australia”.

Looking at the different VET systems on a state by state level, this message remains relevant today.

Even at the time of Federation there were a number of technical education institutions throughout the six colonies. Some were independent of government control; others were established by Acts of Parliament to be partly public and subscription-funded organisations. While there were many changes with Federation, States continued to run schools and the technical education system.

This remained the case until greater Commonwealth involvement in VET by Malcolm Fraser in the 1970s – with the exception of brief interventions by the Commonwealth during the first and second world wars, when it was necessary to provide a workforce to support the war effort and post-war reconstruction.

And then, in the 1990’s, many of you here today will recall the significant mood for a Commonwealth shift to assume full responsibility and funding for TAFE and other post-secondary education and training.

The proposal aimed to establish a consistent, national VET system to ensure graduates would hold highly valued, nationally portable qualifications... This all sounds very familiar!

And yet, when agreement could not be reached, a compromise was implemented, because the importance of a national approach was still clearly apparent. In retrospect, it is evident that a number of the problems ‘we’ in the VET sector – including the employers who access the VET sector – manage now on a daily basis have resulted from compromise.

The failure to move to a unified, Commonwealth-led system in 1992 can be viewed as a missed opportunity; one which would have increased the efficiency and harmonisation of the Australian VET system. But perhaps the time was not right and the preconditions for Commonwealth control were not in place.

In my opinion, we need to learn from this lesson and ensure that a more streamlined, national VET system results from the discussions that have already begun on Federation. As the Federal Minister responsible for VET, I was pleased to see that this important progress was supported by the Prime Minister and First Ministers in July. Assuming their ongoing support, and in collaboration with my State and Territory counterparts, I will continue to progress these discussions to ensure the best and most unifying outcome.

After the failed discussions for a national VET system in the 1990’s, a series of developments took place which still shape the environment we work in today: the introduction of a National Training Wage in 1994, the New Apprenticeships System in 1998, the establishment of the Australian Qualifications Framework, followed by the development of ASQA.

And the latest in a series of Commonwealth/State financial agreements is the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development in 2009 and the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform that all States and Territories agreed to in 2012.

The National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth, states and those responsibilities which are shared – a little like a VET specific version of our national constitution!

Meanwhile, the National Partnership Agreement provides funding for a national, high quality and accessible training system that, theoretically, offers a national entitlement to a government subsidised training place in a more contestable training market.

It is under this National Partnership on Skills Reform that the Commonwealth is providing \$1.8 billion this year to support the states and territories to fund their training systems, including TAFE's.

So, just as there was much debate about Federation, there is also a long history of discussion about the best way the states and the Commonwealth can work together to skill Australians. Much progress has been made in the last twenty years, which is a credit to many in this room, but the nature of these agreements is that they are too often vague or internally inconsistent and too easily allow major differences in approach or dramatic changes in direction to occur. Perhaps nothing exemplifies this more than the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform and the recent developments in my home state of South Australia.

The South Australian Government's new WorkReady programme is limiting student and employer choice and, by doing so, is significantly unwinding progress SA had made under the National Partnership Agreement, which then Prime Minister Gillard and current Premier Weatherill signed in 2012.

Through this agreement, all governments have signed up to a more competitive VET system and to supporting TAFE to be able to operate in a competitive environment.

I note – and welcome – TDA's recognition that, as I quote from your submission to the Senate Inquiry into the operation, regulation and funding of private VET Providers in Australia, that "*Competition hones our performance and sharpens out minds to the changing needs of students, employers and, indeed, the broader economy*". It is exactly this attitude that will hold TAFE in good stead going forward and I congratulate you for it.

Having this opportunity to talk directly with you all here today, I want to be very clear: My concerns with SA's WorkReady policy are not based on a preference for TAFE's or for non-government providers, because both deliver excellent training in many areas. We simply want to empower students and employers to access the highest quality, most cost effective, job relevant training that they can. I know what an important part TAFE plays in offering this choice and, most likely, always will play in it.

In considering the merits of South Australia's WorkReady policy I invite you to put yourselves in the shoes of your competitors. Only 10 per cent of the 51,000 new subsidised training places available in 2015–16 will be allocated to non-government providers. Based on data the SA Government has finally provided to me, this approach will see TAFE SA secure the highest number of subsidised places for any year of the National Partnership Agreement or the year prior. Conversely, non-government providers in SA will compete for the lowest number of places offered in any year of the NPA or the year prior.

No matter what policy reforms may be promised for future years, there is no doubt that the WorkReady policy has created a boom-bust environment for non-government providers and savages the

progress made on student and employer choice in the state with the highest unemployment rate in Australia.

I have met and listened to students, employers and training providers in South Australia about their concerns with WorkReady and I am actively evaluating measures that may ameliorate its impacts.

I do appreciate that we all operate under budgetary limitations and acknowledge the unsustainable nature of some earlier policy approaches, but I will continue to urge the Government of South Australia to not to lurch from one policy extreme to the other.

This is important to me as a South Australian senator, and as the Australian Government Minister responsible for skills and training. This is why I have asked SA Minister Gago to re-write SA's implementation plan under the NPA. I am serious about delivering effective choice for students and employers, including the right to choose a high performance TAFE provider. I know that many of you are also serious about it and have already spent time, money and effort successfully adapting to a competitive VET market.

We are, indeed, at a significant juncture. The NPA expires in 2017, and a review is already underway in order to assess the best way forward.

And as I mentioned earlier, this intersects the Federation debate and having been just a little harsh thus far in my comments regarding the South Australian Government, let me pay tribute to the constructive approach shown by SA Premier Weatherill to date in discussions about the future of the Federation, including a national approach to VET.

We've come a long way since the debate of the 1990's. Times are changing rapidly – technology is changing, economies are changing and becoming more global – and we need to be able to move with the times if we are to remain competitive.

For the future of VET, it has never been more important to have a discussion about how we can secure our national prosperity, with a robust, high quality, relevant, responsive and truly national training system, in which states can choose to operate world class TAFE institutes.

We need to talk seriously about the distribution of roles and responsibilities to deliver the best outcomes for everyone who uses our vocational education and training system. And we have to do this in a way which is consistent with our fiscal strategy.

A national system should lead to more clarity, enhanced certainty, greater consistency and better accountability, as well as increasing efficiency and choice.

Any national approach must ensure the VET system is flexible and responsive enough to meet local and cross-border requirements, helping people to fill the jobs that our economy – from a national to a regional level – offers now and into the future.

A number of facts suggest that a national VET system would create benefits for businesses, training providers and students. We know that 60 per cent of businesses with 200 or more employees operate in more than one state or territory.

Despite the fact that over half of all providers are approved to deliver training across multiple states, relatively few providers deliver subsidised training in more than one state. This strongly suggests that accessing subsidised training markets in multiple jurisdictions is difficult and laden with red tape or multiple compliance hurdles.

Yet, despite some differing requirements and skills needs from one state to the next, most states subsidise many of the same qualifications.

Addressing these kinds of challenges is at the heart of the Reform of Federation process.

A truly national system would reduce duplication of programmes run by the Commonwealth and the states and ensure better targeting of emerging skills needs and specific national priorities.

By placing control of all of the funding levers — the setting of fees, payment of subsidies, and lending of income-contingent loans — with one level of government, we would promote accountability in the system and could create a more effective market, driven by students rather than providers, than we've seen to date.

We could also better link the VET system and higher education, welfare services, and employment. We would be able to provide greater equity in the way the courses are funded.

Looking to the future, we need to play to our strengths and know our limitations.

Australia is only a small country in population terms. Yet economically we are the 12th largest world economy by GDP. We have a high-quality training system that has a great reputation at home and abroad, but it can be even better, with reduced complexity, greater choice to consumers and a responsiveness that ensures our future workforce has the right skills at the right time.

National employers are tired of multiple rules, requirements and paperwork, just as national RTOs are. A national approach would further drive the industry led approach training that is central to other reforms I am pursuing, in areas like the future development of Training Packages.

Through the Federation White Paper process, we are working towards a more efficient system of government, where everyone understands their role.

As I said earlier, there is general agreement to this approach as it relates to VET.

The Leaders' Retreat agreed to consider a shift in VET responsibility to the Commonwealth, provided states and territories could elect to remain TAFE providers within a national system.

We all want a VET sector that ensures training helps young people to get jobs, as well as providing pathways for workers to transition between careers.

Over coming months, we will carry out consultation to ensure that this process is inclusive, collaborative and consensus-driven. And I will ensure that TAFE Directors are at the table of these consultations.

It is time now to take the next steps towards a national approach that gives the next generation the skills necessary for the jobs of tomorrow, and to secure our future prosperity.

While there is a lot of work ahead of us, I believe we are up to the job.

Together, I believe we can make real improvements to our vocational education and training system that will give everyone a stronger future.

Now is the time for you to tell us what is important to you as providers of vocational education and training and, in your experience, what works and what doesn't.

The Federation process is about looking at ways that we can work together, and to work better.

We are focussed on getting the most out of our collective investment in education and training.

There are so many opportunities that can be realised by getting this right and I am determined to see this through.

I look forward to working with you all to progress these discussions in a way that helps deliver an even stronger VET sector, in which TAFE remains a vital contributor to the future of students, employers and the Australian economy.

Concurrent session B1

Industry partnerships – A way of achieving quality

Issues for discussion

- What role(s) can industry play in ensuring quality of vocational education and training outcomes?
- Why would employers want to dine at the TAFE table?
- Do TAFE/industry partnerships give a more productive and skilled workforce?

Speakers

Sara Caplan

Paul Roberts-Thomson

Catherine Murdoch

Facilitator

Keith Cowlshaw

Executive Director Vocational Education,
RMIT University, VIC



Sara Caplan

Partner, PwC, NSW

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Industry partnerships – A way of achieving quality

What role(s) can industry play in ensuring quality of vocational education and training outcomes?

I think this is the wrong question. High quality vocational education and training outcomes are better jobs. And only industry can deliver these.

The real question is how can VET providers make themselves more relevant to industry? Failure to do this delivers trained unemployed people – which is not the outcome we want. That won't help our economy to grow and thrive and keep us globally competitive.

If employers felt that the VET sector delivered what they need, they would engage more readily. In the highly competitive commercial world, most employers will only engage if they see a direct return on the time they invest. Few will invest solely on behalf of their industry.

So, where are we now?

- Employers say that schools, vocational institutions and universities are failing to prepare people for the world of work and not turning out people with the right knowledge and skills.
- The providers say that employers are not clearly articulating what they want.

For so many years there has been a gulf in communication between providers of education and training and employers.

One way or another, we are all failing those in or entering the Australian workforce. Something radical is needed to change this once and for all.

The various layers of the education system need to listen and change the way they do things.

Employers also have to step up and take responsibility for setting out a clear statement of what they need: both the work readiness skills and the technical/ vocational skills.

Education providers have to engage more seriously with industry if they are to succeed.

Why would employers want to dine at the TAFE table?

In PwC's latest global CEO survey, 74 per cent of CEOs said that lack of availability of key skills was one of the biggest barriers to their growth. But do they see TAFE as the answer? At the moment, I don't think so.

If employers are to spend time with you, you have to create the business case that shows how this engagement helps them meet their objectives, whether those objectives are local or international growth, consolidation of a market, diversification, fending off competition or new product/service development. If you want the attention of industry, you need to make yourselves relevant to these:

1. How are your "products" and "services" going to build the skills they need now and in the future? It needs to be an all-round, consistently professional approach – business-to-business.
2. Engage with businesses to understand their recruitment, their staff development, their growth plans and priorities. Then you can co-design a solution that fits their particular requirements.
3. Build relationships to secure routes to work for your students, through apprenticeships, traineeships, paid internships and work experience.

At present the TAFE brand is not synonymous with flexibility and quality and I think that, working together, TAFEs can help to build the reputation of the sector – coming together as one strong voice and vision, with a focus on employer-led programs and qualifications.

If they believe that TAFE can solve their future workforce skills needs and can deliver relevant high quality training in the way they need it and at the price they feel is value for money, employers will come running to the table.

Do TAFE/industry partnerships give a more productive and skilled workforce?

Yes. There is really not an awful lot more to say on that – it's a bit of a no-brainer.

Partnerships between TAFE and industry can only serve to improve understanding on both sides, improve the relevance and quality of the offer and make sure that people are being trained for jobs that exist now and in the future.

Too many people are being put on courses that might be popular but the individual doesn't realise that they are unlikely to get a job at the end, either because there are far too many people with the same qualifications, outstripping the jobs available, or the particular sector is in decline, or the skills they have been taught are not what the industry needs now.

This is irresponsible and has got to stop – it's not fair on the individual and it is a waste of taxpayers' money.

Government also has to play its part. Federal and state/territory governments need to work in a more joined-up way, whether or not the proposed move to federal responsibility for VET takes place in the near future. Governments need to lead on removal of perverse incentives to train people in areas where there is little employment; they need to kick start new initiatives to bring employers and providers together, such as new qualification development; provide incentives and champion apprenticeships and vocational education.

To summarise, failure to do this will lead to failure in the VET sector. Participation is declining, reputation is falling and money is tight. Demand has to drive supply. Employers drive the jobs. Training needs to align with those jobs. Otherwise, as I said, we end up with a nation of trained unemployed people!

Concurrent session B2

International – What role should commissioned agents play in the on-shore international vocational education and training industry?

Barmak Nassirian, a Washington DC-based former Associate Executive Director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, said the reliance on commissioned agents was part of a foreign student “feeding frenzy” among Australian institutions.

“I can’t think of a better manifestation of that tendency than an institution handing its name, its logo, its imprimatur, to a third party who doesn’t eat unless they send warm bodies to that institution,” Mr Nassirian told Four Corners.

Issues for discussion

- By using agents, have our tertiary institutions prioritised revenue over the protection of the quality and reputation of their qualifications?
- How can the quality of off-shore marketing be assured?

Speakers

David Riordan

Rebecca Hall

Facilitator

Mary Faraone

TDA Board Member;

Chief Executive, Holmesglen Institute, VIC



Rebecca Hall

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The role of international education agents

Just three things...

1. International agents have driven the growth of Australia's international education sector and are a unique feature of our engagement.
2. But, despite Australia's pioneering practice and initiatives, our approach to agent quality assurance management is in need of repair.
3. We must make this investment now to ensure the quality and sustainability of our sector. Quality education agents should be part of our future.

Agents are not a homogenous group



1. International agents have driven the growth of international education in Australia and are a unique feature of our engagement model

- 1969 – the first agency created to support students select Australia as a study destination.
- Historical accounts of international education define our agent model and approach to pathways as the keys to our success.
- ESOS Act and National code enshrined the role of agents in ethical recruitment.
- In 2005 Australia piloted the first Education Agent Training Course leading to recognition as a Qualified Education Agent Counsellor (QEAC) and now reports that 3000 agents now hold the QEAC.
- It is estimated that more than half of the international students in Australia are recruited by agents.
- This would be higher for TAFE and even more important as TAFE does have the large resources of universities or multinational colleges.
- ICEF and ISB Agent survey ranked Australia as the “best destination for VET studies”.

2. But, despite Australia's pioneering practice and initiatives, our approach to agent management is in need of urgent repair

- Media accounts and reports focused on "perceptions of risk" rather than widespread risk
- Most cited agent issues are misinformation, supporting course hopping, student transfers, fraudulent evidentiary requirements, complex ownership structures and commissions.
- Industry and government, and quality agents, have recognised that our quality mechanisms are not working as well as they should.
- London Statement – know it ? need it?
- Streamlined Visa Processing further entrenched and highlighted the issues.
- In 2015 IEAA was commissioned to research options for the development of a quality agent framework for Australia.
- Stage 1 project completed (more than 1500 responses to surveys and focus groups) and Min Pyne announced second stage last month.
- Through PRISMS and DIBP data – we have the data – but we are not taking action.

3. We must make this investment now to ensure the quality and sustainability of our sector

- So what could a quality agent framework look like?
 - Australian Quality Agent Framework must work in tandem with existing regulatory context.
 - Amend the National Code and then prosecute it. Enforce through whatever means possible (Consumer Affairs, ASIC others)
 - Share and publish data on agent performance, join up current intelligence embedded in PRISMS and DIBP data

- Reinvest in Agent Training and Certification
- Work to showcase positive examples of exemplary agent support
- Investigate options for transparency in commissions.

(Disclaimer – my personal views, not those of the Victorian Government or from the work of the of IEAA Steering Committee to investigate an agent quality framework)

What are our competitors doing?

- The global ICEF Agent Training Course* (IATC) launched 4 years ago, now has 8,587 registered users with 807 qualified
- The Canada Course for Education Agents* (CCEA), launched around 2 years ago, has 4,366 registered users and 228 qualified
- The US Agent Training Course* (USATC), launched in June 2015, has 153 registered in a pilot program with 5 qualified.
- China Education Agent Course* (CEAC) launched October 2014, has 24 registered users and 10 qualified users.
- New Zealand's Recognised Agency training program, ENZ Agent Training reports over 5000 agents completed the program.
- The British Council has developed an online agent training course. Over 1000 agents have completed this program and appear on the British Council's Global List.

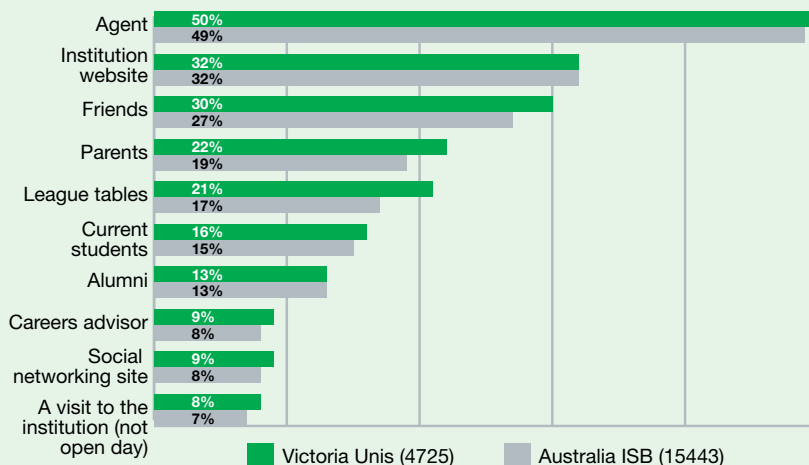
What are some strategies being considered by institutions?

1. Reduce dependency on agents
 - partnerships, pathways and articulations, online systems and processes, direct recruitment
2. Reduce the number of agents – stricter performance measures, due diligence, monitoring, sign off process, closer trust and understanding
3. Manage internally – more staff based offshore to support the process

4. Focus on compliance – spend more on compliance and management
5. Move to lower risk markets – where agents are not so important?
6. Improve training and induction – more information improves outcome?
7. Alter incentive structures – commission, service fees, success
8. Differentiated approaches for onshore and offshore agents
9. Benchmark our agent performance – how do we compare, how much are we paying?
10. Ask our students – are they satisfied with their agents?

Case Study – Victoria

- 160,000 international students per annum, international education single largest services export for the state. Contributes another \$ 2 billion to tourism in the state
- Onshore agents are a large part of the Victorian landscape.
- Role for government:
 - Agent Complaints – Study Melbourne Student Centre
 - Agent Awareness – My story Campaign, regular agent comms
 - Offshore agent engagement
 - Education Services Management
 - Capacity building with providers – Support agent management
 - Advocacy to Commonwealth Government and other regulators.



Concurrent session B3

Future higher education diversity

Issues for discussion

- What will be the role of TAFE institutes and other Higher Education Providers in a future higher education market?
- Will we see a growth in low cost “Baccalaureate/degrees” in private higher education programs and TAFE institutes?

Speakers

Andrew Norton

Dr David Ross

Associate Professor Peter Whitley

Facilitator

Associate Professor Ruth Schubert

Associate Professor and Associate Director,
LH Martin Institute



Andrew Norton

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Grattan Institute, Victoria*

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Future higher education diversity

The non-university higher education sector in Australia is very much shaped by history. That history has given the universities, and public universities in particular, a dominant position. They have a more than 90 per cent market share.

That dominance is built on several factors. The first is just that they have been around for a long time, in an industry where longevity matters. We can see the effects of history in demand statistics, ATAR cut-offs, and rankings.

Second, a result of the Dawkins reforms is that the university brand seems important. In Australia we talk about 'going to university' rather than 'going to college'. Since 2000, there have been high barriers to university status. You have to do a lot of research with no public subsidy to get it. Unsurprisingly, only one full university has been established since, and even that would not have happened under

the current rules (Torrens University was established under a special transition measure from South Australia's old accreditation system).

Third, public universities have a privileged funding position. They receive 99.75 per cent of their money from the Commonwealth Grant Scheme, which in turn gives them a significant price advantage. This advantage is enhanced by an anomaly in FEE-HELP, which imposes a 25 per cent loan fee on full-fee undergraduates only.

The result of these three factors is that the non-university higher education providers are in niche markets that typically avoid direct competition with public universities. That's not to say that there are no students making genuine choices between public universities and non-university higher education providers but, generally, there is strong product differentiation.

Clearly there is demand for a different product, even at a higher price. Before public universities received demand-driven funding for their bachelor degrees there was concern that the non-university higher education providers would be hit. The old quota system provided them with some protection by constraining public university student numbers.

But non-university provider numbers continued to increase after demand-driven funding was introduced, and that continued until at least 2014, the latest statistics we have. Adjusting for the effects of new providers, enrolments that year were up 3 per cent for domestic students and 10 per cent for international students.

It's reasonable to think that if fees were lower there might still be stronger growth. That was one of the goals behind the reforms to the demand-driven system that I recommended with David Kemp last year, which has been supported by the government but not, to date, the Senate.

In 2014, about 60 per cent of undergraduate courses in non-university higher education providers had fees that were below what a university would get for a Commonwealth-supported place. This implies that compared to public universities most non-university higher education providers could match or better the universities on price, with a different funding system.

TAFEs are particularly well positioned, as generally they have low fees relative to other non-university providers.

However, if there was a 30 per cent cut to the Commonwealth contribution that capacity would drop from 60 per cent to about 40 per cent.

All this assumes that university fees will not be deregulated – if they were, the price differences would be larger.

While changes to funding policy would be market-expanding in the bachelor degree market, that is not necessarily true for the sub-bachelor market. Remember that under demand-driven funding universities would get access to unrestricted numbers of sub-bachelor places. The Department said last year that they had declined applications for an extra 4,000 places, or about a 20 per cent capacity increase. The universities clearly think that there is unmet demand for diplomas, and several already have their own pathway colleges. Non-university providers have a significant share of their enrolments (15 per cent) in sub-bachelor courses.

While a shift in funding policy would change the market for non-university higher education providers, it is not in the short or medium term going to change other factors that explain your current position.

You will still start from a position of courses that fill vacant niches. For TAFEs, you have chosen courses that fit with your existing strengths. For both accreditation and market reasons, it would be a bold move to depart radically from that and move into general provision of low cost undergraduate degrees.

Remember that price is only one of the three advantages of the universities, and that price is not necessarily a critical factor – as the experience of non-university providers shows. A Grattan report we released last week shows that in the international and domestic postgraduate full-fee markets there is usually an enrolment skew towards the more expensive courses.

The close relationships that some providers, including TAFEs, have formed with universities may be the safer medium term strategy: a complementary rather than directly competitive relationship with universities.

Although I am obviously a strong supporter of opening up the higher education market, I am also not over-claiming on its likely effects. I think it would speed up an evolution to a more diverse and competitive higher education system. But 'speed up' does not mean fundamentally transform any time soon.



Associate Professor Peter Whitley

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Future higher education diversity

What is the current state of play?

We have been asked to address two questions, namely 'What will be the role of TAFE institutions and higher education providers in a future higher education market?' and 'Will we see a growth in low cost "Baccalaureate/degrees" in private education and TAFE institutes?'. To best understand what the future might bring we must first try and understand the present so we are able to put some context around our foresight to the future. I am going to couch my response to these questions from the perspective of the University of Tasmania and more particularly, the Australian Maritime College.

As everyone at this conference would know the marketisation of both vocational education and higher education is well under way and regardless of whether the results of such marketisation are good or perhaps not so good, these changes are bringing about significant change. However, we can be assured that these changes will continue as the policy environment in which we work further transforms itself.

Education in the maritime industry is dominated by simulators ... at the Australian Maritime College (AMC) we have some of the largest and most sophisticated simulators in Australia. The simulator mimics the bridge of a large super carrier and we are able to re-create any harbour in Australia to allow our seafaring students to practise docking and berthing manoeuvres in safety. The digitisation of learning – ship simulators, truck driving simulators, safety induction simulators, welding simulators – is increasing and with each day digitised learning aides play an ever-greater role in the pedagogical process. In the world of maritime studies research and trials are occurring around autonomous underwater vessels and automated shipping, all of which brings closer together the interaction between man and machine (that is, human factors). The point I make is that educational relevance must be closely linked to the world of digitisation and mobile devices.

The second point I would like to share with you is the role of industry certification. As we move further toward a global student cohort that will find employment within transnational industries, industry certification plays an ever-greater role. To give you an appreciation of the internationalisation of certification, just last month I was meeting with representatives from a European regulatory authority for offshore drilling rig safety. This regulatory authority had been involved in discussions with South East Asian companies about utilising the same regulations deployed in

Europe in an Asian context. What does this mean? It means that as we educate and train students for a global marketplace, we must be mindful of our students' employment destinations. Increasingly, the industry certification is becoming more prevalent and pertinent.

The third point I would suggest that provides context is the linkage and interplay between the educational sectors. The notion of applied learning, vocational and employment outcomes, blended delivery, work integrated learning, workplace delivery, workplace assessment apply equally to all the educational sectors regardless of whether it is university, TAFE, private and/or public. We are moving to a point where the boundaries between learning in a higher education environment and vocational learning are very similar if not the same. However, where there is a clear distinction is at the institutional level between universities, TAFEs, private VET providers and private universities. This is clearly a dichotomy between those being educated and those who are educators. In a recent survey a renowned consulting company found that:

Traditional boundaries between educational sectors are blurring – learners are distinguishing less between types of providers and expect to move seamlessly between the sectors.¹

There are many other factors which both impact and influence the post secondary environment but we do not have the time to identify all those factors in this presentation.

What do educational institutions want?

In Australia, there are in excess of 5,000 registered training providers² including both public and private; currently there are 172 higher education providers (universities and other).³ For the most part, these are organisations which have at their heart

a need to run a sustainable business: a business that provides services in the form of education, which must be able to generate sufficient financial activity that will provide both resources and generate surpluses. As a result, our institutions, particularly our TAFEs and universities, must attract students in ever-increasing numbers for future sustainability.

Educational institutions are nowadays – large bureaucratic organisations with assets and aspirations that require regular and sustained revenue streams.

As we understand our university and TAFE business we also begin to appreciate the philosophy that drives our organisation's need for increased students, the repetition of student recruitment campaigns, the rise of popular courses and a corresponding decrease of less-popular courses, and an increasing pursuit of other forms of educational sustainability, (that is, international students, student recruitment through online and blended delivery, recruitment from beyond national geographic boundaries), and lastly, the demise of less financially robust courses.

What is the demand?

If we consider the emerging market demand, we need to look at the constituents of the market which is made up of students, industry, community and governments. Each of these segments has their own unique needs and demands some of which intersect with other players but some of which compete with others.

If we look at the many student surveys and commentaries that have been carried out over the last five years, we might conclude that students want an educational experience that leads to employment; qualifications that interest, inspire and are tailored to their needs; and students want educational experiences that are "real" educational pathways – not pathways that are filled with obstacles and not pathways where repetitious learning is required.

While students have demands and expectations, employers have also commented that 'there must be a concerted and global move towards new learning models – we must move away from replicating face-to-face pedagogy and make full use of the new digital media AND our move must be toward the use of mobile learning'.⁴ Employers want graduates with defined and industry-specific skills, they need skilled graduates who are able to undertake their respective roles and can therefore contribute productively to the success of the business.

Industry would most likely also reiterate their demand for new and deeper collaborations and a broadening/customising of training. These are expectations that are reasonable given that education and training is primarily the instrument by which individuals find their niche in society through employment. Of course this raises an interesting question as our workforce becomes more global and that is: just who is providing the necessary skills for these new participants entering the global workplace? As recently as last weekend Andrew Robb, the Australian Trade Minister, made the point that the Free Trade Agreements with China and India would provide significant employment opportunities for Australians offshore. If this is really the case we must ask ourselves whether the knowledge and skills transferred through learning, which currently takes place in our TAFEs and universities, will meet these future opportunities.

What will our TAFEs and universities be doing in the future?

Let me first say that the future will belong to the nimble and to the risk takers of our TAFEs and universities. Further, and in keeping with the notion of being nimble and taking risks, I believe the smart, slick and thinking providers will fill the gaps that bring together vocational education and higher education.

For potential students choosing educational institutions and courses to study, price and cost will always be a consideration and value-for-money will be determined not by the institution but by the purchaser/student. It will be incumbent upon institutions to put together "study packages" that match or attract students of the future. The understanding of our markets and the individuals who inhabit them will be crucial. Too often at present it is more of a "one size fits all" approach in respect to our marketing to prospective students. I also believe that as the market develops and providers become more skilled, we will see the emergence of institutional specialisations around particular educational concepts, where institutions will realise and build on their strengths.

My own institution is at the moment engaged in deliberations around the development of new degree structures, which will link together vocational studies and undergraduate studies. We are exploring Associate Degrees that could be created by the student by enabling them to pick and choose to suit themselves and their future aspirations. Amid the choice of subjects on offer would not only be higher education units but also vocational units with vocational outcomes. In this way students would be able to structure their learning experience in such a manner as to achieve both a vocational and academic outcome.

If we believe this is a new initiative, let me say it is not. The current Bachelor of Applied Science (Maritime Operations) delivered through the University of Tasmania has embedded within it a vocational diploma-level qualification, which is linked to the maritime industry regulatory framework. The import of this point is that universities have demonstrated when necessary the capability of embracing the vocational aspects of learning: all to the benefit of the student. It is equally fair to say the opportunity for expanding operations into that diploma, advanced diploma and degree space is increasingly attractive.

The prospect and attractiveness of degree programs with embedded vocational outcomes is tantalising but a more evident intrusiveness into the traditional TAFE market is seen through the changing treatment of ATAR scores. Many institutions are lowering ATAR scores to attract more students; or in some cases promoting particular entrance requirements only to offer enrolment through means other than the published ATAR score.

The TAFE institutions have an enviable reputation in terms of quality and high levels of credibility in the areas of high-level skills training. In the space where diplomas and advanced diplomas are positioned there are two major competitors. Firstly, there are the industries which were once served by diplomas and advanced diplomas that are now choosing degree-level graduates. The stated sophistication and decision-making required in these new occupations has seen employers choosing degree graduates as their candidates of choice. The consequence of these employer choices has seen university providers operating in this space to the exclusion of TAFE. I see this trend increasing in the years to come.

I equally believe that the TAFE environment must reform itself to take advantage of its role as a highly capable operator in the skills acquisition space. However, to achieve this requires substantial change in being able to compete and differentiate itself from private vocational education providers and more particularly industry-sponsored providers.

Will TAFEs be consigned to lower level instruction? I believe not because already we are seeing signs in the marketplace where institutions (TAFE and university) are linking together through substantial articulation and advanced standing arrangements to be able to offer a fully integrated suite of vocational education and degree programs to future students.

The successful TAFEs will be characterised as those institutions able to assist students to build upon previous knowledge without having to take a backward step in their learning. A further characteristic of the successful institution will be its adoption of digitised learning on mobile platforms, to undertake comprehensive work-integrated learning and finally, its capacity to embrace and recognise the educational experiences students gain outside their own institutions.

Conclusion

In the modern world of work students need skills and knowledge in self-awareness, adaptability, collaboration, strategic thinking, and cognitive complexity. As educators we have a responsibility to students to build their skills in thinking, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

Notes

- 1 P Elford 2011, *Global Trends in Vocational Education and Training*, Cisco Higher Education and Research, North Sydney.
- 2 Australian Skills Quality Authority, September 2015.
- 3 Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, National Register of higher education providers, August 2015.
- 4 P Elford 2011, *Global Trends in Vocational Education and Training*, Cisco Higher Education and Research, North Sydney.

Concurrent session B4

Australia-China: Develop and strengthen mutual interests in a rapidly changing environment

Issues for discussion

- What are the opportunities for Australians doing business in China?
- What do Australian institutions need to master to be successful?
- The Australian Government's trialling of Australian qualifications in China.

Speakers

Doug Ferguson

Nicholas Hunt

Dr Melissa McEwen

Facilitator

Martin Riordan

Chief Executive Officer, TAFE Directors Australia

Australia-China: Develop & strengthen mutual interests



Dr Melissa McEwen

*Branch Manager, Governance and
Engagement Branch, Department of
Education and Training*

Australia-China: Develop & strengthen mutual interests

1. Benchmarking skills in the Asia-Pacific region

2. APEC Transport and Logistics Project

- Australia working with China, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam
- Identifying core skills in 5 occupations: warehouse store person, logistics officer, freight forwarder, logistics supervisor, supply chain manager
- Outcomes:
 - Develop occupational standards specifying the core skills required for 5 occupations
 - Build capability for VET officials in participating countries
 - Improve industry linkages with VET systems.

3. International training and assessment courses

Benchmarking

Development
of core
occupational
standards

Development
of training
standards

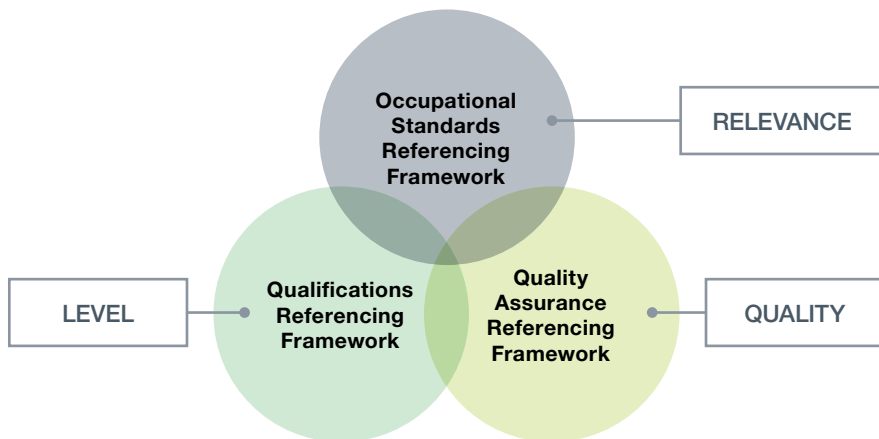
Tailor training
to meet needs
of industry

New International Training and Assessment Courses

- International collaboration between industry, government and training providers
- Courses adapted from Australian industry standard to address regional challenges

4. Bringing it all together

APEC Integrated Referencing Framework for Skills Recognition and Mobility



5. Opportunities for Australia-China VET Collaboration

① Industry engagement	② Effective quality frameworks
③ Work integrated learning – modern apprenticeships	④ Internationalisation of VET

Meet the press: What's in the news and why?

Issues for discussion

- Who controls the narrative about training?
- How do TAFE institutes get their stories heard?
- Who are the journalists pitching to?

Panel

John Ross
Matthew Denholm
Laura Tingle

Master of Ceremonies
Ellen Fanning

Shadow Ministerial address

The Hon. Sharon Bird MP

Shadow Minister for Vocational Education

Introduced by**Dianne Murray**

Acting Chair, TDA Board;
Institute Director, TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute

Shadow Ministerial address



The Hon. Sharon Bird MP

Shadow Minister for Vocational Education

[This speech is available at:
www.sharonbird.com.au/speech_to_the_national_tafe_directors_conference]

Shadow Ministerial address

When I spoke to you last year the theme of your deliberations was "Vision 20–20". I must say that your theme this year is quite a bit more intimidating: "Inspire"!

I see that your Chair, Stephen, has defined this in the conference invitation as:

"The conference is designed to motivate delegates to be more creative and to stimulate discussion on seeing the world differently with speakers who have been tasked to goad, provoke and energise delegates."

Ok – no small brief then!

The former TAFE teacher in me did think that, without the "defined range of contexts", I could pretty well guarantee my ability to "goad, provoke and energise"

you. I could not however guarantee the relevance and reliability of such a contribution. So instead I will just aim to provide the knowledge, with I hope some degree of skill and leave the "attitude" completely up to you.

I note that your conference yesterday opened with a conversation between Professor Peter Noonan and Pam Christie on what could be the great leap forward for Australia's policy on skills and that it was introduced in the program with a quote asking policy makers to "be mindful of the sometimes enervating effect of constant changes and attempts to remake the VET system."

I wasn't able to join you yesterday but it sounds like we are discussing a "great leap forward" by "slow and steady increments." Having been involved in this reform process, in one role or another, since I started TAFE teaching in 1989 I assure you I have great sympathy for this sentiment.

However, the immediate horizon does not appear to offer any short-term relief.

At present the sector has several current reviews underway:

1. In Victoria through the VET Funding Review led by Bruce Mackenzie.
2. In NSW the Parliament's Legislative Committee is conducting an inquiry into vocational education and training in NSW.
3. The Senate Education and Employment Committee has a current inquiry into the operation, regulation and funding of private vocational education and training providers.
4. The COAG review of a proposed federal government take-over of the VET sector.

I have often complained that the sector is treated like poor cousin in the education sector as it doesn't often enough receive the focus and attention it deserves as an equal partner in the national education task with schools and universities. It now seems to be showered with attention and analysis and I welcome this and would like to share with you some of my own observations on these developments and explain Labor's position, recently announced by Bill Shorten on National TAFE Day.

Over the last year the media has been full of stories documenting the serious issues in communities across our country with the closures of TAFEs, reductions in staffing, ever increasing course costs and unscrupulous private providers and brokers preying on vulnerable people – this must not be allowed to continue. TAFE must be backed by governments as it is critical to our future.

On National TAFE Day, Labor Leader Bill Shorten and I announced Labor's plan to back TAFE into the future by developing a comprehensive National Priority Plan that defines the unique role of TAFE as our public provider and delivers on this by working with the states and territories to provide ongoing guaranteed TAFE funding.

We took this policy step because we are convinced that TAFE must remain an essential part of Australia's skills and training sector as it plays a vital role in servicing our regions, industries in transition and disadvantaged groups.

As the Australian economy changes, the jobs of the future will change. Our trades will involve more technology-based skills and workers will need training in these skills to be more effective in the workplace and to remain competitive in the employment market. New trades and professions will emerge and require quality training programs and upskilling courses.

It is therefore absolutely critical that we invest in supporting our national asset – our public TAFE sector.

There are challenges in the way the vocational educational sector is funded which has led to the decline of the TAFE sector nationally. Over the last year it has become clear that there has been a failure in the market and we have seen the proliferation of opportunistic and sub-standard training providers costing the taxpayers and students millions of dollars.

This needs to stop.

Vocational students need to have access to good quality training but we need a better system in place to ensure TAFE's viability and strength into the future.

Under Labor's plan for TAFE, a Shorten Labor Government will work with Premiers and Chief Ministers on a comprehensive National Priority Plan that defines the unique role of TAFE and places it squarely as the public provider within the VET sector – as the cornerstone of our economy's need to train and retrain its workforce and to deliver on improving the participation, productivity, innovation and growth efforts required for the nation.

We will work with the states and territories to rebalance the contestable and non-contestable funding model to ensure it delivers the outcomes that are intended. Labor believes there is a place for contestable funding but we must get the balance right.

The Abbott Government has been silent on TAFE and this gives me great concern in the current discussion about a federal takeover of the sector, even if States remain as the "owner" of the TAFE system.

TAFE is not just another RTO whose owner happens to be the taxpayer through the State and Territory governments.

It is, and must continue to be, part of the social and economic capital of the towns, suburbs, cities and regions it services.

It is our view that TAFE must remain an essential part of Australia's skills and training sector as it has a broader social responsibility as a public provider to deliver government policies focused on servicing our regions, industries in transition and disadvantaged groups.

The skill needs of our economy will be challenged by digital disruption, the application of new advanced technologies, the emergence of new trades and professions, and the need for ongoing upskilling of the existing workforce. People will move more frequently between the VET and higher education sectors, indeed this relationship is already far more complex and non-linear. Whilst I acknowledge many in the private sector take great pride in doing this type of work too, I don't believe it is viable to rely on the private sector to carry the costs or change their model to deliver government priorities.

Whilst private and not-for-profit provides will often be responsive it is only TAFE that can be directed by Government and this needs to be part of the available resources to government.

As I indicated, over the last year it has become clear that the market is not best equipped to effectively deliver the outcomes governments, employers and students need.

The fundamentals of an effective market are clearly missing and no amount of regulation, as important as it is, will change this. Labor believes the market must find stability through a predominant public provider, complemented by a quality private sector.

Labor is firmly committed to a strong TAFE sector.

We understand how critically important TAFE is to so many students, communities, industries and businesses. It is a national asset and we must work across all levels of government to ensure its future.

This brings me to the significant debate occurring around the Federation Reform process and the current consideration of a new arrangement of responsibilities. Public comments by the Minister and Assistant Minister seem to indicate a live willingness to consider a federal takeover.

Who pays, how much should they pay, who decides what's offered and how quality is maintained – who funds, regulates and delivers vocational education and training in Australia are some of the significant and important questions facing us as a nation.

In our federal system of government one of the perennial debates that occur is around service delivery sectors that are required to respond to two government levels of funders, regulators and policy-setters – our vocational education and training system is no stranger to this debate.

The sector is large, diverse and complex, particularly in comparison to its cousins – the school and university sectors. It is often poorly understood and too often neglected because of this complexity. Federal Labor in government renewed the national focus on the sector because we understood its critical role in increasing workforce participation and enhancing national productivity.

The Reform of the Federation White Paper on the Roles and Responsibilities in education was released just before Christmas last year by the Prime Minister's Department. It raises a concern that most jurisdictions reduced, or at best, maintained their level of VET expenditure in real terms between 2003/4 to 2012/13. However, the Commonwealth had increased its contribution in real terms by an average 1.6% per annum over the same period.

The focus for Labor during this time was two-fold. Firstly to create a national entitlement to a qualification up to a Certificate III level through the national partnerships with States and, secondly, to increase skills development of the existing workforce in partnership with employers through the co-investment programs.

We also understood the importance of using expert research to ensure the best advice was provided on the national skills task and to then provide better information to students and industry. The Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA) was formed to bring key players across industry, unions and community together to provide this expert advice on existing skills needs and emerging skills opportunities and challenges. The work required in scanning the needs of individual industry sectors and developing training packages in response was tasked to Industry Skills Councils who formed representative boards of employers and unions from the sector. Even within industries there is significant diversity of views between stakeholders – between small and large employers, between city and rural based companies, between production and service delivery divisions as just a sample. The ISCs worked to ensure, as much as possible, that their responses provided a balanced approach between these various demands. As AWPAs have been abolished and the ISCs have been de-funded by the Abbott Government the result is a significant narrowing of its sources of advice to government.

The White Paper did outline a series of important questions that deserve well-researched and well-considered responses. I have already argued that we

should reject the Commission of Audit's recommendation that the Commonwealth Government abandon the VET field. The White Paper took a step back from that position. It didn't make any specific recommendation but it does ask whether the States and Territories could better coordinate for national consistency as required without the Commonwealth's involvement. This would only deliver a failure to address, not only current skills challenges for the nation, but also to provide effective analysis and response to future and emerging pressures and opportunities.

The White Paper also opens discussions about the funding model and its comparison with the university sector and the issue of student cost burdens. These are important areas for serious consideration. Getting the balance right, however, is not only about the funding mix between different levels of government and between government and students and employers. It must also address the interaction between funding sources and the impact on the quality and relevance of the training provided. This is why Senator Kim Carr and I requested the Auditor-General to investigate the use of VET FEE-HELP to date and we welcome his advice that it will be considered in the work schedule this year. No proposals to extend the program should even be considered before such serious review occurs. There is ample reported evidence of students being enrolled in inappropriate courses and being given misleading information on their debt already available as unscrupulous providers seek to profit from the funding system.

The work of the national regulator, ASQA, has been critically important in exposing many of these practices across the sector and it was a good decision by the previous Minister, Ian Macfarlane, to retain and increase support to the regulator. The current Minister, Simon Birmingham, has worked to see the National Standards strengthened and extended to capture more of the sub-contracted activity. But it would be a serious mistake for the government to ignore the clear need to understand and respond to the link to funding availability. As students in VET shoulder more of the cost for their education and training by utilising VET FEE-HELP it is a serious concern to protect them from shonky and misleading activity.

Many other serious questions are facing us, not all are canvassed in the White Paper: issues regarding quantity as opposed to quality in measuring program success, completion rates and workplace relevance, pathways and lifelong skills development are just some of the more pressing debates occurring in the sector.

The White Paper makes the point that our system, overall, is strong and well-regarded internationally. It should be acknowledged that much of that quality and reputation has flowed from the strength and stability of our public provider – the TAFE system. It provides the benchmark and ballast for the sector but has been under too much attack and we risk the loss of this important public asset if all governments don't act to stem the decline and to rebuild the public provider.

Our private sector, both for profit and not-for profit, needs to be comprised of providers dedicated to quality delivery, student-focussed and employer relevant training. The shonky providers feed off and diminish all quality providers and exploit the hopes and aspirations of the students. We must not only weed them out, we also need to understand the systemic interaction between policy, funding and

regulation and how they can give rise to perverse outcomes that carry a heavy cost for individuals, employers and the nation.

The White Paper poses some of the questions facing the sector but it still doesn't come to grips with the complexity of the inter-relationships between all these factors.

In July we saw the release of the Mitchell Institute's paper, "Feasibility and design of a tertiary education entitlement in Australia", written by Dr Timothy Higgins and Prof Bruce Chapman. It expands on the earlier report, "Financing tertiary education in Australia – the reform imperative and rethinking student entitlements", by Prof Peter Noonan and Sarah Pilcher. These reports follow up on the issues raised in the Reform of the Federation White Paper and I note the Institute is well represented in your conference program.

The Noonan/Pilcher paper, released in February this year, proposed one foundational aspect of the VET matrix should be "a fairer and simpler financing framework, across the different levels of government and tertiary education, that supports a tertiary education student entitlement for young Australians."

The proposal would see an entitlement for Australians aged between 18–24 and would be composed of a combination of public subsidies (by State/Territory and/or Commonwealth governments) and a student contribution through an income contingent loan.

The report considers three funding models and indicates a preference for the third option which separates responsibility between the levels of government based on the level of qualification, however, it also proposes that the Commonwealth make income contingent loans available for all qualification above (and including) Certificate III level.

Echoing the concerns I have expressed about the White Paper proposals, the Noonan/Pilcher report outlines ten specific factors that would need to be considered in setting public subsidies. These factors are just as relevant to the provision of income contingent loans as a complementary avenue of funding, particularly as many students accessing these loans are increasingly enrolled in training that does not carry a government subsidy.

The Higgins/Chapman report explores the potential cost of the extension of income contingent loans to Certificate III and IV level courses based on the measurement of the subsidy ratios that would be created given the lower graduating incomes (indeed often lifetime earnings of graduates, particularly women).

The report specifically outlines a range of risks in this model which include the “potential for intentional income manipulation in order to avoid repayments, generous loan conditions that might influence student choices and/or course providers charging excessive fees and providing poor education services”.

There can be no doubt that significant public media reporting, findings of the national regulator (ASQA) and the Victorian regulator (VRQA) give enough evidence of significant distortion of training provision as recruiters and providers manipulate student choices based on funding options with little if any regard for student capacity, course appropriateness or job market relevance.

It is this behaviour that has seen so many examples of students with very large VET FEE-HELP debts with poor quality qualifications not well-regarded in the industry sector or, even worse, no qualification at all.

While the two Mitchell Institute reports are valuable and important to the national discussion of the VET sector I do not believe that it is wise to further such considerations without a full and evidence-based understanding of the current state of use of VET FEE-HELP. Given its massive growth over recent years, in particular by the private sector, it should not be extended further without this level of rigour in assessing its growth and impact on outcomes.

Both Mitchell Institute reviews envisage a model where government subsidy comprises part of the funding model and it is true on evidence to date that such an arrangement, with a tie to course cost controls, can act as a break on unsustainable growth in the use of ICLs. However, it appears that a significant number of providers have bypassed this by moving into the full fee paying space where it is clear that course costs have skyrocketed and the evidence would appear to prove that the students in this market are not price sensitive as they are not well-informed on the value of the course, the reality of the debt they are undertaking or the alternatives available from the “competition”.

This is one of the reasons that Labor believes that a strong and dominant public provider is essential in the sector to provide the benchmark for quality and cost. Although there is real concern about the increased cost of TAFE courses in various states, they still provide an important comparison point that would not be available if public provision was not available in particular regions or for particular industry sectors. Many of the submissions to the Senate inquiry have used examples of exorbitant costs being charged in the private sector in comparison to TAFE courses.

It is also most important that a better consideration of the impacts of funding mechanisms on the quality of VET provision occurs before decisions are made on complete restructuring of the arrangements in this sector. Federal government changes over recent months to standards and regulation are welcome but a more sophisticated analysis of the market is necessary and must consider the movement between government and non-government subsidised training that can result from the decision to move more funding responsibility to the student.

Whilst taxpayer funding of subsidies of all types in the sector is critical for ensuring the outcomes of training match both the individual's aspirations and the national skill needs, I would argue there is an equal responsibility on government to ensure students undertaking full fee-paying options using both upfront payments and income contingent loans are also able to meet their aspirations. This part of the market also has a direct impact on the national skills task.

These two reports from the Mitchell Institute are welcome and important contributions to the debate. They certainly provoke debate but it is my strong view that more evidence-based analysis is critical before we move to any further significant structural change.

For this reason I welcome the fact that the federal government has continued the implementation of the Unique Student Identifier as it will enable a much more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the sector.

I thank you for the opportunity to join you again this year and look forward to the outcomes of your deliberations – especially as we are likely to face a federal election before you gather again next year.

How TAFEs are getting it right: Competing to win in 2016

Successful tertiary educational outcomes result from deep student engagement. With more interactions moving into the digital sphere, opportunities now exist for personalised experiences, delivered at scale. More TAFEs are recognising – and seizing – the opportunity to transform their service model to deliver better educational outcomes, and help students finish what they start.

Merrill Atlas

Director of Tertiary Partnerships, YourTutor

Master of Ceremonies**Ellen Fanning**

How has the competitive marketplace played out across the States and Territories for TAFE?

The Australian Government Competition Policy Review Final Report (Harper Review) notes 'the potential benefits of competition in human services include lower prices, greater efficiency in service provision, greater innovation and improved customer choice' (Australian Government, March 2015, Competition and Policy Review Final Report, page 36).

Issues for discussion

Have the various Australian states and territories achieved the "benefits of competition" in their implementation of national entitlement and competition policy?

Panel

Maria Peters

Jodi Schmidt

Pam Christie

Neil Fernandes

Associate Professor Dr Steve Shanahan

Shane Kay

Gail Eaton-Briggs

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning



Jodi Schmidt

Chief Executive Officer, TAFE Queensland

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Competition reform and opportunity for TAFE

Introduction

The Australian Government's Competition Policy Review Final Report (Harper Review) calls for structural policy reform to encourage greater competition and the removal of barriers that currently restrict this. The report focuses on industries that have traditionally been provided by government or government-owned entities, this includes health and education services. The key point for TAFE that is also made in this report is the acknowledgement that government providers bring different strengths to a competitive marketplace in sectors such as education (Competition Policy Review: Final Report, p. 245).

The challenge which is currently confronting TAFE is identifying what it brings to a competitive market and how it can leverage these strengths to provide a point of difference in a marketplace that is increasingly competitive. To understand

this, recent developments in the sector need to be examined and the shape that future reform should take considered.

Competition outcomes – participation and sector funding shifts

Competition in the vocational education and training (VET) sector has been implemented in a progressive and inconsistent manner by states and territories. This has been driven by differing funding and political environments and the level of priority that VET has in each of the jurisdictions.

That aside, the case can clearly be made that increased competition has resulted in both additional providers entering the market and an increasing diversity of offerings and choice for consumers. This has subsequently reduced the market share of the public provider, which has been more significant in the jurisdictions that have introduced full contestability (Victoria, South Australia and Queensland).

Participation over this period of increased competition is worth examining as this is one of the key focuses of the document that is widely identified as the vehicle that has driven increased competition in the VET sector – the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform (NPA), which was entered into in 2012.

Based on NCVER data, government-funded participation experienced significant increases in the period leading up to 2012, before a sharp decline between 2012 and 2014, which saw a reduction of 135,000 students.

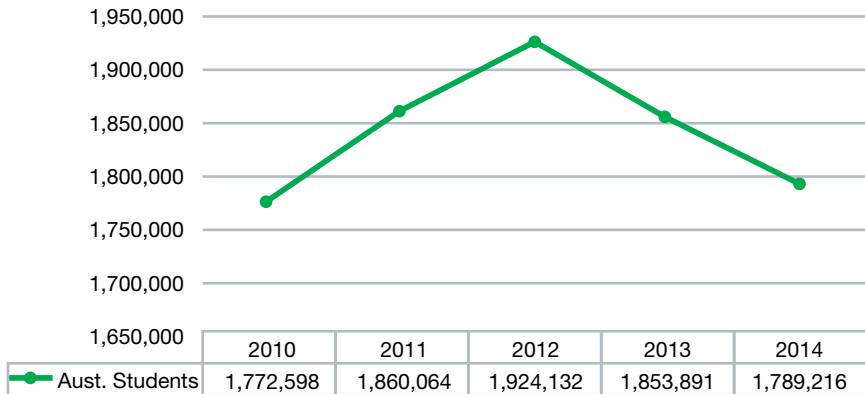
Interestingly, participation fluctuations have aligned with variability in the level of governmental investment in the VET sector. In Queensland this has largely been driven by declines in state government funding in recent years (excluding the recently handed down 2015–16 state budget).

This correlation can lead one to the conclusion that there is not in fact a traditional market for the provision of VET and instead the market, including consumers and providers, responds to changes in government policy and funding. The secondary point to make here is the important role that government needs to play in investing in the VET sector into the future.

The other key development during this period is the increasing role that VET FEE-HELP is playing in driving participation and for that matter, funding of the sector. Commonwealth budget papers illustrate an increase of 160,200 VET FEE-HELP loans between 2012–13 and 2014–15.

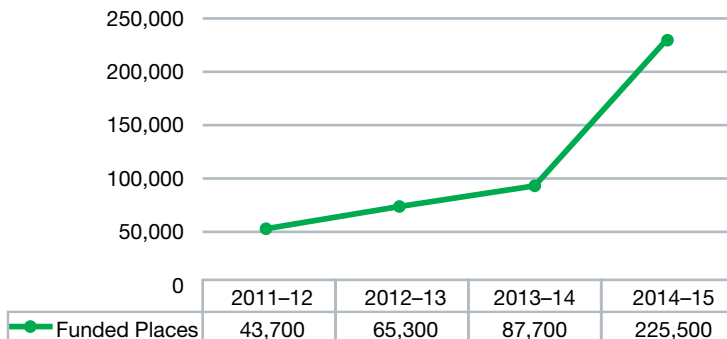
This growth demonstrates a clear shift in the funding source for VET participation from government to users. Tables 1 and 2 clearly illustrate this change.

Table 1 – Government Funded Participation



Source: NCVER – Government-funded students and courses 2014.

Table 2 – Number of VET FEE-HELP Places



Source: Commonwealth Budget Portfolio Statements.

Emergence of quality as a concern and opportunity for TAFE

The other key development within the VET sector in recent years has been an increasing focus and concern in relation to the quality and relevance of the qualifications being provided by the VET sector. There has been particular concern in relation to the safeguards that are in place for vulnerable students against opportunistic providers operating within a rapidly expanding VET FEE-HELP model. In addition to this, length of training has been an ongoing concern, as highlighted most recently by the ASQA report into training for early childhood education and care.

These issues have, in the main, been addressed by increasing market regulation which, it is hoped, will go some way toward addressing these concerns. However, future reform needs to be shaped by these issues and TAFE as the public provider needs to be a key contributor to this direction.

In Queensland there is an increasing price sensitivity. The response by providers to competition in many cases has been to base their product offering solely around pricing, while ignoring other key elements. There is a range of reasons for this including the policy framework implemented, the maturity of the market and its providers as well as clients' understanding of the market and what they are purchasing.

In a civilised world, competition should not only be occurring within the pricing sphere but on a much broader front. Specifically, the focus of competitive reforms should be on providing students with a return on their investment, through employment or access to further education. This also has significant benefits for industry and national economic growth more generally.

This is the opportunity that TAFE is presented with through the ongoing competitive reforms. Take the positive elements that have been borne out of competition, such as consumer choice

and diversity and combine these with improved students outcomes and industry responsiveness.

It is through this approach that TAFE will ensure that it plays a key role in the reform process and that the sector more generally increasingly benefits from competition, while reducing some of the negative elements that have been prevalent in recent years. This also will illustrate, as the Harper Review alludes, the strengths that public providers can bring to a competitive market.

So what does a competitive future hold for TAFE?

Looking to the federal and future landscape, competition and deregulation will continue to be part of our vocational education and training sector – hopefully as our sector moves closer to better integrating with higher education. In the (many) years since there has been a single national strategy for VET, disparity – or uniqueness/'boutiqueness' taking the positive view – between the federated jurisdictions has increased. This has created different markets functioning on different rules and scales. Whenever reform is mentioned – be it at the COAG table or at a business leaders' summit – the discussion quickly moves to VET and the problems within the sector rather than celebrating the significant contribution the sector makes to the economy.

With discussion about shifting responsibility for VET (policy, funding and regulation) to the Commonwealth intensifying, the question for TAFE is how will we compete in an increasingly contestable national market? Will we collectively continue to focus on our own backyards and compete in the markets we know and against each other or could there be a higher calling – to lead the sector back to the outcomes that should be delivered from this sector and should be the focus, that is, building the skills that meet workforce demand that improves productivity and innovation to the benefit of the nation?

VET, the internet and social capital: Some navigational aids for the revolution

Like some other industries, education in general and VET in particular are torn between old models and new possibilities. Incumbent institutions everywhere suffer from what Clay Christiansen calls "The Innovator's Dilemma". Incumbents are usually good at using new technologies as tools to lower their costs, but they balk at, indeed often completely fail to even notice the transformative potential of new technologies. This has never been more true than with the internet.

This presentation will focus on the range of ways we could be transforming education and VET, including far more emphasis on learning by doing, credentialling by achievement and peer-to-peer learning. It will offer some suggestions as to how to continue the journey.

Speaker

Nicholas Gruen

Master of Ceremonies

Ellen Fanning



THE SMART & CONNECTED CAMPUS

Thanks for attending the TAFE Directors Australia National Conference 2015.

Download our VET Trends in Asia report now at www.dandolo.com.au/TAFE

IN COLLABORATION WITH



Presenters, Facilitators, MCs & Conference Organiser

Robert Adams

Chief Executive Officer, Transport & Logistics Industry Skills Council Ltd

Robert Adams has been Chief Executive Officer of the Transport & Logistics Industry Skills Council Ltd (TLISC) since 2011. Prior to taking up his position with TLISC, Robert had extensive experience in the brewing, rail and road transport industries.

The key priorities Robert has focused on since joining TLISC have been in engaging with the industry to identify and execute strategies which underpin improved skilling and productivity outcomes. Effective stakeholder engagement and industry intelligence have been critical drivers for the success of the organisation. Current priorities include working with the industry to address the dual challenge of an ageing workforce and a highly competitive labour market.

TLISC has the reputation, experience and networks to be the enabling body in addressing the growing gap in skills supply and demand in the transport and logistics workforce.

Professor Janelle Allison

Pro Vice-Chancellor Community, Partnerships and Regional Development, University of Tasmania; and Director, Institute for Regional Development

Professor Janelle Allison is Pro Vice-Chancellor Community, Partnerships and Regional Development at the University of Tasmania. Prior to taking up this position she was Director of the Cradle Coast Campus and Institute for Regional Development at the University of Tasmania. Before coming to the University of Tasmania she was the Director of the Centre for Rural and Regional Innovation – Queensland at the University of Queensland's Gatton Campus.

Professor Allison has a particular interest in the areas of participation and regional economic development. Her strategic and creative thinking has established new ways to approach lifelong learning. As PVC Community Partnerships and Regional Development she provides strategic leadership and develops strategic initiatives in collaboration with faculties and community, and business/industry stakeholders.

Professor Allison sits on the Joint Commonwealth Tasmania Economic Council – chaired by the Prime Minister, the Hon. Tony Abbott MP – and on the Tasmanian Development Board.

John Angley

General Manager, International Education, Austrade

John Angley is Austrade's General Manager, International Education. He leads Austrade in the international promotion of Australia's education and training sectors, working with Austrade's onshore team and international network, as well as providers and stakeholders across all sectors.

John's career in government, before joining Austrade in late 2009, includes adviser to deputy prime minister and minister for finance, Budget Group in the Department of Finance, the Parliamentary Research Service, and on regional development and Northern Australia issues.

John studied history at Adelaide University, and economics at the Australian National University and the London School of Economics.

Merrill Atlas

Director of Tertiary Partnerships, YourTutor

Merrill Atlas is the national Tertiary Partnerships Director at YourTutor, working over the past nine years with TAFEs, universities and colleges to lower attrition, and improve rates of retention and student satisfaction, and to support students from low-socioeconomic-status groups find educational pathways to a better life.

With an academic background in sociology, and more than a decade in industry leadership roles, Merrill combines her knowledge of social and corporate issues to provide unique insight into the challenges and rewards that students face when trying to get ahead, and how institutions can better serve their customers' needs to improve, meet goals and drive their business forward.

Tim Bambrick

Product Customer Service Manager, TechnologyOne

Tim Bambrick joined TechnologyOne in 2007 after a 20-year career at the Australian National University. During that time he worked in all areas of student administration from admissions to graduation, as well as in the faculties and colleges and in the Vice-Chancellor's Office. Since joining TechnologyOne Student Management he has held a number of roles, and is currently the Product Customer Service Manager.

The Hon. Sharon Bird MP

Shadow Minister for Vocational Education; Member for Cunningham, New South Wales

Sharon Bird MP was elected as the Federal Member for Cunningham (NSW) in 2004, 2007, 2010 and 2013.

Ms Bird was appointed Shadow Minister for Vocational Education on the 18 October 2013. She served as Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Regional Communications and Minister for Road Safety from 1 July 2013.

Ms Bird also served as Minister for Higher Education and Skills from 25 March 2013 and as Parliamentary Secretary for Higher Education and Skills from 5 March 2012 until her appointment as Minister.

Ms Bird chaired the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications from 2010 until 2012. She was also a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties and the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure from 2010 until 2012.

Ms Bird served on the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training from 2004 until 2010 and Chaired this Committee from 2008 until 2010. She has also served on the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations (2008–10); the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services (2004–07) and served on the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration in 2007 as Deputy Chair.

Ms Bird was born on 15 November 1962 in Wollongong, NSW. She served as a Councillor on Shellharbour Council from 1991 to 1995. Her occupations prior to entering Parliament are as follows:

- BA (Syd), Dip Ed (Wollongong)
- High school teacher (1985–89)
- TAFE teacher (1989–95)
- Electorate Officer to Colin Hollis MP, Member for Throsby (1995–97)
- Senior Project Officer, Department of Juvenile Justice (1997–2004).

Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham

Assistant Minister for Education and Training

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham has served as a Liberal Party Senator for South Australia since May 2007 and in December 2014 he was appointed as Assistant Minister for Education and Training.

Simon grew up near Gawler in Adelaide's north on his family's small horse agistment property. He was educated at government schools before going on to study at the University of Adelaide where he completed a Master's degree of Business Administration.

Prior to entering the Senate, Simon worked for a number of industry bodies, with particular experience in the wine, tourism and hospitality sectors – industries critical to South Australia's prosperity.

After less than three years in the Senate, Simon was appointed to the Shadow Ministry, serving as Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Murray-Darling Basin and the Environment until the 2013 election.

Following the change of government in 2013 Simon served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment, with responsibility for water policy, including the Murray-Darling Basin, National Parks and the Bureau of Meteorology.

In 2014 Simon was appointed to serve as the Assistant Minister for Education and Training in the Abbott Ministry, with specific responsibility for vocational education, apprenticeships, training and skills.

He is married to Courtney and has two young daughters, Matilda and Amelia. Simon is an active supporter of the Parliamentary Association for UNICEF and a proud, but sometimes frustrated, Adelaide Crows fan.

Denise Boyd

Director of Policy & Campaigns, Consumer Action Law Centre, Victoria

Denise Boyd has 20 years' experience in the not-for-profit sector, and brings a strong skills base in strategic planning and delivery to her roles. After leaving university she discovered a passion for advocacy, and so began her campaign career with Greenpeace Australia in the early 1990s working on toxics, oceans and forests. Since then she has worked for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (UK and Australia) and the Australian Conservation Foundation.

Denise has extensive experience of political advocacy, both at the national and international level, and has represented environment and animal welfare interests on Australian government and non-governmental delegations to a number of international forums.

James Burrows

Marketing and Overseas Development Manager, Government Education and Training International

James Burrows graduated from the University of Tasmania with a Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Marketing and International Business. Throughout his career James has performed varying marketing and business development roles in industries such as ICT, advertising, financial services, creative arts and international education. In his current role as Overseas Development Manager for Government Education and Training International, James is responsible for building and maintaining partnerships with institutions, governments and other stakeholders across China.

Mary Campbell

TDA Board Member; General Manager, TAFE Queensland SkillsTech

Mary Campbell was appointed General Manager of TAFE Queensland SkillsTech in May 2010 and brought to the role many years of experience in the vocational education and training sector along with a wealth of knowledge and exceptional leadership skills.

TAFE Queensland SkillsTech is the largest public provider of trade and technician training in Queensland, with more than 20,000 students enrolled annually. The region operates from four training centres across Brisbane and is responsible for the development and delivery of training in key industries, including automotive, building and construction, electrical and electronics, manufacturing and engineering, sustainable technologies, and mining, gas and resources.

Prior to her appointment as General Manager, Mary held senior management positions across a number of TAFE institutes in Queensland, including SkillsTech Australia, Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE and Moreton Institute of TAFE. In more recent times, Mary undertook the role of Director TAFE Reform, leading the strategic and cultural changes for TAFE Queensland SkillsTech under the VET Reform agenda.

Mary is a member of the TAFE Directors Australia Board along with CVIAQ Skills and Training Sub-Committee and the National Apprenticeship Program Steering Committee. She has also been involved in a number of national initiatives, including the COAG Industry and Skills Council and the Alternative Pathways to Trades Industry Reference Group.

Mary has a Bachelor of Arts Degree, Diploma of Teaching (TAFE), Graduate Diploma in Open and Distance Learning, and a Master's degree in Education and

Learning Innovations. She has spent more than 25 years working in the VET sector and is passionate about all aspects of the business, but most importantly about creating real outcomes for VET students and their employers.

Sara Caplan

Partner, PwC

Sara Caplan is PwC Australia's National Skills Leader. Previously, she led the PwC UK Education and Skills practice. Prior to entering consulting, Sara spent 10 years in both delivery and senior management roles within a UK further and higher education college.

Sara's focus is on how Australia creates the skills needed to help industry and business to grow in the future and contribute to greater economic success. She has focused recently on supporting governments in delivering policy outcomes in education and skills, transforming skills systems and creating new access routes to professional careers. She led the development of several new Higher Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship Trailblazers, working collaboratively with other employers. She also led a major Employer Ownership of Skills pilot, supporting SMEs to take on new apprentices and developed and ran the London Professional Apprenticeship program.

In 2012 Sara was appointed by the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) as an Employer Ambassador for Higher Apprenticeships. She was a member of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Education and Skills and the Higher Education Commission. She contributed to a number of research activities focused particularly on vocational and higher education, including financial stability, the skills agenda and how this links to growing the economy.

Sara chaired BIS's Professional and Business Services Council Skills taskforce, was Deputy Chair of the London First Skills and Employment Group, and a member of the Business in the Community Talent and Skills Leadership Group.

Kate Carnell

Chief Executive Officer, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Kate Carnell commenced as CEO of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) in May 2014. ACCI, Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, is the leading voice of business in Australia advocating for over 300,000 businesses across all industries.

Kate is well known and respected in the not-for-profit and business communities having served two years as CEO of beyondblue and before that four years as CEO of the Australian Food and Grocery Council. She began her professional life as a pharmacist, owned and managed pharmacies for some 20 years, was the inaugural Chair of the ACT Branch of the Australian Pharmacy Guild and went on to become National Vice-President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Kate served as Chief Minister of the ACT from 1995 to 2000. She was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2006 for her services to community through contributions to economic development and support for the business sector, knowledge industries, the medical sector and medical technology advances.

Pam Christie

Managing Director, TAFE NSW

As Managing Director of TAFE NSW, Pam Christie is responsible for setting strategic directions and policy across TAFE NSW. Pam has worked in education and training for more than 30 years. Before her current appointment, she was Director, TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute.

Pam is a member of the TAFE NSW Higher Education Governing Council and the TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Board.

Pam's qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education, and Graduate Diploma of Special Education. She is a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Professor Berwyn Clayton

Professor Emerita, Work-based Education Research Centre, Victoria University

Professor Berwyn Clayton has had over 25 years' experience in the vocational education and training sector. During that time Berwyn has worked as a teacher, curriculum development manager, professional developer and research centre director.

A founding member of the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association, Berwyn was the Association's president from 2000 to 2004. Her research expertise and knowledge of vocational education has been acknowledged by her inclusion in national forums such as the OECD Review and Systemic Innovation Study: Experts Forum, Standards Australia Committee for the development of the Australian Standard for Non-formal learning, National VET Workforce Development Managers Network, and Skills Australia Strategic Industry Forum.

She is currently serving as an expert member of the National Skills Standards Council, a member of Innovation and Business Skills Australia's Education Sector Advisory Committee, and chair of the IBSA TAE10 Professional Development Options National Project Reference Group.

Berwyn has published and presented widely on issues critical to vocational culture and change, VET teacher qualifications and professional development, competency-based assessment, recognition of prior learning and flexible delivery.

Linda Condon

Director, Proactive Sustainability

Linda Condon is a Director of Proactive Sustainability, a consultancy that works with government, business and the community to actively promote sustainable practice. Linda is also the founder of the Centre for Sustainability at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, and was until 2007, the Head of the National Centre for Sustainability at Swinburne. More recently, Linda was the Director for the International Green Skills Network on behalf of TAFE Directors Australia where she developed a network to promote green skills and education for sustainability.

Currently, Linda is working as a consultant for a number of organisations undertaking evaluations and promoting environmental sustainability. She has been involved in the judging of awards, in particular, the Banksia Environmental Awards, International Green Gown Awards, Savewater and the United Nations Environmental Awards, and is engaged in promoting the uptake of sustainability in education and training.

She has also provided strategic advice to the Department of Justice in Victoria on their sustainability policies and has worked on the Sustainable Environment Committee Reference Group for Port Phillip Council in Victoria. She has authored and

co-authored the following relevant papers focusing on issues relating to sustainability: L Condon 2004, 'Sustainability and small to medium sized enterprises: how to engage them', *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, vol. 20, no. 1; L Condon, J Donlen and A Tourney 2005, 'Measuring community engagement with sustainability: "Living for our Future"', *Change in the 21st Century*, November; and L Condon 2004, 'Design for sustainability and the aging population', in *lab Report 04 – The New Design Nexus: iCT, changing demographics and sustainability*, L Anderson and S Jackson (eds), Lab.3000, Melbourne: Lab.3000.

Rod Cooke

Chief Executive Officer, Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council

Rod Cooke has an extensive background in leadership, workforce development and governance in business, community organisations and the vocational education sector. He has held senior management and workforce development positions in the Army, government, private enterprise and the not-for-profit sector. These include positions of CEO at Orana Education & Training Cooperative Ltd and National Learning & Development Manager with NRMA.

Rod has significant not-for-profit and community experience in board and volunteer roles for over 20 years, including UPA Aged Care Services, and is currently on the Board of the Lane Cove and Northside Community Services and Rural Financial Counselling Service NSW – Central West.

His qualifications include an Arts Degree, Graduate Diploma in Training and Development, Master's Degree in Educational Administration, Master's Degree in Business Administration, Diploma in Training and Assessment Systems and a Company Director's Diploma.

Dr Peter Coolbear

Director, Ako Aotearoa, New Zealand

Dr Peter Coolbear is the foundation Director of Ako Aotearoa, the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, New Zealand. He took up this role in July 2007, and was previously Deputy Chief Executive at Manukau Institute of Technology.

Peter has a background as a teacher and researcher in plant science and from the mid-1990s he has held a series of management positions in the NZ polytechnic sector, in the Ministry of Education and at the Tertiary Education Commission. He has served on the Council of Otago Polytechnic, the City of Manukau Education Trust and the Board of ITPQ (the quality assurance body for the polytechnic sector in New Zealand).

He is presently Chair of NZCER, external Chair of the Combined Academic Board of Weltec and Whitireia Community Polytechnic, and serves on the Adult and Community Education Professional Development Steering Group. He is also a member of New Zealand's national Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards selection panel.

Keith Cowlshaw

Executive Director Vocational Education, RMIT University

Keith Cowlshaw has a broad industry background in the textile industry. Prior to joining RMIT University in March 2005, he held a number of senior marketing and business management positions with DuPont Nylon, JGL Investments and ICI Fibres. He has had extensive industry experience working in overseas markets with a particular focus on Asia-Pacific countries. Whilst at RMIT he has held the positions of Head of School Fashion and Textiles and also of Design TAFE.

He is especially interested in developing sustainable industry linkages through the connectivity of vocational education.

Dr John Daley

Chief Executive, Grattan Institute

Dr John Daley is the inaugural Chief Executive of Grattan Institute which provides independent, rigorous and practical solutions to Australia's most pressing public policy issues. The current programs of Grattan Institute focus on productivity growth, cities, school education, tertiary education, energy and health.

John's work at Grattan Institute has focused on economic and budgetary reform. He is particularly interested in government prioritisation. His other interests include analysing the situations in which government intervention is justified, and the limits to government.

He has 25 years' experience spanning policy, academic, government and corporate roles. He has worked for the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, McKinsey and Co, and ANZ where he was Managing Director of the online stockbroker, E*TRADE Australia.

John completed an LLB (Hons) and a BSc at the University of Melbourne in 1989, and a doctorate in public law at the University of Oxford in 1999.

Greg d'Arville

Principal, CRGessentials

Greg d'Arville is an educator, journalist and marketer with over 20 years of compliance, governance and risk-management experience. CRGessentials is the vehicle through which Greg delivers interactive, high-impact governance, risk and compliance training purpose-built for a range of target audiences: board members, executives, managers or frontline staff. The company also conducts audits and reviews and provides advice in respect of risk and compliance obligations.

Greg also chairs the Audit and Risk Committee at the Fair Work Ombudsman and is a member of the St Martin's Youth Arts Centre Board.

Greg has been a course facilitator for the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) since 1997. His skillset is derived from professional studies in law (at ANU), drama (Nimrod Theatre), marketing and economics (at Deakin University) and corporate governance (at AICD and the Chartered Secretaries Association).

Brad Davies

Co-owner and Director of dandolopartners

Brad Davies has 20 years' experience in translating the role of technology into government, and specifically into education. He was the author of the report *Global Trends in Vocational Education and Training* which foreshadowed the growing interest in student retention, analytics and new industry partnerships, among other things.

Brad is the co-owner and Director of dandolopartners, a Melbourne-based policy consultancy advising governments and corporates on policy, strategy, evaluation and implementation. In recent years, he has led a number of study tours to the US, Europe and Asia to assess the role of technology in universities and TAFE institutes.

Brad has a Master of Business (Marketing) from RMIT and is a Senior Executive Fellow of Harvard University, USA.

Jan Davis

Board member of Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, Landcare Australia Limited and the Royal Flying Doctors Service (Tasmania)

Jan Davis is recognised as the public face of the Tasmanian agriculture industry. She has kicked the dirt in the paddock, hassled and haggled with three tiers of government, and attended countless (sometimes seemingly endless) meetings. Her success in doing this was recognised when she was named as the state's leading political lobbyist in a poll last year.

Jan has a strong background in the Australian agribusiness sector and in member-based organisations. She has recently stepped down after five years as the Chief Executive Officer at Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association. For some years she also worked as a consultant in the sector, with clients ranging from individuals through to state and federal governments.

Jan has served on the boards of a range of both not-for-profit and for-profit organisations. She is currently a member of the boards of the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, Landcare Australia Limited and the Royal Flying Doctors Service (Tasmania). In the past she has been a director of Plant Health Australia Limited, Skills Tasmania, Horticulture Australia Limited, and the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation. She was also Chair of the Australian Agricultural Colleges Corporation. As a result, she has been identified as one of the top 100 women in Australian agriculture.

Jan has more qualifications than you can poke a stick at. These include Master's degrees in Agribusiness and Environmental Planning; a Bachelor's degree in Economics; and Graduate Diplomas in Education and Environmental Studies. She is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management, the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology and the Australian Society of Association Executives.

Jodieann Dawe

National Manager, Research and Business Development, NCVER

Jodieann Dawe is an executive with diverse skills in research and business development at a national level, with particular experience in managing applied research to deliver knowledge, evidence and market intelligence valued by industry and governments. She has a strong understanding of the role of research in informing policy and practice. Her previous roles include CEO of Water Research Australia, the managing director/company secretary of a University of NSW company supporting students, and Manager – Research Operations of Meat and Livestock Australia.

As the founding CEO of a membership-based non-profit company structured similarly to NCVER, she brings valued experience in governance, business development and stakeholder management. Her diverse and strategic leadership roles will be an asset to NCVER.

Jodieann's qualifications include a Master in Applied Science, Master of Business Administration (Finance/Strategy) and a Diploma from the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Matthew Denholm

Tasmanian Correspondent, *The Australian*

Matthew Denholm is a multi-award winning journalist of 24 years and has been Tasmania correspondent for *The Australian* for the past decade. He is a recipient of the Keith Welsh Award for Outstanding Contribution to Journalism and thrice winner of the Tasmanian Journalist of the Year Award, most recently in 2014.

Earlier this year, Matthew won the state award for Best News Story, after locating alive an alleged paedophile authorities

had believed to be dead. He has worked in London, with Sky News, and in Sydney, with *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Australian*. He has covered politics at the state and national levels and in the United Kingdom. His career began at *The (Hobart) Mercury*.

Karen Dickinson

Managing Director, Kimberley Training Institute

Karen Dickinson is Managing Director of the Kimberley Training Institute (KTI), a position she has held for just over six years. Kimberley Training Institute has six campuses in all the major towns of the Kimberley region in Western Australia and is one of the most culturally diverse TAFEs in Australia with over 50 per cent of students coming from an Aboriginal background. KTI not only works with a large cohort of Aboriginal students but also steps up to meet the ever-increasing requirements of industry in the Kimberley.

Karen has effectively led the organisation to be a highly credible State Training Provider (STP). KTI has grown from being a small, underperforming STP to winning awards, achieving or exceeding most of its KPIs and is now positioned as one of the fastest growing STPs/TAFEs in Australia with 80 per cent growth in the past five years.

Karen has a wide-ranging professional background which includes managerial positions held in state and Australian government agencies across VET, health and employment services sectors.

André Diez de Aux

Visiting Fellow, Australian National University

André Diez de Aux is a scholar in the higher education sector and is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University. He has worked in a variety of roles in the higher education and quality assurance sectors.

Before moving to Australia, André worked as a Quality Assurance Associate at the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service, where he performed program validation, oversaw institutional quality reviews, and worked with Ontario's 24 publicly assisted colleges to ensure that quality standards and the Ontario Credentials Framework were interpreted and implemented appropriately.

Prior to joining the OCQAS, André worked as a Research Policy Analyst at the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, where he was part of the team that developed both program standards and legislative and regulatory amendments, and that spearheaded a number of high-profile policy initiatives, most notably the introduction of a province-wide credit transfer system. André joined the ministry after having spent a number of years at the University of Toronto as a doctoral student in French and Romance linguistics, where he worked as Course Instructor and Research Assistant. He has also worked in a number of roles in the private sector, including corporate language training and managing the creative and strategic direction of a successful business.

Jenny Dodd

General Manager, TAFE Queensland Gold Coast

Jenny Dodd is the General Manager, TAFE Queensland Gold Coast. She moved to Queensland to be part of the formation of TAFE Queensland as a statutory authority on 1 July 2014. TAFE Queensland is Queensland's largest, most experienced training provider delivering practical, industry-relevant training to more than 180,000 students each year.

As the General Manager for TAFE Queensland Gold Coast, Jenny, and the team on the Gold Coast, strive to achieve the strategic directions set by the Board of TAFE Queensland including meeting commercial targets and TAFE Queensland's operating margin, building employee participation and commitment, and ensuring high levels of student, employer and stakeholder satisfaction.

Prior to joining TAFE Queensland, Jenny was Deputy Chief Executive Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) where she was responsible for all education services and business development. During 2013 Jenny took on the role of Chief Executive of CIT and was a Director of the Board of CIT Solutions Pty Ltd.

Jenny is passionate about vocational education and the dual role it plays in meeting the needs of both industry and individuals. She is known for her national leadership through the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG) and represented TAFE on the advisory group for the formation of the 2015 VET RTO standards.

Jenny is currently a member of the Board of TAFE Directors Australia's National Scholarship Fund and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, the Australian Human Resource Institute and the Australian Institute of Management.

Dr Glenys Drew

Director, Coach Culture

Dr Glenys Drew's extensive research and practice has greatly benefitted the field of organisational and leadership development in the education sector – delivering highly reviewed organisational culture-building expertise through Coach, and previously at the University of Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology. Glenys is a recognised leader in facilitating empowering 360 feedback and growth processes for leaders, contributing 12 internationally refereed publications in this field. Her many consultancies in Australasia are highly acclaimed with repeat invitations to provide talks on leadership development internationally, and custom-designed leadership programs within education, local, state and Commonwealth government and community and not-for-profit sectors.

Leanne Drew-McKain

Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Coach

Coach Founder and CEO Leanne Drew-McKain is a leading communication coach, highly regarded for her unique ability to build organisational communication culture and develop highest order communication capabilities in leaders and teams – creating her own coaching brand and suite of products and services that are forging a new and needed place in the business marketplace. Leanne is a sought-after communication strategist in the public and corporate sectors. She equips CEOs, managers and public sector leaders in communication, media, public speaking and influencing skills, critical case-making and negotiation.

Leanne has steered a wealth of complex internal and external communication projects for state and local government and private sectors. She is well-versed in shaping communication strategy within layered organisational and policy contexts, drawing on her background in journalism and communication.

Gail Eaton-Briggs

Executive Manager Education Services, TasTAFE

TasTAFE is one of Tasmania's largest public training providers, delivering vocational education and training products and services to individuals and employers across Tasmania. TasTAFE was established through legislation on 1 July 2013 and is the organisation that has brought together the Tasmanian Polytechnic and the Tasmanian Skills Institute which were established in 2009 as part of the Tasmanian Government Reforms to Post Year 10 Education. TasTAFE has around 900 full, part time and sessional staff, and has over 30,000 enrolments annually. TasTAFE delivers around 400 different qualifications across a breadth of industries; campuses are located around the state in 13 locations. TasTAFE also has an online, national and international presence.

As Executive Manager Education Services, Gail Eaton-Briggs has wide-ranging responsibilities that support the whole-of-student life-cycle, including initiatives to bring students into TasTAFE, supporting students and teachers, capability development, libraries, business growth, teaching and learning technology, pedagogy and andragogy, quality student experience and compliance. As a member of the TasTAFE executive, Gail provides advice to the TasTAFE Board and came to the role after working in children's services as a manager within a local government environment and was inaugural Chair of the Tasmanian Ministerial Child Care Advisory Council. Looking for a career change, Gail's interest in developing others came to the fore and she began a "new" career at TAFE Tasmania in 2003.

Gail holds a Bachelor of Human Services and a Master of Public Administration (Executive), C IV in Training & Assessment and C IV in Celebrancy. Gail was a finalist in the 2014 Telstra Women's Business Awards in the category of Government and Community, and is a member of Women Chiefs of Enterprises International Tasmania.

Ellen Fanning

Award-winning current affairs journalist

Ellen Fanning is best known for her work as an award-winning current affairs journalist. At 24, she broke new ground, becoming the first woman to host one of ABC Radio's national current affairs programs. Two years at the helm of *PM* were followed by several years anchoring *AM* on ABC Radio and serving as occasional host of ABC TV's *7.30 Report*. Ellen also served as the ABC's Washington correspondent and has reported from locations as diverse as Transylvania and the North Pole, under the Indian Ocean aboard an Australian Navy submarine and 30,000 feet over Serbia from a US Air Force refuelling jet.

Ellen has interviewed every current and former Australian Prime Minister from John Howard to John Gorton and has met and interviewed world leaders from France, Britain, Ireland, Israel and the United States. Most recently, Ellen has been a reporter for the Nine Network's *60 Minutes* and *Sunday* programs. She has also had extensive experience moderating political, business and community events in Australia. As a facilitator Ellen's strength lies in her ability to clarify goals, define roles and reach agreed outcomes across both cultural and language barriers.

With a wealth of experience in communications, politics, social, cultural and business issues, Ellen's informative and stimulating presentations make her an ideal moderator and facilitator.

Mary Faraone

TDA Board Member; Chief Executive Holmesglen Institute

Mary Faraone commenced as Chief Executive of Holmesglen Institute in October 2013. Mary had extensive experience working in the VET sector, with industry, RTOs and TAFE in various roles prior to joining Holmesglen Institute in 2003. She has been instrumental in leading the Institute's teaching and learning, securing a number of significant national and international projects and the introduction of higher education. She is proud that today Holmesglen is recognised for its leadership in the delivery of higher education in the non-university sector.

As Chief Executive, Mary is keen to further develop the innovation and entrepreneurial culture at the Institute and build on its history and reputation as a leading tertiary provider. She is committed to the role public tertiary education plays in supporting social inclusion and social cohesion in the community, and its underlying values of equity and access. Mary is optimistic for the future of TAFE and VET. She looks forward to leading the organisation to ensure it remains at the forefront of tertiary education, with pathways and programs within the senior secondary, technical and vocational and higher education sectors.

Mary is currently a member of the Victorian Ministerial Roundtable for International Education with the Minister for Training and Education and the Minister for Industry, and was appointed as the Victorian representative on the TDA Board in July 2015 for a three-year period.

Doug Ferguson

Partner in Charge China Practice, KPMG

Doug Ferguson is KPMG Australia's Partner in Charge of Asia Business and a Deal Advisory Partner. Doug is a Chartered Accountant in Australia, a CPA in Hong Kong and a Graduate of the AICD. He is an Adjunct Professor at Sydney University's Business School, a Board member of Asia Society, a Vice President of Australia China Business Council and one of nine Business Champions for the New Colombo Plan.

Doug was based in Beijing and Hong Kong between 2001 and 2011 as a Deal Advisory professional. In this role, he has advised multinational companies, private equity funds and local Chinese companies on listed and unlisted transactions and restructuring projects. Between 2006 and 2008, Doug was the CFO for Allico Finance Asia Limited in Hong Kong. As part of that role, he acted as Chief Investment Officer for Allico's joint venture mezzanine capital fund with CITIC Capital and managed the funds' capital investments in China.

Doug re-joined KPMG China as a Partner in 2008 and between 2008 and 2011 was a core member of the Lehman Brothers insolvency team with responsibility for managing and recovering over USD1.5 billion of principal real estate investments. Since returning to Australia in early 2012, Doug has led numerous major in-bound Chinese investment projects, including due diligence on a number of technology, real estate, entertainment and agribusiness sector investment projects. He is also the co-author of KPMG and University of Sydney's 'Demystifying Chinese Investment' research series and a regular conference speaker and media commentator on Chinese-Australian business matters.

Neil Fernandes

TDA Board Member; Managing Director, Central Institute of Technology, WA

Neil Fernandes has been the Managing Director at Central Institute of Technology since July 2005. Prior to his appointment at Central, Neil was the Deputy Director-General (Training) in the Department of Education and Training for 18 months and was the inaugural General Manager of WestOne from July 1999 to August 2003. Neil has held a number of senior positions in the vocational education and training (VET) system in Western Australia, and is a strong advocate for vocational education and training. Neil has been a member of the TDA Board since 2011, and represents the TDA on the Australia India Education Council.

Neil is also an honorary senior fellow at the LH Martin Institute at the University of Melbourne. Born in Nagpur, India, Neil's family migrated to Australia in 1969. He completed his schooling in Perth and holds a BA (Philosophy) from the University of Western Australia. Neil is married with two children.

Russ Francis

Industry Manager – Education, TechnologyOne

Russ Francis is a highly experienced and well respected ex-Victorian TAFE Executive who was appointed to the position of the Industry Manager – Education in January 2015. Previously, during 2014, he was the Business Development Manager for Student Management.

Immediately prior to joining TechnologyOne (during 2012 and 2013), Russ was the SMS Business Director at the Victorian Student Management Solution (SMS) Project. In this position he was the senior TAFE Executive representative on the project with the power to "sign off" on behalf of the TAFE consortium regarding project deliverables.

Before his SMS Project role, Russ worked for 26 years in the Victorian TAFE sector as a teacher, middle manager, executive officer and lastly, as a deputy CEO across five metropolitan and regional TAFE institutes. In his TAFE Executive positions Russ directed and led the major corporate functions of strategic planning, finance, student administration, organisational development (including HR, IR and payroll), educational development (including blended delivery) information technology, facilities, business development (including marketing) and student support services.

Tim Gilbert

Manager of Transnational Programs in the Melbourne Polytechnic International Office

Tim Gilbert manages the Transnational Team at Melbourne Polytechnic, one of Australia's largest providers of transnational education. Tim's team has developed a sophisticated quality assurance and business development service that allows all departments, no matter how small, to seize opportunities offshore by sliding seamlessly into this centralised system. As a result of this work, Melbourne Polytechnic's International Office won the 2014 Victorian International Education Award for Excellence in International Education – TAFE.

Melbourne Polytechnic has also been recognised in the Federal Government's Draft National Strategy for International Education (April 2015) for its international mobility projects that are directed towards building stronger ties with existing transnational programs and improving the transnational student experience. Apart from these benefits, Tim has been shortlisted for the 2015 Victorian VET Client Service/Support Excellence Award for leveraging his team's international expertise and connections to support Australian TAFE students and teachers to have amazing experiences hosted by their transnational partners.

Norman Gray AM

Chief Executive Officer, Box Hill Institute

Norman Gray AM is the Chief Executive Officer of Box Hill Institute (BHI) and Centre for Adult Education (CAE) and was appointed to this role in July 2014.

Norman has led the development of the organisation's new strategic plan 2015–18 which has a focus on financial sustainability and serving communities through education, training and lifelong learning. An early achievement has been the establishment of the Lilydale Community Campus, with delivery of BHI and CAE training to the community commencing in February 2015.

Norman's previous roles include Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director of Network Operations of Public Transport Victoria, and Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Thales Australia, a large systems engineering company and leading edge provider of solutions for the commercial and defence sectors, with a turnover in excess of \$1 billion annually. Prior to this Norman had a long and distinguished career in the Department of Defence. He served in the Royal Australian Air Force, having held several significant leadership positions and rising to the rank of Air Vice Marshal. Positions held include Deputy CEO Defence Materiel Organisation; Head, Airborne Surveillance and Control division; Director General Aerospace Development.

Norman's exceptional service was recognised in June 1993 when he was made a Member of the Order of Australia. He was also awarded the Australian Service Medal South East Asia and Australian Service Medal Irian Jaya.

Throughout his career Norman has obtained a number of qualifications, including postgraduate qualifications in corporate leadership and strategy. He also holds qualifications in aviation, management, administration, air navigation and engineering. Norman is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors,

Master Project Director of Australian Institute of Project Management and was a Member of the Business Council of Australia (2006–08). He has held a number of board positions including Non-Executive Director of Royal Flying Doctor Service, Non-Executive Director of Institute of Telecommunication Research, Member of the Air Force Capability Management Board, and a Member of the Defence Audit Committee.

Nicholas Gruen

CEO, Lateral Economics; Chair, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation; former Chair, Innovation Australia

Nicholas Gruen is a widely published policy economist, entrepreneur and commentator on our economy, society and innovation. He is CEO of Lateral Economics and Chair of the Australian Centre for Social Innovation; Deakin University's Arts Participation Incubator; and the Open Knowledge Foundation (Australia).

Nicholas chaired the Federal Government's Innovation Australia till 2014. He is Patron of the Australian Digital Alliance, comprising Australia's libraries, universities, and providers of digital infrastructure, such as Google and Yahoo. He is a Council Member of the National Library of Australia. He was Chairman of the successful San Francisco-based data-analytics crowd-sourcing platform Kaggle.com and an investor in numerous Australian and American startups. Nicholas has advised cabinet ministers, sat on Australia's Productivity Commission (then Industry Commission) and founded Lateral Economics and Peach Financial. He has had regular columns in various daily papers and published numerous essays on political, economic and cultural matters. In 2009, he chaired Australia's internationally acclaimed Government 2.0 Taskforce.

Dr Beth Hagan

Executive Director, Community College Baccalaureate Association

Dr Beth Hagan has been the Executive Director of the Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA) since 1999. She holds MEd and MBA degrees from the University of Illinois and a PhD in Entrepreneurship Education.

Beth has presented on issues of access to post-secondary education at many conferences, including the National Council for Workforce Education, National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, The League for Innovations, Innovations 2001–2008, and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

At the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) in British Columbia, in 2008, Beth conducted a pre-conference CCBA/ACCC Forum. She represents CCBA at an Affiliate Council of the American Association of Community Colleges and has represented the CCBA membership at the 2008 World Congress.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Beth began her career as a business owner on the campus of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana where she taught business courses in the College of Commerce. She lives in Bonita Springs, Florida, where she has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce.

Rebecca Hall

Director, International Education, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, Victoria

Rebecca Hall has over 20 years' experience in the international education sector working across all three levels of government, with peak bodies and education providers. Rebecca is currently the Director International Education with Victorian Government with oversight of the Government's international education strategy. Other senior positions include roles with Gold Coast City Council, Queensland Department of Education and Training, TAFE Directors Australia, and Griffith University.

Rebecca is a passionate advocate for international education and has been an active contributor to the research agenda over the past decade. She holds board positions with International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) and AFS Australia and from 2011–14 was Chair of the Queensland Overseas Foundation. Rebecca holds a Bachelor of International Business Relations, a Master of International Relations and a Graduate Certificate in Higher Education.

Mike G Hansen

President, Michigan Community College Association

Mike Hansen is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Community College Baccalaureate Association and has been the President of the Michigan Community College Association since 2006. Mike began his professional career teaching high school social studies in public schools. In 1988, he began working with the Michigan Senate Fiscal Agency as a non-partisan fiscal analyst in support of the Michigan Senate. His 18-year career with the agency culminated in his position as Chief Analyst where his responsibilities

included staffing the Joint Capital Outlay Subcommittee and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Community Colleges.

Mike has a BA in American Political Science and a Teaching Certificate from the University of Michigan and a Master in Labor and Industrial Relations from Michigan State University.

Dr Bonnie Heckard-Farmer

Associate Dean College Centers, Schoolcraft College

Dr Bonnie Heckard-Farmer is the Associate Dean with oversight of the Schoolcraft College, Radcliff College Center, providing programming in health professions and fostering community partnerships. Bonnie is a current member of the Assessment Academy Mentor program for the Higher Learning Commission and has been a surveyor for the accreditation of allied health programs around the country. Previously, she held the positions of Assistant Provost at the University of Michigan – Flint, and Director of Assessment at Davenport University, leading efforts in assessment of student learning at all levels.

Bonnie earned an undergraduate degree in Business Administration from Saginaw Valley State University, a Master's degree in Business Education with a Vocational Certification in Marketing from Central Michigan University and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Central Michigan University. Her research focus is in the area of concept mapping of faculty professional development through the lens of the adult learner. Bonnie has taught briefly in China, travelled extensively and works to develop her skills in the art of watercolour, ceramics and quilting.

Nicholas Hunt

Chief Executive Officer, William Angliss Institute

Nicholas Hunt was appointed Chief Executive Officer of William Angliss Institute (WAI) in 2007. Since joining the Institute Nick has focused on developing WAI's educational programs, strengthening the Institute's activities in support of industry and leading the Institute's strategic development in a period of significant change.

WAI is Australia's largest specialist provider of foods, tourism, hospitality and events education and training. WAI seeks to be the leading educational provider of Australian hospitality, tourism, foods and culinary arts nationally and internationally. The Institute's mission is to deliver the highest quality specialist skills and education to inspire, empower and develop those people passionately devoted to being service industry professionals, leaders and innovators. Prior to joining the Institute, Nick held a variety of positions in tourism and education development sectors.

These include: CEO, Tourism Alliance Victoria; CEO, Country Victorian Tourism Council; and Executive Director, Tourism Training Victoria. Outside of the Institute, Nick is Chair of the TAFE Directors Australia Finance and Audit Committee, the national body representing public TAFE providers; Director of the International Centre of Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality Education, Board Member Victorian Tourism Industry Council and Treasurer of the Victorian TAFE Association.

Nick's qualifications include a Master of Education Policy (International), University of Melbourne; Bachelor of Arts (Hons) University of Tasmania; he is also a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Peter Hurley

Project Manager, Employment Services, Bendigo Kangan Institute

Peter Hurley is currently a Project Manager at Bendigo Kangan TAFE. He has worked for over 10 years in the vocational sector in employment services, business development and international projects. Peter has worked closely with government departments, professional organisations and industry to create and deliver innovative education programs. He is currently completing a PhD at Monash University focusing on the role of education both nationally and internationally. Peter was awarded the AVETRA/TDA Innovation Research Scholarship in 2015.

Kanishk Kumar

Business Development Manager, Australian Trade Commission, Mumbai

Kanishk Kumar is an international trade and development professional with a long-term interest in the Australia-India trade relationship. Kanishk is currently working with the Australian Trade Commission, focusing on the education and sports sectors. He delivers practical in-market support, advice and insights to Australian institutions, with a focus on trade development and the marketing of international education. Kanishk has previously worked as the Associate Vice President at Sewells Group, a global consulting firm specialising in the automotive retail sector where he led all client engagement activities with an Indian automobile sector. He also worked briefly in the mining and insurance industries.

Kanishk completed a dual MBA and Master of Marketing from the University of Newcastle, Australia. He became the first Indian to lead the postgraduate student association of the University of Newcastle with 8,500 members. He represented this cohort on the prestigious Academic Senate, Faculty Boards and Teaching and Learning Committee to assist in policy development of the university.

Paul Lennard

Education Manager Cookery and Food Programs, TasTAFE

Paul Lennard has been working in the hospitality industry for almost 40 years, and in its educational area for more than 20 of these years. He has worked across three states and territories. His qualifications include a Trade Certificate in Cookery, Graduate Diploma of Management, Graduate Certificate of Public Sector Management, Bachelor of Education, Certificate IV in Workplace Training, and a Diploma of Teaching. He was the inaugural Tsunechi Fujii Fellow and studied cookery in Japan, and is also a Fellow of the International Specialised Skills Institute and recipient of an international skills specialist scholarship to study cool climate food and wine in Europe. Paul has held many positions in industry including executive chef positions in Tasmania, London and Papua New Guinea.

Paul has extensive experience teaching in TasTAFE joint-venture programs in China in the areas of business and wine and food.

Dr Bernardo A León de la Barra

School of Engineering and ICT, Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology, University of Tasmania

Dr Bernardo A León de la Barra has been one of the main driving forces behind the integrated STEM education movement in Tasmania. His integrated STEM education work (www.utas.edu.au/stem) has been funded locally, nationally, and internationally, and seeks to highlight and promote the importance of integrated STEM education for Tasmania and Australia's future.

Bernardo has made major contributions to curriculum resources in two national projects: 'Development of mathematics pathways for VET students to articulate to related higher education courses' (www.utas.edu.au/mathematics-pathways, funded by Office for Learning & Teaching); and 'STEMCrAFT (STEM Critical Appraisal for Teachers) Building capacity for rural and regional STEM teachers using a peer support model' (www.stemcraft.weebly.com), funded by the Australian Maths and Science Partnership Program (AMSPP). He is also a project team member in the 2015–17 AMSPP project titled 'Towards Educating Mathematics Professionals Encompassing Science and Technology: TEMPEST' (www.utas.edu.au/education/research/research-groups/maths-education/tempest) and in the 2015 OLT Seed Project 'Reskilling the manufacturing workforce and developing capabilities for the future'.

Bernardo's research interests include K-12 integrated STEM education and its role in attracting more girls and students from low SES, regional and rural communities to the STEM fields. He is also interested in exploring how a collective impact framework could be used to improve engagement, retention, completion and educational attainment in Tasmanian communities, with a particular focus on changing attitudes and raising educational and vocational aspirations through cradle-to-career integrated STEM education.

Melinda Lethbridge

Student, Swinburne University of Technology – 2014 Australian Apprentice of the Year

Melinda Lethbridge, 23 years, completed her Certificate III in Engineering Mechanical Trade at Swinburne's Wantirna campus and now works as a Fitter and Machinist at Hargo Engineering based in Croydon. Melinda's fascination with how things work, and hands-on approach to life, is what led her to a career in fitting and machining.

Working within what is predominately a male-dominated trade, Melinda is a passionate advocate for the promotion of apprenticeships in manufacturing as a career pathway, especially for young women. Melinda is a Young Industry Ambassador, she was placed first in the regional finals of World Skills Australia in 2013, was awarded the title of Swinburne Apprentice of the Year in 2011 and again in 2013, and last year won the 2014 Australian Apprentice of the Year Award.

Yanwei Ma

Researcher, National Institute of Education Science

Yanwei Ma is a researcher in the National Institute of Education Science (NIES). Established in 1957 NIES is a research arm of the Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China and the only national-level comprehensive education research institution in China. Born in Changchun, Jilin Province, Northeast China, Ms Ma was awarded bachelor and master's degrees in the Northeast Normal University. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University researching Vocational Education.

Between 2010 and 2012, Ms Ma was Secretary and Policy Researcher in the Office of National Education System Reform Leading Group and the Secretariat of National Advisory Committee of Education, consulting across divisions of the Ministry of Education, drafting policy and preparing reports regarding the reform objectives in different education sectors.

In 2014, she worked at TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) as a visiting scholar, funded through a scholarship from the China Scholarship Council. During that year, she edited the China Bulletin published on the TDA's website, facilitated the cooperation and exchange between NIES and TDA, and conducted a research project of the VET system in Australia through a literature review and case studies.

Yunsheng Ma

Founder and Chairman of Shandong Chambroad Holding Co. Ltd

Yunsheng Ma is Standing member of 10–12th National People's Congress representative of Shandong Province; Standing Director of the China Enterprise Confederation; Executive Director of National Federation of Industry and the Oil Industry Association; Vice President of the China Confucius Foundation; Vice President of the Shandong Enterprises Association; Honorary President of Boxing Charity Federation; Principal of Boxing School of Special Education.

Shandong Chambroad Holding Co. Ltd is a top 500 enterprise of China; a top 500 chemical enterprise of China; a top 500 manufacturing enterprise of China; and a growth enterprise of China.

Bruce Mackenzie

Lead Reviewer, Victorian Education and Funding Review

Bruce Mackenzie has played a leading role in the successful development and implementation of the TAFE system in Victoria. His involvement in TAFE goes back to 1981 when he was a member of a four-person unit that designed the TAFE system for Victoria which was implemented in 1982. His contribution to the vocational education and training sector was formally recognised in his selection for the 1994 National AUSTAFE award for educational leadership. In the 2005 Australia Day Honours List, Bruce was awarded the public service medal for outstanding services to vocational education. In 2013, he was made an Honorary Doctor of the University of Canberra for his work in vocational and tertiary education. Bruce was a Chief Executive of Holmesglen Institute for 31 years, was a founding member of TAFE Directors Australia, its Deputy Chair for nine years and Chair in 2010.

He has undertaken national and international consultancies, and spoken at a number of national conferences on tertiary education, particularly on youth at risk and the role of education; strategies for international education; enterprise-based education; and higher education in the non-university sector. In 2012, Bruce was awarded the American Community College Baccalaureate Association pioneer award in recognition of his work as a pioneer in showing the way for others to follow to improve access to post-secondary education in Australia.

Tony Maguire

Director of Sales, Global Learning Support

Tony Maguire has worked at the intersection of education and ICT for over three decades and joins the leadership team at GLS at a pivotal time. Prior to GLS, Tony was the director and owner of an education services company, consulting to the education and not-for-profit sectors. A highly experienced executive, Tony has managed sales, marketing and service delivery for organisations ranging from startups to Fortune 500 companies, including Apple and Oracle.

His journey from teacher and accidental technologist to today has afforded Tony the opportunity to work with internationally recognised thought leaders, government ministers and education and industry partners on a wide variety of projects and initiatives across the P-12, VET and higher education sectors.

Dr Melissa McEwen

Branch Manager, Governance and Engagement Branch, Department of Education and Training

Dr Melissa McEwen is Branch Manager, Governance and Engagement Branch within the Skills Market Group of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. The branch facilitates skills mobility nationally and internationally by working with other countries in qualifications benchmarking and occupational standards development to facilitate greater system comparability and to assist industry meet the demands of the global marketplace. The branch is also responsible for national occupational licensing policy, providing support for national governance bodies, such as the Vocational Education and Training Advisory Board, and promoting skills including through the Australian Training Awards. Melissa has worked in vocational

education policy for the past seven years in various capacities, including working on the establishment of the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

Prior to moving into vocational education, Melissa spent a number of years in the area of broadcasting policy and worked as a policy manager for the Screen Producers of Australia.

Melissa has a BA (Hons) in politics from the University of Adelaide, and an MA in Australian Studies and PhD in cultural history from the Australian National University.

David McLean

Deputy Head of School (Business Services), RMIT University, Melbourne

David McLean is employed in RMIT's School of Vocational Business Education. His industry group delivers a broad range of business qualifications and includes a NEIS program and RMIT's Associate Degree in Business. David is attracted to continual innovation in the sector and has contributed to the design and development of learning resources, non-semester based delivery models and the establishment of youth programs. His current interests look to how mentored enterprise development programs provide strong vocational outcomes for students. He enjoys writing papers from a practitioner perspective that capture innovative experience in the sector. David was awarded the AVETRA Early Career Researcher Award in 2011 and the AVETRA/TDA Innovation Research Scholarship in 2014.

Christopher Medcraft

2014 Tasmanian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year; The Richmond Fellowship, Ulverstone

At the beginning of 2010, Christopher Medcraft was working as a Paper Machine Operator and Team Leader at the Wesley Vale site for Australian Paper when he, and many others, were made redundant. After 32 years on the job Chris had a lot of thinking to do and many decisions to make about his future.

Christopher's passion then and now is to assist others. He enrolled in and completed Certificate IV in Community Services Work at the Tasmanian Polytechnic. Before he had finished his course, Christopher was employed weekends at Anglicare working with children with Asperger's Syndrome. Once his course finished, he was often called upon to work six days a week. From mid-2011, Christopher has worked for the Richmond Fellowship Tasmania on the north-west coast. In the mental health sector there is an increasing need for qualifications and skills development and he has been supported and encouraged to study by his employers. Over the last two years, Christopher has been studying on-the-job and off-the-job for his Certificate IV in Mental Health with TasTAFE. His education and training has led him to broaden his thinking and change his values. It has taught him to have a greater understanding of other people's journeys and the resilience required to assist others work towards a better quality of life. It has also helped Christopher to deal with the stresses of his own life combining work, study, family, community commitments and sport.

Donna Meyer

Chief Executive Officer, Organization for Associate Degree Nursing

Donna Meyer's career spans over 35 years in both practice and education. Her primary clinical background has been in paediatric nursing at St Louis Children's Hospital. She began her academic career at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey, Illinois, as a nursing faculty member and progressed to become the Director of the program and ultimately, the Dean of Health Sciences. Additionally, Donna served as the Director of the Lewis and Clark Family Health Clinic and mobile unit. The clinic is the only nurse-managed primary care clinic operated by a community college.

Donna was responsible for working with then Senator Obama in 2007 to receive funding of a mobile health unit. She is very engaged in numerous organisations, holding offices in both state and national organisations. Her professional nursing activities include Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Academic Progression in Nursing Advisory Board, the Institute of Medicine's Global Forum on Inter-professional Healthcare Education, the Illinois Center for Nursing Advisory Board, the American Association of Community Colleges Workforce Commission, the Illinois Healthcare Action Coalition for the IOM/Future of Nursing, National Nursing Centers Consortium Health Policy Committee, and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society. She has presented at numerous national and state conferences, and completed research on the impact of a nurse-managed centre in the community college setting. She completed her bachelor's degree, master's degree and postgraduate work at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

Donna has been involved with Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (OADN) at the national level since 2007. She began as a Director for four years, then assumed the Presidency in 2011 for three years with her term ending in November 2014. She also served as the Illinois Chapter President. Under Donna's leadership OADN has formed numerous collaborations. In September 2012, after working closely with other national organisations she was one of five national leaders responsible for the release of the joint statement on nursing academic progression. In April 2014, she co-authored a paper organised by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation on the importance of community college nursing programs and academic progression. Most recently, she worked with the Robert Wood Johnson Academic Progression in Nursing National Advisory Committee to release the recommendation for BSN Foundational Courses to assist community college nursing students in nursing academic progression.

Dr John Mitchell

Lead Consultant, ACER JMA Analytics; and Managing Director, John Mitchell & Associates

Now Lead Consultant with ACER JMA Analytics, Dr John Mitchell has assisted over 30 TAFE institutes in every state to implement capability analysis tools that provide institutes with a systematic method for identifying staff strengths and gaps and developing new capabilities that lead to organisational improvement. John is also Managing Director, John Mitchell & Associates, a research, evaluation and consultancy company.

Adam Mostogl

Tasmanian Young Australian of the Year 2015

Adam Mostogl is a passionate 26-year-old who believes that if something in the community needs to be done, people should get out and do it! With a strategic (some would say boring) mind, Adam looks at how to empower the community to create change, especially how to engage young people to be integrally involved in the process. This can be seen in Adam's business which develops and encourages young people to be innovative and entrepreneurial through engaging education programs, as well as his community endeavours in a variety of fields.

Adam was recently recognised as the Tasmanian Young Australian of the Year 2015. He was also awarded a Leadership & Innovation Award at the Tasmanian Young Achievers Awards 2014 and was Launceston's Young Citizen of the Year 2014.

Catherine Murdoch

Manager Environment, Tasmanian Irrigation

Catherine Murdoch is Manager Environment at Tasmanian Irrigation, having joined the company in 2010. She is a former CEO of NRM North and has had more than 20 years' experience within the field of environmental and small business management. During this time, Catherine has held on-ground, planning, management and policy roles. She has managed national award winning organisations in New South Wales and Queensland.

Catherine has a Bachelor of Applied Science from Southern Cross University and is an accredited Lead Environmental Auditor and a Certified Environmental Practitioner. She was recently appointed as a board member of the Tasmanian EPA.

Dianne Murray

Deputy Chair, TDA Board; Institute Director, TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute

Dianne Murray is the Director of TAFE Illawarra which provides training services across 14 campuses in the south-east region of New South Wales. Her experience at executive level includes strategic planning, policy setting, systems development and resource management. Dianne's commitment to TAFE Illawarra is to build the business performance of the organisation through active engagement with business and industry partners, and support for individuals to challenge themselves by responding to customer needs in innovative ways. Dianne is Deputy Chair of TAFE Directors Australia, a member of the Regional Development Australia – Illawarra Board and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Robin Murt

TDA Board Member; Chief Executive, TAFE SA

Robin Murt has a wealth of experience in the vocational education and training sector and has led a number of senior teams within TAFE SA and South Australian government departments. He was the Acting Chief Executive of TAFE SA in 2012–13, guiding the corporation and the establishment of its inaugural board. This paved the way for the transition to a single TAFE SA from three institutes. He was the Executive Project Sponsor for the development and management of the delivery plan for the \$150m Sustainable Industries Education Centre at Tonsley and the \$38m Mining, Engineering and Transport Centre at Regency Park.

Robin has spent more than a decade in the health industry and an additional six years in the vocational education and training sector. During that time, he has facilitated major reform in both areas and successfully implemented a range of strategic initiatives

within various departments. Until January 2015, Robin was Chief Operating Officer for the Central Adelaide Local Health Network where he was responsible for leading and running health service operations, including the Royal Adelaide and Queen Elizabeth hospitals.

Professor Peter Noonan

Professorial Fellow, Mitchell Institute for Health and Education Policy

Professor Peter Noonan is Professor of Tertiary Education Policy and a Fellow of the Mitchell Institute for Health and Education at Victoria University.

Peter has played a major role in shaping policy directions in VET, higher and post-compulsory education in Australia for over 25 years as a senior public servant at national and state levels, adviser to ministers, as a consultant, and as a researcher. He was a member of the Expert Panel for the Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley Review) and was instrumental in the development of Australia's national VET system. He undertook a review of post-secondary education and training in Queensland and has led major reviews of TAFE systems and institutes in several jurisdictions.

Peter has also undertaken several major overseas projects advising on the development of national VET systems and addressing workforce skills needs. He is a former member of the Senate of the University of Western Australia and the Council of RMIT University, and a former Chair of the VET Development Centre in Victoria.

Peter holds degrees in Arts and Education from the University of Western Australia. He was also the recipient of the inaugural Fulbright VET Award. In 1999 he was given a special award by TDA in recognition of his outstanding contribution to VET in Australia.

Andrew Norton

Higher Education Program Director, Grattan Institute

Andrew Norton has worked as a policy adviser to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne and as a research fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies. Andrew has written widely on higher education, and in the late 1990s was higher education adviser to the then Federal Education Minister, Dr David Kemp. With Dr Kemp, he conducted a federal government review of the higher education demand-driven funding system, with its report published in April 2014.

Alison Overeem

Local Palawa woman

Alison Overeem is a proud Palawa woman from Southern Tasmania. Alison grew up in Southern Tasmania, completing a Bachelor of Education and later an Advanced Diploma in Management. She has a background in Education and Community Development.

Alison was the Director of the Aboriginal Children's Centre (Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Inc.) from 1989–2013. In 2012, she oversaw the Centre's relocation to the award-winning, culturally inclusive Child and Family Centre at Risdon Cove. Alison is currently in a community development role with the Aboriginal community at Leprena in Glenorchy. Alison is passionate about the learning and sharing of Tasmanian Aboriginal history, culture, people and cultural practices, embracing the wisdom of Elders and the intergenerational connections and reconnections of community through respectful relationships.

Ili Pelletier

Director, TAFE NSW Higher Education

Ili Pelletier is a passionate and creative education manager with experience in the tertiary, secondary and mixed education sectors. Ili has worked in academic leadership in all these areas, both in Australia and overseas. She has extensive experience in developing, implementing and evaluating higher education programs, with a strategic oversight as to their relevance and viability. Ili's blend of experience, as well as her background in fine arts has exposed her to a gamut of strategies and insights that complement the ongoing development of higher education in a tertiary and further education environment.

Maria Peters

Chief Executive Officer and Director, Chisholm Institute

Maria Peters is CEO of Chisholm, the Victorian and Australian Large Training Provider of the Year 2014. She has extensive experience in vocational education within Victoria and internationally.

Maria has led significant educational innovation within the VET sector aimed at improving participation and ensuring strong student and industry outcomes. She has been at the forefront of effective organisational change and management in the TAFE sector. Maria has led key innovation at Chisholm in higher education, programs for youth and online delivery. She has participated in government committees both at a state and national level on aged care, the automotive industry, vocational and higher education.

Bradford Polak

Director Business Capability Unit, TAFE NSW Western

Bradford Polak, the Business Capability Director is the leader of TAFE Western's Business Capability Unit, the primary objective of which is to develop and maintain the institute's external relations and commercial business strategy that is essential to the financial viability of the institute and its ability to contribute to the economic and social development of the region.

Brad is a strategic leader with over 30 years in the VET industry who delivers high quality outcomes utilising skills acquired through extensive experience and expertise in business improvement, educational operations, project management and financial management. He has a strong focus on high quality customer-focused programs and services, both in Australia and internationally. Brad is committed to ensuring TAFE Western grows and prospers by providing a range of high quality products and services to meet individual, industry and community needs.

Brad holds a Bachelor of Education, Diploma of Teaching, Diploma in Training and Assessment, and a Graduate Certificate in Frontline Management.

Allyn Radford

Chief Executive Officer, DeakinDigital

Allyn Radford is an executive-level manager experienced in innovative business models and infrastructure solutions. He has led projects in private enterprise and education in Australia, the United States, Mexico and South Korea. He has been involved in the use of technology in learning for more than 25 years. During that time, he has participated in the development of several learning technology standards and was a member of the Board of Directors of IMS Global.

Allyn has worked for organisations such as University of Melbourne, RMIT University, Open Learning Australia, HarvestRoad, and Cisco, and he has consulted independently.

Currently, Allyn is the CEO of DeakinDigital, a wholly owned subsidiary of Deakin University that is focused on credentialling as an alternative to traditional higher education approaches.

David Riordan

Institute Director, TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute

David Riordan was appointed Director of Sydney TAFE in June 2010. Sydney TAFE is one of the largest education and training providers in Australia, with over 70,000 students annually and 800 nationally recognised courses and training programs. David has over 27 years' experience working in the vocational education and training, higher education, schools and corporate sectors. In 2000, he managed the training of the workforce for the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games, the largest educational project in Australia at the time.

In 2007, David was appointed CEO for the NSW Department of Education & Communities International with responsibility for all international students and projects for both TAFE NSW and NSW government schools. He was the

Australian-based manager of the Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute project in the United Arab Emirates from 2007–10. During 2009, David chaired the NSW Ministerial Taskforce on International Education and was appointed to the Premier's Council on International Education.

He is a member of RC-2020, an international vocational and community education alliance, a Board Member of the International Education Association of Australia and was appointed to the Australian Qualifications Framework Council, International Alignment Committee in 2012. In 2011 and 2012, David accompanied the Premier of NSW on business missions to the People's Republic of China and India. In his current position, David has focused on budget reform, globalisation and positioning the institute for a sustainable future. In 2012, Sydney Institute was awarded the International Training Provider of the Year at the Australian Training Awards. In July this year Sydney TAFE won the prestigious National Travel Industry Award as the best registered Travel Industry Training Institution.

Martin Riordan

Chief Executive Officer, TAFE Directors Australia

Martin Riordan is CEO, TAFE Directors Australia and has recently returned from sabbatical leave.

As a recipient of a Prime Minister's 2014 Postgraduate Asia Scholarship, Martin was hosted at the Shanghai Second Polytechnic University (SSPU). SSPU has enjoyed a 10-year relationship collaborating for curriculum and "twinning" qualifications with Australian TAFEs.

In 2009, Martin was awarded an Australian American Fulbright Professional Scholarship, to review new financial structures and four-year degree models applying in American community colleges. He was appointed a Senior Fellow in 2014 at the LH Martin Institute of Tertiary Education Leadership and Management, University of Melbourne, where he is enrolled in postgraduate studies.

Prior to TAFE Directors Australia, Martin had spent much of his professional career as a senior executive with Australian and UK listed public companies managing investor relations and counsel on regulation. He enjoyed an extended posting to Singapore where he also established a dedicated vocational education and research agency for industry benchmarking. Martin was recruited to the Federal Education Department (DEST) on his relocation to Australia in 2002, and was a recipient team member in the Corporate Strategy Group of the DEST Secretary's Award for Excellence in 2005. He was recruited as CEO of TDA in 2006.

Externally, Martin has represented TAFE Directors Australia on the Board of the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics (WFCP) since 2006, and was recently re-elected Board Member. WFCP is a peak body for OECD-based community and vocational colleges. Most recently, Martin was foremost in establishing the TDA National Scholarships Foundation, seeking to improve corporate philanthropy into the skills and vocational education sector.

Anne Ripper

Director, Tasmanian Government, Education and Training, International

Anne Ripper was appointed in 2009 as the inaugural Director of Government Education and Training International Tasmania (GETI) responsible for international education in Tasmanian Department of Education Schools and TasTAFE. In this role, Anne has responsibility for marketing and recruitment, student welfare and compliance, and all Commonwealth and State regulatory obligations for international programs. GETI pursues business development opportunities offshore, coordinates and manages contracts and provides quality control of current offshore programs in Kuwait, Manila and Shanghai, Fuzhou and Guangzhou.

Anne represents the state of Tasmania in a number of national forums including Commonwealth and State and Territory International Education Roundtable; the Commonwealth Government's Education Visa Consultative Committee (EVCC); the international network of TAFE Directors Australia (ATIN); and Australian Government Schools International (AGSI).

Anne is Chair of the Tasmanian Minister of Education's Study Tasmania initiative which oversees strategies to promote Tasmania as a study destination for international students and provides community engagement opportunities and support for international students in Tasmania.

Prior to appointment to her current position, Anne was the Executive Manager of TasTAFE's Drysdale Institute, the Tasmanian Government-owned hospitality and tourism training organisation delivering programs in hospitality, tourism and cookery across the state of Tasmania. She also managed the International Education program for TasTAFE.

Anne is a qualified teacher and trainer with many years' experience in public sector management, private business operation, vocational education and training and workplace training and assessment.

Paul Roberts-Thomson

Managing Director, Van Diemen Quality Bulbs

Paul Roberts-Thomson is Managing Director of the Van Diemen Quality Bulbs company. In 1984, Paul and Bronwen Roberts-Thomson imported their first tulip bulbs from Holland and since then Van Diemen Quality Bulbs has continued to expand. They are now one of the major producers of not only tulip bulbs, but also Dutch iris and lilliums.

Chris Robinson

Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer, Australian Skills Quality Authority

Chris Robinson has held a number of senior government positions in education, training and related fields, including Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia; Deputy Director-General of the Department of Employment and Training, Queensland; and Managing Director of the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research. Chris also held numerous senior executive roles in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Australian Government's departments responsible for education and training, and the Department of Employment and Training in the United Kingdom.

Chris held the role of Acting Chief Commissioner of Australian Skills Quality Authority from 1 July 2011, and was appointed as Chief Commissioner on 1 October 2011 for a period of five years.

The Hon. Jeremy Rockcliff MP

Deputy Premier of Tasmania and Minister for Education and Training

The Hon. Jeremy Rockcliff is a north-west Tasmanian who grew up on the family farm at Sassafras. After matriculating in 1987, Jeremy went to work on a cattle and sheep property near Hagley. Following a two-year period at Lincoln University in New Zealand, Jeremy received a Diploma in Farm Management and returned to Tasmania to manage his family's property at Sassafras which specialises in mixed cropping and prime lamb production.

Apart from his passion for farming and rural life, Jeremy has a strong empathy with public and community services and has worked with a number of organisations including Lifeline North West Tasmania, natural resource management and Landcare groups, Youth and Family Focus, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association and MST Workplace Solutions, as well as holding many other positions. Jeremy has a close association with the Latrobe Football Club of which he was President from 2006–09.

In 2006, Jeremy was awarded life membership of Lifeline North West. He campaigned successfully in July 2002 to become an MP for Braddon in the House of Assembly and held the portfolios of Shadow Minister for Primary Industries, Water and Environment, and Shadow Minister for the Arts. In December 2006, Jeremy held the portfolio responsibilities of Economic Development, Resources, Sport, and Recreation, and Community Development, and between August 2008 and March 2010 was Shadow Minister for Tourism, Infrastructure, Resources and Racing. He held the position of Deputy Leader of the Opposition from March 2006.

Jeremy is currently the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Primary Industries and Water, and Minister for Racing. Since becoming the Minister for Education and Training, he has been instrumental in implementing a range of initiatives to raise educational standards in Tasmania. These include establishing a team of literacy and numeracy specialists to work with high school students, extending high schools into Years 11 and 12 to improve retention rates, and investing in support for students living with disabilities.

Jeremy played a significant role in helping set up the Tasmanian Devil Research Trust Appeal, progressing the rights of asbestos victims, championing the need for water development and greater quarantine barrier controls, fighting for stronger food labelling laws and effectively representing many people across the Braddon electorate.

Jeremy is known for his strong representation of the north-west and west coast of Tasmania and believes that as much of Tasmania's wealth is created by the diverse industry base of the north-west and west coast the region deserves its fair share of government support and services.

Jeremy is married to Sandra and they have three beautiful young daughters Ruby, Lucy and Holly.

Jen Rodger

Executive Director of Education, TAFE SA

Jen Rodger has held a number of senior positions over more than 10 years of employment with TAFE SA, most recently as the Acting Managing Director of TAFE SA North. She was previously the General Manager of TAFE SA Regional and also spent 18 years as a Lecturer in Community Services and Health. Jen's qualifications include a Master of Education.

Dr David Ross

President and CEO; Southern Alberta Institute of Technology Polytechnic, Calgary, Canada

Dr David Ross is the 16th President and CEO of Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) Polytechnic. For over 25 years David has been involved with post-secondary expansion in Canada with a record of productive relationships with communities, industry and government. David holds a PhD from the University of Nebraska in Higher Education, as well as graduate degrees from Simon Fraser University and Dalhousie University. Nationally, David is a member of the NSERC's National Committee on Research Partnerships, and a board member for both the Canadian Bureau for International Education and Polytechnics Canada. He is also Co-Chair of the AUCC/CiCan Joint Committee on Student Transferability, a former Executive Board Member for CiCan, and a member of the Canadian Business Higher Education Roundtable.

Internationally, David is past Chair of the College Baccalaureate Association and a Board Member of the Post-Secondary International Network. He has also served as President and Chair of the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations and sat on the American Colleges Commission on Marketing and Community Development. Before joining SAIT, David was President of Langara College and Vice-President Administration and Student Services and Chief Financial Officer at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

John Ross

Higher Education Journalist, *The Australian*

John Ross is a higher education journalist with *The Australian*. He reports across the range of tertiary education issues, specialising in international and vocational education. He has won journalism awards from the National Press Club, Universities Australia, the International Education Association of Australia, the Migration Institute of Australia and the Australian Council of Deans of Education. John joined *The Australian* in mid-2010 after working for several years with *Campus Review*. Prior to that, he spent many years as a media officer with NSW Government agencies including the Department of Education and Training, TAFE NSW, the Adult Migrant English Service and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. John has also freelanced for publications including the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Good Weekend*, and as a casual scriptwriter for educational and promotional videos and television.

John has also worked at various times as a musician, English teacher, kitchenhand, landscape labourer and sugar-cane chopper. He drinks too much coffee and plays Galician bagpipes quite badly.

Mark Ryan

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Tassal Group Limited, Chairman and Director on a number of Boards

Mark Ryan is the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Tassal Group Limited, a position he has held since November 2003. Mark holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Tasmania, is a Chartered Accountant, a fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Mark holds board positions with the Tasmanian Development Board and Salmon Enterprises of Tasmania Pty Ltd (industry hatchery); he is Chairman of Juicy Isle Pty Ltd and Chairman of the Macquarie Point Development Corporation.

Mark has extensive experience in the finance and turnaround management sector, with experience gained through Cox Miller & Robinson (Hobart), Price Waterhouse (Hobart, Melbourne and Toronto, Canada) PricewaterhouseCoopers (Toronto, Canada, and Melbourne), Arthur Andersen (Melbourne) and KordaMentha (Melbourne). He was previously a Partner with KordaMentha.

Professor Perry Samson

Associate Chair and Professor, Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic, and Space Sciences, University of Michigan, USA

Professor Perry Samson holds an Arthur F Thurnau Professorship at the University of Michigan and is the recipient of one of the 2009 Teaching Innovation Awards at the University of Michigan. In 2010, Professor Samson was named the Distinguished Professor of the Year by the State of Michigan Council of Presidents.

Perry is the co-founder of The Weather Underground, which is one of the 100 most visited websites on the internet. He is also the creator of LectureTools, a web application that allows students to synchronise their notetaking with the instructor's slides and respond to a wide range of question types in large lecture halls, and XamPREP, a new model for online textbooks. Perry is co-author of a new textbook, *Extreme Weather and Climate*, based in part on his years of experience leading student teams to chase supercell thunderstorms in the Great Plains.

Jodi Schmidt

Chief Executive Officer, TAFE Queensland

Jodi Schmidt assumed her current role as CEO (in July 2013) to reform and revitalise TAFE in Queensland. Her priorities include the overall leadership of TAFE Queensland as an independent statutory body and ensuring it is developed into a flexible and responsive organisation that works closely with industry and the community to meet the needs of stakeholders in a commercially viable way.

Jodi joined the TAFE Queensland network in late 2005 as Director of Corporate Services at Southbank Institute of Technology. During her tenure, Jodi was integral in repositioning the institute as a specialist in the delivery of higher level certificate and diploma programs and led the development and implementation of the statutory framework and separation from the Department of Education, Training and Employment. In July 2012, she became the Deputy Director-General of Training and Employment, with full responsibility of the state's training and employment portfolio, including operational oversight of TAFE, and was the senior officer responsible for input into the Skills and Training Taskforce and development of the Skills Reform Agenda, inclusive of the TAFE Reform for Queensland.

Jodi holds qualifications in marketing, accounting and market research. She is an Appointed Member of the Ministerial Queensland International Education and Training Advisory Council, Board Chair of the APTC Consortium, and holds memberships with the Australian Institute of Management, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Australian Association of Tertiary Education Management.

Associate Professor Ruth Schubert

Associate Director, LH Martin Institute

Associate Professor Ruth Schubert joined the LH Martin Institute in April 2014. Prior to that, Ruth was the Director, Business Transformation with TAFE SA, a role responsible for the complete change process bringing together the three separate South Australian TAFE institutes. This change involved over 2,500 staff, a total staffing restructure, and multiple major business improvement projects. This reinvention of TAFE SA as a Statutory Corporation has enabled TAFE SA to compete more effectively in the newly established commercial training market of Skills for All.

Ruth has worked in the education sector for over 30 years, with experience in private RTOs, the schooling sector, and universities, and most recently 15 years in executive positions in TAFE institutes in South Australia. She has had several stints as Acting Managing Director, TAFE SA Regional. Ruth was instrumental in the process of TAFE SA Regional winning the state and national 2011 Large Training Provider of the Year. Ruth's considerable expertise in the tertiary education sector includes both academic and professional roles.

Ruth has served as a member, Deputy Chair, and Chair for the Limestone Coast RDA Board 2009–14, is a Director of the Stand Like Stone Foundation since 2004, and has been an inaugural member of the Governor's Leadership Foundation since 2000. Ruth has a PhD and a Master of Educational Management from Flinders University, and was awarded a Premier's Award for Postgraduate Research into Lifelong Learning 2001. She is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Ruth's research interests include leadership, social capital, building successful communities and the structure and positioning of the tertiary education sector.

Trevor Schwenke

General Manager, TAFE Queensland South West

Trevor Schwenke started his career as a tradesman and soon became a specialist welder and welding inspector. Further study in engineering (Associate Diploma) and education fields (Bachelor Degree) allowed Trevor to follow his passion of teaching within higher level engineering programs. In the following years he obtained a Master of Education (Leadership), allowing him to further his career in the field of educational leadership and management. Throughout this time, Trevor continued to pursue his special interest in blended and flexible delivery, obtaining a postgraduate certificate in Open and Distance Learning from the University of Southern Queensland and a scholarship in flexible delivery from The Australian Flexible Learning Framework.

After 22 years in the technical and further education system, 10 of those years holding senior management positions, Trevor was appointed to the role of Institute Director and has held this position across four different institutes. In addition to his responsibilities in the institute, Trevor is heavily involved with AUSTAFE. AUSTAFE is an association that provides professional development to managers in the vocational education and training sector in Queensland. Trevor is also the state Chair of WorldSkills which provides opportunities for young tradespeople to demonstrate their skills and competence through competition. He is currently engaged in developing workplace delivery models and innovative training solutions, especially in the mining, resource and infrastructure sectors.

Trevor was the Australian Institute of Management 2013 Queensland Professional Manager of the Year.

Associate Professor Dr Steve Shanahan

TDA Board Member; Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Vocational Education and Training, Charles Darwin University, NT

Associate Professor Dr Steve Shanahan is a long-term Charles Darwin University (CDU) employee (25+ years) who started at the university as a lecturer in physics. He has been head of numerous schools in various faculties of CDU since 1992, becoming Dean of the Faculty of Technology in 2002. In 2007 Steve was one of the major architects of the transformation of VET delivery in CDU when the majority of VET delivery was shifted out of faculties into stand-alone divisions. The divisions later were reformed under the current Faculty of VET.

Steve's current substantive position is General Manager, VET Business Improvement, and he is also currently the acting Pro Vice-Chancellor VET. He has institutional responsibility for NTG negotiations on VET issues. Steve is the Chair of the CDU Academic Board, and a member of the CDU Council.

Kathryn Shugg

Branch Manager, VET Reform Taskforce, Department of Education and Training

Kathryn Shugg has been in the Commonwealth public service since 1983 and has worked on a number of key policy and program initiatives in a number of portfolios. Kathryn has often said that the one thing she has loved about her career is the diversity of opportunities she has had.

For several years, Kathryn has been leading the development and implementation of key initiatives in vocational education and training policy, including the National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults, the Unique Student Identifier and the 2015 Standards for Registered Training

Organisations and Regulators. She is currently leading the review of training packages and accredited courses, and the resultant work on improving the quality of assessment within the VET system. Kathryn is currently the Branch Manager of the VET Reform Policy Branch in the Australian Government's Department of Education and Training.

Denise Stevens

Chief Executive Officer, VET Development Centre

Denise Stevens has extensive educational managerial experience, with over 25 years working in the Victorian VET sector, primarily in leadership, innovation and change management roles. She has been a department manager, director for innovation and, more recently, a director for teaching and learning. Denise has also worked internationally to develop vocational educational programs to meet skills gaps and changing economic needs.

Warren Tapp

Chair, TAFE Queensland Board

Warren Tapp is Chair of the Board of TAFE Queensland. Prior to that, he was a member of the TAFE Reform Board and before that, Chairman of Southbank Institute of Technology, the largest TAFE in Queensland. Warren is also Chair of the TAFE Chairs group which consists of all the State TAFE Chairs in Australia. His previous experience includes being Chairman of nine companies in a range of industries and for 10 years, he was a lecturer for the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Warren's qualifications include an MBA and Master of Laws as well as a Graduate Diploma in Applied Corporate Governance. He lives on the Gold Coast in Queensland.

Laura Tingle

Political Editor, *Australian Financial Review*

The *Australian Financial Review's* political editor, Laura Tingle has covered politics, policy and economics from Canberra since 1986 for *The Australian*, *The Age*, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Australian Financial Review*. Laura began her career in Sydney with the AFR in the early 1980s reporting on financial deregulation and the floating of the dollar. Her book, *Chasing the Future – documenting the recession of the early 1990s*, was published in 1994.

Laura is also the author of the June 2012 Quarterly Essay's 'Great Expectations – government, entitlement and an angry nation'. She won the Paul Lyneham Award for Press Gallery Journalism in 2004, was shortlisted for the John Button Prize for political writing in 2010 and won Walkley Awards in 2005 and 2011.

Cheryl Underwood

Head of School of Vocational Health and Sciences, RMIT, Victoria

Cheryl Underwood has been involved in education and science throughout her career. After enjoying some involvement in research in biochemistry early in her career, her main focus has been on education. In 2004, Cheryl was appointed Head of School of Vocational Health and Sciences at RMIT University following a long career in science education, including the secondary, VE and HE sectors. The school teaches STEM pathway programs, VET qualifications in laboratory technology, conservation and land management, IT and health, as well as associate degrees in IT, Applied Sciences and Health Science.

Peter Vaughan

Chair, TAFE SA Board

Peter Vaughan is the Chair of the Board at TAFE SA, a Statutory Corporation since November 2012. Peter's experience spans a broad range of occupations, including teacher, union official, industrial arbitrator, industry spokesperson and senior private sector manager, most recently as Chief Executive Officer of Business SA, which he helmed from 1999 until his retirement in July 2012.

During his tenure, Peter successfully steered the former Chamber of Commerce through a period of major change to its present enviable position as the leading business membership organisation in South Australia. Peter's leadership in the business community has extended well beyond his involvement with Business SA. He was a long-time member of the governing bodies of the Cancer Council, the WorkCover Corporation, the Training and Skills Commission, the Committee for Economic Development of Australia, and the State Theatre of South Australia. In addition to his role with TAFE SA, Peter is a member of the SACE Board and is Chair of the Jam Factory, a unique, not-for-profit organisation that nurtures the careers of artists, craftspeople and designers.

Professor David Walker

BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies, Peking University, Beijing; Alfred Deakin Professor, Deakin University, Melbourne

Professor David Walker is the inaugural BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University, Beijing. He is also Alfred Deakin Professor of Australian Studies at Deakin University, Melbourne. David has written extensively on Australian representations of Asia. His prize-winning book, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the rise of Asia, 1850 to 1939* (UQP 1999) has been translated into Chinese and Hindi.

David is the co-editor of Australia's Asia: From Yellow Peril to Asian century (UWA Publishing 2012). A collection of his Asia-related essays has been published under the title *Encountering Turbulence: Asia in the Australian imaginary* (Readworthy 2013). His recently published personal history, *Not Dark Yet* (which explores family, memory and the experience of becoming "legally blind") has been translated into Chinese (光明行) and published by The People's Literature Publishing House, Beijing (2014). David is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and also a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Jonathan Wang

Director, Asia Pacific Desk of ANZ Corporate and Commercial Banking

Jonathan Wang is Director, Asia Pacific Desk of ANZ Corporate and Commercial Banking based in Melbourne and covering Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia. Jonathan's role is to support and facilitate Australian businesses trading, investing or expanding into Asia, as well as helping Asian businesses investing in Australia. Before joining ANZ, Jonathan was with NAB for over seven years, where he headed the Asia strategy and execution for NAB SME Business and NAB Private Wealth's transformation program.

Jonathan started his career with IBM Global Services where he spent over six years as IT business consultant. He holds a Master of Commerce and Information Technology and an Executive MBA from Australian Graduate School of Management.

Yin Wang

Director, Journalist and Host, International Channel Shanghai

Ms Yin Wang is now a director, journalist and host at International Channel Shanghai. She graduated from Shanghai Theatre Academy majoring in Broadcasting and Hosting. She has hosted the press conferences of Shanghai International Film Festival, and the red carpet of Huading Award. She is passionate about the TV industry and interested in exploring more possibilities

Associate Professor Peter Whitley

Chair, Vocational Education and Training; Deputy Director, National Centre of Ports and Shipping, University of Tasmania

Associate Professor Peter Whitley has had an extensive career in both vocational education and higher education across Australia. He has been responsible for the development of many strategic initiatives that have facilitated pathways and integrated learning opportunities across senior secondary, vocational education and higher education sectors.

Peter is a passionate believer in the value of blended and online learning as a way of increasing access for the remote, isolated and disadvantaged student. He is also keen to see students continue their learning journey through educational structures that both recognise and value previous formal and informal learning undertaken by the student.

A new appointment to the University of Tasmania, Peter's focus is on building vocational education and pre-degree study opportunities across Tasmania. His personal research is in the field of pathways, exploring the benefits of blended learning in the maritime industry, and the capacity of pre-degree opportunities to expand participation in education.

Andrew Williamson

Executive Director at the Victorian TAFE Association

Andrew Williamson is a passionate VET professional. He is Executive Director at the Victorian TAFE Association (VTA), the peak employer body for Victorian TAFEs and dual sector universities. Andrew brings to the role a career history that wends its way through the different elements of the VET sector: TAFE, dual sector university, private RTO, technical college and a stint in government.

A chef by trade, Andrew moved from cookery teacher to manager, leader and executive. Throughout his career, he earned a reputation for developing close links with industry and community stakeholders. Andrew has played an active role within the VET sector, as past president of VISTA (Association of VET Professionals) and founding member of the Victorian Applied Learning Association.

Prior to joining the VTA, Andrew was Acting Director of TAFE Governance and Performance Monitoring in Victoria's Department of Education and Training.

Marc Wilsdon

Business Manager, Museum of Old and New Art (MONA)

Through its unique positioning, visitor experience and clever approach to marketing, MONA has done wonders for visitation in Tasmania. Drawn to the excitement of MONA founder David Walsh's vision, Mark Wilsdon started as a consultant to Moorilla, the home of MONA, in 2002 facilitating the design and opening of the award-winning Ether building. After facilitating a restructure of management in 2006, he took on the role of Business Manager and now supports all business operations from a strategic position as a member of the Executive while monitoring commercial operating efficiencies and investigating further opportunities for

MONA. In this role, Mark is responsible for business development and strategy for all commercial operations within MONA: restaurant, accommodation, functions, food and beverage, and winery.

Mark will explain how MONA developed the “O Device” to provide a highly sophisticated virtual tour of the museum. The technical sides of installing a large-scale WiFi network and the world’s largest USB charging hub are fascinating. Not only does the tour enhance the visitor experience, it has also allowed MONA to connect with hundreds of thousands of customers after their trip.

Mark has over 25 years’ experience in the tourism and hospitality sector and has operated and headed several successful restaurants as a chef and owner.

MONA has an extremely focused proposition, one that is never short of shock value with a sex-and-death section. The risqué brand extends from exhibits to all of MONA’s communications, and Mark will share a little about MONA, its operation, brand and some examples of their communication.

Jianxin Yang

President, Wuxi Vocational Institute of Commerce, China

Jianxin Yang has a PhD in Law, is professor and tutor of postgraduates, and now President of Wuxi Vocational Institute of Commerce, Wuxi, China. He is mainly engaged in the study areas of Marxism localisation in China, youth science and higher education and is a committee member of the youth professional section of the Chinese Teenagers Development Association (CTDA).

He has hosted the National ‘11th Five-Year Plan’ research programs in educational sciences, and many other programs including those by the Youth Foundation of the Ministry of Education of China on Humanities and

Social Sciences, the Jiangsu Provincial Foundation on Philosophical Social and Scientific Research, the Jiangsu Provincial Foundation on 11th Five-Year Plan Programs in Educational Science, and the Jiangsu Provincial Foundation in Humanities, Philosophy and Society Research. He has published over 30 essays including Studies on Marxism, Marxism and Reality, and Educational Research in addition to three books, *A Survey of Overseas Study of Marxism localization in China*, *An introduction to the Education of Cultural Quality* and *The Survival and Development of university Culture*. He has been head of the research group on Structuring Inner Connotation Construction Quota Index by the Ministry of Education of China, Research and Practice on Modern Internship in Higher Vocational Education in China, with substantial constructive achievements attained.

Zhigang (Rick) Zhao

Director, International Business, Global Link China (GLC) International Group, China

Zhigang (Rick) Zhao graduated from Macquarie University with a Master’s Degree in Accounting. He is a Member of Australia CPA, a member of ACCA and has eight years of finance and six years of international education experience. He has been working with many Chinese schools and institutions to develop international programs with foreign education providers from Australia, Finland, New Zealand and UK.

Dr Don Zoellner

Research Associate, Charles Darwin University

Dr Don Zoellner has worked in the school, vocational and higher education sectors in the Northern Territory since 1973. Don has been a principal in both Alice Springs and Darwin and served as Executive Director of Centralian College in Alice Springs and as Pro Vice-Chancellor VET and Community Engagement at Charles Darwin University. He was a member of the Board of the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation, Chairperson of the Australian Principals' Association's Professional Development Council and a board member of TAFE Directors Australia. Don is Chair of the Board of Group Training Northern Territory and has been a member of numerous advisory committees, reviews and evaluations in the areas of education and training at both an NT and national level.

Don is a Fellow of the Australian College of Education. His formal qualifications include a Master's degree in Educational Administration and a Graduate Diploma in Senior Executive Public Sector Management. He is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors course. Don completed his Doctor of Philosophy in 2013 by describing the development and implementation of VET policy in Australia. He continues to undertake research into the use of VET as a public policy response and has been published in a number of peer-reviewed journals and conference papers, as well as preparing a history of VET in the Northern Territory.

Conference organiser

Pam Caven

Director Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, National Secretariat, TAFE Directors Australia

Pam Caven took up the position of Director Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) in May 2007. Pam's career has included being a secondary school teacher, teachers' college lecturer, TAFE teacher, senior manager in state and federal government departments, and author. She was a Director in the Victorian Department of Education and Training prior to moving to the Australian National Training Authority as Project Director.

At TDA, Pam has managed significant national projects and organised a range of seminars and the annual TDA national conferences. Pam holds a BA (Hons), DipEd, Cert IV (Training & Assessment) and a Master's degree in Education – Leadership and Management.

86%

of TAFE student enquiries surface after **8pm**. **35%** on a **Sunday**. **51%** of your students want personal writing feedback. **22%** are frustrated by accounting and maths problems. **All** students are at-risk until these moments are supported. Are you helping each student succeed in their course **when** they need it **most**?



**Robin Murt, TDA Board Member;
Chief Executive, TAFE SA**



**Professor Peter Noonan, Professor of
Tertiary Education Policy,
Victoria University**



**Lion Dancers perform at the
TDA Conference Dinner**



**The Hon. Jeremy Rockcliff MP, Deputy
Premier, Tasmania, and Minister for
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RESTAURATEUR

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