



Training Package Stakeholder Resource - Consultation

Response from Victorian TAFE Association

The Victorian TAFE Association (VTA) represents 14 Victorian TAFE Institutes and 4 dual-sector Universities. VTA members deliver training and education across the spectrum of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and are highly experienced stakeholders in matters relating to Training Packages and the development of standards for Training Packages. As key stakeholders, VTA members are well placed to contribute to this current consultation.

VTA is pleased to respond to the Consultation Paper (January 2014) 'Training Package Stakeholder Resource' (the resource).

In this response, VTA draws on member consultations and on the views of members attending a focus group convened in February 2014. VTA members may respond individually to the discussion paper to highlight areas of particular interest to their organisations.

Introductory comments:

- VTA members acknowledge that the Training Package Development Handbook and associated support materials do not meet contemporary needs for users of training packages.
- VTA members acknowledge that stakeholders need a resource as a one-stop shop to understand the development and the implementation of the Standards for Training Packages (The Standards), Training Package Products Policy and Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy (The Policies).
- Public VET providers are highly experienced in using training packages. VTA members participating in the consultation were of the view that the discussion paper lacked depth and was not particularly helpful in prompting the required depth of discussion the issues deserve. The proposed format of the resource, using The Standards to underpin the framework, does not help end-users to get a sense of 'what' is being produced for them to use.
- VTA members are critical of the timing of the work to prepare a new resource noting it as 'rather little, rather late'.
- VTA members proposed there may be merit in having two resources; one targeted at the 'back end' for industry, government and relevant stakeholders, and another targeted at the 'front end' for teachers and trainers.
- While the resource aims to provide shared understanding of the Standards, it will also become an important contributor to driving consistency among Training Package Developers and drive consistency of assessment outcomes.

Proposed resource scope:

- **Resource Introduction:** The purpose of the resource to the end user must be clearly described. The reader, as an interested stakeholder, needs to understand if the resource has

application to their interests and to what extent. The resource has an important function to build stakeholders, including end-users', confidence in the standards and using them. A series of reader profiles at the beginning may serve this purpose.

- **Scope:** The current scope as outlined in the discussion paper is too shallow and includes unnecessary repetition of the standards. Hyperlinks from the resource to The Standards and Policies are necessary throughout the resource to enable the reader to cross reference to The Standards and The Policies.
- **Why:** Revisiting the history of training packages as outlined in the discussion paper has no particular value. The reasons for the Standards are already clearly articulated in the Standards. This new resource should consolidate information from existing resources rather than duplicate information or cast the same information in different language. The 'why' should include a justification for the changes leading to the need for this resource. Standards for Training Packages (page 3) state the purpose 'to ensure Training Packages are of high quality and meet the workforce development needs of industry, enterprises and individuals. The Standards for Training Packages apply to the design and development of Training Packages for endorsement consideration by the national Skills Standards Council.'
- **Who:**
 - This new resource should consolidate information from existing resources rather than duplicate information or cast the same information in different language. In relation to key stakeholders providing feedback, the resource should define the stakeholder group (aligned to The Policies), their roles and contributions to Training Packages.
 - The resource should also document the means by which stakeholders can inform changes and improvements to Training Packages.
 - Trying to provide information and context to a variety of stakeholders has merit but whatever resource is prepared the principal users will be Training Package Developers and ISC project officers/managers. The resource must focus on their needs and be designed to provide unambiguous detailed information to Training Package Developers and ISC project officers/managers to ensure consistency and to ensure they are clear about how to do their work. Other stakeholders can be acknowledged with information tailored to their needs. For example, teachers, trainers and assessors will benefit from an understanding of the requirements and intent around how a Training Package or Unit of Competency is structured, but will not need the same level of detail as the developers. Employers' interests lie in the development process and their role in the input and feedback. Learners as a distinct stakeholder group have been overlooked in the table on page 8 of the Discussion Paper and need to be acknowledged in the new resource.
- **What and how:**
 - The resource would better serve the needs of stakeholders by clearly articulating the changes from the Training Package Development Handbook and associated support materials to the new Standards for Training Packages. Public VET providers, as experienced users of the Training Package Development Handbook and associated support materials want to know what has changed and what it means to them. A summary table could describe the changes in the context of the broad stakeholder groups – industry, training bodies, government, VET regulators and learners.
 - The resource needs to provide guidance regarding the purpose and use of companion volumes as these can be very important in bridging differences between past and new standards.
 - Assessment conditions are different and stakeholders' awareness of this is essential. Interpretation of assessment requirements within a new unit of competency and

aligning assessment practices and documentation to the new design model are paramount for training organisations.

- This section of the resource can draw on information from the NSSC Technical Workshop presentation and/or the critical part of the Training Package Products Policy (eg all units of competency codes to change, entry requirements to qualifications must be completed prior to commencing a qualification).
- In relation to the interpretation of standards, consider including samples in the resource.

Proposed resource content:

- Training organisations need a definitive source regarding the interpretation of the standards and policies and a guide to unpacking training packages, and to use this knowledge to design and implement learning programs. It is essential this resource provides that information.
- As the resource is to complement The Standards and The Policies, there is no need to report information from these documents. To be accessible, the resource should précis important sections of the standards documents and reference these. For example, it is essential that the resource clearly describes the “multi-stakeholder” design of the Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy. To ensure high quality training products that meet the needs of all stakeholders in the VET system then all of those stakeholders need to be aware of their roles and responsibilities and be proactive in informing the development of Training Packages. This will not occur if the checks and balances that have been cleverly designed into the system remain buried in the Policy document. Greater awareness by stakeholders of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the development of Training Packages may avoid version changes to Training Packages for relatively minor changes. Feedback to the ISC websites and through the industry environmental scans are of great value to maintaining the currency of Training Packages but realistic processes must be agreed to avoid the current situation of many relatively small changes to the content of Training Packages. A training package should have a shelf-life and be upgraded for significant Industry change. Training organisations are increasingly exasperated with the extent of version changes to training packages as they impact on the planning for learning, delivery arrangements, communications with students and industry and assessment. Training organisations require this resource to describe the circumstances whereby Training Packages can be updated. For example, an ‘update’ may be triggered by a certain proportion of the Training Package changing. For minimal Industry changes, an entire training package does not need to be superseded. Rather the NSSC should communicate a ‘Training Package notification’ that informs RTO’s that there have been some upgrades to the existing training package that reflect industry practice. The RTO would then incorporate the changes into their deliveries and assessments.
- The resource should alert all stakeholders that in the short term there will be multiple copies of some TPs as the Standards compliant versions are phased in.
- A very useful feature in the Training Package Development Handbook is a checklist at the end of each chapter. It is suggested a similar summary checklist may be used at the end of each section of the new resource.
- The resource would benefit from a FAQ, glossary and index.

Nita Schultz
Education Policy Consultant
Victorian TAFE Association
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nschultz@vta.vic.edu.au