

AVETRA News

From the President

Welcome to the first A-News for 2009. For AVETRA it is a time of mixed feelings. We are excited by the upcoming national conference, but saddened by the recent news of the death of Ray Barker, a major benefactor. An obituary on Ray Barker prepared by former AVETRA President Peter Kell is included in this issue.

The AVETRA executive is also saddened to hear of the recent passing of Lucy Stockdale, the long-standing Research Co-ordinator at Kangan Batman TAFE. Lucy was a greatly loved member of the VET research community and a stalwart of AVETRA. She will be greatly missed.

The annual conference in Sydney from 15-17 April promises to be a great success thanks to the work of a large and enthusiastic conference committee: Ros Brennan Kemmis and Melinda Randall (Co-convenors), Stephen Crump, Cathy Down, Tom Dumbrell, Carmel Ellis-Gulli, Kevin Heys, Peter Kell, Ann Reich & Larry Smith. Thanks are due to one and all. We have a great line-up of international and national speakers. If you haven't registered yet, you can still do so at http://www.aveutra.org.au/annual_conference/index.shtml



Erica Smith, President

AVETRA News

Ray Barker Obituary

After a short illness Dr Ray Barker passed away at Mona Vale on 20 March 2009.



Dr Ray Barker was a foundation member of AVETRA with a long background in training and development and a generous patron to the association. His contributions enabled the establishment of the Dr Ray Barker Distinguished Service to VET Research Award and the Ray Barker Fellow scheme. This sponsorship has seen the production of a history of AVETRA and also a report on the impact of VET research which will be shortly released, as well as AVETRA ambassadorships to enable representatives of local VET communities to attend AVETRA conferences and engage in activities in their communities.

Ray entered the film industry in the 1930s in Sydney and joined the Royal Australian Navy at the outbreak of the Second World War. He served on the HMAS Perth and was aboard when it was sunk in the Sunda Straits in 1942. He became a prisoner of war.

After the war Ray studied psychology at Sydney University and overseas and became involved in pioneering workplace and workforce research. Ray returned temporarily to work in the film industry

but then moved to the oil and gas industry. Working for BP he was involved in the commissioning and management of petrochemical works in Australia in the 1960s.

Ray specialised in training and workforce programs. He left the corporate sector to work as consultant on training and workforce issues. He had public and private clients across the Asia Pacific region. Dr Ray Barker completed his PhD on the history of apprenticeships and private training.

Ray Barker had many friends in the VET community. He will be sadly missed and fondly remembered.

Research and VET News

Report on the Big Skills Conference

The Big Skills conference mounted by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in Sydney (2-5 March 2009) was kicked off by David Finegold from Rutgers University in the United States. Finegold asked a big question: 'Are skills the answer?' His reply, borne out by the intense talk of the next three days, was 'no, not in isolation'. Nevertheless, skills did emerge as a critical element in finding solutions to the big issues discussed: the global economic crisis, climate change and social inclusion. Indeed, the Deputy Prime Minister asserted on day three that 'vocational education and training was now on centre stage of economic policy'. (See http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_090305_093449.aspx)

The gloomy economic outlook permeated discussions yet the Big Skills conference had a vibrant quality about it, with much talk about the opportunities the crisis presents for innovation and for creating better jobs for the future. There was also room for laughter and tears, especially during a session run by Julie McCrossin about ways in which to engage with people with a disability, on a personal level as well as through better policy settings and sensible funding arrangements. These latter levers can only work when the fear of difference is confronted.

Another moving speech came from Singapore, where the Institute of Technical Education (<http://www.ite.edu.sg>) has been successful in creating a vocational pathway for low performing students. Its approach is to develop 'thinking doers' through strong institutional planning, sustained marketing efforts and dedicated pastoral care.

Clear among the opportunities for VET are the demands of the green economy. A message in these sessions was the need to think about the best ways for reskilling existing workers and teachers as well as about emerging industries and new skills. An associated issue arises when considering the nature of a tertiary education sector. While the Dr Megan Clark, the head of CSIRO, has her sights on a new generation of university educated scientists, others are thinking about how the VET sector can help equip the workforce to retrofit our houses, install our solar panels, audit our water allocations, and bring the innovations incubated in university laboratories into the mainstream.

A World Bank representative, Dr Marope, reminded us also that we must not forget the early childhood years. It is here that the foundations not only of a skilled but an inclusive society are laid.

Some of the speakers' presentations are already available. See http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/programmes_funding/Programme_categories/Conferences/Speakers_Presentations.htm Conference proceedings will be made available online from mid-April 2009. To receive a copy of the conference proceedings CD, please register your interest via email to skillsconference2009@deewr.gov.au and include your name and postal address.

Calls for Papers/Submissions

18th National Vocational Education Training Research Conference, 'No Frills' 2009, University of Ballarat, Mt Helen, Victoria, 8-10 July 2009

Registration and call for papers now open. The conference will focus on strategies, observations and proven practices that can influence an even better VET system in Australia. We seek papers that rely

on sound evidence-based research rather than on descriptive or opinion-based work. For more information, to submit a paper, or to register, please visit:

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/trconf/trconf18.html>

Network on Innovative Apprenticeship. Apprenticeship: A successful tradition and innovation of school-to-work transitions

The International Network on Innovative Apprenticeship (INAP) invites contributions to its international conference, to be held in Turin, September 17th and 18th, 2009. The conference will address the following topics:

- Managing the transition from general schooling to vocational education
- Vocational literacy and vocational identity as a pre-condition for an effective transition from vocational education into the employment system
- Levels of governance and the role of stakeholders in the transition from school to VET

Submissions: torino2009@uni-bremen.de

General Correspondence: innovative-apprenticeship@uni-bremen.de

For the full call for papers see <http://www.innovative-apprenticeship.net>

International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education www.academicjournals.org/IJVTE

The International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education (IJVTE) publishes high-quality, peer-reviewed solicited and unsolicited articles, in all areas of the subject. Original articles in basic and applied research as well as critical reviews, surveys, opinions, commentaries and essays will be considered for publication.

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Conferences and other Events

The 12th Annual Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association Conference, Sydney, 16-17 April 2009 <http://www.avetra.org.au/>

New Zealand Industry Training Federation Research Conference 22-23 April

The annual VET Research Forum has been extended to two days this year and includes four international speakers. <http://www.itf.org.nz/research-forum-2009.html>

The Wellington forum will be opened by Minister for Tertiary Education Anne Tolley on 22 April and includes an impressive line up of speakers covering a range of issues that have an impact on skills and development. The international line-up features the United Kingdom's Professor David Ashton who has developed a highly respected expertise in the international comparisons of skills systems, globalisation, skill formation, workplace learning, organisational strategies and high performance workplaces. Also from the United Kingdom and speaking on the varying nature of industry-led vocational education and training, is Dr Johnny Sung of the University of Leicester.

The ITF annual conference will be on Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 July 2009; details available soon at <http://www.itf.org.nz/conference-2009.html>

International Conference on Organizational Learning, Knowledge and Capabilities (OLKC) 'Connecting Worlds', Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 26-28 April 2009

The full program and session overview for the OLKC 2009 conference is now available on the OLKC2009 website. To view the OLKC 2009 paper and round table sessions, to register and to arrange your accommodation, please see the conference website: <http://www.feweb.vu.nl/olkc2009>. Contact: Roos Erkelens: VU University Amsterdam olkc2009@feweb.vu.nl

Victorian TAFE Association State Conference 2009, 'Delivering Success in a Contestable Future', Victoria University Convention Centre, 7-8 May 2009

http://www.vta.vic.edu.au/?Name=Events_State_Conference_2009

WA Training Forum 2009, 11-12 May 2009, Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre,

<http://www.vetinfonet.det.wa.edu.au/home/>

NSW Department of Education and Training Skills Recognition Conference, Australian Technology Park, Sydney, 25-26 May 2009

<http://www.hotelnetwork.com.au/>

VET Teaching 2009 ... a celebration of teaching and learning, 26-2-May 2009, Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, <http://www.vetteaching.com.au>

Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council 'Mind the Gen Gap – Working together to meet workforce challenges', Dockside Convention Centre, Darling Harbour Sydney, 2 June 2009

https://www.cshisc.com.au/index.php?option=com_events&task=view_detail&Itemid=36&agid=36&year=2009&month=06&day=02

Young people: Finding their way in a new era - Policy Forum, Melbourne, 10 November 2009

Presented by NCVER & the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations this event will draw on findings from a range of research using data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY), the event will seek to inform policy makers on how they can improve education outcomes for young people, provide young people with skills for the contemporary labour market, as well as ensure that young people lead full and meaningful lives. To receive further information as it becomes available please email: events@ncver.edu.au

Recent Publications

Brinkley, I, *Knowledge Economy and Enterprise, The Work Foundation (UK), 2009* The purpose of this paper is to explore how much of the knowledge economy is driven by SMEs. Is the transformation towards a knowledge based economy also seeing a shift to what some people call an 'entrepreneurial economy'? Or is the knowledge economy seeing the rebirth of the corporation as the most effective means of generating and exploiting new forms of knowledge?

<http://www.theworkfoundation.com/research/publications/publicationdetail.aspx?oItemId=203&parentPageID=102&PubType=>

Cisco, *Equipping every learner for the 21st century: a white paper, San Jose, Calif., 2009.*

In this study, Cisco worked with leading educational thinkers from around the world to propose a new paradigm of 21st century learning; one that will require a transformation of education systems, using new pedagogic techniques to teach 21st century skills delivered through education reform agendas. <http://www.cisco.com/web/about/citizenship/socio-economic/docs/GlobalEdWP.pdf>

Figgis, J, *Regenerating the Australian landscape of professional VET practice: Practitioner-driven changes to teaching and learning - Research overview, NCVER, 2009*

An overview of research on innovative teaching and learning practice in Australia is discussed in this publication, which was based on discussions with practitioners and vocational education and training

(VET) managers responsible for teaching and learning. It examines why and how people are changing their pedagogy, and with what results. It found that improvements in teaching and learning practice arise from a perceived need to change. The imperatives to change are usually locally based and their success is dependent on a commitment by all those supporting the learner. Practice is best shared through effective mentoring and by using networks effectively.

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2133.html>

Giddy, K, Lopez, J and Redman, A, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes*, NCVET, 2009

Helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job-seekers find and keep a job has been the focus of recent reforms announced by the Australian Government. This report and accompanying guide describe seven essential characteristics of employment service organisations that lead to successful employment outcomes for their Indigenous clients. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2127.html>
<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2125.html>

Hillier, Y, *Innovation in teaching and learning in vocational education and training: International perspectives - Research overview*, NCVET, 2009

This overview of research into innovative teaching and learning practice internationally found that technologies can be used to support networks of practitioners and resource banks to foster better professional practice and help practitioners exchange ideas and resources. In addition, it is important for practitioners to be able to step back from their 'daily grind' to think about what they can do differently and how. They need to be supported to test out new resources and pedagogies in a culture of active experimentation. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2134.html>

Knight, B and Mlotkowski, P, *An overview of vocational education and training in Australia and its links to the labour market*, NCVET, 2009

This paper, written as a background paper for a visit from the OECD, describes Australia's VET system and how it relates to the broader set of education and learning options that are available to Australians.

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2117.html>

University and College Union, *Challenging the market in education: marketisation and the growth of the private sector in tertiary education: a preliminary report*. UCU (UK), 2009.

This report focuses on the growth of the private sector, the sharpest and most immediately visible part of the process of marketisation in tertiary education (comprised, in this context, of further education, adult education and higher education).

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/a/h/challengingma>

Jobs and Other Opportunities

Open Funding Round: National Vocational Education and Training Research and Evaluation Program (NVETRE)

Researchers with innovative ideas are invited to submit a proposal for funding for a project that is relevant to the contemporary environment and focuses on research that is pertinent to policy and how the tertiary education sector operates. Funding for several research projects in the vicinity up to \$100,000 per project is available through a competitive selection process.

For an information kit go to: <http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/tenders.html> or contact Renee Lukeman on + 61 8 8230 8661 or renee.lukeman@ncver.edu.au

Proposals must be submitted by close of business 11 May 2009

Calling all VET Researchers!

Nominations for the 2009 Vocational Education and Training (VET) Researcher of the Year Award are now open. If you know a researcher of a high standing whose work has had a positive impact on policy or practice in the VET sector, and who is actively engaged in the sector then you are strongly encouraged to nominate that person for the award. The award will be presented at the Australian Training Awards in November 2009.

Nominations close at 5pm on Friday, 12 June 2009. A copy of the award guidelines and nomination forms can be accessed at: <http://www.ncver.edu.au/resources/resinfo/building.html>

About AVETRA

AVETRA is the peak professional association for VET researchers. Its ability to be a sustainable and viable association depends on its membership. Members are urged to continue their membership and to encourage their colleagues to join AVETRA. AVETRA services include:

- An annual VET international research conference
- Two editions of *International Journal of Training Research per annum*
- The bi-monthly AVETRA e-newsletter with the latest news in the VET sector as well as VET research.
- The new *Research Today* publication twice a year.
- OctoberVET workshops organized by AVETRA members in centres as widely spread as Perth, Darwin, Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.
- The AVETRA website with VET research links and information
- Awards for VET researchers including the joint award with TAFE Directors Australia, the Berwyn Clayton Award, The Ray Barker Award, and the AVETRA Best paper Award.

HELP AVETRA help VET research and join now if you are not a member. Full **\$145** (GST inclusive) and Student memberships **\$71.50** including GST are available to join AVETRA.

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