

Adelaide's OctoberVET was held on 28 October in the Bradley Forum at UniSA's City Campus and focused on the tertiary sector's recent history. The session '*Memoirs of the VET sector - Examining the past to move into the future*', reflected upon policy developments in Australia's education sector over the last few decades.

The event attracted an audience in excess of 80, from within South Australia and beyond. They heard John Dawkins - former Labor Minister and current Chair of the Australian Qualifications Framework Council - reminisce about what he tried to achieve in the 1980s and 1990s. Dawkins reflected on what he saw as his major achievements; namely, increasing the skill levels of all Australians and improving equal opportunity to tertiary education for all Australians.

A discussion followed between Dawkins and other figures who have been engaged in the vocational education sector at very senior levels: Kaye Schofield, Robin Ryan and Virginia Battye. The panel spoke of the tensions that colour the VET landscape. Robin Ryan spoke of the myriad of trade institutes and colleges peppered throughout Australia before Federation, noting that these illustrate the richness of VET's history.

The Kangan Report, because of its significance to the sector, featured heavily in discussions. Also noted as developments of consequence were the opening up of the training market, the internationalisation of VET and the changing governance arrangements of TAFE, and pathways between the various educational sectors. Kaye Schofield concluded that 'TAFE is a destination in its own right..the notion of VET as merely a pathway to higher education diminishes its worth'.

Overall, the event was very favourably received. There was some disappointment that there was not enough time for the audience to ask questions and contribute their own recollections of the times and events discussed. But the interest in the afternoon suggests that there is an appetite in the VET community for more history about the sector.