

**Victorian TAFE Association  
Submission:**

***Creating a future direction for  
Australian vocational education and  
training***

Victorian TAFE  
*Association*

Reg. No. A37584B



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**Victorian TAFE Association Submission to Skills Australia in response to the discussion paper on the future direction of Australian VET: *Creating a future direction for Australian vocational education and training***

The Victorian TAFE Association (VTA) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Discussion paper *Creating a future direction for Australian vocational education and training*.

The VTA is the peak employer body for Victoria's TAFE sector. VTA members include four dual sector Universities, fourteen stand-alone public TAFE providers, AMES and the Centre for Adult Education. Victorian TAFE providers are actively engaged in VET at the state level as well as nationally and internationally. Services provided by VTA to members include governance advice, workforce relations advice, industrial relations advice and representation, education projects, research, government liaison and representation, and professional development. VTA has participated in each cycle of consultations undertaken by Skills Australia since 2008.



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## Scope of this response

VTA has reviewed the discussion paper on the future of the VET system prepared by Skills Australia and consulted with members and TAFE Directors Australia. VTA members may respond individually to the discussion paper to highlight areas of particular interest to their organisations.

This response is made in the context of COAG's policy directions for VET and is also framed in the light of VTA members' experiences as public entities operating in a competitive VET market in Victoria where government funding for VET will be fully contestable from January 1, 2011 and with governance arrangements that offer relatively high levels of independence compared with TAFE providers in other states and territories.

The discussion paper *Creating a future direction for Australian vocational education and training* includes matters raised in the Productivity Commission *study into the VET workforce*<sup>1</sup>, LH Martin Institute research on *the Quality of Teaching in VET*<sup>2</sup> and the NCVET review of the AQTF Quality Indicators. VTA responded to each of these projects and attaches the key messages from those submissions at appendices to this submission. Refer to the footer below for links to access these VTA submissions in full.

It is important to underpin this commentary with a shared understanding of terminology. To that end, in this commentary VTA understands the VET sector to include more than just the registered training providers (RTOs) offering vocational education and training. The VET sector includes employers and governments. The responsibilities for change cannot be seen to rest solely with the supply side of VET – the RTOs. Employers and governments cannot deny a high level of responsibility for ensuring learners' experiences in vocational education and training in Australia are effective and prepare learners well for the future of work. Therefore where the discussion paper (p25) says the VET sector 'will need to be ever more agile, flexible and responsive to the requirements of industry, individuals and communities', that responsibility is to be read in the broadest sense not limited to RTOs.

We have chosen to concentrate this response on the improvement of the VET experience with particular focus on apprentices.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.vta.vic.edu.au/docs/PositionDiscussion%20Papers/Productivity\\_Commission\\_Submission\\_VTA-TDC-TDA.pdf](http://www.vta.vic.edu.au/docs/PositionDiscussion%20Papers/Productivity_Commission_Submission_VTA-TDC-TDA.pdf)

<sup>2</sup><http://www.vta.vic.edu.au/docs/TDA%20%20VTA%20submission%20Quality%20of%20VET%20Teaching%20Oct%202010.pdf>



## **Is the apprenticeship model the *right* one?**

VTA agrees that the apprenticeship model is perceived as complex and inflexible with a fragmented governance structure and confused branding. That said, the fundamental pedagogy born out of the Guild-based system remains solid and not in question – applied learning in a work context supported through teaching, coaching and mentoring by expert and experienced people.

While the apprenticeship model belongs to employers VTA believes that various policy interventions by successive governments to regulate and shape the system have created the complexities, inflexibilities and confusions around the brands of ‘apprentice’ and ‘apprenticeship’ in Australia.

VTA supports the apprentice training model of on-the-job and off-the-job as sound pedagogy however the administration of the Australian apprenticeship systems needs streamlining.

### ***Definitions & Terminology***

Historically the words ‘apprentice’ and ‘apprenticeship’ are associated with workplace training arrangements in areas described as traditional trades: plumbing, hairdressing, carpentry, electrotechnology and the like. Traineeships are a fairly recent phenomenon and the application of a workplace training model to a broader range of occupations.

From a national perspective, since 1999 apprenticeships and traineeships have been included together under umbrella terms: New Apprentices (Howard government) and Australian Apprentices (Rudd/Gillard governments). It is doubtful whether the public generally has been well educated to understand that these terms are inclusive of apprenticeships in the traditional sense and traineeships.

While policy language talks about Australian Apprentices most conversations around formal workplace based training arrangements talk about ‘apprentices’ and ‘trainees’ (eg NCVET data). Employers use the language ‘apprentice’ to describe workplace training arrangements in traditional trades and do not have an understanding of Australian Apprenticeships to include traineeships. For bureaucratic and political purposes the term used is Australia Apprentice but the average person does not understand what that really includes. VTA members’ note that at times, the State of Victoria and the Commonwealth of Australia may define ‘apprenticeship’ differently.

Such inconsistencies are unhelpful in ensuring effective communications and a shared understanding of terminology.



An occasional paper prepared by Group Training Association of Victoria for the Victorian Qualifications Authority 'Old Dogmas – New Tricks' (2005) highlights that 'the move to New Apprenticeship and the combining of apprenticeship and traineeship under the one nomenclature has affected perceptions of meaning, quality and value. The relationship of traditional trade apprenticeship to the performance of traineeships may lead to a need to disconnect the two for the benefit of both'. In VTA's view this still holds true in 2010.

### **BLUE SKY THINKING**

***The mechanism of apprenticeship remains but it is separately named to reflect the diversity of the individuals and the design of the activities that may be undertaken.***

***The application of the term apprenticeship to similar but different training activities is resisted and apprenticeship continues to be identified with skill rich areas and the need for prolonged skilling.***

***Apprenticeship and traineeship are identified as distinct activities and traineeship evolves a separate tradition of training in a discrete set of industries.***

*(Source: GTA(Vic) Old Dogmas – New Tricks, 2005 page 11)*

### **Completions of apprenticeships/traineeships**

As noted by the discussion paper, low completion rates of apprentices and trainees have been the subject of a great deal of debate and considerable research in Australia. One reference, not cited in the discussion paper is *Good Start: Great Finish Improving Completion Rates for New Apprentices* ([http://www.gtald.com.au/projects/gstart\\_gfinish/good\\_start\\_great\\_finish.pdf](http://www.gtald.com.au/projects/gstart_gfinish/good_start_great_finish.pdf)). In this paper Jonas states 'Who is non-completion a problem for? To some extent employers and apprentices see it as an inevitable feature of the employment experience – and the cost to both is absorbed by them.' She goes on to say, '(c)ompletion appears to be more of an issue for policy makers trying to ensure their investment in education and training is paying off' (p5). The paper posits that there is insufficient attention paid to the fact that majority of apprentices and trainees do complete their training contract 'but there is little information about what makes them complete their training/qualification.' The paper highlights key messages for employers and group training organisations, RTOs and policy makers.

Key messages for employers and group training organisations (GTOs) relevant to current discussions:

- A good recruitment process
- A well demonstrated interest in the apprenticeship area



- Assistance to employers to better understand the training system
- Data collected by employers can be used effectively to reduce the problem of attrition
- The most common timeframe for withdrawal from the training contract is the first 4 months
- Continuous and effective monitoring of the apprentices is essential
- A good employment relationship between the apprentices and their employers is one of the most important elements of completion
- A good field officer working closely with the apprentice and the employer can improve completion rates
- Consistently successful host employers have good human resource policies and a genuine commitment to their employees
- Keeping the apprentice motivated is a key to retention

Key messages for RTOs relevant to current discussions:

- Off-the-job training can be an area of vulnerability in the completion of an apprenticeship
- A good relationship with the RTO can have a significant impact on apprentice completion

Key messages for policy makers relevant to current discussions:

- The apparent benefits of completion of formal training and certification do not seem to be well understood
- Perceptions regarding the legally binding nature of indenture vs. contract of training and commitment by employers to the completion of the indenture/contract

As an outcome of this paper eight 'tried and tested' ideas for employers to help apprentices complete their trade training were published and distributed widely to employers. A copy is attached as Appendix 4. In summary:

- Positive recruitment
- No surprises
- Protect your investment
- Give them a chance
- Look out for warning signals
- Enlist support
- Keep them motivated
- Communicate

VTA commends to Skills Australia 'Good Start: Great Finish Improving Completion Rates for New Apprentices'<sup>3</sup> 'Old Dogmas New Tricks'<sup>4</sup> and a study undertaken for the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry by John Mitchell & Associates in 2008 *A Systematic Approach to Retaining Apprentices* showing that it is possible and important for employers to take a systematic approach to retaining apprentices one

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<sup>3</sup> ([http://www.gtald.com.au/projects/gstart\\_gfinish/good\\_start\\_great\\_finish.pdf](http://www.gtald.com.au/projects/gstart_gfinish/good_start_great_finish.pdf))

<sup>4</sup> ([http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/voced/Accreditation/Courses/LandsPossibilities\\_for\\_Apprenticeship.pdf](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/voced/Accreditation/Courses/LandsPossibilities_for_Apprenticeship.pdf))



that is 'evidence-based, logical, rigorous, thorough, targeted, engaging, interventionist, customised, benchmarked and continuously improved.'<sup>5</sup>

VTA strongly endorses actions that are targeted to prevent non-completion of apprenticeships/traineeships rather than knee jerk policy reactions once young people are already at risk of leaving.

VTA supports recent policy initiatives to encourage retention of apprentices and completion of apprenticeship qualifications including financial incentives for employees and employers and strategies to continue off-the-job training for out-of-work apprentices during the global financial crisis. VTA members are involved in a new initiative to appoint 27 Apprenticeship Support Officers (ASOs) across Victoria. These positions are in addition to 33 Apprenticeship Field Officers (AFOs) liaising between employers, apprentices and RTOs to facilitate apprenticeship completions. The ASOs will provide pastoral care for first-year apprentices. This role acknowledges the benefits of a more personalised/case management approaches to learning and student support described in *Creating a future direction for Australian VET* (p28). VTA recommends Skills Australia keeps a watching brief on this initiative and evidence of improved apprenticeship outcomes resulting from the initiative.

VTA supports stronger advice in schools and assistance to employers to ensure better matching of young people to careers through apprenticeships and traineeships. This is discussed further below 'Informed Choices & Completions'.

Several strategies described by Victorian TAFE providers have provided some success in raising completions of qualifications and may be worthy of further exploration by Skills Australia:

- Increased promotion of pre-apprenticeships as a pathway into apprenticeships. During the pre-apprenticeship skills, preferences and suitability for a particular occupation are tested. Apprentices are supported to build foundation skills.
- Several Victorian TAFE providers offer the Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills (CAVSS 52313). CAVSS is a framework for teaching literacy and numeracy skills in direct application to VET training activities. CAVSS is a delivery strategy for integrating literacy and numeracy support with vocational training. This course provides a means of assisting students to achieve the industry competency standards in the 'parent' vocational course or Training Package qualification with which the CAVSS is being delivered. CAVSS is recognised by the National VET Equity Advisory Council as good practice in imbedding foundation skills within vocational training.<sup>6</sup>
- Interventions and a pastoral care model have been adopted by Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE (BRIT) in co-operation with small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in that region. This program is credited with raising the

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<sup>5</sup> The report *Worth Their Weight in Gold*, case studies and employer interviews can be found at <http://www.acci.asn.au/Systematic%20Approach%20to%20Retaining%20Apprentices.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> See [http://www.nveac.tvetaustralia.com.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/54355/WA\\_CAVSS.pdf](http://www.nveac.tvetaustralia.com.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0004/54355/WA_CAVSS.pdf)





awareness of employers of their obligations to support the employees and built stronger relationships between apprentices, their employers and co-workers.

- Workplaces actively changing their work environments to better engage and motivate apprentices. The CEO of Porter Davis Homes reported to a construction industry forum in 2009 on a training model, drawing on group training, of rotating apprentices through all aspects of the business including business management. The model extends to sub-contractors of Porter Davis Homes. This approach gives a clear message of investing in human capital for the future and ensuring apprentices build depth and breadth of skills in an industry where sub-contracting arrangements could lead to the apprentice not having exposure to the broadest skills attached to the occupation. In another example, Work Co. (GTO based in Horsham Victoria) changed models for supporting apprentices. Field Officers, traditionally responsible for apprentice recruitment and employer visits, were charged with the responsibility to manage a case load of apprentices from recruitment to completion. Field Officers look after the group of apprentices, liaising between the apprentice and other parties to the apprenticeship arrangement and providing pastoral care to each young person. Dean Luciani, General Manager WorkCo, is quoted in *Good Start, Great Finish Improving Completion Rates for New Apprentices* (2005 p15.) as saying 'that many things contribute to completion, but specific to group training he nominates the role of the field officer. He believes that the group training concept with a good field officer is almost unbreakable'. VTA understands apprenticeship completion rates for Work Co. are in the vicinity of 90%.

### **Informed Choices & Completions**

Young people need access to qualified careers professionals and online information that is current and accurate. Sound advice and quality information will provide a platform for qualifications choices that have greater prospects of completion. Young people must also have support from parents and peers that their choice to enter into an apprenticeship or traineeship is worthwhile and carries esteem. Parents, family and friends also influence students' choices and sustained communications strategies need to be directly targeted to these groups.

VTA agrees that young people who have considered a range of career options and have some inkling of future life beyond school appear to engage more purposefully with education. In the TAFE context many providers develop individual learning plans with students. A feature of many of these plans is the opportunity for experiential learning and structured workplace based learning. The VTA notes this type of delivery model in the Technical Education Centres<sup>7</sup> (TECs) across Victoria and in Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning<sup>8</sup> (VCAL) programs delivered by TAFE providers. We consider that experiential learning/delivery models are critical to

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.skills.vic.gov.au/corporate/programs-and-initiatives/technical-education-centres>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vcal/index.html>



successful youth transitions and outcomes, and contribute to higher levels of work readiness. The models adopted by the Victorian TECs across the state, while unique in each context, demonstrate a range of approaches to better engage industry in vocational learning and are worthy of attention.

We acknowledge that experiential learning/structured workplace learning is resource intensive (facilities/human resources) but this should not be a barrier to further exploration of this area.

VTA would encourage broader thinking around individual learning plans rather than just career plans as many young people lack the maturity or foresight to plan in their teens for a specific career/occupation.

Any career/learning planning activities must be dynamic, well resourced and regular. They should not be ad hoc such as the occasional one-to-one with a careers counsellor, materials in a library or 'careers' room or attending a mandatory career education class. Effective career planning in tandem with a learning plan should include the exploration of non-linear pathways with multiple entry and exit points in formal education, training and employment.

All careers counsellors should hold qualifications for that role. The VTA remains concerned that careers educators do not have sufficient experience, or contemporary understanding, of the VET sector and their advice is limited by their own university education experiences. As the common pathway into career counselling at schools is from classroom teaching, pre-service training for all teachers should include consideration of VET, applied learning and the relationship of specific disciplines to career options. In addition all subsequent qualifications for careers counsellors must include a significant exposure to the VET sector both in theory and practice. Further, careers counselling should not only be funded through the schools sector but should be universally and freely available to all young people to the age of 25 enrolled in education.

Employers can be more involved in young people's career choices. Traditionally the focus has been on preparing young people for the workplace and not on preparing employers (the workplace) for young people – attention must be given to both aspects of work preparation. Workplace learning co-ordinators are well placed as the bridge between RTOs (including TAFE), schools and employers.

### **Governance and Cross-Jurisdictional Issues**

TAFE providers are frustrated with having to navigate the demands of the Commonwealth and state/territories as funders of apprenticeships and traineeships. Both provide are involved in funding support training and workplace training. Both provide incentives to employers and apprentices through various policy initiatives. For example, in the Victorian context, *Tools for Your Trade* (Commonwealth), *Apprentice Trade Bonus* to apprentices (Victoria), completions bonuses for



employers (Victoria and Commonwealth), VET fee concessions (Victoria), Health Care Card for eligible apprentices (Commonwealth). *Kick Start* (Commonwealth).

RTOs frustrations are exacerbated by different funding models for apprenticeship/traineeship across jurisdictions. Victorian TAFE providers report that the course duration/nominal hours for the same course can vary across jurisdictions. States/territories also determine approved courses for apprenticeships/traineeships. For example, a review of various states' implementation for UEE30807 Certificate III in Electrotechnology - Electrician show:

- Western Australia – 904 hours
- Victoria – 1060 hours
- South Australia – 1060 hours
- Queensland – 1050 hours

VTA is open to discussions to change the governance arrangements so that apprenticeships and traineeships are solely the responsibility of the Commonwealth. The outcomes of such a change must be predicated on:

- acceptance of apprenticeships/traineeships as employment strategies, not training strategies,
- streamlined regulation,
- no disadvantage to TAFEs in funding arrangements,
- a review of the incentive system for employers to mitigate against perverse behaviours,
- improved consistency of processes, and
- transparency of information for all parties.

As part of a review of governance of apprenticeships VTA strongly supports a detailed evaluation of the role of Australian Apprenticeship Centres (AACs) in contributing to apprenticeship completions. We believe that over time successive governments' policies have created organisations consumed by inputs (using a sales approach to employer incentives rather than the sustainable recruitment of apprentices) to the detriment of outputs (supporting and mentoring apprentices to completion).

The role of employer financial incentives is also worthy of detailed research. VTA is of the view that the systems surrounding employer financial incentives linked to apprenticeships and traineeships have been about growing the numbers of apprentices/trainees in the workforce and not flexibility, quality on completion and retention of the apprentice/trainee in the industry. As described earlier and in Appendix 4, there are a set of employer behaviours that do make a difference to the experience of being an apprentice/trainee and long-term outcomes for the employer and industry. Incentives should reward good behaviours that improve outcomes. VTA suggests exploring employer incentives linked to creating skills reservoirs where employers explicitly over train in their industry and grow the skilled workforce in their industry.



## Figure 9

VTA is not convinced that the creation of four streams of apprenticeships as described in Figure 9 page 49 of the discussion paper will necessarily lead to better quality outcomes for employers than the current system. Based on the limited commentary provided in the discussion paper, we are sceptical that the creation of a four tiered structure, as distinct from the current two tiered structure, will find employers and RTOs facing even more burdensome regulatory and reporting/bureaucratic processes without any improvements to outcomes. The hierarchy of knowledge and learning happens anyway under current arrangements. Lifelong learning already occurs outside formal learning processes whether off-the-job or on-the-job. Implementation guides<sup>9</sup> for training packages detail approved qualifications for apprenticeships and traineeships and include many examples of higher order qualifications (Certificate IV and Diploma). Employers already invest heavily in the professional development of staff post-apprenticeship/traineeship primarily adopting just-in-time principles to match need to development.

We are also concerned at the linear approach adopted in Figure 9 to career development and the alignment of types of apprenticeships to time periods is unhelpful when 'competency based completion' is preferred. We understand that such a framework as described in Figure 9 is not explicitly linked to the employment arrangements for apprentices/trainees under various industrial arrangements but these must be in the back of mind for any structural changes to apprenticeships/traineeships.

VTA believes that qualification levels relevant to employment arrangements involving training contracts could be reviewed in the light of the recently agreed revised Australian Qualifications Framework. This review must include school-based apprentices which, we are told, lack credibility with industry. We acknowledge that the outcomes of some school-based apprenticeship arrangements are examples of good practice but there is not consistency of outcomes and the variability raises doubts in employers' minds of the skills and knowledge of the job applicants holding qualifications from those RTOs. Anecdotal advice to VTA is that there is a need to differentiate between the outcomes of apprenticeship training provided in conjunction with VET in Schools programs and those provided on-the-job and/or in partnership with non-school RTOs. Coupled with this is the need to have strong, rigorous regulatory processes to consistency of competency and quality outcomes.

## Conclusion

As stated at the outset VTA has chosen on this occasion to respond to a discreet part of the discussion paper *Creating a future direction for Australian vocational education and training*. Our starting point remains firm. Whether the discussion centres on learner well-being, apprenticeship arrangements, pathways and

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<sup>9</sup> [http://trainingsupport.otte.vic.gov.au/p\\_trgpck.cfm](http://trainingsupport.otte.vic.gov.au/p_trgpck.cfm)



connectivity or investing in VET, responsibilities to strengthen Australia's VET sector rest with those on the *demand* side of the equation, governments and employers, and the providers of VET on *supply* side.

VTA looks forward to seeking a plan for a co-operative plan of action growing out of the current discussions around creating an agile, flexible and responsive VET sector in Australian.



## **Appendix 1 – Key messages VTA/TDA/TAFE Development Centre Submission to the Education and Training Workforce Study - Productivity Commission, August 2010**

The key challenges and opportunities for TAFE in workforce development distilled from the responses are:

- The demand for continuous professional development across all sectors of the TAFE workforce to enable them to deal with changes driven by governments, industry, social and economic conditions, and technological developments. While it may not always be true that a more highly skilled workforce will increase productivity it is a stylised fact (i.e. more often true than not) that a less skilled workforce will reduce productivity.
- The older age profile of the VET workforce poses a challenge in terms of retention of capability and an opportunity for regeneration. Incentives to attract and retain older workers will be as, or more, important than incentives to attract younger workers. But TAFE can also expect to see a more mobile and flexible workforce, more fluid in employment attachment and more likely to enter, exit and re-enter the workforce according to personal experiences and needs.
- Given that TAFE providers continue to be the dominant providers of VET, any effective policy interventions and increased investment geared towards improving the VET workforce should focus on the developmental needs of VET practitioners, VET Professionals and General Staff working in TAFE settings.
- The pressure on TAFE (and vocational education) to 'fix' broad social and economic problems and the obligation to respond to public policy goals/settings. This requires more flexible and adaptive teachers with a broad range of inclusive teaching skills in addition to specific content knowledge and industry experience. It may also result in a change in the workforce profile of TAFE with the increase of different staff employed to cater for more learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The need to develop measures of workforce productivity that go beyond simply increased student contact hours and more done with less. The emerging tertiary education sector, the drive for higher qualifications and the blurring of education boundaries means crosssectoral provision, is assuming an increasingly important role for TAFE. The TAFE workforce is now required to operate across institutional structures, regulatory and accountability frameworks. The skills, qualifications and productivity of TAFE practitioners is not and therefore cannot be confined to the siloed view of the VET sector.
- The need to re-examine the current methods of measuring VET workforce performance to capture more than just the volume of workforce inputs and outputs to include their quality, scope and potential to improve productivity. A useful response to these types of workforce issues may be to develop metrics that have a direct line of sight to creating effective organisations.
- The need for a national data base on the characteristics of the VET workforce including qualifications. Individual TAFE providers generally hold this data and will use it for planning purposes but there is no coherent national picture of the



VETworkforce which would allow providers, regions, States and Territories to benchmark on the characteristics.

- The increasing requirement to respond to the impacts from the emergence and perhaps more significantly the convergence of technologies that are rapidly shaping new practice in industry, enterprise and education. The emergence of a critical mass of teachers and trainers who are well prepared to incorporate e-learning into their practice and have the skills to use elearning in transformative and innovative ways will not happen organically. It will require further investment in a well planned and well resourced national workforce development strategy for the VET sector.
- The growth of international delivery off-shore has resulted in TAFE providers building significant capability in exporting vocational education and working off shore. Consequently they have had to broaden their skill profile and grow a workforce (both domestically and in country) capable and qualified to support these endeavours. This area of provision will continue to grow into the future and will assume increasing importance in the recruitment and workforce development strategies of TAFE.
- There is no consistent view on the benefits of registration for VET practitioners and other professionals. It appears there is little connection between VET professional registration and peoples' perception of teaching as being a worthwhile career. A self-regulating professional association designed to promote 'professional practice' may be a better focus for raising the professional status of those who work in the VET sector.



## **Appendix 2: Key Messages on the TDA/VTA submission to the DEEWR project undertaken by the LH Martin Institute on the Quality of Teaching in VET**

- A rigorous evaluation should be undertaken immediately of the suitability of the Cert. IV TAE as an entry level qualification for VET teachers. The place of teacher practice in the delivery of the courses should be a feature of any such review. The current arrangements for assuring the quality of VET teaching are not satisfactory. The Cert. IV TAA has not been adequate preparation for the role of VET teacher in the TAFE environment due to the complexity of curriculum/training packages being taught (AQF 1 – 7), the diversity of learner cohorts and the likelihood that delivery may occur across education sectors. As a minimum, the huge disparity among RTOs between delivery models of the entry level Certificate IV qualification, whether the TAA40104 or TAE40110, must be addressed.
- There is merit in distinguishing between categories of teachers based on their level of responsibility. Establishing VET teaching as a profession with transparent career paths linked to qualifications is important to enhancing the quality of teaching in institutions.
- TAFE support acknowledgment of the different roles of VET teachers and the qualifications required to deliver quality teaching.
- The idea of formalised cross-sectoral teaching has merit and different models for cross-sectoral teaching should be explored further.
- TAFE gives in principle support to the need for a national database on the characteristics of the VET workforce including qualifications.
- Institutions and jurisdictions should both have a responsibility to support teachers to undertake study as a condition of teaching.
- There is qualified support for a qualifications framework for VET teaching that includes the nesting of entry level qualifications in high level qualifications where TAFE providers across jurisdictions are not disadvantaged by such changes.
- Industry currency is a vital issue in the quality of teaching and a common understanding of industry currency must be agreed and communicated.
- A strategy to support industry currency is needed and should be supported through a specialist/dedicated fund.
- Further work should be undertaken around the creation of work teams and how to support them as examples of good learning and teaching practice





### **Appendix 3: Key messages - NCVER review of the AQTF Quality Indicators, September 2010**

A discussion was convened of VTA members to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the three AQTF Quality Indicators, in terms of their usefulness to regulators, the TAFE and policy makers.
- Evaluate the reliability of the data for enhancing a TAFE's training and business performance.
- Determining what is working well and what is not.
- Identifying improvement opportunities and future direction for the indicators.

#### **Key Messages:**

- The rationale/business case for gathering information on Learner and Employer satisfaction is well understood. Understanding the rationale behind the Competency Completion Rate Indicator was less clear.
- TAFE have the technical and resource capabilities in administering, implementing, using and interpreting the AQTF data effectively.
- There is a lack of synergy when trying to use the three Quality Indicators as a whole – e.g. what is the correlation between completion rate and student satisfaction?
- The Learner questionnaire assumes a level of literacy which poses a challenge for many students and, hence the TAFE – e.g. apprentices, Language schools
- Concerns the flaws in the survey instruments will compromise benchmarking. Publishing the data in any form would result in benchmarking of data that is not collected using the same methodology so any comparisons would be inaccurate.
- Administration of the surveys is costly.
- Sufficient lead time needs to be assured for implementing any changes to the AQTF Quality Indicators. (i.e. collection process, collation, analysis and reporting).
- Considering the time, effort and cost associated with meeting compliance requirement, TAFE it is imperative that feedback is provided on the Quality Indicators reports and process and the inability to benchmark results.
- Specific directions on the outcomes of the Quality Indicators (e.g. feedback from the Registering Bodies) must be provided.
- There is a need to encourage better communication between organisations involved in Quality Indicators process. Providers do not know when, how or to whom reports on actions plans for improvement are to be made.



## Appendix 4: Good Start Great Finish ideas for employers

(Source: [http://www.gtald.com.au/projects/gstart\\_gfinish/good\\_start\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.gtald.com.au/projects/gstart_gfinish/good_start_flyer.pdf))

# Good Start – Great Finish

*Tips for helping you to help your apprentices and trainees complete their training.*



- 1 Positive Recruitment** – Plan for employing an apprentice and invest time in getting the right apprentice from the start. Let them know you see them as a long term investment in the future of your company.
- 2 No surprises** - Make the job clear up front – give the apprentice a clear understanding of what is expected of them, what the apprenticeship involves, and what the commitment will be both ways.
- 3 Look after your investment** – Personal support for your apprentice is vital; they are young adults moving into adulthood, there will be critical times when other things will compete for their time and interest, and there will be situations at work and at home that might knock their confidence.
- 4 Give them a chance** – The first three months of starting a new job is crucial – getting used to a work routine, learning new skills and for some, moving away from home – can all have an impact on performance. Don't be too hasty with your judgments; they mature at different times and learn at different speeds.
- 5 Look out for warning signals** – Dropping a training module, absence from off-the-job training, lateness for work - don't let them go unnoticed. Monitor your apprentice - a small investment of time will pay dividends.
- 6 Enlist support** – Parents, teachers and trainers, apprenticeship field officers, group training field officers, and other employers can all help you to keep the apprentice on track.
- 7 Keep them motivated** – Encourage them to learn, recognise their achievements, provide incentives, challenge them with new tasks and learning new skills. Involve them in company training opportunities - talk to them about career paths and additional training within your company and/or industry.
- 8 Communicate** – The better you understand each other the less chance there is of misunderstandings derailing the apprenticeship or traineeship.

**For further assistance or to recruit an apprentice or trainee contact Group Training on: 1800 819 747**