



From the President

Greetings to all AVETRA members!

This edition of A-News will reach you around the time of our National Conference. I would like to publically acknowledge the work of Llandis and

his team and Doug and Jodie from The Association Specialists for all their hard work in making the conference a reality for all of us to enjoy.

The Conference came at a significant time for the VET sector as it moves into yet another period of change. Various state-based reforms are having a significant impact on the workforces in both public and private training organisations. The release of the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA) strategy document *Future, focus, 2013* National Workforce Development Strategy, the report from the Allen Consulting Group on VET quality and long-awaited National Skills Standards Council (NSSC) paper on the review of the standards for the regulation of VET signal an intense period of reflection and debate around how the institutional mechanisms might be improved to enhance the quality and integrity of the VET system. Many of these issues were addressed at the conference and the Executive provided expert input into the various consultations that are currently being held around the country.

The Executive met prior to the National Conference to discuss how the next stages of our work plan will be implemented. We looked at the outcomes from the membership survey which has been open over the last few months for ideas on ways to advance the development of research hubs in the association and to enhance the role the Association might play in supporting the development of a robust VET Research Community. We will be finalizing plans for the rollout of our annual OctoberVET events. I would encourage you to be on the lookout for information about the events that might be planned in your state or region.

Best wishes



Michele Simons

President of AVETRA, University of South Australia, March, 2013

Prof. Stephen Billett, a founding member of AVETRA, is to be awarded with an Honorary Doctorate of Education by the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. This prestigious award is in recognition of Professor Billett's contributions to educational science. As AVETRA members will know, Finland takes education and educational research seriously, and



the University of Jyväskylä is granted this honorary doctorate as part of its 150 year celebrations of teacher education. Prof. Billett will be attending a three day ceremony in August to receive the award.

On behalf of the association, we congratulate Prof. Billett on this outstanding award.

Dr Darryl Dymock – a long time AVETRA member and renowned VET researcher – publishes his new book *Extending Your Use-by Date: Why Retirement Age is Only a Number* as an e-book this month. This book presents a positive approach to choosing an active later life, and reveals the many social, psychological, physical and financial benefits of staying in the workplace for longer.



Darryl wants people to start thinking seriously about their retirement plans from the age 40, and to actively consider their options rather than blindly accepting retirement just because they've reached a certain age. His book – initially published as an e-book – is a practical 'how to' guide for mature-age people wanting to stay on at, or get back into, work and draws on hundreds of interviews with real-life Australians about their experiences of working longer. *Extending your use-by date* is available online at www.xoum.com.au and at Amazon and the iBookstore.

AVETRA congratulates Darryl on this remarkable achievement.

2013 AVETRA CONFERENCE

Fremantle welcomed nearly 150 AVETRA delegates, with several from other countries, to a hot Western Australia to enjoy extended summer weather. The Esplanade Hotel was a central venue at the heart of Fremantle with nearby harbor and cappuccino strip giving us superb conference facilities.

We started at Challenger Institute on the Indian Ocean edge with 8 workshops and then a wonderful Welcome reception as the sun set with ocean views across to Rottnest Island. Liz Harris the CEO told us about the history of Challenger and the recent success as large training provider of the year. The Challenger staff laid on a generous reception that made for a great evening for us and our thanks go to them for their generosity and efficient arrangements.

Day one began with Ben Taylor welcoming us to his country and recanting past stories. Etienne Wenger, so often referenced in AVETRA papers, then explained and developed his theory indicating that our communities of practice are now ringed with social networks and interlinked. The over-choice of knowledge means the challenge for us is the continual negotiation of identity in a confusing landscape.

We ran seven streams of papers throughout the conference with excellent timing by the chairs making for a fluid interchange between rooms. Lunch was highly praised by delegates who struggled up to the afternoon sessions. Colleen Hayward then confronted us with the realities of being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in Australia. What came through in her passionate and well measured address was the interlocking nature of learning, health and socialization for the development and working patterns of our young indigenous people.

Our day one completed with an AVETRA AGM delivered in efficient style by the President Michele Simons, reflecting on a successful year for the association despite external pressures and changes. We made our way then to the southern Success Harbor and the Fremantle Yacht Club, with views of myriads of boats and a blazing ocean sunset yet again. Mario the nearly marvelous magician made scarves appear from our sleeves and cards change in our hands leaving us baffled over canapés and drinks, while the Jazz band played. The food was sumptuous. The band from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts played a feature set for us, and then we were on to the awards recognising the workshop facilitators, and the best paper and new researcher paper. Roger Harris and Steven Hodge won the best Journal article of the year and a well deserving Hugh Guthrie was given the Berwyn Clayton award for services to AVETRA.

Day two started with a wonderful address for Stephen Billett. Beginning with a walk through history and how Aristocrats, Theocrats and Bureaucrats have shaped VET and marginalized the knowledge and skills residual in facilitators, Stephen produced an agenda for change and was immediately requested to run for Ministerial office by the audience. Philipp Gonan took us away to Europe and explained the German and Swizz experience, dissecting what we might take from the system but warning of cultural imperatives. His review was warm, erudite and connected with the Australian experience. Finally, Gavin Moodie presented a model of how VET is shaped by external discourses and the interplay between the media, interest groups, committees and policy, indicating how research findings might have an impact on the system. In response Michele Simons, Jane Figgis (journalist), Liz Harris (CEO), and Asrida Uptis (DIISRTE) gave their views on VET futures from Academic, Journalistic, VET leadership and Federal policy perspectives.

We left with an invite for Stephen Billett to be in Queensland in a year's time for AVETRA 17 and the goal of 200 delegates. We departed to disperse to four continents taking many good memories and a strengthened network with us.

A MINUTE WITH Assoc. Prof. Ruth Wallace, Charles Darwin University



I first got interested in VET research when working with Indigenous people running VET programs in various remote and marginalized communities across northern Australia. I became concerned that needed to learn and share our understandings of the best ways to deliver programs and make delivery successful and sustainable by addressing problems in the educational system that burn out the Indigenous and non –Indigenous educators and learners.

Two people who inspired me most to conduct research

Dr Allan Arnott, The Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University: he challenges me to critique my thinking and the status quo and the accepted ways of working from the evidence base.

Kathy Guthadjaka of Gawa, Galiwin'ku has taught me about working across different knowledge systems and the importance of good research to help institutions change and respond to all the communities' needs.

Methodologies that I have used are Critical Ethnography, Narrative Enquiry and Participatory Action Research.

The most interesting piece of VET research I conducted was about understanding learning identities of marginalized regional learners and their implications for educational delivery.

Currently I am researching mobile learning using mobile technology and game theory to help us engage diverse learners and lecturers in the new frontier of educational delivery and workforce development.

Each edition of AVETRA News will feature a special interview with a VET researcher. If you are interested in being featured or you know someone who might – please get in touch with either Sarojni Choy or Sinan Gemici.

Request for Research Proposals

From April 4-7, 2013, the College of the North Atlantic-Qatar will be hosting a major international conference in Doha, Qatar, entitled **Global Innovators 2013: Leading and Learning in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**. The goal of our conference is to bring together delegates from around the world who are renowned for excellence in TVET practice and innovation. Participants will experience a novel and pragmatic suite of strategies, techniques, and tools delivered by the world's leading authorities and advocates for technical and vocational education. Distinguished international plenary speakers, high level roundtable discussions on international TVET frameworks, practical workshops, "real-world" skills developers, and a TVET Exhibition are only some of the offerings. Delegates will witness best practices at work in the field and classroom that positively transform the technical and vocational education learning experience, improve student engagement and support the development mandate inherent in global TVET education. The conference will focus around 5 central themes:

- Leadership and Innovation in TVET
- Applied Research and TVET
- Teaching and Learning in TVET
- Student Counseling in TVET
- Supporting Learners in TVET

For more details on the Global Innovators 2013 conference, or register online, please visit our conference website at <http://www.globalinnovators2013.com>. For inquiries, please contact the Planning and Programming Co-Chairs Skipp Symes (skipp.symes@cna-qatar.edu.qa) or Paul MacLeod (paul.macleod@cna-qatar.edu.qa)

Are we there yet?
Youth transitions in Australia
National Research Forum



Thursday 11 April 2013

Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney

LSAY National Research Forum: *Are we there yet? Youth transitions in Australia*

Young people in Australia face a complex and challenging future. The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) provides decision-makers with valuable data and research to help understand the challenges for young people as they navigate the road from school to study and work.

Hosted by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), this one-day national forum will present the latest findings from LSAY research with a focus on young people in transition.

Key topics include:

- The impact of schools
- Student aspirations
- Gap years
- Financial wellbeing

Leading researchers, together with key players in youth research, policy and education, will discuss how the LSAY findings support the choices young people make and inform youth transitions policy and practice.

When: Thursday, 11 April 2013

Where: Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney

Time: 9.30am to 4.00pm (registration opens at 9.00am)

[For more information and to register, please visit the LSAY website.](#)

Research Learning and Work Centre (RWLC) 8th International Conference on Researching Work and Learning, 19-22 June 2013, University of Stirling, U.K.

This international conference is concerned with such questions as:

- What knowledge, which actors, and what parts of the environment are most visible?
- What and who remains invisible?
- When do actors become aware of invisible infrastructures?
- And what research methods and analytical approaches can make the invisible visible?

Full details are available at: www.stir.ac.uk/schools/education/researching-work-and-learning. If you have any queries, please contact RWL at: rwl2013@stir.ac.uk

Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 10th International Conference.

The Tenth JVET Conference will be held at Worcester College, Oxford from the 5th to the 7th July 2013. The formal call for papers is at: <http://www.jvetconferences.co.uk/>

22nd National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference 'No Frills', Sunshine Coast TAFE, 10-12 July 2013

Sponsored jointly by NCVER and Sunshine Coast TAFE, this annual conference is considered one of the best value events on the VET research calendar. It aims to bring together those involved or interested in education and training research and with its informal and collegiate atmosphere, it encourages lively exchanges about VET and provides a great opportunity to network. For more information, visit <http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/trconf/trconf22.html>.

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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 quarterly 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 organised 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 **\$160** (GST inclusive) and Student memberships **\$80.00** including GST are available.

If you are interested in contributing to this newsletter please contact either Sarojni Choy or Sinan Gemici.