

# AVETRA 2005

## EMERGING FUTURES

RECENT, RESPONSIVE AND RELEVANT RESEARCH



SOFITEL BRISBANE  
WEDNESDAY, 13 APRIL 2005  
to  
FRIDAY, 15 APRIL 2005



AUSTRALIAN  
NATIONAL TRAINING  
AUTHORITY

*AEshareNet*



**TAFE Queensland**

Queensland Government

Department of Employment and Training

8TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE - 13 - 15 APRIL

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## **Welcome to AVETRA 2005.**

It is my pleasure to be the Convenor of the 8th AVETRA Conference, and the first to be held in Queensland.

The theme of this conference is recent, relevant and responsive research and the papers and workshops that have been put forward by yourselves and your colleagues certainly seem to demonstrate the capacity of VET practitioners to respond to those challenges.

From the 8 workshops on the Wednesday, through the 6 Keynotes on Thursday and Friday and over 70 presentations on both these days – to the Friday finale of the panel and some reflections on VET by a revered practitioner, we have a packed programme.

I hope to also see you at the Welcome Cocktail Party at Southbank and dinner at the historic Customs House on the banks of the Brisbane River.

On behalf of the Conference Committee and the AVETRA Executive, may I wish you an enjoyable, productive and challenging three days. May you take some learnings home with you.



**John Blakeley**  
*Conference Convenor*

## Wednesday 13 April 2005

12.00pm – 1.00pm	Registration - for Workshops and/or Conference
1.00pm – 5.15pm	Selection of Professional Development WORKSHOPS – to enhance your professional skills
4.00pm – 5.30pm	Registration for Conference – beat the rush on Thursday!
6.00pm – 8.00pm	Welcoming Cocktails – at UC Brisbane Campus, Southbank

## Thursday 14 April 2005

8.00am – 9.30am	Registration
9.30am – 10.00am	Conference Opening – The Hon Tom Barton, Qld Minister for Employment, Training & Industrial Relations
10.00am – 11.00am	Keynote: Professor David Boud - UTS - Productive perspectives for research on workplace learning
11.30am – 12.30pm	Keynote: Professor John Stevenson - Griffith University - Keeping the Vocational in its Place
1.30pm – 2.00pm	Monique Dawson, Assistant General Manager, Qld Dept of Education & Training – Pathways to the Future - SMARTVET
2.00pm – 5.30 pm	STREAMED Sessions – 5 themes
7.00pm – 11.00pm	Conference Dinner at The Customs House – award presentations, entertainment, and great networking.

## Friday 15 April 2005

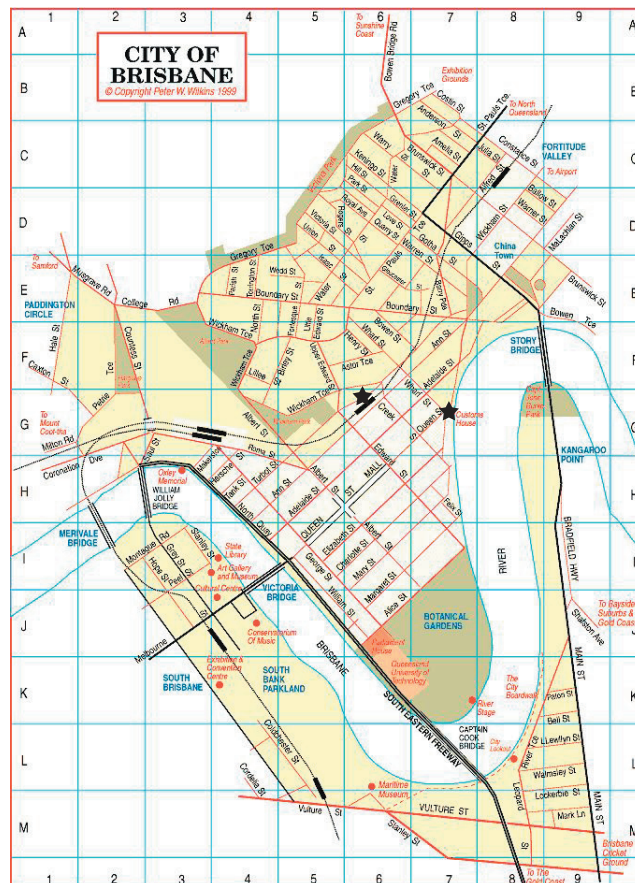
8.00am – 9.00 am	Registration
9.00am – 9.10am	Opening and Housekeeping
9.10am – 9.55am	Keynote: Pam Caven, ANTA - Australian VET, an Overview
9.55am – 10.40am	Keynote: Professor Kaye Schofield, UTS - Outcomes of the High Level Review of Training Packages
11.10am – 11.55am	Keynote: Kaye Bowman, NCVER - Research Opportunities and Priorities for the VET Sector
11.55am – 3.20pm	STREAMED Sessions – 5 themes
3.20pm – 4.00pm	PANEL, Reflections and Closing Remarks
4.00pm – 4.15pm	Thanks and close of conference

## Sofitel Brisbane Hotel

Sofitel (formerly Sheraton) Brisbane Hotel  
249 Turbot STREET  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

The Sofitel Brisbane Hotel is conveniently located in the heart of the sunshine state's capital. Perfectly placed for guests to enjoy the city's best, they are just a short walk from the shopping, entertainment, and business precincts.

The 410 superbly refurbished rooms and elegant suites, including the exclusive Executive floors, offer a totally luxurious hotel experience. Enjoy wonderful restaurants, intimate bars, state-of-the-art meeting and conference services, and a host of relaxation facilities topped off with a warm Sofitel welcome and friendly service.



## Level 2 Conference Area



## **ANTA (Australian National Training Authority)**

2005 is a year of change for the government agencies managing vocational education and training. On 30 June 2005, ANTA will be abolished and its responsibilities transferred over to the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). While ANTA is being abolished, its core work of improving the national training system will continue. This means it's business as usual for ANTA up to 30 June and then DEST will take over its work after that date. ANTA and DEST are working closely to ensure a smooth transition of work between the two agencies. To find out more about ANTA's transition to DEST visit [www.anta.gov.au](http://www.anta.gov.au)

## **TAFE Queensland**

TAFE Queensland's mission is to help students on their pathway to 'Greater possibilities', whether that is in their career, business or in life. TAFE Queensland has an extensive range of education and training programs available to just about every walk of life – all ages, backgrounds, and vocations. With more than 120 years of history, a networks of institutes, more than 100 campuses across the state, and more than 800 programs, TAFE Queensland is the largest and most experienced provider of vocational education, training and adult learning in Australia's smart state – Queensland.

## **AEShareNet Ltd**

AEShareNet facilitates the online trading and sharing of licences for learning materials. Find it, view it, licence it, get hold of it, use and adapt it, all so simple via the AEShareNet website. Traditionally, the discovery, licensing and purchase of learning materials has been an arduous and multi-skilled process. AEShareNet connects people who are looking for learning materials with those who own them, and automates the negotiation and licensing process. AEShareNet is owned by the Australian Education Ministers and is dedicated to maximizing the use and reuse of learning materials. It offers four licence templates that can be used by anyone to share materials and two that support commercial trading. Over 21,000 resources listed, over 500 organisations listing and trading including TAFEs, private RTOs, universities, publishers and multi media companies. [www.aesharenet.com.au](http://www.aesharenet.com.au)

## **NCVER (National Centre for Vocational Education Research)**

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) aims to be Australia's leading provider of quality, independent information about vocational education and training (VET).

Their vision is that VET policy and practice are informed by a sound base of high-quality information.

In this capacity, NCVER is responsible for collecting and managing national VET and New Apprenticeship statistics, and managing national surveys of TAFE graduates and students, and employers' views of training.

It undertakes a strategic program of research, and collects and provides VET research findings from Australian and international sources through the VOCED research database.

NCVER actively communicates this information to the state, territory and federal governments, industry, the VET sector and the community.

Additionally, NCVER undertakes consultancy work specialising in industry skills studies, conducting program evaluations, and undertaking statistical analyses of various aspects of VET.

## **Blackboard International B.V.**

The Blackboard Learning System™ is a Web-based server software platform that offers industry-leading course management, an open architecture for customization and interoperability, and a scalable design that allows for integration with student information systems and authentication protocols. This system is available for local installation or hosted by Blackboard ASP Solutions. The Blackboard Learning System is an industry leading course management system based on a third-generation enterprise technology platform featuring curriculum-driven content management and content sharing provides instructors with flexibility and control.

## The Conference Secretariat

The Conference Secretariat will be housed in the Boardroom 3 and manned at all times to assist you.

## Badges

Badges may be 'shared' amongst delegates from the one organisation, but ALL delegates must wear a valid badge at all times. The badges / lanyards have been colour coded as follows:

Organising Committee: GOLD lanyards

Speakers: RED lanyards

Delegates: BLACK lanyards

***Plus an indicator denoting your dinner status: RED dot indicates Dinner Attendee.***

## The Conference Dinner and Awards Night

The Conference Dinner and Awards Night will be held at The Customs House, 399 Queen Street, Brisbane.

Dwarfed by modern towers of glass and steel, the Customs House still shines like a beacon on the banks of the Brisbane River. With work commencing in 1886, this imposing and rare surviving masterpiece of the Colonial architects Office took three years and 38,346 pounds to build. It is actually older than both City Hall and the houses with direct river frontage. Opened in 1889, this stately land mark served as the city's Customs House for almost a century before the gradual shift of port activities closer to the river mouth undermined its role. Regular guided tours capture the building's historic flavour while a display of memorabilia from those bygone years still stirs the imagination of visitors.

Customs House finally closed in April 1988 and for a while the building's future was uncertain. Then in late 1991 the University of Queensland took over the lease and launched a major restoration program to return the heritage-listed building to its former glory. Three years and \$7.5 million later the original style had been faithfully recaptured - but this time subtly blended into a modern, highly functional, multipurpose building for educational and cultural activities. The Customs House is once more a major Brisbane asset.

***If you have booked to attend, your badge should sport a RED dot.  
NO RED DOT, NO ENTRY!!***

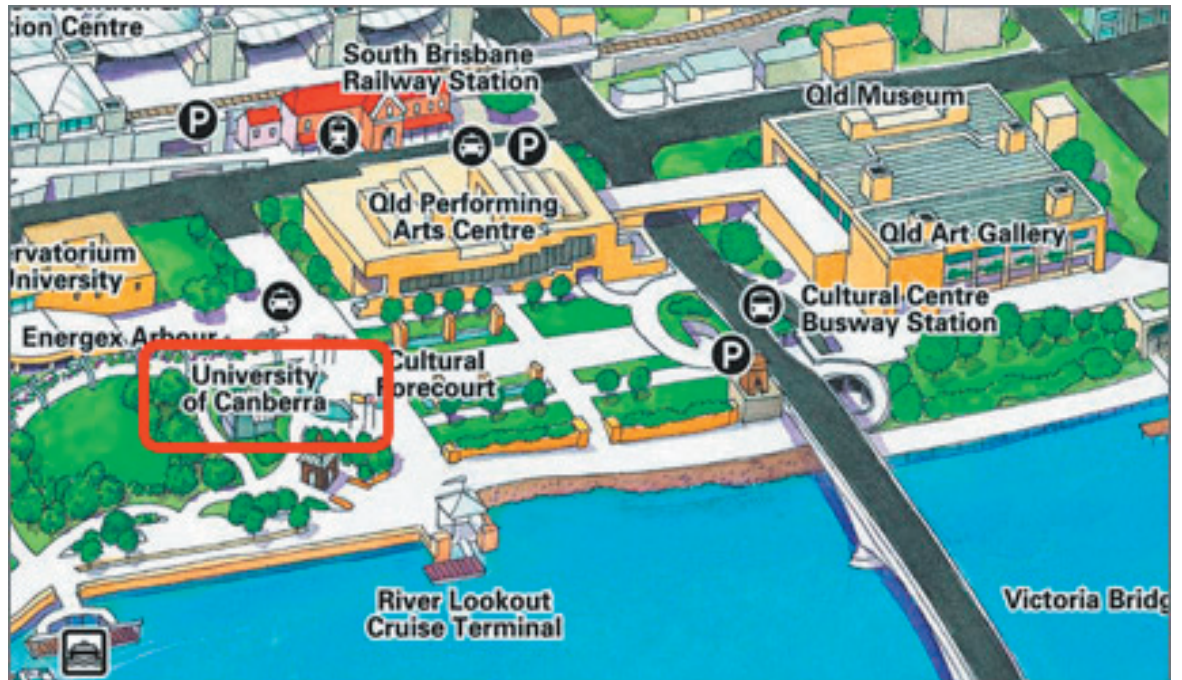
The evening will include the presentation of the Best Paper Awards for the 2005 Conference.



## The Cocktails Venue

The Welcome Cocktails will be held in rooms B104 & B105 at the Lower Level of Royal Brisbane

International College, University of Canberra Brisbane Campus, South Bank Parklands on Wednesday 13 April. For those delegates wishing to walk to the venue, please see map below.





# Conference Timetable - Wednesday

AVETRA - 8TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Wednesday 13th April		Ballroom 3	Ballroom 2	Ballroom 1	Meeting Room 2	Meeting Room 4
START TIME	END TIME	WHAT				
10:00	13:00		AVETRA Executive Meeting			
12:00	13:00	Registrations				
13:00	17:00	Workshops				
		<b>Workshop 3</b> - AESharenet - Carol Frupp & Dennis Macnamara - Managing Content in a Digital Environment 2 hours	<b>Workshop 6</b> - Perry, Howe - Applying Information and Research to New Ways of Working in VET 1.5 hours	<b>Workshop 4</b> - Jo Hargreaves & Hugh Guthrie - Developing an effective research proposal 2 hours		
13:00	15:00					
		<b>Workshop 8</b> - Wallace, Mair - Turning Points: exploring the development of learning communities through participatory action research 1 hour	<b>Workshop 1</b> - Phoebe Palmieri - Getting started, getting credibility 2 hours	<b>Workshop 7</b> - Katrina Ball - VET Statistics 1.5 hours	<b>Workshop 2</b> - Rhonda Appo - Indigenous Engagement & Inclusiveness 2 x 1.5 hours	<b>Workshop 5</b> - Mike Brown - Making History in VET 3 hours
15:15	17:15					
16:00	17:30	Registrations				
18:00	20:00	Welcoming Cocktails	Southbank			

Thursday 14th April		WHAT	Ballroom 3	Ballroom 2	Ballroom 1	Meeting Room 2	Meeting Room 4
START TIME	END TIME						
8:00	9:30	Registration and tea/coffee					
9:30	9:45	Opening, Welcomes & Housekeeping					
9:45	10:00	Old Minister - Tom Barton					
10:00	11:00	KEYNOTE 1	KN084 - Professor David Boud - UTS - Productive perspectives for research on workplace learning.				
11:00	11:30	Morning Tea & Exhibition					
11:30	12:30	KEYNOTE 2					
12:30	13:30	Lunch	KN081 - Professor John Stevenson - Griffith University - Keeping the Vocational in its Place				
13:30	14:00	KEYNOTE	AVETRA AGM Monique Dawson - Acting General Manager, Strategic Directions & Policy Division, DET Queensland Pathways to the Future - SMARTVET				
14:00	15:40		STREAMED SESSIONS				
			THEME 1 - Responding to Youth Needs	THEME 2 - Re-engaging later learners	THEME 3 - Learning at/in Work	THEME 4 - Interacting with Technology	THEME 5 - The Marketplace
14:00	14:20		PA039 - Anlezark, Ong, Thomson - Does participation in school VET programs result in successful outcomes for students in the short-term?	PA028 - Taylor, Rose - Bridging the divide: older learners and new technologies. Strategies for engaging older learners with ICT training	PA026 - Mitchell - Effective VET networking with industry in the marketplace	PA002 - Robertson - Teachers negotiating the use of online technology: Implications for professional development	PA046 - Moodle - Emerging futures in VET policy in Australia and overseas
14:20	14:40		PA019 - Boote - Young VET Learners with disabilities: Acquiring 'learning skills' for life and work	PA050 - Cameron - The mature age in transition: Innovative practice for re-engagement	PA004 - Crampton - Employer sponsored learning: re-reading the texts.	PA025 - Robertson - VET practitioners: Active participants in the introduction of technology into teaching	PA024 - McPhee - Privately Owned Registered Training Organisations in Victoria - Diversity as an emerging theme?
14:40	15:00		PA041 - Stanwick, Guthrie - Lower level AQF qualifications: Pathways to where?	PA021 - Smith - Understandings of learning styles among VET practitioners	PA012 - O'Keefe, Crase, Mayberry - Economic, psychographic and organisational influences on employees' participation in VET: Preliminary results	PA060 - (Bobby) Harnewald - Walking the walk - vocational educators and researchers using technology to learn about technology	PA066 - Burke - Public and private spending on education and training: trends and implications
15:00	15:20		PA023 - Croy, Delahaye - Some Principles for Youth Learning	PA027 - Golding - About FACE: Implications of research into men's learning patterns in rural towns	PA049 - Azemikhan - The Design of Competency Based Learning Resources for VET Training Packages using learner centred, work centred and attribute focused simulation strategies	PA003 - Shields - Corporation, Learning Strategies and Teachers Work	PA058 - Spiers - Indigenous participation in health sciences education: elements of the institutional learning environment critical for course completion
15:20	15:40		PA005 - Dunn - Incentives and Disincentives to Learning and the role of Credit-Based Frameworks in encouraging Learners	PA016 - Ferrier - Meeting new challenges - are specialist VET centres the way forward?	PA063 - Wemyss - Building networks of assessors in remote Queensland for the purposes of: moderating assessment tools; and tailoring assessments for participants with a disability.	PA070 - Down - Transferring and adapting competence across different contexts: a metaphoric framework	PA011 - Cooper, O'Keefe - The importance of credit transfer in the decision to undertake post-compulsory education: An exercise in experimental choice analysis.
15:40	16:10	Afternoon Tea	STREAMED SESSIONS				
16:10	17:30		THEME 1 - Responding to Youth Needs	THEME 2 - Re-engaging later learners	THEME 3 - Learning at/in Work	THEME 4 - Interacting with Technology	THEME 5 - The Marketplace
16:10	16:30		PA031 - Connelly - Quick fixes and bandaids: sites of vocational education for youth	PA098 - Callan, Gardner - VET Provision and Redivivism in Queensland Correctional Institutions	PA092 - Michelle Spuler - Collaborative Frameworks: A TAFE Queensland Case Study	PA045 - Eagles, Pope, Woodward - Indigenous learners in the digital age: recognising skills and knowledge	PA074 - Dawson - Productivity, participation and place - a three-dimensional approach to evaluating publicly funded programs in Queensland
16:30	16:50		PA022 - Scholten - Success & successes, working with youth at risk	PA017 - Trood - The Dilemma of Skill Shortages in Regional Areas - a case study of manufacturing skills on the North Coast of NSW	PA054 - Terrill, Robertson - Learning from the learner: Exploring the relationship between workplace culture and workplace learning.	PA051 - Rose, Schooneveldt, McPherson - 'political ecology' in VET and capacity building with small business/community partnerships in the Adelaide Hills region.	PA036 - Plane - Becoming more responsive to VET or becoming over vetted? Tensions for the 'political ecology' in VET and capacity building with small business/community partnerships in the Adelaide Hills region.
16:50	17:10		PA030 - Sulayman - A proposed Strategic Plan for Haili Technical College	PA042 - Foley - Searching for the 'C' in ACE	PA072 - Black - TAFE head teachers: Discourse brokers at the management/teaching interface	PA068 - Firminger - Microtechnology: the technology we have to have?	PA015 - Hellwig - The competency debate in German VET research: implications for learning processes based on vocationalism
17:10	17:30		PA082 - Al Dhalaan - Development of TEVT in Saudi Arabia - A Case Study	PA020 - Thompson - Creating a Student Centred Training Program - notes from the workplace - creating a Student Responsive Learning Environment	PA052 - Manning - Hidden Treasures: Work related learning using the arts	PA040 - Avers - Evidence for policy: NCVET's systematic reviews of research: process and outcomes	PA033 - Tesse - Chefs or cooks: the impact of social change on cookery education
19:00	23:00	Dinner & Awards	Customs House				

# Friday

AVETRA - 8TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday 15th April		Ballroom 3	Ballroom 2	Ballroom 1	Meeting Room 2	Meeting Room 4
START TIME	END TIME	WHAT	TITLE			
8:00	9:00	Registrations				
9:00	9:10	Opening & Housekeeping				
		John Blakeley				
9:10	9:55	KN085 - Pam Caven - Principal Project Officer ANTA - Australian VET, an overview -				
9:55	10:40	KN086 - Kaye Schofield - High Level Review of Training Packages: update				
10:40	11:10	Morning Tea				
11:10	11:55	KN087 - Kaye Bowman, NCVET - Research Opportunities and Priorities for the VET Sector				
11:55	12:35	STREAMED SESSIONS				
		SPECIAL	SPECIAL	THEME 5 - The Marketplace	THEME 3 - Learning at/in Work	THEME 4 - Interacting with Technology
11:55	12:15			PA065 - Billett, Clemans, Seddon - Forming, developing and maintaining social partnerships in VET	PA014 - Newton, Ashman & Ellis - The Australian Army soldiers' perspective of flexible learning: Reserve distance learning pilot	PA034 - RF - Pickersgill - Comparison and Contrast: the relevance of the evidence-based research debate on VET research
12:15	12:35	WO088 - Bowman - Research Workshop following KN087	WO048 - Perkins, Waite - Expanding Horizons of Distance Education for Remote Aboriginal Communities	PA008 - Grace - Training Packages and the AQTF: Freedom to move or components of a compliance-driven straightjacket?	PA037 - Wheelahan - Theorising the relationship between the individual, knowledge and skill	PA047 - RF - Harris, Simons - Playing the right tune in VET research: Using cognitive testing to improve our instruments
12:35	13:45	Lunch	NZ Meeting			
13:45	15:20	STREAMED SESSIONS				
		THEME 1 - Responding to Youth Needs	THEME 5: The Marketplace	THEME 5 - The Marketplace	THEME 3 - Learning at/in Work	THEME 4 - Interacting with Technology
13:45	14:05	PA079 - Ferrer - The skill and training needs of young volunteers	PA077 - Buczkowsky - Drivers of change. Researching where VET is heading.	PA055 - Guenther - Pathways to effective training outcomes: lessons from northern Australia	PA073 - Clayton, Fisher - Sharing critical 'know-how' in TAFE institutes: Benefits and barriers.	PA035 - Edwards, Pickersgill - The contribution of VET to innovation in regional industry
14:05	14:25	PA038 - Grady, Esson, Paterson, Jeavons - Engaging youth in mLearning - the use of mobile phones in VET teaching & learning	PA089 - Kent - Sustainability – a new paradigm for skills policy?	PA 096 - Gallagher & Anderson - The Virtual IT Training affair: A case study of market failure and neoliberalism in VET		PA069 - Down, Brown - Action research and activity theory: what are the essential differences?
14:25	14:45	PA018 - Rushbrook, Brown, & Pickersgill - Emerging pasts: the role of the Instructional Systems Model (ISM) as a precursor of outcomes based vocational education and training	PA094 - Nevard & Thompson - Tracking student aspirations - a work in progress	PA032 - White-Hancock - The silent teacher: spoken and unspoken rhetorics and the politics of training reform	SY064 - Farrell, Anderson, Billett, Clemans, Holkner, Seddon - Paying attention to new VET learning spaces! - symposium	PA010 - Gillis & Bateman - The Development of a Framework for Assessing Complexity of Units of Learning Across Schools, VET and Higher Education
14:45	15:05		PA097 - Barratt-Pugh LGB, English B, Jones B, Malony C and Elderfield J. - Framing development in terms of professional health: constructing an instrument to monitor organisational 'wellness' and inform development practices within the WA Public Services.	PA067 - La Forgia - Support Teachers in Assessment of Competency Based Training: A Community Practice approach		PA062 - RF - Middleton - Research as a Second Career: Research Culture in a VET Setting
15:05	15:20					
15:25	16:00	PANEL - the Future of VET ; REFLECTIONS - Geoff Woods; PARTING REMARKS - Hugh Guthrie				

## Conference opening address.

*The Hon. Tom Barton, Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, QLD*

**Plenary - Ballroom 3**

**Thursday 14th April**

**9.45 – 10.00 AM**

## Productive perspectives for research on workplace learning.

*Prof. David Boud, University of Technology Sydney, NSW*

**Plenary - Ballroom 3**

**Thursday 14th April**

**10.00 – 11.00 AM**

What is the practice that research seeks to influence? A fundamental function of vocational education and training is to provide the basis for the learning that occurs throughout the world of work. Most of this learning and the practices to which it will be applied takes place long after any given VET experience in contexts unimaginable to those involved at the time. As researchers we need ensure that we are not distracted by an exclusive focus on the short-term and on familiar sites of application. An understanding of the changing nature of work, the contexts of learning at work and how work is experienced is needed. The presentation will focus on a search for perspectives on the practice of learning for work that are fruitful and which acknowledge the experience of work. It will start with a contrast between the field of workplace learning and a relatively well-researched field of post-compulsory education to highlight differences and particular characteristics of learning and work. It will discuss the elusiveness of the 'learner' in workplaces and it will argue for the need for multiple perspectives on both the nature of practice and on the construction of workplace learning. It will suggest that we need to be clearer about what is the practice that research seeks to influence. Whatever this practice is, little progress is likely to be made using single perspectives. The complexities of the problems being confronted demand the involvement of multi-disciplinary approaches that refuse to accept the binary distinctions that have been pervasive in some research to date.

## Keeping the Vocational in its Place.

*Prof. John Stevenson, Griffith University, QLD*

**Plenary - Ballroom 3**

**Thursday 14th April**

**11.30 AM – 12.30 PM**

This paper explores the problematic place of the concept of the vocational in contemporary educational discourses. The tensions are seen to lie between discourses that place the vocational at the bottom of a hierarchy of knowledge and value, and discourses concerning expectations for the vocational. It is argued that these tensions flow from a mistaken view of the vocational, especially those based on polarisations of behaviour and knowledge. The paper discusses research and theoretical concepts that support the restoration of the vocational to its rightful place, and challenges educational policy to promote this stance.

## Pathways to the Future – SMARTVET

*Monique Dawson, Dept. Education and Training, QLD*

**Plenary Ballroom 3**

**Thursday 14th April**

**1.30 – 2.00 PM**

## **Australian VET - an Overview**

*Pam Caven, Principal Project Officer, ANTA*

**Plenary Ballroom 3**

**Friday 15th April**

**9:10 – 9.55 AM**

## **High level review of Training Packages: Update**

*Prof. Kaye Schofield, University of Technology Sydney, NSW*

**Plenary Ballroom 3**

**Friday 15th April**

**9:55 – 10.40 AM**

In June 2004, the Australian Minister and state and territory ministers for vocational education and training considered the findings of the High Level Review of Training Packages and agreed to six major areas of action. ANTA and the National Training Quality Council have been charged with completing the agreed work program. Since then much has happened. A Federal election, new Commonwealth policies for VET and the decision to abolish ANTA. In this heady policy mix and institutional restructuring, what is happening to the recommendations of the High Level Review of Training Packages? This session will provide an analytical overview of progress since the review was published.

## **Research Opportunities and Priorities for VET Sector**

*Dr Kaye Bowman, NCVER, SA*

**Plenary Ballroom 3**

**Friday 15th April**

**11:10 – 11.55 AM**

During 2004, it was decided nationally that research priorities for VET should be informed by a formal set of consultative and advisory arrangements undertaken by the NCVER. This consultation process will be launched at the AVETRA Conference followed by a Workshop to enable participants to have input into the research priorities for 2006.

Research has an important role in improving VET policy and practice and needs to be focussed on the major issues facing VET, distilled and tailored to users' needs and provided to users when they need it. The current challenge is to identify priority issues in need of additional research for 2006 related to Shaping our Future, Australia's National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2004 – 2010.

This paper will describe the consultation process including background papers and strategies of how feedback will be sought from stakeholders. In addition, researchers and interested participants will have the opportunity to provide input into this essential process to ensure that the priorities that are important to the VET sector and related partners are captured effectively.

The presentation will highlight that advice on national research priorities for 2006 will be organised around the four objectives of the national strategy and stakeholder input. Some of the areas identified will lend themselves to research projects and others to systematic reviews of existing research. The NCVER is committed to determining appropriate areas of interest for both through broad consultation and collaboration.

## **Wendy Perry - Applying Information and Research to New Ways of Working in VET**

**Workshop 6 – Ballroom 2**

**Wednesday 13th April**

**1:00 - 02:30 PM**

This professional development workshop will cover the strategies and processes practitioners are using to apply information and research to new ways of working in VET. Based on experiences of 2004 Reframing the Future projects, the workshop will step through examples of how VET practitioners from across Australia are addressing current issues such as mature age workers and learners; recognition of prior learning; indigenous learners; VET options for young people; VET pedagogy; assessment for New Apprenticeships; implementation of Training Packages and sharing of resources/tools across the Adult Community Education sector. The workshop will explore how applying information and research can facilitate fresh ideas, new angles and approaches for VET practitioners, teams and organisations.

Wendy Perry , (*Reframing the Future*) and Francis Howe, (*Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE, QLD*)

## **Developing an effective research proposal**

**Workshop 4 - Ballroom 1**

**Wednesday 13th April**

**1:00 - 03:00 PM**

This aim of this workshop is to provide researchers, and other interested individuals, with key insights into developing an effective proposal for a competitive research grant. This session will cover how a proposal should be developed and what the finished product might look like, as well as exploring common pitfalls. This session will not include designing research methodologies or how the research will be done.

Topics include:

- Expectations and functions of the research proposal
- Unpacking the various sections - background, research questions, methodology and budget
- What are funding agencies looking for?
- Common pitfalls
- Strategies and tactics to improve your proposal

Jo Hargreaves , (*NCVER, SA*)

## **Indigenous engagement & inclusiveness**

**Workshop 2 – Meeting Room 2**

**Wednesday 13th April**

**1:00 – 5:00 PM**

This workshop reports on two ANTA projects. The outputs of the Inclusiveness Project are:

- a set of guidelines and standards for Indigenous inclusion into flexible learning projects
- accompanying notes to provide details of contextualisation requirements for various Indigenous cultures
- report of indigenous issues and protocols as outlined by the benchmarks of success
- templates for future Indigenous flexible learning projects

The outputs of the Engagement Project are:

- A summary of the environmental scan of Framework 2000-2004, identifying Indigenous outcomes and lessons learnt.
- A current issues paper to plan for increased engagement of Indigenous Australians in e-learning
- A set of strategies to inform the structures for the Indigenous Engagement Component of the Framework 2005 - 2007.

The workshop will provide an overview of both projects.

Ms Rhonda Appo, (*DET Queensland*)



## **Making History in VET**

### **Workshop 5 – Meeting Room 4**

**Wednesday 13th April**

**1:00 – 4.30 PM**

This workshop unveils for discussion and development a skeleton proposal for a collaborative project that seeks to record histories from within the VET sector across Australia. The workshop is aiming to sharpen up the proposal by enhancing the focus of the project, further developing the methodology and planning ways to move the project forward. Participants at the workshop will be offered a range of brief panel presentations from expert VET practitioners and researchers. Participants will be asked to consider and respond to these inputs through small and whole group discussion.

*Mike Brown, Peter Rushbrook, Gillian Goozee, Damon Anderson, John Stevenson, Berwyn Clayton, Robin Booth, Maddy Harford, Peter Kell, Kevin Heys*

## **AESharenet – Managing Content in a Digital Environment**

### **Workshop 3 – Ballroom 3**

**Wednesday 13th April**

**1:00 - 03:00 PM**

AEShareNet has been pioneering the management of intellectual property through an online brokering service and open content licensing for the Australian Vocational Education Sector. The journey is evolutionary, and needs to continually respond to current events, such as the impact of the Free Trade Agreement; Creative Commons entry into Australia; and piloting of digital repositories and digital rights languages.

Collaboration and sharing are now considered a key goal within the sector, but political pressure also exists for cost-recovery and even for profit-generation. In both cases, however, the management of copyright has been a continual stumbling block to progress. The workshop will outline the various distinct but inter-related businesses, involving an increasing number of free services and potential new options for revenue raising activities. The overall objective of the AEShareNet Brokering Service is to open up content for educational use and to provide value through providing services such as:

- Rights negotiations
  - Recording of transactions
  - Settlement of payments between parties
  - Facilitation of supply of master copies
  - Cataloguing services to aid search
  - Search engine services
- And offering consistency in use of metadata.

The workshop will provide an opportunity to explore the various business options, and to explore the six trademarks currently available for use and/or exploitation.

*Carol Fripp, & Dennis Macnamara, (AEShareNet, QLD)*

## **Getting started, getting credibility**

### **Workshop 1 – Ballroom 2**

**Wednesday 13th April**

**3:15 - 5:15 PM**

This workshop is intended to help newer researchers prepare successful research proposals and write research reports that are readable while maintaining high standards. Topics covered will include:

- working with the client
- identifying the purpose of the research and the audience for the report
- writing research questions and choosing methodologies
- research ethics
- structuring the report: what to include
- presenting data in different forms
- reporting on difficulties and changes of direction
- drafting and editing
- citing and referencing.

The workshop will be interactive. Participants will be encouraged to share their experiences and work on proposals they may be intending to prepare.

*Ms Phoebe Palmieri, (Phoebe Palmieri Pty Ltd, VIC)*

## **VET Statistics**

### **Workshop 7 – Ballroom 1**

**Wednesday 13th April**

**3:15 - 4:45 PM**

This workshop will provide information on the use of data in the national VET statistical collections and surveys managed by NCVER. The scope and data elements in the national VET provider data collection and the apprentice and trainee collection will be discussed and an overview of the NCVER survey program will be provided. The methodology used to estimate apprentice and trainee activity will be outlined. The workshop will be invaluable for researchers who want to utilise data from the surveys or the collections in their research projects.

*Ms Katrina Ball, (NCVER, SA)*

## **Turning Points: exploring the development of learning communities through participatory action research.**

### **Workshop 8 – Ballroom 3**

**Wednesday 13th April**

**3:15 - 4:15 PM**

Turning Points is a pilot project developed by a Charles Darwin University team and funded by the NT Department of Health and Community Services to respond to a community need for effective and sustainable professional development in the children's services sector. This workshop describes the project, and discusses some of the emerging results and insights about its effectiveness and potential as a model for training and professional development in the workplace. The innovative approach to professional development and training of local children's services staff and organisations, supports participating services to develop 'communities of practice' as they engage in participatory action learning cycles that act as a framework for developing positive and self sustaining learning experiences, networks and environments. The workshop will initiate a discussion about implementing and using this approach in a range of industries. It seeks to encourage participants to draw on resources for learning generated from within their industry as well as from a broader network of organisations and networks in their field.

*Ruth Wallace, and Kathie Mair, (Charles Darwin University, NT)*

## **Expanding Horizons of Distance Education for Remote Aboriginal Communities**

### **Workshop Special – Ballroom 2 Friday 15th April**

**11.55 AM – 12.35 PM**

Until now, distance education has been restricted by limited technology such as print based materials sent via mail. With the emergence of new technologies, distance education has evolved to become a vibrant, truly interactive learning experience for remote Australian students. By March, 2003, Interactive Distance eLearning (IDeL) studios were established at Dubbo, Broken Hill, Darwin, Alice Springs and Port Macquarie. Soon after, School of the Air (SOTA) students at remote properties in Broken Hill were the first in Australia to receive IDeL lessons. Since then, TAFE NSW has commenced IDeL lessons for SOTA parents and isolated Aboriginal communities in NSW.

The IDeL program enables teachers to interact with students, using real-time video, shared applications, graphics, audio conferencing, internet access and e-mail. This will allow isolated students to benefit from modern learning techniques that have been impossible in distance education. IDeL can be broken down into three major areas. These are:

- SOTA
- Homesteads and small schools
- Remote Aboriginal communities

The workshop will focus on IDeL delivery to remote Aboriginal communities. The workshop will give participants the opportunity to see the technology and also to provide a forum to discuss the benefits of using this method of learning on remote Aboriginal communities.

*Ren Perkins, & Virginia Waite, (TAFE NSW North Coast Institute, NSW)*

## **Research Workshop - Opportunities and Priorities for the VET Sector**

### **Workshop Special – Ballroom 3 Friday 15th April**

**11.55 AM – 12.35 PM**

*Dr Kaye Bowman, (NCVER, SA)*

## Abstracts are in order of first named Authors Surname

### \*\*\* Refereed papers

Papers annotated with an asterisk in the Contents below have been refereed to comply fully with the verification requirements of the Department of Employment, Science and Training for a conference publication, full written paper refereed. An anonymous refereeing process has been used. For further information please refer to the 2002 Higher Education Research Data Collection: Specifications for preparing returns for the collection of data, Higher Education Division, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra (available online: <http://www.dest.gov.au/highered/research/herdc.htm>).

**Presenter/s:** **A. Anlezark, (NCVER), K. Ong, (NCVER), S. Thomson, (ACER)**

**Paper #: PA 039**

**Title:** *Does participation in school VET programs result in successful outcomes for students in the short-term?*

VET activity in secondary schools (including VET in Schools programs and School-based New Apprenticeships) is designed to expand opportunities for senior secondary students, and to prepare young people for the workplace of the future (MCEETYA, 2002). In allowing students to combine vocational studies with their general education curriculum, these programs broaden the range of curriculum offered, and provide young people with more diverse pathways to work and tertiary education. A key feature of VET in Schools programs is that they form part of the students' senior secondary certificate, as well as providing students with a nationally recognised VET qualification. Since their introduction in 1996, VET in Schools (VIS) programs have evolved and become more widespread in recent years. The increased participation in VET in Schools and other school VET programs has attracted increased interest in outcomes and achievements of students who participate in these programs. With VET in Schools programs being relatively new, current research on outcomes is limited. This paper sets out to assess whether participation in school VET programs results in successful outcomes for students in the short-term. Outcomes are measured in terms of: school retention rates, post school improved engagement with learning and improved employment outcomes, post-school unemployment relative to youth unemployment rates, and post-school self-esteem. This paper is the work of a joint project between ACER and NCVER. The scope of the research is young people who were in Year 9 in 1998 surveyed for the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (Y98 cohort), supplemented by students covered by the NCVER data collections to add depth to the analysis of VET activity. Where relevant, comparisons are made to the reported activity of the LSAY Y95 cohort.

**Presenter/s:** **Dr Sulaiman Al Dhalaan, General Organization for Tech Education and Voc. Training, Sardi Arabia**

**Paper #: PA 082**

**Title:** *Development of TEVT in Saudi Arabia – A Case Study*

The modern Saudi educational system provides quality instruction in diverse fields of modern and traditional arts and sciences. This diversity helps meet the Kingdom's growing need for highly educated citizens to build on its rapid progress of the past few decades. Formal primary education began in Saudi Arabia in the 1930s. In 1951, the country had 226 schools with 29,887 students. In 1954, the Ministry of Education was established. The first university, now known as King Saud University, was founded in Riyadh in 1957. Today, Saudi Arabia's nationwide educational system comprises eight universities, more than 24,000 schools, and a large number of colleges and other educational and training institutions. Open to every citizen, the system provides students with free education, books and health services. A measure of the government's substantial commitment to this sector is the allocation of over 25 percent of the total budget for fiscal 2000 for education including vocational training, an amount totaling U.S. Dollars 13.17 billion. Saudi Arabia prizes education because of its critical importance in developing the human potential of the country.

**Presenter/s:** **Andrea Averis,, Manager, Research Management Branch, National Centre for Vocational Education**

**Research, Susan Dawe, Senior Research Fellow, National Centre for Vocational Education Research**

**Paper #: PA 040**

**Title:** *Evidence for policy: NCVER's systematic reviews of research - processes and outcomes*

During 2004 NCVER undertook for the first time two systematic reviews of research. This model of secondary research has been used in the health sciences for many years and more recently has been applied overseas to research in social sciences (including education). A systematic review identifies all available research and evaluates it systematically and transparently to establish the strength of evidence about a topical policy question. Judgments are made according to explicit research inclusion and quality criteria. The questions identified by policy makers for our reviews were: "What evidence is there that skill development activities for the mature aged improve (i) labour market attachment (ii) productivity?" and "For Indigenous people, what are the key features required in the planning, design and delivery of VET and ACE learning programs to ensure positive educational, employment and social outcomes?" This paper describes and compares the processes and the outcomes of these first systematic reviews of VET research in Australia. It will consider the lessons we have learnt about the application of the systematic review model, and how we will be using the model for future systematic reviews.

**Presenter/s:** **Homi Azemikhah, Open Learning Institute of TAFE**

**Paper #: PA 049**

**Title:** *The Design of Competency Based Learning Resources for VET Training Packages using learner centred, work centred and attribute focused simulation strategies*

This paper provides an approach for incorporating learner centred work centred and attribute focused simulation strategies into the instructional design of learning resource materials for the Diploma of Accounting. At present Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Australia is on the verge of the implementation of the "Six Major Areas of Action" work plan enunciated by the High Level Review (HLR) of the Training Packages. Action 2 of the plan focuses on better Training Package design specifying work performance, knowledge, skills and abilities as well as workplace simulation and participation. The primary purpose of simulation is to facilitate the development of competence where the learners do not have access to related workplace experience. The High-level review of the Training Packages has indicated that further research is needed into the use of appropriate pedagogies in teaching practices. Given that "the responsibility for translating Training Package requirements into teaching, learning and assessment strategies and programs is clearly that of VET providers", and Training Packages contain "a number of implicit pedagogical assumptions, and that "new requirements of the workplace, which suggest a pedagogical orientation that is more learner centred, work centred and attribute-focused" should be adopted. This paper proposes a model for addressing this identified need that incorporates learner-centred, work centred and attribute-focused simulation strategies to develop learner's competence. A preliminary model was designed at the Open Learning Institute (OLI) in Queensland and currently is being tested for its effectiveness in terms of competence development. An action research methodology will be used to review the preliminary resource model for potential improvements. It is argued that the resultant model will have applicability for other units of competence in VET Training Packages. An underpinning assumption of the research is that competence is a tri-dimensional concept comprising of knowledge, skills and performance. The research being undertaken aims to establish that the teaching practices that target the development of learner's competence require suitable resources based on a new instructional design utilizing appropriate learner centred, work centred and attribute-focused simulations to make the integration of the three dimensions of competence a reality.

**Presenter/s:** Llandis Barratt-Pugh, B. English, B. Jones, C. Malony , and J. Elderfield

**Paper #: PA 097**

**Title:** *Framing development in terms of professional health: constructing an instrument to monitor organisational 'wellness' and inform development practices within the WA Public Services*

It is evident that the extension of the 'self' within organisations is a complex and continual experience where formal development practices constitute just one part of a far wider relational landscape. Unfortunately, much formal organisational development activity is simplistically focused upon immediate skill requirements with limited investment allocated to discovering and exploring the contingent relation issues underpinning personal growth.

This current research focuses specifically upon professions where recent discourses of managerialism have impacted adversely upon relational wellbeing, with individuals either permanently or temporarily disengaging from their profession and organisation with significant mutual loss.

In the VET field of 'needs analysis' there has been little systematic investigation into what constitutes 'professional health' and therefore limited understanding of what organisational performances might be orchestrated to support and develop both professional individuals and the body of a profession.

This paper explores such a major collaborative venture to investigate the meaning of organisational, professional and individual health being undertaken by Edith Cowan University and the Western Australian Health, Police and Education Departments with to with Australian Research Council support.

The initial stages of the study are establishing indicators of 'wellness' within these organisations and their professions. The study is constructing and testing an instrument measuring 'wellness' across those organisations that will inform practices of organisational development and training. The emphasis in this paper is upon the specific development activity within the Western Australian Police Service.

Organisational developmental practices are contested by discourses seeking to privilege either global or local agendas. This research attempts to develop a more inclusive organisational perspective that positions individual feedback as the basis for subsequent organisational activity, and where training and development is just one of a raft of potential relational performances used to extend professional health and wellbeing.

**Presenter/s:** Stephen Billett, Allie Clemans, Terri Seddon

**Paper #: PA 065**

**Title:** *Forming, developing and maintaining social partnerships in VET*

Globally, government and non-governmental agencies are now viewing social partnerships as a means of improving service delivery and for building enhanced capability at the local level (Green, Wolf & Leney 1999). This view has arisen from: (i) a growing consensus that centralised agencies struggle to understand and accommodate the diverse needs of communities, such as in providing effective and tailored educational provisions for young people (e.g. O'Donoghue 2001); (ii) a growing government interest in building capacity at the local level to assist in the effective targeting and delivery of service provisions, such as VET courses and provisions (e.g. Kosky 2001); (iii) an emerging concern is to find ways of the securing economic goals through local partnerships and decision-making, such as aligning VET provisions with local enterprise needs (e.g. ANTA 2003); and (iv) a growing governmental interest in engaging and mobilising individuals and communities more directly in civic activity and community building projects (Field 2000). So both economic and social motives underpin interest in the effective enactment



of social partnerships, such as in VET. However, the formation and ongoing development of these partnerships can be complex and vexed, and likely requiring support and guidance. This paper reports the initial findings of a project aiming to identify practices and principals that will likely support the effective formation, the initial development and maintenance of social partnerships through changing circumstances and priorities. These findings are drawn from interviews with 10 social partnerships that have operated over time. Some comprise social partnerships that were investigated in earlier research (Seddon, Billett and Clemans 2004, Seddon & Billett 2004). However, here the specific purpose is to identify what practices and principals need to be enacted by both sponsoring agencies and the partnerships themselves to assist their initial development and being sustained over time, with specific implications for how these partnerships might support and extend VET.

**Presenter/s:** **Stephen Black, Northern Sydney Institute, Meadowbank Paper #: PA 072**

**Title: \*\*\*** *TAFE head teachers: Discourse brokers at the management/teaching interface*

During the past decade in particular, TAFE, like all public education institutions, has been subject to changes in organisational culture that reflect the competitive, globalised world of business. This 'new work order' (Gee, Hull and Lankshear 1996) involving the primacy of market forces and competition, structural efficiencies, and the need for teamwork now dominates the management discourse in TAFE Institutes. But it is unlikely that this discourse has been accommodated by the majority of teachers in TAFE whose occupational identity is underpinned by values and beliefs associated with their industrial expertise, liberal education tradition, and commitment to the concept of public service (Chappell 1998). Head teachers in TAFE are strategically located at the interface between management and teaching as TAFE management attempts to incorporate teachers into this new business-oriented discourse. Head teachers are the key people to be won over to the managerial discourse because they are likely to have considerable influence over the many teachers they supervise. In effect, they become 'brokers' between management and teachers in determining the extent to which the new managerial discourse will be accommodated by teachers. This paper is based on a qualitative research study of the attitudes of eighteen current head teachers in one TAFE NSW institute. It addresses questions such as: How do head teachers respond to the new managerial discourse and the manner of its implementation? Are they largely accommodating, or do they resist the discourse, and in what ways?

**Presenter/s:** **Jeanne Boote, Hunter Institute**

**Paper #: PA 019**

**Title:** *Young VET Learners with disabilities: Acquiring 'learning skills' for life and work*

Young people are being prepared for employment through VET studies both at School and in TAFE. Students with disabilities are actively encouraged to access VET studies delivered by either provider. Within VET, the "employability" skills are recognized to be of increasing significance, particularly by employers. 'Learning' is identified as one of these generic skills – that is, students need to acquire the skills for learning, particularly for work. Lifelong learning skills are recognized as essential in preparation for a vocation, and should be addressed within VET in Schools modules. This paper will report on a 5-week overseas study tour to investigate various approaches to developing the 'learning skills' component of generic (employability) skills in young VET students – especially those who have a disability. People who are specialists in equity, integration, diversity, vocational learning in schools/polytechnics/institutes, lifelong learning and generic skills were interviewed in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland, and France. The findings of this study, and the resultant recommendations to the NSW Premier will be discussed.



**Presenter/s:** Anita Buczkowsky, Swinburne University of Technology **Paper #: PA 077**

**Title:** *Drivers of change. Researching where VET is heading*  
Industry, economic and demographic change is increasingly impacting on the VET sector and we must find ways to incorporate the trend analyses into strategic and pedagogic planning and teaching practice. How do we go about researching the drivers of change which are impacting on the VET sector and unpacking some of their implications? This paper will focus on the research process from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. It will provide an insight into the difficulties of "prediction" and highlight some of the major drivers drawing conclusions about potential implications and outcomes for the VET sector over the next 10 years

**Presenter/s:** Prof Gerald Burke, Monash University, Vic **Paper #: PA 066**

**Title:** *Public and private spending on education and training: trends and implications*  
The private share of total expenditure on education and training in Australia has grown in recent years, mainly as a result of HECS, the growth of the export of education and the increased size of the non-government school sector. The paper traces the changes in public and private spending across the education sectors. It examines the changes in relation to patterns of participation and considers the implications for efficiency of provision and access by particular groups. Some limited comparisons with other countries are made.

**Presenter/s:** Prof. Victor Callan & John Gardner **Paper#: PA 098**

**Title:** *VET Provision and Recidivism in Queensland Correctional Institutions*  
This project examined the multiple disadvantages faced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders in correctional institutions. A related objective was to investigate the nature of vocational education and training programs being delivered in correctional centres, including the factors that are assisting or hindering the delivery of these programs to prisoners. A final objective of the research was to determine statistically the factors most associated with reducing the rates of return to prison of offenders.

**Presenter/s:** Roslyn Cameron **Paper #: PA 050**

**Title:\*\*\*** *The mature age in transition: Innovative practice for re-engagement*  
This paper is based on Adult Learning Australia (ALA) funded research into mature age jobseekers and their use or non use of recognition of prior learning (RPL). The research was conducted in two stages, which involved a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The ALA research complimented doctoral research, which involved a Learning Survey of job seekers (n=247) of whom 62 % were over 40 years of age. The synergy between the two areas of research has contributed greatly to the development of a model for fostering re-engagement and lifelong learning. The model draws upon multiple disciplines including different adult learning theories and approaches, sociology, psychology and cognitive psychology and the New Literacies Studies. The model contains four integrated components and views the learner holistically. One of the main areas of focus within the model relates to issues of identity, transition and what has been referred to as the 'narrative turn' in pedagogy. Theories and pedagogic practices, which relate to the use of biographicity or what Alheit (1992) refers to as biographical competency will be explored within the broader frame of 'self-reflexivity' in modernity (Giddens, 1991; Beck et al, 1996; Alheit, 2002).

**Presenter/s:** Sarojini Choy & Brian Delahaye

**Paper #: PA 023**

**Title:** \*\*\* *Some Principles for Youth Learning*

This paper proposes some principles for youth learning, developed following a major research project that investigated youth learning. Specific parts of the project have been published in other literature, and the paper summarises key findings before proposing a set of principles to support their learning. A profile of youth learners is drawn from the research data on priorities that youth have, their motivation, and learning attributes. The analysis leads to three broad conclusions about youth learners:

- Most youth use a surface approach to learning largely due to time constraints, overwhelming volume of content, and assessment requirements that reward outcomes achieved through a surface approach.
- Most youth are at Stage 2 of their learning on an orthogonal scale. Their learning could be facilitated through a directive, but supportive approach where the facilitator plays the role of a motivator and guide.
- Most youth seem to appreciate a relational level of understanding rather than abstract thinking. Youths' learning could be better facilitated using Kolb's learning theory using the information processing model.

Their learning is best facilitated through an approach that begins with concrete experience and is followed by reflective observation and then abstract conceptualisation. The findings of the research about youth learners and how they learn are analysed in the context of adult learning principles proposed by Knowles (1990). The analysis exposes discrepancy between youth and adult learners, implying that adult learning principles is unsuitable for most youth learners. A set of principles for youth learners in terms of education delivery practices, and skilling for higher learning is proposed to better facilitate and enhance their learning.

**Presenter/s:** Berwyn Clayton and Thea Fisher, CURVE

**Paper #: PA 073**

**Title:** *Sharing critical 'know-how' in TAFE institutes: Benefits and barriers*

TAFE institutes face demands for uniquely high skill levels in their workforce at a time when a large numbers of their experienced workers are on the threshold of retirement – taking with them their TAFE and industry 'know-how'. One of the means of shoring up this skill base lies in retaining the critical knowledge - if not the worker - through effective knowledge transfer within organisations. This paper reports on research that has explored the benefits of knowledge transfer to in TAFE environments. It reports on impediments to achieving effective knowledge transfer - whether constraining attitudes or vanishing resources, limiting management practices or unhelpful organisational structures. It presents a range of factors that organisations use to overcome these impediments – the building of attitudes and cultures, the establishing of processes with people at their core, and the integration of knowledge transfer organisation wide. The paper also reports on what TAFE organisations can learn from business models of knowledge transfer.

**Presenter/s:** Liesje Connelly, Box Hill Institute

**Paper #: PA 031**

**Title:** *Quick fixes and band-aids: sites of vocational education for youth*

Due to rapid structural change in the labour market and high unemployment, young people in transition from education to employment, are particularly vulnerable. While many of those who leave school early do so with the expectation of finding work, their lack of work experience, skills and in many cases low levels of literacy and numeracy make finding stable employment difficult. Although some have positive experiences when moving onto employment, apprenticeship and traineeships many other early school leavers with low school achievement and

low self-esteem, combined with perhaps, a poor socio-economic background find themselves 'at risk' of unemployment. These are the young people least likely to make a successful transition into adulthood. This begs the question, if many young people who leave secondary school early are at risk, why then is school policy not reflecting this by implementing strategies to keep young people engaged in the secondary education system. Although TAFE picks up a number of these young people in various VET programs, the TAFE system is predominately an adult learning environment. However, because it (TAFE) provides a solution to the problems that exist in the secondary education system many schools feed their problematic students into TAFE programmes with little reflection on how effective and or suitable this may be. The location of vocational education and work-based learning experiences for young people continues to be problematic. The various promises made with respect to this issue by the two major parties in the lead up to the 2004 Federal election exemplify the dilemma over whether young people are best supported to remain in school or allowed to learn at work or in a TAFE institute. This paper, based on a small qualitative study, takes a fresh look at the question of where and how young people should learn.

**Presenter/s:** Bethany Cooper & Sue O'Keefe, Latrobe University **Paper #: PA 011**

**Title: \*\*\*** ***The importance of credit transfer in the decision to undertake post-compulsory education: An exercise in experimental choice analysis***

The increasing value that education provides to the economy and society (Samier 2000; McKenzie 1999) supports the notion of the importance in understanding the concept of "buying" education. From a supply-side perspective, providers must respond in a strategic manner to an increasingly complex environment. Reductions in Government funding have been accompanied by increased competition between providers for both students and funding. The result has, in part, led to pressure to 'marketise' education, increasingly focusing on factors such as institutional standing, product differentiation and niche markets, relentlessly seeking new opportunities to achieve strategic objectives. Finally, there is the increased influence of stakeholders. From a demand-side perspective, the individual must be proactive in an environment where knowledge becomes rapidly obsolescent and workers are under constant pressure to up-grade their skills and knowledge throughout their working life. This paper reports findings relating to the relative importance of a number of product attributes such as cost and the extent of credit transfer in the individual's decision to undertake post-compulsory education and training. The methodology utilized is experimental choice analysis which is a stated preference technique. This method combines an extensive iterative qualitative phase of data collection with a rigorous statistical technique to ultimately determine the marginal rate of substitution for the various product attributes.

**Presenter/s:** Keith Crampton, SMA Pty Ltd **Paper #: PA 004**

**Title:** *Employer sponsored learning: re-reading the texts*

The literature addressing workplace learning indicates an increasing positive trend in the provision of learning opportunities by employers for their workers. This improving trend is most apparent in large enterprises (employing over 100 workers) where 99% of large Australian organizations are reported as providing some form of training and 93% of this group also stating that they provide structured training. As the size of the enterprises investigated reduces, it was found that the quantity, scope and structured nature of the learning opportunities provided by their employers also reduced. This indicates a strong correlation between enterprise size and the quality of employer-sponsored workplace learning. Recent studies identify additional predictors of workplace learning quality including workforce composition,

position of the employee within the organization, industry sector and previous studies undertaken by the employee. My research into a large Australian company's performance in employer sponsored learning (as part requirement for the Doctor of Education program at the University of South Australia) defies the picture constructed within the associated Australian and international literature. The company is an exemplar of the economic and organizational models that predict a strong enterprise learning culture. However, little in the way of structured, employer-sponsored learning is in evidence, suggesting a dichotomy between the company's practice and that reported in the literature. This paper presents a summary of the literature on employer-sponsored workplace learning and uses the resulting predictors of learning quality to assess the performance of this Australian company. It is then argued that the significant divergence between the company and the reported studies identifies a gap in this literature. Finally, an alternative, constructionist research perspective is offered for pursuing answers to the question: why does a company that conforms so well to predictors of economic performance fare so poorly when compared with the literature on employer-sponsored learning?

**Presenter/s:** **Monique Dawson - General Manager in the Department of Employment and Training, Qld**

**Paper #: PA 074**

**Title:** *Productivity, participation and place – a three-dimensional approach to evaluating publicly funded programs in Queensland*

Productivity and participation are well recognised as drivers of economic growth. In the past 5 years, the Department of Employment and Training has introduced a wide range of innovative programs and services that are aimed at increasing productivity and participation throughout Queensland's diverse communities and regions. The impact of these initiatives has been regularly assessed, generally in the context of the annual budget cycle. However, isolated assessment, with varying performance measures are not enough. Vocational education and training and employment programs operate in a complex dynamic. In this dynamic, the picture is more than just its single parts. Singular evaluations are like looking at a panorama through a microscope. In reflection of this, the Department of Employment and Training is currently designing an unprecedented scale of evaluation of its programs and services. The focus will be on developing a framework to provide:

- precise, consistent and usable performance measures and systems that will examine the role that programs and services have played in increasing productivity and performance across Queensland's diverse communities and regions
- systems for applying evaluations of productivity, participation and place to singular programs funded by the Department of Employment and Training
- an integrated picture of how programs and services work in complementary and interdependent ways to achieve increased productivity and participation across Queensland's regions.

This presentation will outline the methodology that will be undertaken for this evaluation, and the theories which underpin the methodology.

**Presenter/s:** **Cathy Down, RMIT University**

**Paper #: PA 070**

**Title:** *Transferring and adapting competence across different contexts: a metaphoric framework*

This presentation will look at the findings and conclusions of my PhD research thesis entitled Situated learning, poly-contextual boundary crossing and transfer: Perception of practitioners on how competence is transferred across different work contexts. The aim of the research was to understand how people adapt to new learning and work contexts as the change jobs or when their jobs change. The findings suggest that

there are four types of activity involved: reconnaissance, enactment, exploration and consolidation and that practitioners move between these different types of activity as part of their structured interaction between the technical, learning, social, physical, emotional and organisational contexts which comprise the workplace. The research also identifies the metacognitive skills and knowledge which enhances this interaction and argues that formal education does not necessarily do enough to ensure that graduates understand the nature of work and workplaces and the survival skills which are required.

**Presenter/s:** **Cathy Down & Mike Brown**

**Paper #: PA 069**

**Title:** *Action research and activity theory: what are the essential differences?*

Using applications of Activity Theory as a basis for the design of research methodology and the analysis of data, to inform curricular design and practice and to refocus on learner activity and experiences as a key factor in the quality of learning (Engeström 1999; Lektorsky 1999; Bakhurst 2003), is being taken up by an increasing number of educational practitioners. What commenced as a alternative philosophy is starting to have an impact on mainstream educational practice. The use of Action Research (Lewin 1952; Sandford 1970; Carr and Kemmis 1986; Kemmis 1988; Billett 1996; Herbert 2001; Kemmis and McTaggart 2003) can also be used to design and improve research methods and methodology, design and enhance curriculum and to improve learning and teaching. Whilst having a longer and more popular history in using a collaborative approach to improve practice than Activity Theory, the two approaches have many similarities. They also have some key differences. Based on an analysis of research projects which have used these approaches, the authors of this paper compare the practicalities of these two approaches. What are the essential differences between these approaches and what are the basic philosophic principles which underpin them.

**Presenter/s:** **Ms Felicity Dunn, Victorian Qualifications Authority, Vic** **Paper #: PA 005**

**Title:** *Incentives and Disincentives to Learning and the role of Credit-Based Frameworks in encouraging Learners*

The disincentives which deter both young and older learners from participating in education and training are varied and complex. They may include concerns about cost, or the likelihood of guaranteed pathways into further study or work. They may stem from the difficulty of understanding the range of opportunities available and how they relate to each other. The credit matrix provides a common basis to compare different types of learning, making it easier to understand and navigate the education and training system. This paper explores to what extent the credit matrix may be able to reduce the disincentives and instead provide incentives for people to continue learning.

**Presenter/s:** **Deborah Eagles, Marcia Pope, Pam Woodward**

**Paper #: PA 045**

**Title:** *Indigenous learners in the digital age: recognising skills and knowledge*

This paper presents findings from an action research project conducted by the University of Ballarat, funded through the Australian Flexible Learning Framework, New Practices initiatives. The project was designed to help remove barriers to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) through developing a streamlined and culturally appropriate model for assessing the knowledge and skills of Indigenous workers intending to gain vocational qualifications. The project investigated and trialled the use of web-based voice applications for recording and transmitting oral evidence. The paper highlights challenges in traditional RPL assessment processes described as time-consuming and cumbersome by Kemmis (2004) and Bowman et al (2003). These challenges were encountered by experienced Indigenous workers who possessed a wealth of knowledge and experience in relation to their work,

but had not, necessarily, collected the documents (certificates, logbooks, diaries) to demonstrate competence. These workers preferred to demonstrate their knowledge orally, through discussion, conversation and/or narrative. These workers were geographically isolated, which meant that face to face interview methods would prove a costly option. Initial trials suggest that online voice technology may provide an alternative method for the confidential and secure capture and transmission of evidence of competence.

**Presenter/s:** Dawn Edwards & Richard Pickersgill

**Paper #: PA 035**

**Title: \*\*\***

*The contribution of VET to innovation in regional industry*

There has been considerable policy interest, discussion and a range of VET related research projects into the actual and potential contribution of VET, and more generally Training and Development, to the Australian National Innovation System. The paper draws on the authors' current field research in regional Australia which is investigating the relationships between skill formation, knowledge transfer and the innovation process. The organizations under study in this research were deliberately selected for their known innovative features. They include a range of small to medium enterprises that supply the domestic market, those which export directly into international commodity markets as well as not-for-profit groups that supply services to the domestic and international tourist markets. Of significance is that they draw on local labour markets for the majority of their workforce and therefore rely to a large extent on the existing education and training infrastructure for skilled workers. In this context the paper discusses the role of the formal education and training system and, in particular, the extent to which the extension of Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) has had, or is likely to have, an impact on the innovation process. It also considers the role of informal and on-the-job processes in skill development. Preliminary findings suggest that to conflate 'innovation' with 'technological innovation' is problematic. The organisations under study, in general, have not relied on capital intensive large scale technological innovation, and that the role of the VET contribution can be best understood as part of a broader development of social and technical infrastructure. The paper concludes that reincorporating broader notions of 'human resource development' as this term was understood in the immediate post-war period would benefit policy and practice.

**Presenter/s:** Lesley Farrell, Damon Anderson, Stephen Billett, Allie Clemans, Bernard Holkner, Terri Seddon

**Paper #: SY064**

**Title:**

*Paying attention to new VET learning spaces!*

Vocational Education and training is becoming, in some respects, de-institutionalised. Established VET education and training institutions (notably TAFE Institutes, universities) are being diversified, pressed into external networks and encouraged to support learning for wider ranges of students and in places where learning was not acknowledged (eg. In workplaces and community settings). Commonly these pressures mean that learning is occurring within the social spaces constituted by partnership arrangements which bring different, sometimes quite culturally dissonant, partners together. This symposium considers this trajectory towards more porous institutional and organisational boundaries in VET, and the way it creates new learning spaces, in and beyond the established institutions of education and training. The presentations consider alternative ways of understanding these new learning spaces, exploring ways of theorising and researching their pedagogical and political relations and their implications for learners, partners, partnership workers and social justice. The symposium builds upon a series of completed research projects that have examined the respatialisation of education and training, and contributes to a current ARC project which aims to assess new learning spaces and what they mean for pedagogy, governance and supporting learner's life chances.



**Presenter/s:** Fran Ferrier, CEET, Monash University

**Paper #: PA 016**

**Title:** *Meeting new challenges – are specialist VET centres the way forward?*

In Victoria the establishment of Specialist VET Centres was based on a view that the 'TAFE system is not homogenous' and that each Institute is 'uniquely positioned to engage with the innovation economy and community and educational needs in their own way'. Specialist Centres are expected to lead the development of supporting provider networks to share their expertise across the system. In England a Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) Program has similar objectives but in addition the Centres are expected to contribute to the rebuilding of a national training system that was widely regarded as run-down and out of touch with the changing needs of learners, industries and communities. This presentation is based on research undertaken in Australia and the UK. It examines the roles and functions of the different types of centres and some indications of their success in achieving their aims. It asks if, and how, England's model could be usefully adapted to suit the Australian context.

**Presenter/s:** Fran Ferrier, CEET, Monash University

**Paper #: PA 079**

**Title:** *The skill & training needs of young volunteers*

**Presenter/s:** Lyn Firminger, Swinburne University of Technology

**Paper #: PA 068**

**Title:** *Microtechnology: the technology we have to have?*

If Australia is to compete internationally in technology industries it must carry out high-level research and be able to translate the findings of research into skills needed in the workforce where appropriate. A previous study has shown that some of these skills are vocational skills, and that there can be impediments to the transfer of skills into VET. The present study describes how the transfer of knowledge operates across departmental boundaries in the VET sector. It concentrates on the transfer of knowledge through a prototyping facility for microtechnology; a critical high-technology technology for which Australia is attempting to find niche markets. It also describes another method of technology transfer through a 'virtual' Co-operative Research Centre.

**Presenter/s:** Annette Foley, Goldfields Employment and Learning Centre, Vic

**Paper #: PA 042**

**Title:** *Searching for the "C" in ACE*

The main focus of the paper is to examine and unravel the discourses emerging from the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Adult Community Education (ACE) sectors in the light of policy discourses that serve to construct 'community' in economic terms. The paper seeks to highlight current changes taking place in ACE as Victorian government policy discourses move to place vocational outcomes as a priority for Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) funding. The paper draws from empirical data taken from five participating ACE coordinators from four ACE organisations, two in the Melbourne metropolitan area and three in regional Victoria. The data highlights a cautionary tale of the potential exclusion of some ACE participants who do not fit within current government policy priorities.

**Presenter/s:** Colin Gallagher & Damon Anderson, Monash University **Paper #: PA 096**

**Title:** *The Virtual IT Training affair: A case study of market failure and neoliberalism in VET*

This paper examines the influence of neoliberal economics on vocational education and training (VET) policy in Australia by analysing government financing and regulation of apprenticeship training. After outlining the policy context, particularly the creation of a training market, the paper focuses on the recent abuse by a

private Registered Training Organisation (RTO) of funding guidelines for Information Technology training under the federal Government's New Apprenticeships Incentive Programme. The circumstances surrounding this incident and its aftermath are described, and the immediate repercussions are examined. The relationship and tensions between training quality and business imperatives are discussed, and it is suggested that the conditions have been created for a potential decline in trainer and workforce skills. In light of this discussion and evidence of endemic quality and probity problems, the links between neoliberalism and current VET policies are analysed in order to identify the deeper causes and consequences of market failure.

**Presenter/s** **Shelley Gillis & Andrea Bateman**

**Paper #: PA 010**

**Title: \*\*\***

*The Development of a Framework for Assessing Complexity of Units of Learning Across Schools, VET and Higher Education*

This paper reports on the findings of a study, funded by the Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA), to develop and validate a model for recognising the complexity of learning units delivered across the three educational sectors in Victoria. The approach taken during the construction of the model was based on a combination of both theoretical and psychometric approaches to scale development. The theoretical approach was used to initially identify a set of domains that could be used to recognise varying levels of unit complexity. Each domain was operationalised into a variable using indicators identified in international models as well as the literature, and panelled on representatives within each of the educational sectors. The indicators for each domain were then empirically tested and validated through survey techniques in which participants were requested to complete a questionnaire on a unit of learning in which they delivered as part of their routine teaching/training. Participants were requested to a) supply background information about the unit of learning, b) judge which of the indicators within each domain best captured the complexity of their unit, and c) rate each domain on its perceived effectiveness in defining the true complexity of the unit. Two hundred and fifty four (n=254) people responded to the survey. Of these people, 31% represented senior secondary education, 43% represented the VET sector and 25% represented Higher Education. Item Response Modelling was then used to evaluate the psychometric properties of the model as well as to empirically develop and define levels of complexity within and across the domains. The data collected demonstrated the validity, accuracy and reliability of each domain measure. The results also showed that the correlations among the domains were significant, yet moderately positive, thus having direct implications for the factor structure that should underpin the Complexity Model.

**Presenter/s: Barry Golding, University of Ballarat**

**Paper #: PA 027**

**Title: \*\*\***

*About FACE: Implications of research into men's learning patterns in rural towns*

Recent (2004) research by Golding (with Harvey and Echter) of men's learning patterns in small rural towns has established the significance of a number of variables that determine whether and how men learn in these contexts. This paper presents and combines the findings of that research, based on a survey of men in ten towns, with other recent research into learning by adult males. In essence, the research shows that men learn much from their active involvement in community and service organisations in small rural towns. They preferred learning that was informal, practical and local and provided through that organisation. It asks whether there might be a need, in the light of the research evidence and men's expressed learning preferences, to examine and reconsider the gendered nature of many adult and VET learning organisations in order to better accommodate a wider range of men and women. The paper identifies particular problems for men in rural towns where a TAFE is often not accessible and where an adult and community education (ACE) provider becomes the primary site for adults undertaking local, formal learning

and for accessing services including the internet. The implications of the general reluctance of men to learn in formal and structured settings is contrasted with the many other ways in which men access learning in community-based, volunteer and service organisations. Some suggestions are made as to how learning contexts and policies might be reconfigured to more closely match the needs of older men as well as men with negative previous experiences at school. The implications of the research for appropriate teaching and learning contexts for boys, as well as for re-engaging later learners and breaking the cycle of intergenerational reluctance to learn by some men, are also considered.

**Presenter/s** **Ms Lauri Grace, Deakin University, WA**

**Paper #: PA 008**

**Title: \*\*\***

*Training Packages and the AQTF: Freedom to move or components of a compliance-driven straightjacket?*

This paper reports on a PhD research project being undertaken through the Faculty of Education, Deakin University. Training Packages and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) form part of the ruling relations of VET, but how do they operate in practice? Do they provide frameworks within which training professionals are free to use judgement and respond in innovative ways to local learning and assessment contexts? Do they impose rigid 'guidelines' within which the decision-making authority of practitioners over appropriate practices is displaced by that of auditors, constraining creativity and creating pressures towards conformity? Or does their impact vary, depending on how they are interpreted and who is doing the interpreting? My PhD research explores issues relating to the use of Training Packages in workbased learning. Interview data suggests that, in practice, different training organisations respond very differently to a regulatory framework that aims to achieve national consistency. Some practitioners describe working in a compliance-driven environment, in which their ability to meet the needs of learners is stifled by standardised training and assessment practices imposed by Training Packages and the AQTF. This view is reflected in phrases such as 'you're not allowed to...', and 'you always feel uneasy because you've got AQTF compliance, inspections, auditors'. In contrast, other practitioners talk about having freedom to design learning and assessment programs for their particular target group and context, providing they stay within broad guidelines that guarantee national recognition of qualifications they issue. This view is reflected in comments such as 'it just leaves it open ... to be as creative and flexible as you like', and 'It just gives us freedom'. This paper explores the proposition that the impact of these abstract and generalised texts is influenced by local interpretations, and it considers the role that organisational culture plays in determining these interpretations.

**Presenter/s: Jock Grady, Julie Esson, Anne Paterson, Susan Jeavons Paper #: PA 038**

**Title:**

*Engaging youth in mLearning – the use of mobile phones in VET teaching & learning*

In mid 2004 a CoP (Community of Practice) of VET practitioners and Telco experts was established to investigate the use in education and training of emergent mLearning technologies with youth, particularly those with low levels of literacy and numeracy. The CoP project paralleled several related research and development projects nationally and sought to establish linkages to these through representative membership from, and ongoing liaison with, the various projects. Consideration was given to research coverage of all related projects as a loosely coupled set so as to maximise potential benefits and reduce unnecessary project overlap. In view of this the CoP has focussed its attention primarily on the use of mobile phone technologies including SMS and MMS within teaching and learning paradigms. The CoP is an ongoing group with fluctuating membership dispersed nationally. Following an initial face-to-face meeting and several early teleconferences the CoP has used a number of virtual team tools to pursue its communication and research dialogue. These tools include email, asynchronous discussion forums, file sharing and synchronous chat meetings. As the membership of the CoP includes several

practitioners and members of related research teams it has been possible to conduct, or link to, several targeted and practical action research studies and trials. The findings and outputs of these will be available via a web site the CoP is establishing to capture, catalogue and share the findings and resources of the group.

**Presenter/s:** Annette Green, Charles Sturt University

**Paper #: PA 057**

**Title:** \*\*\*

*Changing direction to make a difference: New voices in VET in Schools*

When asked about the reasons they had elected to leave their careers in industry to become secondary teachers of technology and VET in Schools teachers in NSW, the most common response was that they “wanted to make a difference”. Now the research participants are in their second year of teaching, mainly in rural and remote schools because of their indenture with NSW DET, they have been invited to reflect on their change in direction and their approach and stance in their new roles as part of a longitudinal study of their pathways from industry to school. This paper will discuss the backgrounds and training of these teachers in an Accelerated Teacher Training Program (ATTP) and in particular examine some of the early findings of the research in terms of their orientation to teaching and their experiences during their first two years in rather challenging rural schools. Of particular interest to the researcher is the fact that these new teachers, unlike most of their colleagues, came to teaching after, in many cases, having a less than successful school career and extensive experience in industry and the workplace. They have obvious strengths in terms of technological knowledge, but they have a very different view of pedagogy, student achievement and ability and the purposes and intent of the school system. One of the emerging themes that have already been identified is the desire to make school a more rewarding experience for the average and lower achieving students. By critically exploring the backgrounds of the participants, their beliefs and pedagogical approach, the researcher aims to tell the stories of this very different group of new teachers in VET in Schools.

**Presenter/s:** John Guenther

**Paper #: PA 055**

**Title:**

*Pathways to effective training outcomes: lessons from northern Australia*

There has in recent years been a lot of emphasis on the importance of training outcomes for individuals and industry. These outcomes have been well described in terms of employment, educational, community development and personal development outcomes. There has similarly been a lot of emphasis on training delivery that takes place to produce those outcomes. There has been far less research on the formative processes that take place for participants prior to—and following on from—training delivery. This paper considers these processes in terms of a model that includes needs identification, motivators and enablers as well as the identities that are developed as a result of participation in training. The findings show that while there are clear pathways for training along streams that lead to industry, community and personal development outcomes, there is no clear pathway for training that leads to new enterprise development. The results also suggest that it is quite possible for training participants to switch tracks from a pathway that leads to community or personal development outcomes to one that leads to industry outcomes—and vice versa. The paper draws on research conducted by the author towards a PhD. The findings come as a result of over 100 semi-structured interviews with education and training stakeholders (representatives from industry, communities, government agencies and providers) in four separate case-study sites in northern Australia. The model presented has implications for providers, government funding bodies and industry advisory bodies. It offers a possible way of eliminating ‘training for training’s sake’ and of promoting effective outcomes for organisations involved in planning and developing new education and learning initiatives. It raises questions about the need for a more clearly defined pathway for training that leads to enterprise development and suggests alternative measures for determining the success of education and training programs.

**Presenter/s:** R. E. (Bobby) Harreveld, Central Qld University

**Paper #: PA 060**

**Title: \*\*\***

*Walking the walk – vocational educators and researchers using technology to learn about technology*

If teachers and trainers are to contribute in meaningful ways to the changing social and technological bases of what counts as knowledge in our society, then their own professional learning should be examined. This paper reports initial findings from a research project constructed around the views of a cohort of twenty (20) teachers/trainers on the language, literacy and numeracy demands of their jobs and the nature of the learning experiences they believe they require to do that work. The research project utilizes features of the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) to evaluate participants' engagements with a course entitled 'Literacy @ Work'. A unique feature of this course is its location in programs for people who are studying to work in secondary schools and/or TAFE colleges and/or private training providers and/or on-site training for businesses, industries, community organisations. All participants are mature-age adults who have prior industry and/or trade qualifications as well as relevant work experience in their chosen vocational teaching/training areas. The research participants are engaging with the LMS technology to learn about the multiliteracies of the complex connections of meaning that are generated through varying combinations of spoken, visual and written language and multi-modal communication systems. They are also using the selfsame technology to provide evaluative data on the nature of their professional learning throughout the course. These data are used to address the key research question: What knowledge and performance based demands does an electronic learning management system make upon a cohort of teachers and trainers who are learning about vocational English language, literacy and numeracy? In answering this question, data will be discursively analysed to identify participants' perceptions of the knowledge base/s and nature of the learning experiences they believe will best assist them in their current and future work as teachers and trainers.

**Presenter/s:** Roger Harris & Michele Simons, SA

**Paper #: PA 047**

**Title: \*\*\***

*Playing the right tune in VET research: Using cognitive testing to improve our instruments*

The importance of using research instruments that ask the 'right' questions is critical in our VET research. How often have we heard the old adage that a particular piece of research is only as good as its methodology? How often have we examined theses, reviewed journal articles or listened to conference papers where the method section is the area that we really pay attention to and where we stake our verdict as to the worth of the research? How many of us VET researchers, in the agonising throes of writing up, have come to the shattering realisation that it is extremely difficult simply because the material is not producing the goods due to some less than satisfactory data gathering? And how many of us then blame our own (or someone else's) tools? This paper focuses on the process of developing interview schedules or survey questionnaires and highlights the issues involved in getting the 'right' questions. It is based on our own recent research, particularly on our experience in undertaking an NREC project that involved a national survey of private providers of vocational education and training. It is a story of how we were able, eventually, to obtain approval from the Commonwealth Government Statistical Clearing House (SCH), a body which vets survey processes and instruments involving 50 or more organisations run by, or on behalf of, any Commonwealth agency. We used a process of cognitive testing (Willis 1999) – in particular, verbal probing techniques – to fine-tune our instrument before the survey. This is different from conducting a pilot study. The focus is on the cognitive processes that respondents use to answer survey questions rather than on the results received. We will explain what that means, how we used it, the advantages and disadvantages, and what the results were.



**Presenter/s:** Ms Silke Hellwig, University of Konstanz

**Paper #: PA 015**

**Title:** *The competency debate in German VET research: implications for learning processes based on Vocationalism*

Vocationalism and competency-based training are mostly seen as opposing principles underlying different VET systems. However, despite the fact that the German VET system is influenced by the vocational principle, which is regarded as maintaining a stable system generating high quality vocational qualifications, the competency debate has entered current VET research in Germany. The reason is that learning and work processes change due to increasing globalisation and technological progress, and therefore more flexible and adjustable qualification processes are demanded. Different research activities approach the concept of competency focusing mainly on the question of what constitutes competency in vocational and didactic theory. A widely-used and broadly-discussed concept is the so called "professional action competency", which includes technical, methodical, social and personal competency. Although this concept has been the focus of several research projects, the question of its impact on learning processes based on vocationalism has not been answered yet. The paper will discuss this impact by establishing a comparative perspective between competency-based learning processes and processes based on the vocational principle. Their differences and similarities, of both and the question of whether a competency-based approach can be integrated into a vocationally-based approach, will be discussed against the background of the current competency debate in Germany. Furthermore, the issue of whether a competency-based approach has potential to improve the flexibility and self-directedness of existing qualification processes will be illustrated by the example of the IT sector where new approaches to vocational learning are evident.

**Presenter/s:** Jenny Kent, TAFE Industry Partnership Centre, NSW

**Paper #: PA 089**

**Title:** *Sustainability – a new paradigm for skills policy?*

Education for Sustainability has been little explored within the context of Vocational Education and Training and largely remains marginalised from current VET research and debate. Yet there are calls for Education for Sustainability to be integrated within VET. How does or could sustainability fit within the VET skills paradigm? This paper will explore notions of sustainable development with particular reference to the emergence of Education for Sustainability within VET and rising theoretical frameworks of skill. As Jonathan Payne describes in his article titled 'The unbearable lightness of skill': "[We] ...have to begin by reclaiming the transformative potential of education as a vehicle for the construction of an intelligent public willing to defend social life from free market blight." Payne paints a rather gloomy picture of the failings of current education policy in developed economies to deliver the promises of the knowledge economy of high-skilled and rewarding work. Similar research outcomes in Australia are leading VET researchers to increasingly question the dominant skills policy rhetoric. In parallel to these discussions is an emergent area of education theory and policy based on a global political agenda under the rubric of Sustainable Development. Education for Sustainable Development theorists and practitioners equally call for transformation of our education systems but often fail to establish ideas on the social, economic and political frameworks required for achieving radical change in education. Can a joint understanding of the 'political economy of skill' and the sustainable development political agenda provide a way forward for skills policy in Australia?



**Presenter/s:** Luigi La Forgia, RMIT University

**Paper #: PA 067**

**Title:** *Support Teachers in Assessment of Competency Based Training:  
A Community Practice approach*

The terms Training Package, Competency, AQTF compliant and the like have become very well known in the TAFE sector. Yet even today, some 8 years after the implementation of Training Packages, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding by many VET practitioners around the practical application of these terms. This paper is about the journey experienced via an Action Research Project: "Support Teachers in Assessment of Competency Based Training". It covers the initial observations that spawned the idea for the project; the need to re-evaluate the project objectives and the establishment of a "Community of Practice around Competency Based Training in the Electrotechnology Program". The paper also explores the challenges in establishing a Community of Practice in a work environment where staff are very much loaded to the maximum and colleagues have to offer their good will in order to engage. The paper also explores the relationship between VET practitioners, the organization (RMIT University), and the external bodies that can provide support and guidance (for example ANTA), that has prevailed in our Community of Practice throughout the project. The project has helped thread these three entities together by establishing and improving processes and channels of clear communication between the practitioners the organization and the National training agenda. This is vital in order for the organization to issue qualifications and Statement of Attainment for candidates, based on practitioners using valid assessment processes in the implementation of Training Packages. A relationship between the three entities is exemplified in a succinct resource I produced based on guides and information from the National Training agenda.

**Presenter/s:** Claire Manning, NSW

**Paper #: PA 052**

**Title:** *Hidden Treasures: Work related learning using the arts*

There are a number of personal and social skills that are highly regarded in workplaces today. This research explores the ways that the arts and learning with the arts can motivate adults to learn and build the skills needed to succeed at work. Through several case studies it unfolds the learning experiences of adults who undertook work related learning courses, which utilised the skills, techniques and environments offered by the performing and visual arts. This paper presents a preliminary analysis of the participants' perceptions of learning with the arts and their understanding of its value for their personal and professional development. The application of the Contextual Model of Learning (Falk & Dierking, 2000), to analyse learning with the arts through a personal, sociocultural and physical context, provides a framework for this study.

**Presenter/s:** Joan McPhee, Vic

**Paper #: PA 024**

**Title: \*\*\*** *Privately Owned Registered Training Organisations in Victoria  
– Diversity as an emerging theme?*

It is now over 10 years since the vocational education and training (VET) system was opened up to private providers. As part of a PhD research project the growth in the Victorian VET system of privately owned registered Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) has been traced since 1991 when the VET system was opened up to private providers. This growth is reviewed and a brief literature review places it in its context. The CEOs, or their nominees, in twenty one privately owned RTOs which have operated in the Victorian VET system over the period under review have been interviewed. All the RTOs interviewed were accredited prior to December 1994 and are still operating. These RTOs included enterprise, industry and commercial organizations of varying sizes. The main purpose of this paper is to report some

aspects of what these interviews 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 group they service. The significance of government funding to their operations is also identified. Some common themes have also emerged – in relation to networking, their competitors and their marketing approaches. The diversity of the findings reinforces the need for more detailed research into the activities and impact of privately owned RTO's operating nationally, particularly as those who do not receive government funds are not currently included in statistical data prepared by NCVER. This paper represents work in progress. Comments will be very welcome.

**Presenter/s:** **Dr. Stuart Middleton, Manukau Institute of Technology**      **Paper #: PA 062**

**Title:** *Research as a Second Career: Research Culture in a VET Setting*

As the tertiary sector internationally is being asked to be accountable for its research outputs, those who teach in the VET sector are faced with the pressures of meeting not only the demands of tertiary teaching and tertiary level research activity but also the requirements that they are engaged in partnership activity that is appropriate to their business, industrial or commercial area. An additional factor is that many who work in the VET sector have first developed credibility and excellence in a first career in their area prior to entering a second career as a teacher at a tertiary level. This paper details the results of a major research study of the impact of change on a VET institution in New Zealand. Faced with an openly competitive situation in the early 1990's, the institution introduced its own degree programmes. This brought a requirement that those teaching the programme be engaged with research. The stages through which the institution attempted to introduce an academic research culture are described and the impact on its credibility and performance analysed. Not only did staff have to engage in research activity, they also had to consider the relevance of what they did to their mission of delivering quality vocational and applied education. At the same time, the credibility of the institution with its community of practice was a source of tension as the institutions worked to meet the demands of research and at the same time reflect their commitment to their profession. After a decade of dedicated effort on the part of the institution, the New Zealand government, following closely in the footsteps of other governments, introduced the Performance Based Research Fund that placed the institution firmly at the bottom of the "league table of tertiary research". The paper concludes by outlining the reaction of other VET institutions that stayed outside this process to their seeming advantage.

**Presenter/s:** **Mr. John Mitchell, John Mitchell & Associates, NSW**      **Paper #: PA 026**

**Title:** *Effective VET networking with industry in the marketplace*

Increasingly, the VET marketplace requires VET practitioners to network with industry representatives. 'Networking with industry' is a new catch-cry within VET, but more research is needed to understand the complexities and benefits of such networking. This paper is based on research conducted over two years, 2003-2004, of forty networks funded by Reframing the Future, and will be the first conference presentation on the research. The paper builds on a report entitled Building Industry Training Networks (ANTA, March 2004), adding new insights from research conducted in 2004. A simple but useful definition of a network is that it is an interlocking web of connections (Cohen and Prusak 2001). Networks are based on collaboration and can provide access to power, information, knowledge and to other networks (Cohen and Prusak 2001). However, the paper shows that networks are complex and can be difficult to manage, as participants' needs and ambitions can constantly change (Ford et al 2003). Networks also need to continuously provide

value for all members. The research questions used to frame the 2003-2004 research are as follows:

- Why does VET need industry training networks?
- What skills, knowledge and processes help industry training networks function effectively?
- What knowledge is generated by industry training networks?
- What are the benefits of industry training networks?
- How can the achievements of networks be sustained?

The research methods included observations and discussions at national forums convened at the start of the project and at the mid-way point; reviews of the networks' action plans, mid-term progress reports and final reports; and on-site observations and interviews with network participants. The networks described in the paper will provide the VET sector with models of how to effectively build networks that impact positively on the individuals and organisations involved, and enhance VET's achievements in the marketplace.

**Presenter/s:** **Gavin Moodie, Griffith University, Qld**

**Paper #: PA 046**

**Title: \*\*\***

*Emerging futures in VET policy in Australia and overseas*

This paper examines recent developments in vocational education in Aotearoa New Zealand and England to put the recently announced changes in Australia in context. It finds common themes in seeking to deal with skills shortages by making vocational education 'industry-led', however each country has adopted different mechanisms to reform the sector. Interestingly, no country is increasing market mechanisms in vocational education. This contrasts with higher education, which all countries have marketised.

**Presenter/s:** **Jennifer Nevard & Doug Thompson, Challenger TAFE, WA** **Paper #: PA094**

**Title:**

*Tracking student aspirations - a work in progress*

This article reports on a study that is concerned with surveying the aspirations of some students in an Australian Technical and Further Education (TAFE) College and of developing strategies to address issues arising from the surveys. The study is essentially a series of surveys, though it has an action learning aspect because of its developmental nature; it describes problems, actions taken to solve them and subsequent review of those actions. It is a work in progress that began three years ago by seeking to understand why students in the Health section of the Community and Health Services Training Centre at the College undertook their studies. The paper begins with some background matters, and is followed by an account of the methods employed in the surveys. Next some of the findings are displayed and discussed. Finally, an outline is given of some of the changes implemented as a result of the investigation process thus far.

**Presenter/s:** **Diane Newton, Maj. Paul Ashman & Allan Ellis, NSW**

**Paper #: PA 014**

**Title: \*\*\***

*The Australian Army soldiers' perspective of flexible learning:  
Reserve distance learning pilot*

This study aims to understand the perceptions of soldiers involved in the shift to flexible learning (computer based learning and distance learning) in the Australian Army. This move represents a major shift for an organisation that has a hierarchical and authoritarian decision-making and training structures. Interviews and questionnaires with managers, instructors and soldiers involved in flexible learning in an Army Reserve Corporal distance learning pilot course indicated the importance of understanding the organisational context and culture. Students provided reflective insights into their learning experiences that complemented Army's more outcomes

based evaluation approach. This case study indicates that flexible learning development is not a simple process of introducing a computer based learning package into the organisation. It highlighted the importance of mutual adaptation of flexible learning and the organisation that reflects the learning culture, learners' needs and a constantly changing environment.

**Presenter/s:** Sue O'Keefe, Lin Crase & Darryl Maybery, Vic

**Paper #: PA 012**

**Title: \*\*\*** *Economic, psychographic and organisational influences on employees' participation in VET: Preliminary results*

The past decade has seen significant change in the area of education and training in Australia. The Australian market for vocational education and training (VET) is influenced by a confluence of forces within the macro environment, which combine to impact upon the context of VET, and, in turn, affect both the demand for and supply of VET. The VET sector operates within an economy increasingly open to international pressures and with an agenda for economic reform that has continually stressed more efficient government and the efficacy of market forces. Subsequently, Australian public policy has moved relatively quickly to a more demand-led, market-oriented approach to the VET sector. One corollary of this has been the increased interest in the financing of VET, and the concomitant suggestion that increasingly in the future individuals may need to finance their own education and training. This paper presents preliminary results of a pilot study examining employee's decisions to participate in VET utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Results reveal a mixture of economic, psychographic and organizational factors that impact upon the choices made by individuals in the work environment. Directions for further research are also suggested.

**Presenter/s:** Richard Pickersgill, Charles Sturt University, NSW

**Paper #: PA 034**

**Title:** *Comparison and Contrast: the relevance of the evidence-based research debate on VET research*

VET research has drawn on techniques and founding assumptions from a range of social science disciplines. A further characteristic is an eclectic use of research methods, with individual projects often employing a multi-method approach. It is arguably an important strength of the VET sector that it has, in general, been practically and pragmatically oriented, and has historically drawn on a range wide range of disciplines to answer specific research questions. This VET approach is in contrast to some recent trends in the General Education, or more accurately the school education sector. With, some important exceptions in the sociology and ethics of education, the primary focus has been on pedagogy, classroom practice, and 'the teacher'. This narrow focus has involved heated disputes over appropriate methodologies, most notably in epistemologically flawed distinctions between quantitative and qualitative methods. This current debate in the United States over the status of 'evidence-based research' has even seen the federal government take the extraordinary step of defining its version of appropriate 'scientific' research methods in legislation. In general, VET has been isolated from these debates although some reflection of them may be found in recent discussion of 'evidence based curricula' and scattered references to 'discourse analysis'. This paper attempts to place some of the theoretical and practical issues raised in the international debate around the meaning of 'science' and 'knowledge' into the context of current Australian VET research. It does this through a discussion of the theory and practice of research design as applied in a range of current VET research projects. It argues that, contrary to the claims of some fashionable textual critics, research implies knowledge, and knowledge is to be justified by evidence. The paper discusses minimum conditions for valid, if fallibulist, inference from evidence to knowledge in VET research.

**Presenter/s:** Karen Plane, CREW, SA

**Paper #: PA 036**

**Title:** *Becoming more responsive to VET or becoming over vetted?  
Tensions for the 'political ecology' in VET and capacity building  
with small business/ community partnerships in the Adelaide Hills region*

Schofield and McDonald (2004) have advocated for a search for the middle ground in Vocational Education and Training (VET). Nowhere is this more cogent than for promulgating equitable learning partnerships between cross-sectoral, diverse institutions like VET, business and the community for developing learning regions. But at a time when it is argued small business is delivering less in formal VET, there is a need to question if regulatory change in industry, an increasing demand for compliance from government, juxtaposed with a greater accountability from consumers and the wider community is proving to be too burgeoning for increasing small firm participation in VET. Capacity-building initiatives are being encouraged widely by all levels of government with a focus on developing decentralised, sustainable, self-supporting regions. It is ironic though, that this comes at a time when the 'institutional capital' (Cocklin & Alston 2003) and role for the state is being minimised faster than support for regional services and capacity-builders at the local level. In the pressure to create can do communities, are small businesses and the community filling this vacuum in the regions by 'can doing' already? To what extent could small business and the community 'do more' in VET if current policy trends were more conducive to collaborative decision-making and democratic processes at the local level, as opposed to the increased competition for scarce resources from afar? Are globalising, neo-liberal policy environments, arguably designed to make both business and communities more productive and internationally competitive in the marketplace, actually capacity reducing at the local level? This paper will attempt to come to grips with the tensions in this 'political ecology' by presenting findings from semi-structured interviews and a qualitative PhD research study with practitioners and small business in the Adelaide Hills region.

**Presenter/s:** Mr Ian Robertson, RMIT University, VIC

**Paper #: PA 002**

**Title:** *Teacher's negotiating the use of online technology:  
Implications for professional development*

The World Wide Web was introduced in 1992 and the promotion of online technology for teaching in VET has been supported through co-ordinated policy since the mid-1990s. ANTAs first national conference about online technology was conducted in 1997. At a national level this promotion has largely been facilitated through the Flexible Learning Advisory Committee. Through the Flexible Learning Framework there has been significant investment in infrastructure, professional development and the development of online resources. However, recent research suggests that the uptake of online technology for teaching remains at a low level. Using the findings from case studies with VET teachers this paper describes how teachers negotiate the introduction of online technology into their practice. This information is used to develop a model that describes how these teachers have made decisions about the ways they use online technology in their teaching practice. Based on the model described, the presentation will conclude by considering professional development strategies that are likely to increase the uptake of ICT in vocational education and training.

**Presenter/s:** Mr Ian Robertson, RMIT University, VIC

**Paper #: PA 025**

**Title:** *VET practitioners: Active participants in the introduction of technology into teaching*

The introduction of online technology into VET teaching has been promoted by policy at national, state and local levels. Significant levels of funding have been used to develop IT infrastructure, to develop online learning resources and to conduct

professional development. Despite this investment, recent studies show that the uptake of online technology for teaching and learning remains at a low base. This paper reports several case examples of TAFE teachers who use online technology as an integral aspect of the teaching. The evidence demonstrates that VET practitioners are active agents in the introduction of online technology into teaching practice. Information derived from semi-structured interviews with research participants is used to develop a model that describes how teachers negotiate the introduction of online technology into their practice. The implications of this model for professional development and policy implementation will be discussed.

**Presenter/s:** Josie Rose, Mary Schooneveldt, Glenda McPherson **Paper #: PA 051**

**Title:** *Flexible ACE- Investigating flexible teaching and learning in Adult Community Education, Victoria*

During 2004 TAFE frontiers commissioned Southern Western Port Learning Communities to conduct a series of state-wide focus groups exploring flexible learning in ACE (Adult Community Education) in Victoria. The purpose was to capture a snapshot of current practice in flexible teaching and learning in ACE, which would in turn translate into a research report and a series of scenarios that would exemplify good practice. ACE organisations define flexible learning in ways that relate to their ethos and culture. ACE sees its approaches as inherently flexible - providing what the learners need when they need , i.e. creating a whole program that is flexible, with an increasing use of technology to support this. With more and more ACE organisations delivering accredited VET courses, meeting learner needs through flexible delivery tools and techniques is becoming increasingly important .By adding the dimension of information communication technology to the debate around flexible learning, we found that centres or individuals who had experienced the use of carefully selected ICT tools for their program delivery reported that it:

- Provided clients with greater choice and control over where, what and how they learn;
- Enhanced their learner centered and client focused repertoire with carefully chosen ICT tools;
- Provided a blended learning experience as far as their infrastructure, connectivity and human resource capacity allowed;
- Overcame distance and time issues as well as a range of other barriers – specifically in the rural and regional centres.

The researchers found that despite some significant obstacles flexible teaching and learning is flourishing in ACE- as it has for a long time. The use and constant exploration of ICT tools to further enhance a teaching culture so firmly rooted in learner centered approaches, has confirmed that for ACE flexible delivery is much more than just ICT. The research also identified a range of common themes, issues and practical solutions. This paper will outline the issues facing ACE in flexible teaching and learning today and look at some of the innovative, practical solutions that community education have found to better meet the needs of their communities and their learners.

**Presenter/s:** Peter Rushbrook, Michael Brown & Richard Pickersgill **Paper #: PA018**

**Title:** *Emerging pasts: the role of the Instructional Systems Model (ISM) as a precursor of outcomes based vocational education and training*

Competency Based Training (CBT) is the curriculum technology of choice of the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. First mooted in 1989 and formalised in 1992 by the Commonwealth and States Apprenticeship Advisory Committee, CBT quickly achieved hegemonic status. CBT, however, arrived with



a past. Behavioural and outcomes based programs have a long history within Australian vocational education and training, including vocational colleges and industry sites. The paper briefly outlines these developments before settling on the example of the Instructional Systems Model (ISM) introduced in Victoria during the 1980s. It is argued that ISM suggested to vocational policy makers the possibility of a hegemonic curriculum discourse that both defined the sector and enacted its project of reconciling the aims of vocational education with industry training needs. In the end, though, the outcome for vocational education was the dissolution of its liberal ethos and replacement by a totalising technocratic model – CBT. In many ways, the introduction of CBT represented the final failure of the mid-1970s dreams of Myer Kangan. He gave Australians the acronym 'TAFE' and the hope that individuals and their lifelong learning needs would become the centre of vocational education provision. ISM, perhaps unintendedly, played a significant role in the state's failure to realise this objective. The paper also acts as a reminder that emerging futures and the production of recent, responsive and relevant research do not exist in a vacuum but are firmly based on past practices. It is the role of the historian to create awareness of those pasts and suggest possibilities for alternative futures.

**Presenter/s:** **Katie Scholten, Wodonga Institute of TAFE**

**Paper #: PA 022**

**Title:** *Success & successes, working with youth at risk*

For three years Wodonga Institute of TAFE has conducted a very successful program designed to engage youth for whom the school system does not suit. The program aims to make education attractive, purposeful and beneficial to students in the youth cohort, particularly to those who have disengaged. Fundamentally, it is about making education a powerful and irresistible proposition. In achieving this end, the program is based on a combination of the CGEA and the Film, Television, Radio, Multimedia Industry Training Package focusing on high end technology, (including multi media, print, TV and radio) and generic skills (literacy, numeracy, personal skills, etc) to provide students with multiple pathways, plus substantial grounding in foundation skills. At the conclusion of the second year of the program in 2003 students and teachers participated in a number of focus groups designed to evaluate the program. The evaluation revealed some of the key ingredients thought necessary for successfully engaging and working with this cohort. With the third year almost complete the dynamic and dedicated group of teachers are working with The Centre for Research, Planning and Development to research some of the hows and whys that have made this program so successful. The teachers and support staff undertake a 14-week online journal as well as focus groups. The online journal provides a means for teachers to express their thoughts and reflections of the program whilst engaged in the day-to-day teaching. The students' perspectives inform the research via focus groups and informal interviews. Exploring the ideas of success, relationships, gender, personality, group dynamics, attendance, engagement, staffing, motivation, discipline, security, support and the adult learning environment, the research aims to inform and guide similar programs that provide opportunities for disengaged youth in the VET sector.

**Presenter/s:** **Mr James Shields, Vic**

**Paper #: PA 003**

**Title:** *Corporations, Learning Strategies and Teachers Work  
New Strategies:*

The 'automation' of teaching and learning as I describe, is not simply a collection of technology driven tools for pedagogical change at work. I do not limit the term to such areas as the virtual classroom, e-learning or the role of the personal computer as a replacement for human intervention in learning. It is not simply changes in technology that is at the core of what I chose to call 'automated' learning. It is rather, as though thinking itself has become an obstacle to 'throughput' in

automated knowledge flow programs. Thinking 'wastes time' and there is probably someone else out there who already knows what you don't! Whole areas of thinking at work that requires skilful development within appropriate teaching and learning reference frames for success, are being devolved to the workers to articulate or are abandoned, neglected or eliminated altogether in implementation design programs that follow an automaton-diffusion paradigm to cope with 'continual' workplace change i.e., towards an absence of pedagogy at work. This strategy assumes that individuals and groups will 'pick up the slack' outlined in the 'why' and 'what' in changing workplace circumstances and teach themselves the 'how'. Within this strategy however, there can be subtle coercion. The threat is that someone else, or at some place else, the information we seek is already known and can be got - without a need for a learning program.

#### *New Powers:*

While there are clearly issues that go to workplace change (and these can be articulated), it is more than an issue about change necessities and subsequent implications for people at work. Strategic change merely reflects strategic choice that is in turn, founded on changing power struggles taking place between stakeholding groups in political 'time' e.g., to the seat and imbalances of power, to job distributions or expectations and to the politics inherent to decision-making for this. Thus, the analysis also considers the evidence in the data about expectations, realities and uses of political power and the power relations that underpin evolving new job roles and changing learning strategies within corporations".

**Presenter/s:** Peter Smith, Deakin University

**Paper #: PA 021**

**Title: \*\*\*** *Understandings of learning styles among VET practitioners*

As part of an NCVER funded research project, the research described in this paper investigated the understandings of the concept of learning styles among VET teachers and trainers; and the perceived usefulness of learning styles as part of VET delivery considerations. The research took place in six provider sites across three States, and involved some 300 VET practitioners in a questionnaire, in focus groups, and in case studies. The quantitative component of the research, based on the questionnaire, indicated that VET practitioners identify learning styles among their students along two major dimensions. The first of these relates to teacher observation of group and individual responses to content presentation methods; and the other is associated with observation of preferred contexts for learning. The qualitative components of the research indicated that VET practitioners identify a wide range of values in an understanding of style, as well as display a considerable understanding of style as an expression of individual differences. Additionally, the research indicated a considerable number of informal techniques used by practitioners to identify preferred styles among their students. An iterative model of practitioner style identification and response to style was developed from the combined quantitative and qualitative data.

**Presenter/s:** Helen Spiers, Charles Darwin University, NT

**Paper #: PA 058**

**Title: \*\*\*** *Indigenous participation in health sciences education: elements of the institutional learning environment critical for course completion*

This study, a work in the final stages of a doctorate, describes the institutional support structures and applied strategies currently considered effective and culturally appropriate to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Northern Territory. In attempting to investigate whether these solutions to the acknowledged problem of low retention rates and course completions in tertiary study are supported by the students themselves, the study records the perceptions of a sample of Indigenous students enrolled in Northern Territory institutions across both the

Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) undergraduate and post-graduate health sciences courses. Three Case Study sites are involved in the study. In order to limit the student population base from which to investigate the problem, the area of health science has been chosen. However it is expected that the conclusions drawn from the study can be broadened and applied to Indigenous students in all avenues of tertiary study. This paper examines the progress to date on both the results and the practical issues associated with the study's methodological approach, based on the Case Studies model.

**Presenter/s:** **Dr. Michelle Spuler, Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE**

**Paper #: PA 092**

**Title:** *Collaborative Frameworks: A TAFE Queensland Case Study*

This paper examines the applicability of emerging collaborative frameworks from James Cook University to the Networked Learning Project in TAFE Queensland. The Networked Learning Project is a collaborative partnership involving regional TAFE Queensland Institutes that aims to improve the availability of training services to regional Queensland. TAFE Queensland Institutes have traditionally focussed on their own business or territories that has limited offerings to the capability of one Institute. The Networked Learning Project is improving equity of access to a wide range of training services across regional Queensland through collaboration by individual TAFE Queensland Institutes. The Networked Learning Project utilises a number of tools to guide this endeavour including Kotter's change management model, virtual teaming and communities of practice. However, a range of issues have emerged that these models do not address, such as the need for social capital. A recent James Cook University research program has studied the principles and logics important for building local structures and processes for collaborative action in local and regional communities. The resulting conceptual advances on collaborative ways of organising provide a collaboration framework that honours personal, organisational and societal issues. This paper examines the applicability of this framework to the Networked Learning Project experience, concluding that principles such as the need for relational synergy, liminal space, edge space and groundedness, need to be incorporated into future collaborative efforts.

**Presenter/s:** **John Stanwick & Hugh Guthrie, NCVET, SA**

**Paper #: PA 041**

**Title:** *Lower level AQF qualifications: Pathways to where?*

This paper examines the extent and use of Certificate I/II and Diploma/Advanced Diploma qualifications with a focus on young people, including VET in schools. The paper examines the extent to which these qualifications are seen as endpoint qualifications leading to employment outcomes, and to what extent they are seen as pathways to further studies.

The analysis for this research includes an examination, down to training package and individual qualification levels, of the characteristics of students undertaking these qualifications, completion rates for these qualifications, and an analysis of pathways students take to other qualifications. In addition, outcomes of these qualifications were analysed according to employment outcomes, and the relevance and benefits of undertaking the course.

The paper looks at how young people (less than 25) differ from all students in terms of how these qualifications are used. Young people represented about 40% of all enrolments in the public VET system in 2003, and about 47% of all training package enrolments.

Future work will look at how Certificate III and Certificate IV qualifications are used.

**Presenter/s:** Althwaini Sulayman, Sardi Arabia

**Paper #: PA 030**

**Title:** *A proposed Strategic Plan for Ha'il Technical College*

This paper presents a proposed strategic plan for the calendar years 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 for one of the technical colleges in Saudi Arabia, Ha'il Technical College. Because General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVOT) has 92 units including 26 technical colleges, each college needs a specific strategic plan to implement and to set its goals and achievements. This paper gives the basic outlines for a new strategic plan that is related to Ha'il Technical College. Besides the main components of the plan, it has some emphasis such as the enhancement of student quality, motivation and attitudes. The plan identifies the current system of the college, external and internal drives, vision, objectives, strategies, priorities and other important components. At the end, this paper suggests some recommendations to assure the best implementation of this strategic plan.

**Presenter/s:** Terry Taylor & Josie Rose, Vic

**Paper #: PA 028**

**Title:** *Bridging the divide: older learners and new technologies.  
Strategies for engaging older learners with ICT training*

In 2003 and 2004 as part of the ANTA funded Adult Literacy Innovative Projects AMES Research and Learning Innovation has conducted research into strategies for the successful engagement of older learners in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning. This paper presents the findings of that research strategies for the successful engagement and retention of older learners (those aged 45 years and over) in ICT learning and potential barriers which can prevent these learners from engaging with and benefiting from learning in general and ICT programs in particular. It will present case studies of four very different, highly successful, approaches to ICT learning for older learners.

Using data from the case studies the paper will give an overview of:

- the 'older learner' profile
- a profile of the skills, experience and attitudes that are characteristic of teachers/trainers working successfully with older learners and ICT
- the "top ten" strategies for creating an effective learning experience for older learners. The research and this paper address both teachers/trainers and program coordinators involved in the planning and delivery of ICT programs for older learners. From the teacher/trainer's perspective the findings will inform teaching practice and from the perspective of program coordinators the research can be used to inform program planning as well as staff development programs.

**Presenter/s:** Tania Teese, Box Hill Institute, Vic

**Paper #: PA 033**

**Title:** *Chefs or cooks: the impact of social change on cookery education*

The hospitality industry in Australia has changed dramatically over the past fifty years. A young couple dining in Melbourne in the 1950s were unlikely to dine out in a restaurant regularly. They were more likely to go to a picture theatre and have a milkshake afterwards. By contrast a young couple in the all-you-can eat, all-day-breakfast food culture of 2005 will eat many meals either out of the house or in the form of pre or partly prepared 'meal solutions' in their home. Not surprisingly as the dining habits change so does not only the nature of the hospitality industry but also the work of TAFE cookery teachers. This study originated in the author's personal observation that Victorian TAFE cookery teachers perceive that the quality of cookery training has fallen. Moreover these teachers apparently believe that the value of their work and their own professional standing has diminished as a result. Some preliminary work into the validity of this perception suggested that the issues surrounding it are complex and embedded in a raft of changes in educational policy,

the hospitality industry and societal attitudes to work and education. This paper presents a reflective analysis of the changing nature of the work of TAFE cookery teachers. It is based on one case study, a review of the relevant literature and the author's reflections on her personal experience as a cookery teacher. The study examines the diversification of the contemporary hospitality industry, the impact of new regulations such as food safety laws, changes to work and life patterns amongst TAFE students and consequent curriculum change.

**Presenter/s:** Sarah-Jane Terrill & Christine Robertson, RMIT

**Paper #: PA054**

**Title:** *Learning from the learner:  
Exploring the relationship between workplace culture and workplace learning.*

For the past three years a group of practitioners from RMIT School of International and Community Studies has worked collaboratively with industry in the delivery of Certificate IV in Community Services to staff currently employed in a major institutional facility for people with disabilities. The employment of action research in the planning and evaluation of competency based training has identified the importance of critical reflection and continual adjustment in workplace training provision. This process of constant reflection has revealed a complex web of interrelated and interdependent cultural mores that underpin not only the work environment, but also the learning context. This paper will report on how this knowledge has been used to reinvent training and assessment processes to workplace cultural specificities. The utilisation of narrative centred learning methodologies to achieve successful learner driven outcomes will also be discussed.

**Presenter/s:** Mr Douglas Thompson, Challenger TAFE, WA

**Paper #: PA 020**

**Title:** *Creating a Student Centred Training Program – notes from the  
workface - creating a Student Responsive Learning Environment*

This is a case study about engaging student motivations and feedback in a virtual circle that changes both the student and the course to produce better outcomes. It describes how a teaching section has used basic research on student segmentation to formulate a program that actively engages with the motivations and needs of its student population to improve its courses and the outcomes for students. It describes five processes:

1. Adopting a model to understand student motivations based on primary research into Student Segmentation.
2. Collecting information to understand student's perceptions and aspirations for success.
3. Acting on that information to adjust course delivery to accommodate and assist those aspirations
4. Implementing those findings as part of a continuous cycle of improvement.
5. Reflections on the way the processes have changed the personnel involved - both staff and students.

The study has been carried out by a practicing lecturer as part of his implementation of courses. The focus is on the students and their aspiration as they move through their courses how course processes change as lecturers become involved and informed of student initial and changing motivations.

**Presenter/s:** Cliff Trood, North Coast Institute, NSW

**Paper #: PA 017**

**Title:** *The Dilemma of Skill Shortages in Regional Areas  
– a case study of manufacturing skills on the North Coast of NSW*

Without a doubt the looming skill shortage in the traditional trades areas is becoming the focus of political debate and policy formation as efforts are made to patch up and rebuild a degraded skills base in manufacturing. These skills have for

so long been ignored, and as recent research shows are fundamental and pivotal to a nation's capacity to innovate, manufacture and compete in the global economy. Regional areas such as the North Coast of NSW provide an attractive location for those wishing to move businesses and industry from metropolitan regions. Low cost land, a holiday lifestyle and ease of access to major markets are however offset by difficulties in accessing skilled staff in many traditional areas and local provision of niche new technology skills training. This paper outlines research carried out on the North Coast in a cooperative project between the NSW Department of State and Regional Development and the North Coast Institute. In recognition of the important role education and training has in assisting regional development of industry the research set out to identify the diversity of manufacturing industries, the skills required and limitations, if any, these industries were facing now and in the future. The findings show that among others issues skill shortages and a lack of access to training, particularly in specialised and new technology skill areas, are limiting the development and expansion of many of the industries on the North Coast. This research raises important questions about the effect skill shortages and training in new technologies can have on industry development in regional Australia.

**Presenter/s:** Lesley Wemyss, Qld

**Paper #: PA 063**

**Title:** *Building networks of assessors in remote Queensland for the purposes of: moderating assessment tools; and tailoring assessments for participants with a disability*

This Reframing the Future project was undertaken to develop and establish innovative and effective remote assessor links between and within private public and industry VET assessors, and disability stakeholder groups to support the implementation of the National Training Framework with special emphasis on the AQTF standards 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 concerning assessment. Many studies have amplified the fact that there is poor assessment practice in VET that therefore leads to questioning about the outcomes of VET programs. The common areas of concern for assessment say Gillis and Bateman (2001) are the on-going professional development of assessors, gathering of assessment evidence, and the quality assurance of assessments. Clayton et al (2001) notes that the quality and consistency of assessment is a critical issue in VET but there is often no agreement on solutions. This is even more emphasised in the remote regional areas, due to the tyranny of distance, and lack of regional professional development opportunities, more commonly held in urban areas. Under the NTF assessment moderation, is a vital aspect of both the RTO's responsibility and commitment to a quality delivery product and quality in the assessment process. As a private RTO we have long learnt that we cannot meet all of these NTF requirements without support and professional development, networks are the answer, especially where we can involve industry stakeholders as well. It is commonly known that public providers have access to far more professional development, as their respective State Government departments support them. Remote regional assessors are literally 'starved' for professional development opportunities. This paper examines the background to this project, and the significant outcomes of the six workshops conducted in Mt Isa, Townsville and Rockhampton which included:

- The workshop participants in these regional areas had a process by which they could confidently meet AQTF Standards 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3.
- Workshop participants developed action plans to improve the quality and consistency of assessment for all their clients, especially those with a disability, and workshopped methods to increase the attendance of people with a disability in their courses.
- Participants in the workshop had a better understanding of the concepts and practices involved in 'reasonable adjustment', 'sufficiency', 'moderation' and 'quality and quantity of evidence' of assessment for all students.



- An understanding as the project co-ordinator of the disparity in assessment processes across the range of RTO's in the networks.
- Networks were formed to progress this process beyond the scope of this project.

**Presenter/s:** Leesa Wheelahan, Griffith University, Qld

**Paper #: PA 037**

**Title: \*\*\*** *Theorising the relationship between the individual, knowledge and skill*

This paper critiques the recent emphasis in the post-compulsory education and training literature on the contextual, situated and problem-oriented nature of knowledge creation and learning. It argues that this is problematic on two grounds: first, in the way it understands how knowledge is created and used; and second, in the way it conceptualises the relationship between the individual, skill and the work-place. I use social realism to argue that the knowledge we need to use does not just arise from the context of our practice on the one hand, and on the other, in taking the fact of our embodiment seriously, I argue that learning needs to go beyond learning in the work-place or learning for work.

**Presenter/s:** Lorraine White-Hancock, Box Hill Institute, Vic

**Paper #: PA 032**

**Title: \*\*\*** *The silent teacher: spoken and unspoken rhetorics and the politics of training reform*

One of the precepts of GameTheory states that whoever starts the game is more likely to win. This paper explores the game of training reform and particularly its impact on teachers who certainly do not make the rules. It traces the impact of the Training Reform Agenda from 1990 to its echoes Victorian Minister Kosky's 2002 Statement Knowledge and Skills for the Innovation Economy. The study considers the effects of these reform rhetorics on curriculum and teachers' work. It considers who speaks and who must remain silent when curriculum decisions are made. The study is based on personal reflection, one case study and a review of relevant literature. The author focuses particularly on education and training in jewellery-design and other arts education as she explores what is spoken and what is unspoken in the politics of training reform. Reference to learning that is, or should be, rich in thinking and creativity leads to a critique of many of the assumptions underpinning Training Packages and to Ross's concept of artistic 'mental slavery'. The author goes on to consider the application of some novel theories and novel solutions to the analysis of Training Reform, Game Theory in particular. She refers to Akerlof, Spence and Stiglitz' work on 'information economics' where the "players have different information and are privileged with different, unequal knowledge about the object of a game". This analysis throws new light on the question of who can speak and who must remain silent during Training Reform events such as the development of a Training Package.

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I trust you have enjoyed this year's conference and will join us for our next event in 2006.

## **John Blakeley**

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Conference Convenor 2005