

**Increasing opportunities for apprenticeships and traineeships  
in Melbourne's Western Region**

**John Martino and Sue Holden  
Victoria University, Footscray**

Apprenticeships and traineeships or the rebadged New Apprenticeships have taken the initiative of encouraging, particularly young people, to look at career paths in a variety of traditional and non-traditional industries. In some regions of Australia, such as the west of Melbourne, this initiative appears to have failed.

The research project identified factors that inhibited the expansion of apprenticeships and traineeships in Melbourne's west. These factors included career counselling, the importance of VET in Schools, community and media perceptions, quality and source of information and organisational issues. The methodology involved focus groups with six schools in three local government areas, surveying 400 local businesses and interviewing key stakeholders such as group training companies, industry training boards, employers and school careers teachers.

The outcomes provided an invaluable insight into the perceptions held by young people, businesses and educational authorities about the utility of New Apprenticeships. This research has taken a critical look at New Apprenticeships with the view to providing a way forward for all parties to improve the quality of apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities and outcomes.