

AVETRA News

From the President

Dear AVETRA member

What a great **OctoberVET** this has been! There were nine events all around Australia with a total of over 300 people attending. See the web site for presentations and photos from the events <http://avetra.org.au/octobervet/current-year>. Many thanks to those who organised events, to those who attended and contributed to lively discussions, and to Bobby Harreveld for national co-ordination of OctoberVET.

Also during October and November a series of four **new researcher teleconferences** were held. Thanks to Peter Smith for organising these and to the individual convenors: Ian Robertson, Ros Cameron, Ros Brennan Kemmis and Francesca Beddie. The Executive decided at its meeting on 9 December that it was so popular that a series would be held each year and would become a permanent part of OctoberVET.

We hope all members of AVETRA are planning to attend the **Annual Conference on the Gold Coast 7th-9th April 2010**. We have had a record number of abstracts submitted, and have some terrific keynote speakers. Four pre-conference workshops are offered including a complete day aimed at newer researchers (but not excluding old hands!) Many thanks to co-convenors Stephen Billett and Sarojni Choy and their excellent committee. More details are on the AVETRA web site at http://www.avetra.org.au/annual_conference/index.shtml. Registrations will be opened during the week of December 14th 2009.

Another major project funded by the generous donation from Dr Ray Barker not long before his death last year, has now concluded. The report, **Aligning VET Research, Policy and Practice**, written by Darryl Dymock and Stephen Billett is on the AVETRA web site with a link from the front page www.avetra.org.au. Some of you may have seen an article recently in Campus Review by Stephen Billett, discussing their findings.

After Christmas we will be calling for **nominations to the Executive and Presidency of AVETRA** with a closing date in early February. Members are elected every two years. The President is elected separately, while other Officer positions are selected from among the Executive members once the new Executive is formed. The current Executive has been working on 'job descriptions' for the Executive to let prospective nominees know more about what is involved in the various roles and to help improve service to members. The 'job descriptions' will be available on the AVETRA web site under 'About AVETRA/structure' when nomination forms are released. At the Executive meeting last week, it was approved that the President will still be elected for two years but that there will be an option for withdrawal at one year, in recognition of the large amount of work involved in the role. I will not be standing for re-election, and some other members of the Executive will be standing down, so please consider nominating for the Executive. It is a great experience to work with colleagues from around Australia and from different organisations.

We will also be calling shortly for **nominations for the AVETRA awards**

- [Berwyn Clayton Award for Distinguished Service to AVETRA](#)
- [Ray Barker Award](#) for Distinguished Service to VET Research

These are awarded biennially at the AVETRA conference (in even years). You will find details and the nomination forms on the AVETRA web site under 'awards and scholarships', but please don't apply just for a few days as forms need to be updated for the new round.

We will also shortly be calling for expression of interest to undertake **a consultancy to prepare a conference manual for AVETRA conferences**. This will be circulated to AVETRA members initially as well as to a limited tender list. Please forward to anyone you think may be interested in and suitable for this task.

Thanks once more to Sarah Sutcliffe and Francesca Beddie for their work on editing the newsletter.

Best wishes



Erica Smith
President of AVETRA, University of Ballarat, 14 December 2009

AVETRA News

International Journal of Training Research

The link to our new journal can be found at <http://jtr.e-contentmanagement.com/>. Please note that papers from all previous editions will continue to be on the AVETRA web site under 'publications'.

OctoberVET 2009

Each year AVETRA members around Australia organise community research events to showcase VET research. These activities complement and extend the AVETRA annual conference. These locally convened events are often, but not always, held in October - hence OctoberVET! They aim to engage local VET researchers and practitioners in discussions about recent and topical research. Complete AVETRA OctoberVET details are available online at <http://avetra.org.au/octobervet>



CQ University OctoberVET participants, Rockhampton



(from left to right) Steve Davis (interviewer) Virginia Batty, Robin Ryan, Kaye Schofield and John Dawkins at the Adelaide OctoberVET



Participants at the Canberra Institute of Technology OctoberVET

In 2009, there were 8 OctoberVET events held throughout Australia — in Adelaide, Canberra, Ballarat, Newcastle, Perth, Rockhampton, Sydney and Wagga Wagga. Convenors report enthusiastic participation in all activities which demonstrated significant contributions from all sectors of VET. The events demonstrated the depth and breadth of VET research undertaken in regional and metropolitan communities. In addition, the collegiality among researchers from institutes, colleges, industries and universities added immensely to the rich tapestry of knowledge produced through their endeavours and shared during these events.

Bobby Harreveld

Early Career Research Teleconference

The first of a series of 'early career research conferences' was held on Wednesday 7 October. In addition to Ian Robertson, who facilitated the session, twelve participants joined the discussion. Participants were drawn from around the country and represented the breadth of AVETRAs membership. Those who joined are employed in TAFE, private providers, government and universities. The majority joined the teleconference looking for an opportunity to network with others in similar circumstances and were looking for general advice on how to submit papers for the AVETRA conference in April 2010. Some participants were also seeking more specific assistance related to higher degree research.

Following introductions we discussed what range of aspects related to the AVETRA conference and strategies for seeking support as an early career researcher. As a result of this activity the AVETRA Committee is now considering a range of measures to further support this important group.

Ian Robertson

Research and VET News

TAFE Directors Australia mission to the UK

TAFE Directors Australia recently hosted a mission to the UK to visit further education colleges and other organisations associated with the training sector, as well as attend the Association of Colleges annual conference. The delegation visited colleges in England (London, Durham and Birmingham) and Scotland (Edinburgh) which provided an opportunity to compare the challenges faced by the vocational training sector in the UK to that in Australia.

UK colleges are certainly facing sizeable challenges on the back of the global financial crisis with many planning for anticipated cuts in public spending (of unknown magnitude). But like Australia, the UK is looking at what skills development needs to occur during economic recovery and the role that both further education and higher education will play.

While the Australian delegation was in the UK, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills released *Skills for Growth: a national strategy for economic growth and individual prosperity* (available at <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/skills-for-growth>). An interesting point in the skills strategy is an acknowledgment of a need for higher level craft and trade skills (advanced vocational education). Hence, the focus is shifting slightly from higher education to encompass higher level vocational training.

The Association of Colleges conference (<http://www.aocannualconference.co.uk/conference.asp>) provides the opportunity for college principals and executives to network and discuss issues facing the sector. A highlight for attendees of this year's conference was hearing from members of the

various political parties and engaging with them on issues that are of importance to the sector in the lead up to the general election.

Jobs and Other Opportunities

NCVER Communities of Practice Scholarships

Ten NCVER Communities of Practice scholarships are available for novice researchers working in the VET sector. Successful applicants will receive \$4,000 to help them participate in a community of practice where they will receive peer support as well as the assistance of a mentor to guide them through a research project.

If you have a problem in your workplace that research could help you solve then we want to hear from you! Applications close **Wednesday, 17 February 2010**. For more information visit www.ncver.edu.au/research/opportunities.html#Community_of_practice_scholarships_for_VET_practitioners or contact Bridget Wibrow on 08 8230 8450.

Churchill Fellowships

The Churchill fellowships offer expenses for overseas study tours. AVETRA has been asked to publicise the special award for education/VET. Applications are now open for the 2010 round. Details at <http://www.churchilltrust.com.au/sponsors/about/park-family/> Please direct any queries to the Churchill Trust as we do not have any further information. Their phone number is 1800 777 231 or see their web site.

Conferences and other Events

New Zealand Vocational Education and Training Research Forum, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, 14 – 15 April, 2010

The Industry Training Federation is pleased to open its call for abstracts for the New Zealand Vocational Education and Training Research Forum 2010. The ITF is accepting abstracts on a wide variety of skills, workplace, professional, and vocational education-related topics.

Registrations for the Research Forum will open in late January 2010. If you have any questions about the abstract submission process or the Research Forum, please contact Nicholas Huntington via email at nicholas@itf.org.nz, or phone on +64 4 499 8157. Further information is available at <http://www.itf.org.nz/research-forum-2010.html>

Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education Conference, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, 30 May – 1 June 2010.

Call for papers and further details about the conference can be found at www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/cnf2010/cnf2010.html

Recent Publications

Linking flexible delivery and community development: The Wugularr story, Anderson, S, NCVER, 2009

This paper has been produced by a NCVER sponsored new researcher who has been mentored by an AVETRA member.

Early vocational education and training programs for young Aboriginal learners: Perceptions of practitioners and young people, Harding, R, NCVER, 2009

This paper has been produced by a NCVER sponsored new researcher, who has been mentored by an AVETRA member.

Problem-based learning: Student engagement, learning and contextualised problem-solving, Mark Mossuto, M NCVER, 2009

This paper has been produced by a NCVER sponsored new researcher who has been mentored by an AVETRA member.

New NCVER resource

NCVER has developed a resource on Indigenous VET, which provides a simple summary of NCVER's statistics and research on Indigenous Australians and vocational education and training (VET).

<http://www.indigenouset.edu.au>

Future skill needs for the green economy, Cedefop, 2009

This publication is based on an October workshop on future skill needs for the green economy. Case studies present emerging skill needs, the changing qualification needs in jobs for renewable energies and skill profiles in environment and eco-innovations.

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publication_details.asp?pub_id=563

Practitioner experiences and expectations with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104): A discussion of the issues, Clayton, B, NCVER, 2009

This paper arises from a research project investigating the extent to which practitioners believe the Certificate IV Training and Assessment (TAA04) qualification provides an effective foundation for the delivery and assessment of training in the VET environment. It focuses on the history of the TAA04 and outlines some of the key issues relating to the quality of delivery. The project is due for completion in late-2010. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2183.html>

Learning for jobs: OECD policy review of vocational education and training: initial report, OECD, 2009

The report sets out key policy recommendations: (1) to meet labour market needs: offer a mix of vocational programmes reflecting student preferences and employers' needs plus provide transferable skills to support occupational mobility; (2) to sustain the workforce of teachers and trainers: in vocational institutions, promote partnerships with industry, encourage part-time work, and promote flexible pathways of recruitment; (3) to promote workplace training: offer sufficient incentives for both employers and students to participate in workplace training and ensure that training is of good quality, with effective quality assurance and contractual frameworks for apprentices; (4) to respond to the economic crisis: sustain workplace training and meet the increased demand for full-time VET; and (5) to develop tools for policy: engage employers and unions in vocational policy and provision plus collect and analyse data on the labour market outcomes and provide career guidance accessible to all, informed by knowledge of labour market outcomes.

http://www.oecd.org/document/61/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_43736957_1_1_1_1,00.html

High quality traineeships: Identifying what works - Good practice guide, Smith, E, et al., NCVER, 2009

This study explores the common features of high-quality traineeships using case studies from the cleaning, child care, construction, retail, finance and insurance, and meat processing areas. The research identifies a range of policy measures that could improve both the practice and image of traineeships. A good practice guide has also been developed to assist in ensuring that all traineeships are of equally high quality. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2191.html>

A competent recovery? Economic downturn and Australia's vocational education and training system, Sweet, R, NCVER, 2009

This paper reflects on the impact of the recent financial crisis on particular groups in Australian society and comments on whether the VET sector is well placed to meet the challenges of the recovery. <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2193.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 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 **\$145** (GST inclusive) and Student memberships **\$71.50** including GST are available to join AVETRA.

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