

AVETRA News

From the President

Dear all

I am pleased and honoured to have taken over the position of President of AVETRA. Having recently taken up a position at a dual sector university, I hope that I may be able faithfully to represent the interests of the diverse AVETRA membership. AVETRA is a lively and thriving organisation that is increasingly securing a major place both in the national VET scene and in the scholarly research community. For example in April I was invited to meet with members of a visiting delegation from the OECD to discuss the part that AVETRA plays in VET research. These achievements have been in no small part due to the sterling efforts of the Immediate Past President Peter Kell.

Many members will have attended our 2008 conference, in Adelaide in April. The informal as well as formal feedback was extremely positive and we are very pleased that delegates enjoyed the conference so much. Resounding thanks are due to the conference committee, made up of South Australian members. The feedback forms have been carefully analysed to inform future planning. The location of next year's conference is still not determined but I hope that members in whichever State it is located will be able enthusiastically to throw themselves into organising AVETRA 09!

I am pleased to say that we have an excellent National Executive Committee team for 2008-10. It is wonderful that so many talented yet extraordinarily busy people were willing to offer their services. The office holders are as follows:

- President: Erica Smith
- Vice President: Ruth Wallace
- Secretary: Michele Simons
- Treasurer: Kevin Heys

And members are: Cathy Down, Bobby Harreveld, Sarah Sutcliffe, Ian Robertson, Francesca Beddie, Llandis Barratt-Pugh, Peter Smith and Anne Jones.

Executive Committee members have each agreed to take on a particular role in regard to AVETRA's major activities and will no doubt be contacting you over the next little while in relation to their roles. New initiatives include the formation of a New Researchers' Advisory Group within AVETRA, as part of our contribution to the national effort to build research capacity in VET.

Some of you will know that AVETRA received a donation a little while ago from Dr Ray Barker, who is an AVETRA life member and a well-respected VET researcher. Over the past few years AVETRA has worked with Ray Barker to identify suitable fellowships that build AVETRA's strength and its contribution to VET research. Full details of the projects can be found on the AVETRA web site. 'Project no 1' provides scholarships each year for three years for 'AVETRA ambassadors', 'Project no 2' funded a history of AVETRA, and 'Project no 3' has funded a research project into the state of VET research and its impact on policy and practice. The History of AVETRA, by Cydde Miller, is now on the AVETRA web site. This is a wonderful record of AVETRA's first ten years and we thank Cydde for her hard work. 'Project no 3' has just been awarded to Darryl Dymock and Stephen Billett of Griffith University, and no doubt many members will be involved as participants in their research over the next six months or so.

At the AVETRA conference dinner in April, Mark Cully from NCVER announced that the Minister for Employment, Education & Workplace Relations, Julia Gillard, had approved an annual award for the VET Researcher of the Year. This award will be presented as part of the annual Australian Training Awards and NCVER will manage the process. It is wonderful news that the contribution of research

to VET has been acknowledged in this way and we are very appreciative of NCVET's efforts in gaining and funding this award.

I wish AVETRA members all the best in their work and their research



Erica Smith, May 2008

The 2008 AVETRA Conference: VET in Context

A wonderful spread of delegates attended the 2008 conference in Adelaide. There were 185 registrations including 171 from Australia (every state/territory represented) and 11 from New Zealand, 2 from Germany and 1 from the United Kingdom. One hundred and fifteen (62%) of those registered were AVETRA members and 70 (38%) non-members. Eighteen full-time students registered, with 11 of these presenting a paper. There were 64 speakers in total.

Thirty different concurrent speakers were nominated for best presentation by respondents to the conference evaluation form. This variety is pleasing as it gives an indication that the quality of the conference presentations was well regarded and that delegates enjoyed the diversity of the program.

The conference program, organisation and venue met the needs of delegates, with the highest ratings being awarded to technical support (4.8 out of 5), venue accessibility (4.7), registration desk (4.7), venue facilities (4.5) and the opening reception sponsored by University of SA (4.5).

There were some good suggestions offered to improve future conferences. Thank you to the 51 delegates who took the time to fill out the conference evaluation form.

Conference Action and in particular, Aurelie, were praised by delegates for their helpful, friendly service in making it a great conference. Susan Dawe also needs to be commended for all of her work and so too all other members of the local organising committee, including for collectively obtaining a high level of sponsorship.

Kaye Bowman, Conference Committee

New Researchers Advisory Group (NRAG)

The AVETRA Executive has resolved to develop a New Researchers Advisory Group to advise the Executive on ways in which the Association can assist people who are wanting to get into research. For example, new researchers often have questions such as:

- identifying research issues and generating research questions that can be answered through research;
- forms of methodology that are available and which of them may most fruitfully be used to pursue a research question;
- writing research for different audiences;
- writing for refereed publication;
- research ethics.

The Executive is keen to hear from new researchers about the issues that matter to them; that form barriers to them in developing research; and how the Association can help with those things.

The convenor for the NRAG is Melinda Randall at Major Training Services, and the AVETRA Executive liaison person for the group is Associate Professor Peter Smith at Deakin University. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Melinda at melinda.randall@majortraining.com.au

Good luck with your research.

Peter Smith, AVETRA Executive liaison for the NRAG.

The AVETRA Mentoring Network

AVETRA is, over the next three years, developing a mentoring network that supports practitioner researchers, specifically those practitioners involved in the communities of practice being supported by NCVET, which is also funding this mentor scheme.

The first stage of this initiative is already underway and has gathered a pool of diversely experienced and located mentors. A successful two-day workshop involving all 10 of the current research protégés was held at Victoria University on 13/14 May 2008.

The participants were able to review their initial proposals for their research projects and begin tailoring them into more focused projects through a variety of activities and discussion led by the Victoria University VET Community of Practice team. The aim of the sessions was to kick start the participants research process and form the face to face and virtual support structure of the community of practice. All participants left the workshop with a commitment to carrying out their research project and have engaged with the aim of producing and presenting a paper at a VET conference next year.

During the workshop they were able to explore what a mentoring relationship may add to their project, discuss their individual needs and propose a mentor that they would like to work with from the current mentor register. We are currently engaged in the mentor / protégé matching process so that the relationships and projects will flourish as the year continues.

This is the first group of protégés, and there will be two subsequent groups in 2009 and 2010.

Llandis Barratt-Pugh, AVETRA Mentoring Network Manager

Research and VET News

Skilling Queensland for the future

The Queensland Government is addressing the skills shortage with a \$716 million investment in vocational education and training programs announced in the 2008-09 state budget. See <http://statements.cabinet.qld.gov.au/MMS/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?id=58462>

New Executive Director of Dusseldorp Skills Forum

<http://www.dsf.org.au/>

Oona Nielsen is the newly appointed Executive Director of the Dusseldorp Skills Forum. She is a communications specialist, formally principal of her own communications consultancy specialising in public relations, strategic communication and marketing advice and implementation to clients including Multiplex Developments, Leighton Contractors, American Express and the Diversity Council of Australia.

Reporting Employability Skills

www.employabilityskillsresources.com

At its July 2007 meeting the National Quality Council endorsed an approach to descriptive reporting on employability skills which involves: learners downloading qualification specific Employability Skills Summaries for Training Package qualifications they have completed from an internet site; and RTOs adding a mandatory sentence providing directions to the site to all qualification testamurs for Training Package qualifications. At its March 2008 meeting the Council agreed to the following two step process for moving to the new reporting arrangements:

- **From 1 July 2008**, RTOs will be required to inform all students issued with Training Package qualifications that Employability Skills Summaries for Training Package qualifications can be downloaded from employabilityskills.training.com.au ; and

- **From 1 January 2009**, RTOs will be required to add the following mandatory sentence to all qualification testamurs issued for Training Package qualifications: A summary of the employability skills developed through this qualification can be downloaded from employabilityskills.training.com.au
Professional development resources for implementing the model for assessing and reporting employability skills are available from the website.

Calls for Papers/Submissions

The Innovation Minister, Senator Kim Carr, has put out a consultation paper on **promoting excellence in research**:

<http://minister.industry.gov.au/SenatortheHonKimCarr/Pages/WANTEDINPUTINTOANEW'ERA'FORAUSTRALIANRESEARCH.aspx>. Submissions are due by 30 June.

Review of Australian Higher Education Discussion Paper June 2008

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/policy_issues_reviews/reviews/highered_review

The discussion paper outlines a number of issues on which feedback is sought, including social inclusion, resourcing, the student experience and links with industry and the vocational education sector. The issues outlined in the discussion paper have been informed by the preliminary input received. The panel invites comments on the questions raised in this paper or on other matters that relate to the terms of reference. Deadline 31 July 2008

Conferences and other Events

2008 Training Sector Forum: Better Skills, Brighter Futures, 26 and 27 June 2008 at Hilton Adelaide

http://www.training.sa.gov.au/OVETorgs/a8_publish/modules/publish/content.asp?id=20022&navgrp=119

The themes for the 6th annual 2008 Training Sector Forum are:

- Improving participation in education and employment
- Raising the skills and productivity of our existing workforce

Two-day, one-day and half-day registrations are available until 16 June. For further information please contact Katja Paulaharju on telephone (08) 8226 4358 or email the Quality Directorate at dfest.quality@saugov.sa.gov.au

17th National VET Research Conference (No Frills), University of Tasmania, Newham Campus, Launceston, 9-11 July 2008. Co-hosted by NCVET and TAFE Tasmania.

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/trconf/trconf17.html>

'No Frills' brings together staff involved or interested in education and training research from TAFE institutes, universities and private registered training organisations as well as consultants. Keynote speakers will be The Hon David Bartlett MP, Premier of Tasmania, Minister for Education and Skills, Minister for Planning and Workplace Relations, Ms Oona Nielszen, Executive Director, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Dr Rob Simons, Head of Research and Evaluation, The Smith Family.

First World Congress on Teacher Education for TVET, 21-23 July Bandung. Convenor:

Ministry of National Education, Republic of Indonesia & TT-TVET EU-Asia-Link project partners, Indonesia <http://www.upi.edu/tvet-congress/index.php> The theme of the congress is Shaping TVET-Teacher Education for the Changing World of Work

Apprenticeships: Sustaining Australia's skills base - NCVET Research Forum 15 August 2008, Melbourne, Victoria <http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/sustaining/forum.html>

NCVER is hosting a national one-day event to spotlight the past, present and future of apprenticeships in Australia. The program will feature: Mr James Barron, Group Training Australia; Professor Victor Callan, University of Queensland, Professor Erica Smith, University of Ballarat; and, Dr Tom Karmel, NCVET. In addition, a panel of high-profile industry leaders will debate future directions for apprenticeships in a session hosted by Peter Mares of ABC Radio National. To register your interest to attend, email: events@ncver.edu.au

ACPET 2008 National Conference Thursday 28 to Saturday 30 August 2008, Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart, Tasmania www.acpetconference.info Keynote speaker: the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister; Minister for Education; Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations; Minister for Social Inclusion. Renowned *futurist*, Peter Sheahan, will also be facilitating a workshop on '**Creating a new generation of educational leaders**', which will provide future-focused strategies for continuing to build successful education through courageous leadership, innovation and change. **For more information please contact** Tulips Meetings Management on 02 4984 2554 or email acpet@pco.com.au

Recent Publications

Callan, V, *Accelerated apprenticeships: Apprentice, employer and teaching staff perceptions*, NCVER, 2008 This research examined recent pilots of accelerated apprenticeships in the automotive industry in Queensland. Interviews with apprentices, employers and teachers showed that the traditional model is still well regarded. It is not failing, but does require evolutionary change <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1991.html>

You can also hear Victor Callan talking about his research by downloading the MP3 file.

Choy, Sarojni C. and Haukka, Sandra: 'Industrial attachments for instructors in TVET delivery', in Maclean, R. and Wilson, D., Eds. *International Handbook of Technical and Vocational Education and Training UNESCO-UNEVOC*. UNESCO, 2008. Scholars, learners and employers across the globe agree that the workplace is the most authentic learning environment to train a competent workforce ... Industry attachments have long been accepted as a core component of training for trainees and are well structured and coordinated ... This chapter begins with an overview of training arrangements for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) practitioners followed by a discussion on the significance of industrial attachment for them ... Key issues are drawn from an analysis of these models. The chapter concludes with considerations for planning and arranging industrial attachment to update or maintain TVET practitioners' currency of industry changes, knowledge and skills.

Ferrier, Fran; Burke, Gerald; Selby Smith, Chris; *Skills development for a diverse older workforce* NCVER, 2008 In the context of an ageing population, the opportunity for people aged 45 years and older to update their work-related skills and knowledge is potentially important in enabling some of these workers to remain in, or return to, employment. This study considers the diverse nature of older workers in the labour force and their learning preferences. It suggests that some changes to skill development activities are required to accommodate the motivations, objectives and ways of learning of older workers. These changes include a mix of organisational factors, such as integrating learning and work, and teaching and learning factors, such as flexibility and responsiveness to learner needs. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1984.html>

Kearns, P; Bowman, K.; Garlick, S.: *The double helix of vocational education and training and regional development*, NCVER, 2008. Vocational education and training (VET) has a role to play in sustainable regional development. Through five regional case studies this research examines how well VET is tailoring supply to skill needs, how VET has become more flexible to obtain a better match between demand and supply, and whether partnerships have been linked to whole-of-government frameworks in ways which support sustainable regional development. The study concludes that successful relationships between VET and regional development require ongoing alignment both ways. Comprehensive regional frameworks could facilitate this co-development between VET and regional development. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1989.html>

Martin, R; Villeneuve-Smith, F.; Marshall, L.; McKenzie, E., *Employability skills explored* London: Learning and Skills Network, 2008. 65 p. This report examines the factors that define employability skills and explores how UK employers perceive the current level of skills of young people entering their first job as well as the type of skills they expect from these young workers. It goes on to reveal employer expectations of skills development and their views on the funding of it. <https://www.lsneducation.org.uk/user/order.aspx?code=080044>

Mitchell, J and McKenna, S, *Productivity and participation enhanced by VET*, Elizabeth, SA: Reframing the Future, 2008. 60 p. This report describes how a selection of organisations and practitioners in the vocational education and training (VET) sector in Australia undertook professional development projects and assisted industries, enterprises and individuals to increase workforce productivity and enabled individuals and groups to participate in the workforce. The projects were managed and supported by Reframing the Future, the national staff development and change management program that supports the implementation of the national training system. http://www.reframingthefuture.net/docs/2008/Publications/0ALL_Productivity_participation_29apr08.pdf

Most of the papers produced by those who received new researcher awards to attend NCVET's 2007 No Frills conference are now published: See **Sutcliffe, S:** [Getting on \[line\] with it ... surveying student experiences](#) ; **Pettigrew, T and Todhunter, S:** [VET goes virtual: Can web conferencing be an effective component of teaching and learning in the vocational education and training sector;](#) **Ward, J,** [Measuring student satisfaction with VET services ... and getting it right!;](#) **Bell, D** [Organisational planning and performance integration in a TAFE context](#)

Qualit-e-News: a newsletter published by Quality Directorate in the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, every three weeks to keep you up to date with the latest issues relating to the Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education Sectors. To subscribe, please email defeest.quality@saugov.sa.gov.au and include the words 'subscribe to Qualit-e-news' in the subject line.

Jobs And Other Opportunities

The **Australian Council for Educational Research** is currently seeking an experienced and accomplished researcher to work on projects in the area of vocational education and training (VET). Research in this area typically involves high-level analysis of the processes and outcomes of VET systems, institutions and programs, designing and managing assessment and evaluation projects, managing data collections and analyses, and the preparation of reports and briefings for a wide range of clients. We are seeking a person with a higher degree, preferably at PhD level, and experience working in the vocational education and training sector. Extensive experience in the statistical analysis of large complex data sets is highly desirable. For further information please visit ACER's website at <http://www.acer.edu.au/employment>

Applications are now open for the **2009 Fulbright Scholarships** sponsored by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Valued at A\$25,000 this Scholarship supports three to four months of professional development or research in the United States. The Scholarship period may be started any time between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010. This Scholarship is for an Australian citizen who works in the vocational education and training sector, or is a training leader in business and industry. The program undertaken should concern current vocational education and training policy or practice. The proposal must include an educational component (such as a short-course and/or research) and may involve other forms of professional experience including visits to relevant organisations. For further information and application forms see www.fulbright.com.au Applications close 31 August 2008.

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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