Privately Owned Registered Training Organisations In Victoria – Diversity As An Emerging Theme?

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Abstract

This paper traces the growth in the Victorian Vocational Education and Training (VET) system of privately owned Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) since 1991 when the VET system was opened up more widely to private providers. This growth is reviewed and a brief literature review places the research in context.

The CEOs, or their nominees, in 21 privately owned RTOs which have operated in the Victorian VET system have been interviewed. All the RTOs participating in this research inquiry were registered prior to December 1994 and are still operating. They include enterprise, industry and commercial training organisations of varying sizes.

The main purpose of this paper is to report some aspects of what these interviews have revealed. It illustrates the extent of diversity found within this group of RTOs; for example the rationale for seeking registration and the benefits perceived, the markets in which they operate, including the courses they offer, and the client groups they service. The significance of government funding to their operations is also identified.

The findings of this research reinforce the need for more detailed research into the activities and impact of privately owned RTOs within the national VET system, particularly as very few of those which do not receive government funds are currently included in statistical data prepared by National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

This paper represents work in progress and is part of a PhD project. Comments are very welcome.

Introduction

The Vocational Education & Training Act 1990 first came into force in Victoria in 1991 to allow for "registration of providers in the private sector and their access to State accredited courses" (State Training Board, 1990).

This paper provides a brief overview of the growth of privately owned Registered Training Organisations in Victoria since 1992 when the vocational education and training system was opened up to private providers. It reports on interviews undertaken between October 2003 and February 2004. A critical outcome of this research will be to increase our understanding of privately owned RTOs in the Victorian VET system and to help identify their influence on that system.

Limitations

The paper has not discussed any theoretical underpinning, particularly in relation to corporatism or critical theory nor has it covered contextual issues such as public policy theory at either State or Federal level.

Where possible, primary sources have been used to obtain data, in particular Annual Reports of the State Training Board in Victoria and its successor, the Victorian Learning & Employment Skills Commission. For the literature review both primary and secondary sources have been used.

A more detailed comparison between what has been found from these interviews and the research undertaken by others (Anderson, 2002; Kell, Balatti, & Muspratt, 1997; Saggers, Moloney, Nicholson, & Watson, 2002) has yet to be carried out. It is anticipated such analysis will add further value to the research outcomes.

Research Method & Definition

A purposeful sample was selected from a record of all privately owned RTOs which had been registered either prior to or during 1994 (Office of Training & Further Education, 1994). Twenty-six RTOs were selected. Five of the RTOs who were approached refused to be interviewed. Of the remaining 21, ten were commercial, seven were industry and four were enterprise RTOs. This purposeful sample represented approximately the same proportion of each of the categories of privately owned RTOs which existed in Victoria at the end of June 2002 - see Table 2 below. It was believed that selection of a cohort of RTOs which had been in the system for almost the whole of the period since it was opened up would be more illuminating than sampling all RTOs registered at July 2002.

Private providers in Victoria were registered initially in one of four categories. The categories which encompass those defined as privately owned RTOs in this study are:

- Commercial providers that supply "fee for service programs to the general public" (State Training Board Victoria, 1993, p. 25). The Application for Registration form referred to them as "commercial providers [which] charge students fees for training" (State Government of Victoria, 2001).
- Enterprise based provider – an organisation which provide accredited "training within an organisation for its own employees" (State Training Board Victoria, 1993, p. 25).
- Industry based providers include those that offer accredited "training to an industry sector". (State Training Board, 1993, p. 25). This last category included industry associations, professional associations and group training companies.

Table 2 below sets out data relating to these three RTO categories.

The fourth category which has been excluded from this study is "Community based providers" described as "established by Government or community-sponsored organisations for the purpose of enhancing access to the labour market and/or further education and training" (State Training Board, 1993, p. 25). These are excluded because they are not privately owned and their recurrent funds flow from government sources of one kind or another.

Appendix 1 contains the semi-structured interview questions that CEOs, or their nominees, were asked during an hour long interview. The interviews were taped and summaries prepared. The tapes have since been digitised which has enabled appropriate quotations to be identified more readily.

Literature Review

There had been a widely held view dating from the mid 1980s that changes were needed to national training arrangements to improve quality, responsiveness and flexibility of the system. (Dawkins, 1989; National Board of Employment Education & Training, 1989). Arrangements were believed to be totally inadequate to meet the requirements of a de-regulated economy which would need to be export oriented and internationally competitive. (Kell, 1997). Business and the unions had been criticising the VET system as inadequate throughout the late 1980s (Australian Council of Trade Unions/Trade Development Council, 1987; Business Council of Australia, 1988; 1994; Confederation of Australian Industry, 1988).

Federal government reports issued through the National Board of Employment Education and Training (NBEET) (established by Act of Parliament July 1988) and the Employment & Skills Formation Council (which operated as one of five Councils under NBEET) from its inception, and through the 1990s from other sources, all dealt with issues relating to training reform and support for opening up VET (Allen Consulting Group, 1994a; Allen Consulting Group Pty Ltd, 1994b; Carmichael, 1989; Dawkins, 1989, 1990, 1992; Dawkins & Holding, 1987; 1991; 1992; . Employment & Skills Formation Council, 1994; Finn, 1991; Keating, 1994a, 1994b; National Board of Employment Education & Training, 1989, 1992, 1994, 1996).

Although the possibility of opening up the VET market was advocated strongly by Deveson in his Report (1990), it would be misleading to see this report as the only contribution to this reform even though there have been claims that this particular review was the "defining moment".

Ryan has suggested that the State Training Board formed in Victoria in November 1987 "became the strongest advocate among State TAFE administrations of the use of market forces in vocational education" (2002). Evidence to support this was found in the Annual Reports for 1988/9 and 1989/90 when major themes included:

> continued development of new and more flexible training arrangements… and the development of a process that allows for the recognition of private providers to enable them to offer State-accreditated [sic] courses (State Training Board Victoria, 1989, p.14)

In this same Annual Report the driving forces for change were identified as development of "internationally competitive industries and the need to facilitate award restructuring" which in shaping the training debate suggested a need for

> …reforms to existing training to improve the quality, flexibility and efficiency of delivery, in both the public and private training sectors" (State Training Board Victoria, 1989), p.19).

No matter how one views this period, there is little doubt that it would have been unthinkable that all the views expressed would not lead to significant change in VET. Included amongst these reforms were the adoption of competency based training arising out of the industrial relations decisions about award restructuring (Goozee, 1995, 2001), user choice, competitive tendering; adjustments to the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT) and the introduction of the modern apprenticeship/traineeships schemes. But it could be argued that allowing registration of private providers and ending TAFE's monopoly of accredited training was the most momentous change of them all.

The ongoing research being undertaken is intended to identify the consequences of the opening up of the VET system in Victoria to privately owned RTOs, or private providers as they were initially called. It is believed that the interviews carried out and still being analysed will provide useful insights into a number of qualitative aspects of the operations of these RTOs. The study will inform conclusions about the significance and impact of these privately owned RTOs on the Victorian VET system.

Growth of RTOs in Victoria

Notwithstanding the broader political context, briefly discussed above, by 9 June 1992, 61 organisations were registered in Victoria as private providers (Department of Employment & Training, 1991/2). Table 1 shows the cumulative registrations of all Victorian providers at 30 June each year from 1992 to 2003. The number of RTOs peaked in 2001/2002 at 1189, with the largest number of new registrations occurring in 1998/1999.

Table 1 - Registrations of providers – Victoria at June from 1991/1992 to 2001/2003.

Year	Cumulative registrations	Net new registrations *
1991/2	61	61
1992/3	220	159
1993/4	298	78
1994/5	450	152
1995/6	630	180
1996/7	707	77
1997/8	737	30
1998/9	950	213
1999/2000	985	35
2000/2001	1041	56
2001/2002	1189	148
2002/2003	1173	-16

*This records new registrations less terminations.

Source for column 2 : State Training Board Annual Reports, 1991/1992 to 1999/2000 and Victorian Learning & Employment Skills Commission Annual Reports 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003. Other calculations based on the source data

The term Registered Training Organisation (RTO) is now in common use but it was not always so. Providers registered under the system were originally referred to as "registered private providers" (State Training Board, 1994). [2]

[2] The terms used to describe registered private providers in Victoria have changed over time. The first reference to Registered Training Organisations appeared in the 1997-8 State Training Board Annual Report and the term described all other providers with the exception of TAFE Institutes. The inclusion of TAFE Institutes as Registered Training Organisations appears to date from 1999-2000 Annual Report (State Training Board, 2000).

The data in Table 1 include privately owned RTOs (already defined) as well as TAFE Institutes, community organisations such as community access centres, adult education and adult migrant education providers, government and independent schools. None of these later named RTOs has been included in the purposeful sample selected for interviews. This is not to say that interviews will not occur with any of these groups but at this stage of the research none has occurred.

Privately owned RTOs as defined above have been the focus of this paper. They represented nearly 70% of all RTOs registered in 2001/2002. Table 2 below illustrates the annual rates of registrations of this group. These rates have fluctuated over the period under review. For example, commercial and enterprise provider registrations doubled in 1995-6 in comparison with the previous year's registrations. Again, in 1997/1998 an upsurge in registrations occurred, particularly in the commercial category. However, since 2002 the annual registrations for each category shown have declined. It is suggested public policy, Victorian government funding of private providers through competitive tendering from 1994/1995, "user choice" from the beginning of 1998, the introduction of Training Packages from 1997, and more recently the implementation of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) standards could provide partial explanations for the decline in the enterprise and industry new registrations. It may also be because more partnership arrangements have occurred (Smith & Keating, 2003). Certainly the interviews conducted by the researcher provided examples of the larger enterprise and industry RTOs engaging other RTOs, including TAFE Institutes, to deliver training to their employees and members.

Table 2 - Privately owned registered providers by categories included in study Annual registrations each financial year according to date of initial registration 1990/91 to 2001/2002

Year **Financial year**	**Commercial**	**Industry**	**Enterprise**	**Total private**	**% of total**	**Total all RTOs**
To 30/6/91	6	1	0	7	87.50	8
1991/2	6	6	5	17	85.00	20
1992/3	15	13	7	35	39.77	88
1993/4	17	10	3	30	71.42	42
1994/5	13	19	7	39	75.00	52
1995/6	29	26	14	69	73.40	94
1996/7	18	19	7	44	65.67	67
1997/8	42	21	13	76	80.85	94
1998/9	53	33	20	106	57.29	185
1999/2000	80	41	19	140	76.50	183
2000/2001	65	31	11	107	69.93	153
2001/2002	69	17	4	90	79.64	113
Total	**413**	**237**	**110**	**760**	**69.15%**	**1099**

Source data provided by Office of Training & Tertiary Education on floppy disk

Findings and Discussion

In order to explain the impacts privately owned RTOs have had on the VET system in Victoria it is necessary to examine both structural and qualitative dimensions of change and/or impact. A range of factors has been considered as part of this process. For example, the size, structure and growth of privately owned RTOs, their clients, the level and type of courses being delivered, the markets in which they operate, the significance of government funding have all been part of the structural or quantitative dimension. Qualitative dimensions examined have included the rationale for and benefits from registration, the extent of competition faced, how RTOs market their services, their educational values and practices, their approaches to networking, the extent to which strategic alliances and collaboration have existed, the issues faced in operating as privately owned RTOs in the VET system and views about the future of accredited training, the VET system and the 'open training market'.

This paper addresses only the findings of a selection of the qualitative dimensions nominated above, namely the rationale for and perceived benefits of registration, the markets in which the RTOs have operated, the significance of government funding and a limited number of issues raised by those interviewed about aspects of the VET system.

Rationale for registration & perceived benefits

Questions about the reasons for registration and its perceived benefits elicited varied responses. One small commercial provider saw multiple reasons:

> an opportunity for funding … the training guarantee levy was about to come in [and] if going to extend business [you needed to take up] whatever opportunities were available to you as an RTO to go into companies and be competitive.

In discussing the benefits this same provider felt there was a "marketing advantage". Three other small commercial providers saw registration as "ensuring credibility". Another perspective of the benefits put forward was: "the market expects accredited training".

In contrast, a somewhat larger commercial provider operating in a niche market wanted its students to have "travel concessions…as few students had cars …and were paying their own fees". While, perhaps surprisingly, one of the medium sized commercial providers maintained that he had to be an RTO as the "unions would only recognise accredited training" in the field in which he specialised.

One large industry provider stated that it "basically became an RTO to put in quality control". In the same interview in relation to the benefits of being an RTO, it was argued,

> …RTO status gives us credibility … crucial in Asia … would not have succeeded in NZ or South Africa without RTO status…[it is] the first thing they want to know.

Control over their own destiny in training was yet another benefit identified by both enterprise and industry providers.

In the case of some enterprise and industry providers multiple reasons and/or benefits applied. These included "quality control purposes", "to get govt funding" and recognising the "need for people who had not had training". For a large manufacturing enterprise it was that “no one [had] the specialist knowledge needed for the training – TAFE does not have the knowledge of the business nor the equipment”. The one regional industry RTO interviewed maintained that it had become an RTO “so we could deliver the required training ourselves in our own way and in our own time…TAFE was not flexible enough”. These reasons were also perceived by this RTO as the benefits it had gained as a consequence of registration.

Even if the reasons and benefits are considered according to the type of provider, considerable diversity still exists. It could be said that the commercially orientated providers perceived the reasons and benefits more in relation to status, credibility or competitive advantage than the other categories of providers, at least in this study. Hence it is not possible, from this study, to state any single definitive rationale for providers becoming registered.

Markets, client group and courses

Another possible dimension of the impact of privately owned RTOs is gleaned by considering their involvement in different markets. Seventeen RTOs interviewed were located in suburban Melbourne; a further three were situated in the central business district. A Group Training Company in the industry organisation category was the only interview undertaken in a regional area.

The markets in which these RTOs operated extended beyond State boundaries and in some instances overseas. The importance of interstate operations varied according to type of RTO and client group. For example, the four enterprise RTOs which were all national companies trained their own employees in other States. Furthermore these enterprise RTOs indicated that they did not necessarily limit training opportunities to so-called permanent full-time employees. At least two of the four provided accredited training for both casual and temporary workers.

Four of the commercial RTOs had national clients for whom they trained outside Victoria. These same RTOs were basically workplace trainers with company clients who used their services in other States to ensure consistency in training outcomes. But of these four, only two had significant proportions of interstate training, being around 50% of total training in one instance.

One large commercial provider had training facilities in both New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland in addition to its Victorian operation. Its enrolments in NSW outnumbered those in Victoria. This same provider had a significant number of overseas student enrolments. Another large commercial provider had significant numbers of international students but all were located at the one campus. In each case these RTOs had strong connections with tertiary institutions which enabled their overseas students to move from the VET system into the university system with comparative ease. One commented that only 20% of its total enrolments were local Victorian students – the remainder being from a variety of overseas countries, mainly China, Korea, Indonesia and Eastern Europe. Not unexpectedly, the distance education commercial RTO had participants outside Victoria, mostly on the eastern seaboard.

One industry RTO which auspiced teachers to deliver the training, operated throughout Australia, with over 3000 certificates issued in 2003. It estimated that interstate clients represented approximately 30% of its total throughput. The other industry organisation which had trained interstate said that this represented only a very small proportion of its total training. Nine of the RTOs interviewed had not delivered any training interstate.

Two of the commercial RTOs with their own permanent training facilities catered for full-time and part-time student enrolments. In one of these, there was considerable discussion about the differences in delivery strategy according to the type of student – as the CEO put it

> we have always had a flexible delivery approach… in that the course is delivered in two totally different ways … our full-time cohort is students coming straight from school and they have always had a lot of support in their first year… and have had very little work experience …a lot of the focus is on …giving them skills to enable them to work in industry…[on the other hand] the part-time course…evenings, weekends, weekends away …those people are already working in the industry…so the focus there is not so much in employability skills but the nuts and bolts …of the [specialist skills]…

Just under half of the RTOs delivered most of their training in the workplace to full-time employees of client companies – the employees involved in training ranged from operational/shop floor employees through to senior managers.

The courses these RTOs delivered included their own accredited short course qualifications in eight instances and Victorian or other crown copyright qualifications and/or short courses in 7 instances. Nineteen different packages were cited as being regularly delivered by the RTOs interviewed. A previous paper by the researcher has detailed the courses offered and the packages being delivered by this group (McPhee, 2004).

A picture emerges from the above of RTOs operating in quite different markets. They had local, interstate and even international students, full-time and part-time; across 19 different training packages, in urban, suburban and regional training markets. On the basis of these interviews it is not possible to pigeonhole the impact of these private providers according to particular or conspicuous markets. Sometimes they operated as niche providers but what distinguished them (as a group) was not their distinctive markets or market share, but the way they each maintained their focus on the needs of their client groups.

Government funding

Of the 21 RTOs interviewed, 16 stated they did not currently receive government funding through either the Victorian government Priority Education & Training Program (PETP) or Apprenticeship Traineeship Training Program (ATTP) schemes. Five of these 16 RTOs indicated that they had received this type of Victorian government funding in the past but had not applied in more recent times. As one provider put it:

> …not worth while…government PETP in 2003 [170 places] represented a drop in the ocean in comparison with all the training delivered…too costly to

run and accountability issues too difficult…found the work load and the audit …too burdensome….

Of the remaining five companies which identified funding sourced through either ATTP or PETP, all but one maintained it represented a small proportion of their total training activity. In one instance it was as low as 1%, in another 2% and yet another, which had received this funding in the past, indicated it had not applied for it in 2004. Thus only one of all the RTOs interviewed indicated that this type of funding represented a significant proportion of revenue, being somewhere between 50% and 60% of its total training. This particular case was the regionally located RTO.

It would appear that, at least for many of these 21 RTOs, gaining Victorian government user choice funding was not seen as either a desirable or necessary goal. This finding is particularly interesting in the light of "common sense" or folk-lore understandings which assume that access to government funds is a major rationale for private training companies seeking registration.

It should be noted that government funding as discussed above did not include Commonwealth incentive payments to employers.

Issues identified:
Another emergent theme concerns the negative attitude expressed regarding the extent of support received from the Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE). Comments were made such as the "government would like to have private RTOs disappear". The same interviewee felt that the private RTOs had been shut out of access to free professional development and participation in Centres of Excellence available to TAFEs. One of the large enterprise RTOs maintained that implementation of a *real* national training system was not being achieved due to the differences between States.

One provider believed that TAFE Institutes could not meet all the needs of all categories of training and that "choice was greater with private providers who could focus on specific needs of an industry".

A small commercial provider expressed his concern about the lack of understanding in companies of accredited training and the lack of a training culture – in his words "I wish that people could get their heads around the need for training". Yet another concern expressed by an enterprise provider was that the Training Packages might not be kept up to date and maintain relevance – particularly once the Industry Training Advisory Board (ITAB) structure was dismantled.

The interviews raised a wide range of issues and uncovered diverse perceptions and opinions. Not all of these could be considered reasonable or entirely well informed – but they show private training providers have concerns with the system.

Conclusions
This paper has focused on preliminary findings from interviews undertaken with a number of privately owned RTOs relating to a limited selection of qualitative dimensions. Considerable diversity is apparent from the information gathered so far, particularly about the rationale for and perceived benefits of becoming registered.

The reasons stated by the commercially orientated providers were connected more with status, credibility and competitive advantage. On the other hand, control over quality and over one's own destiny were seen by enterprise and industry providers as the critical reasons for seeking to deliver nationally recognised training.

The findings on markets, client groups and type of courses delivered, as described above, adds further support to the diversity theme. The relative importance which interstate operations have had for some of the commercial providers and the national enterprise RTOs has varied considerably. A mixture of client groups was evident. These included auspicing arrangements for school students, international students, full –time and part-time Australian students, full-time, part-time and casual employees in enterprises receiving their training from enterprise RTOs and/or commercial providers.

It was apparent to the researcher that regardless of the markets in which they operated, a significant number of those interviewed were very focused on meeting their client's needs. The analysis undertaken on staffing approaches, innovative practices, delivery modes and locations (not reported here due to space limitations) reinforced the views expressed by privately owned RTOs that meeting client needs has been a paramount consideration. Being responsive to client requirements may well prove to explain why these RTOs have remained successful over a relatively long period.

It is interesting to note that the responses in relation to government funding supported the notion that most of the RTOs interviewed had not become registered in the hope of gaining government funding to maintain their operations. Indeed, the preponderance of RTOs interviewed which did not seek government funding raises questions about the importance of Victorian State government funding in explaining the survival and growth of RTOs operating in niche markets. Conclusions on this issue are however premature.

Concern was expressed by many of those interviewed about the lack of support from OTTE. More importantly perhaps, criticism was made by national companies about the lack of uniform and/or consistent treatment of their training operations in different States.

The issue of the lack of a training culture raised by one provider is not new. However it is disappointing to think that this issue, discussed in the mid-nineties is still perceived as a deficiency (National Board of Employment Education & Training, 1996).

The research and analysis undertaken to date appears to suggest a high degree of diversity within the private provider market. It may well be that such diversity represents a real strength of the current VET system. Without privately owned RTOs in the market the degree of choice, responsiveness and flexibility which is apparent from the research to date, might not have occurred.

The lack of information available in statistical data about those providers which did not receive government funding has been acknowledged as a problem for some time. This research is intended to help identify the extent of

activity of a limited number of RTOs. It is pleasing to note that the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Inc (NCVER) has indicated to the researcher that some private and industry/enterprise RTOs do report on a voluntary basis even though they may not receive government funding. However, many RTOs which receive government funding only report the government-funded activity and do not necessarily report their fee-for-service activity. Formal agreement has been gained by NCVER to a proposal to proceed with a trial to collect information on a voluntary basis on all recognised VET activity. As a consequence NCVER hopes to be able to make some reasonable estimates of total recognised VET activity in due course (Knight, 2005).

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APPENDIX 1
Questions for Interviews with Selected Privately Owned RTOs

1	***Confirming information:*** You became a private RTO according to the data I have recorded in my research in …………….. Can you confirm this for me?
2	What is your formal position title?
3	How many reports are there between you and the CEO of the RTO?
4	How long have your been working in this organisation? (yrs)
5	Were you working in the organisation when it became registered as an RTO?
6	If you were, do you know who made the decision to become an RTO?
7	If you were working in organisation and know, please state reason why decision was made
8	Do you think those reasons still apply today?
9	If not what has changed in the meantime?
10	If you were not working here at the time, do you know who would be able to tell me why the original decision was made?
10a	If yes –
11	***Accredited training significance****:* Can you tell me what proportion of your total training (either in student contact hours or in relation to total revenue) is devoted to accredited training (i.e. training which delivers some part of training packages or other courses which form part of the VET accredited program)?
11a	If yes express as %
11b	Has this proportion changed significantly since the organisation became an RTO?
11c	If yes, has it increased or decreased?
11d	Could you tell me why you think this?
12	***Scope of registration*** Of the qualifications on your scope – Which have been regularly delivered (i.e. main part of your accredited training delivery)? Which have rarely been delivered (i.e. no more than twice)? Which ones have never been delivered?
13	***Delivery strategies:*** Can you tell me about your delivery strategies (how you deliver training – it may include the method as well)?
13a	If yes,
13b	Are there particular reasons for using the ones you describe? If yes, can you tell me about them?
13c	Can you tell me more about that?
14	***Client Group*** Can you tell me about the client group to whom you deliver programs?
14a	Are they usually employed?
14b	If yes, are they mainly part time/full time employees?
14c	Can you tell me more about this client group?
15	What is the highest level the RTO has delivered in accredited training?
15a	According to my data you have up to ………………….but have you actually delivered to that level?
16	Please nominate 3 (or 4) training packages which you have found to be the most popular (from your scope)
16a	Which of the ones you nominated has been the most successful in meeting the needs of your client group, in your opinion?
16b	On what basis do you make that judgement?
17	***Innovation*** Is there anything you can tell me about you being innovative in terms of the delivery or design of courses or any other aspects of your operations as an RTO?
18	**No of Statements of Attainment issued and/or Certificates** To gain some idea of your student throughput over a period can you tell me how many qualifications issued to students on an annual basis or over the last two or three years compared with the first two or three years of your operations. How many (if any) of these would be apprentices or trainees?
19	**Training in other States** Do you deliver training in other States?
19a	If yes, what proportion of your total training do you estimate this to be? – on revenue or student contact hours basis
19b	Why have you done this training in other States?
20	***Competitors*** What about other competitors? Who are they? How do they compete?

21	***Marketing*** Can you tell me something about your marketing – how you gain your business; whether you advertise or use other methods of keeping your name in the marketplace.
22	***Government relations*** How would you describe your relationship with government? Are there particular segments or parts of government that you would differentiate this relationship? (i.e. State/Federal) – grants – tenders - subcontracting
22a	Have you received **funding** from Government funding have they ever received any?
22b	If yes, how significant in relation to total training?
22c	Reasons for seeking it?
23	*Networks* Can you tell me something about the networks you use and why you use those in particular?
23a	**Inter-institutional relationships** Do you have any kind of business relationships with other institutions involved in the sector? E.g. ITBs, other RTOs
23ba	What do you think can be gained from these relationships?
24	***Staffing issues:*** Trainers – methods/criteria for recruiting
24a	Type of arrangements (employee, contractor)
24b	*Number of trainers employed or used*
24c	*Other employees or contractors e.g. accountant, administrator, managers*
24d	*Determining rates of pay, rewarding performance, contractual arrangements*
	Costs/Benefits
25	What about costs of being an RTO? Can you identify those for me?
25a	Have they changed significantly?
25b	Can you explain why changes have occurred?
26	What about benefits of being an RTO? Can you identify those for me?
	Have they changed significantly?
27	**Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)** Has the implementation of the new AQTF had any effect? Direct or indirect? Good or bad?
28	***Organisations/Associations*** Do you belong to Australian Council for Private Education & Training (ACPET)? If yes, why did you join? If no, why did you decide not to join? Uncertain – discuss what it is
29	What is your view about the future of RTOs, accredited training and the training market generally?
30	Is there anything else you would like to mention which I have omitted to touch on in all of the questions raised above?