

A-NEWS

The Newsletter of the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association
March 2010

AVETRA News

From the President

Dear AVETRA member,

This will be my last message as President of AVETRA. I have been privileged to serve the VET research community in this way over the past two years and to observe the continued growth of AVETRA activities thanks to the tireless efforts of our Executive and other members. During the occasions I have served as the AVETRA representative at a number of events around the 'VET world', many senior people and VET practitioners alike have given me very favourable feedback about AVETRA and its work.

I hope to see many AVETRA members at our conference in Surfers Paradise. With a stellar line-up of speakers and the beautiful beach outside, what more could we ask for? A wonderful committee of Queensland members has been working very hard to stage the event. Thank you to Stephen Billett and Sarojni Choy, the co-convenors. It's not too late to register:

<http://avetra.org.au/annual-conference/conference-registration>

Peter Kell has now taken over as the Editor of the 'International Journal of Training Research'. We welcome Peter in this role, and also thank Andy Smith for serving as Editor for seven years, since the journal took on its current form. Many of you will be aware that IJTR scored a B - a very respectable ranking, meaning it is viewed as being in the top 50% of Education journals - in the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) journal rankings. Our new publisher (e-Content Management) is busy promoting our journal, and the journal has a new web home, at

<http://ojs.e-contentmanagement.com/index.php/jtr>

But you can still view previous editions on the AVETRA web site, in the 'publications' section.

The journal's past editions, as well as our conference publications, have recently been archived by the National Library of Australia's Digital Archiving Section, so they will be preserved for all time!

Members will of course continue to receive the journal as part of their membership. With subscription to the journal priced at \$99 a year (in itself good value for an academic journal), AVETRA membership looks very good value indeed, considering you also receive 'Research Today' twice a year, reduced rates for conference registration, and members-only access to research teleconferences. And, of course, the 'A-News' four times a year! **So... if you haven't yet renewed your membership for 2010, please rush to do so!**

Best wishes



Erica Smith
President of AVETRA, University of Ballarat, March, 2010.

AVETRA Annual Conference, VET Research: Leading and Responding in Turbulent Times, Holiday Inn Surfers Paradise, QLD, 8 – 9 April 2010

The 13th Annual Conference is expected to attract some 200 participants with an interest in vocational education and training – with practitioners and researchers presenting their research. This conference seeks to explore the way in which VET Research can lead or respond in turbulent times. Pre-conference workshops, Welcome Reception and First Keynote Address: Wednesday, 7 April 2010. Register online at <http://avetra.org.au/annual-conference>

Journal of Vocational Education and Training Special Issue: Apprenticeship as an Evolving Model of Learning

In 1998, the *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* published a special issue on the theme, 'Contemporary Apprenticeship: perspectives on learning, teaching, policy and design', edited by Alison Fuller and Lorna Unwin (Vol.50, Number 2). In 2010, they will edit a new special issue in order to revisit the theme of apprenticeship and examine how this model of learning is being experienced, adapted and re-thought at the start of the 21st century. Papers are being called for in response to this theme which is of central importance for the vocational/professional education and training systems in many countries round the world. As a model of learning, apprenticeship has a universal meaning, though its institutional form and status differs across countries. It appears to be resilient, though the current global economic crisis will certainly test the willingness of employers and governments to invest in apprenticeship. At the same time, the nature of jobs and occupational sectors continue to change, demanding new ways to conceptualise the meaning of skill and knowledge and different strategies for both the initial and continuing development of expertise. Internships (usually unpaid), for example, have rapidly expanded in the UK as young people attempt to gain a foothold in sectors such as the media, creative industries, and financial services. Do they represent a return to the days when apprentices had to pay employers to take them on?

Interested authors are invited to submit papers which interrogate the meaning of apprenticeship in contemporary economies and societies. The editors also welcome initial enquiries from authors who have ideas for papers. The deadline for papers is July 30th 2010. The special issue will be published in early 2011. Papers and enquiries should be sent to: a.fuller@soton.ac.uk or l.unwin@ioe.ac.uk.

Mentoring New Researchers

This year we have had a wonderful response from our AVETRA mentors and from the new researchers. Two 2 day workshops in May and November have been organised by Victoria University to equip the new researchers with VET research knowledge and skills. Berwyn Clayton and Geri Pancini have created a community of practice for the group of new researchers. At the second workshop in November we were joined by the group of higher degree by research students shepherded by Roger Harris from UniSA. This was the first time such a large group of over 20 new VET researchers had been drawn together to discuss their dilemmas and report their progress.

All of the new researchers have received scholarships from NCVER to support their development and will soon be presenting their first reports on their VET projects at our conferences. This NCVER initiative has really begun to build VET Research capacity, by building VET researchers for the future.

The AVETRA mentors have been learning the skills of passing on their knowledge and helping the new researchers form their first investigative projects. They have all been great contributors to the scheme and you can see from the list that the new researchers are getting quality advice from experienced VET researchers. The mentors are: Roger Harris, Michael Platow, Jane Figgis, Moira Watson, Stephen Crump, Paul Hager, Barry Golding, John Mitchell, Peter Rushbrook and Peter Smith.

The feedback in February is that all the new researchers have been engaged with data collection, involved with their analysis and have begun drafting their reports. In early March a new group of researchers will be selected to form the third year of the scheme and build the capacity of VET research.

Llandis Barratt-Pugh

Research and VET News

International

In 2007, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), set up an independent Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning to identify a broad consensus for the future of lifelong learning in the United Kingdom. Its report, *Learning through Life*, was published late last year (2009). See <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/default.htm>

The inquiry makes ten recommendations, the main ones being that:

- lifelong learning policy should be based on a new model of the educational life course, with four key stages (up to 25, 25–50, 50–75, 75+). Such an approach would help deal better with an ageing society and changing patterns of paid and unpaid activity.
- resources be distributed fairly and sensibly across these different life stages to reflect a more coherent view of the changing economic and social context for adult education.

Tom Schuler, the director of the inquiry, has a blog, *Musings on Lifelong Learning*: <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/blog/>

Francesca Beddie

Jobs and Other Opportunities

Institute Director

London or South Yorkshire, UK.

Attractive Package

The remit of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills is to provide vigorous and independent challenge, advising government at the highest levels across the UK on employment and skills strategy, targets, policies and progress towards challenging competitiveness goals, including the vision of an 80% employment rate by 2020.

The Research and Policy Directorate plays a crucial role within the UK Commission undertaking applied Labour Market Analysis, Research Development, and Policy Analysis to provide high quality, strategic intelligence and advice to support the working of the Commission and wider stakeholders in the skills and employment system.

The role and remit of the Research and Policy Directorate is expanding and we are seeking to recruit an Institute Director of the new Skills Research Institute; this is a high profile, outward facing role, drawing together research expertise from a range of sources to provide expert advice in critical areas of Government policy.

The UK Commission offers you the opportunity to work alongside a range of committed and professional colleagues, many of whom bring a national and international reputation in their research field. Please visit our microsite for further information about the Commission, job opportunities and how to apply www.workingatukces.co.uk

Head of Research

London or South Yorkshire, UK

Up to £60,000 (+ £3,500 London weighting where relevant) and benefits including final salary pension scheme.

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strategic intelligence and advice to support the working of the Commission and wider stakeholders in the skills and employment system.

Based within the Research and Policy Directorate your role will be focused on the National Skills Research Strategy and associated research programme in conjunction with the UK Commission and its new Skills Research Institute.

The UK Commission offers you the opportunity to work alongside a range of committed and professional colleagues, many of whom bring a national and international reputation in their research field. Please visit our microsite for further information about the Commission, job opportunities and how to apply www.workingatukces.co.uk

Conferences and other Events

NZ Vocational Education and Training Research Forum 2010, Rutherford House, Victoria University of Wellington, 14 – 15 April 2010

Registrations have now opened for the New Zealand Vocational Education and Training Research Forum 2010 – New Zealand's largest event dedicated specifically to research on aspects of Vocational Education and Training. Papers to be presented at this year's forum cover a range of topics including skill utilisation and dimensions of skill demand, supporting effective workplace-based learning, measuring and enhancing the skill and productivity benefits of training, developing management capability, policy issues in VET and tertiary education, and literacy and foundation education. A special feature in this year's forum is a session devoted to showcasing the latest research on Vocational Education and Training by current and recent postgraduate students from around the country. Register online at <http://www.itf.org.nz/research-forum-2010.html>
For further information please contact Nicholas Huntington at nicholas@itf.org.nz.

19th National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference 'No Frills' Perth, 7 – 9 July, 2010

NCVER invites practitioners and researchers to share their research and knowledge at 'No Frills'. The conference focuses on strategies, observations and proven practices that can influence policy and practice for an even better education and training system in Australia. The conference is sponsored jointly by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Polytechnic West and Central Institute of Technology. Abstracts must be submitted online by Friday 16 April 2010. See <http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/trconf/trconf19call.html>

VET Network conference, 'Creative Futures: the changing landscape', Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, 15 – 17 Sept 2010

This event is designed for all those involved in vocational education and training in schools. For further information go to <http://www.vetnetwork.org.au/01 cms/details.asp?ID=114>

Tertiary Education Management Conference, Crown Convention Centre, Crown Promenade Hotel, Melbourne, 3 – 6 October, 2010

The theme for the 2010 Conference is Future Directions and promises to be an exciting and unique opportunity to see what the future might bring. Registrations are now open. To register, go to <https://www.secureregistrations.com/temc2010>
More information about the Conference can be found on <http://www.temc.org.au/2010/index.html>

AUSTAFE Conference, 'Leadership, Innovation and Workplace Culture', Sydney, 13 – 15 October, 2010

Details to be announced later in the year at <http://www.austafe.edu.au/events>

Recent Publications

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

The international student safety debate: moving beyond denial / C. Nyland, H. Forbes-Mewett, S. Marginson. Higher education research and development, v. 29, no. 1, February 2010, pp 89-101, London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2010

This paper reviews the unfolding debate on international students and safety in the USA, the UK, New Zealand and Australia. The authors argue that in all four cases it took an exogenous shock to convince education exporters to acknowledge student safety as an issue that needs to be openly debated.

Going for growth: our future prosperity. Great Britain. Dept for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), 2010, 59 pp

This paper outlines seven core capabilities in the British economy needed to underpin the government's drive to restore strong, sustainable, long-term growth: (1) supporting enterprise and entrepreneurial activity; (2) fostering knowledge creation and its application; (3) helping people develop the skills and capabilities to find work and build the businesses and industries of the future; (4) investing in the infrastructure for a low carbon economy; (5) ensuring open and competitive markets to drive innovation and rising productivity; (6) building on industrial strengths (7) employing the right strategic role for governments.

Bringing Cinderella to the ball: constructing a federal system of technical and further education in Australia, 1971-1975 / Peter Rushbrook. Journal of educational administration and history, v. 42, no. 1, February 2010, pp33-54, London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2010

The paper outlines the circumstances leading to the formation of the Australian Committee for Technical and Further Education (ACOTAFE) , its work and its outcomes. Focus will be placed on the influential role of Chairman Kangan in shaping ACOTAFE's conclusions. A key theme within the paper is the intersection of biography, politics and the economy in shaping policy construction.

What would it take? Employer perspectives on employing people with a disability, Peter Waterhouse et al., NCVER, 2010

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2219.html>

One focus of the Australian Government's social inclusion agenda is to help people with a disability into work. For this to succeed, employers must be willing and able to productively employ people with a disability. The purpose of this study was to answer the question 'what would it take' to enable employers to employ people with a disability. Based on focus groups with select employers from small-to-medium enterprises, the research found that, while employers were quite positive about employing a person with a disability, they lacked confidence in dealing with disability employment issues.

The role of vocational education and training in the labour market outcomes of people with disabilities, Cain Polidano, Kostas Mavromaras, NCVER, 2010

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2215.html>

Low levels of education generally among people with a disability is one of the factors contributing to their lower rate of labour market participation. What role vocational education and training (VET) plays in ameliorating this is the focus of this report. Using data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics of Australia surveys, the authors find that for people who are not working, completing a VET qualification does increase the chance of employment and more so for people with a disability.

Vocational education and training workforce data 2008: A compendium, ed. Hugh Guthrie, NCVER, 2010

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2218.html>

This is a compendium of three reports. The first examines the size and attributes of the vocational education and training (VET) workforce using a variety of data sources. The second looks more specifically at TAFE's workforce. The final report considers the feasibility of a national VET workforce collection.

Australian vocational education and training statistics: Employers' use and views of the VET system 2009, NCVER, 2009

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2188.html>

This survey shows that 56.7% of employers used the VET system in the last 12 months. This is an increase of 2.7 percentage points since the last survey in 2007. The percentage of employers with apprentices and trainees increased by 1.5 percentage points to 30.6%.

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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