

‘Leave No One Behind’ The case to re/enact a national equity policy agenda in and for Vocational Education & Training (VET in Australia.

AVETRA Research Forum 2018

**New VET Research Perspectives:
Issues, practices, insights.**





Underlying assumptions: value statement

There is an extensive and rooted consensus around the recognition of education as a factor of social inclusion and social justice (Apple, 2013). This fact is endorsed by numerous academic and empirical studies that reached the shared conclusion about the educational level as a decisive factor of people's life and work trajectories.

The value acquired by the educational system as an inequality corrective (generated by the labour market or the redistribution of income) is a policy of preventing inequality and fighting poverty in the future.

(Virto & Fernández, 2018, p.136)

Overview (Synopsis of Paper)



- Introduction
- **Contemporary mega trends and transformational changes: a global ‘New Deal’**
- **What are the SDGs?**
- **‘Leave no one behind’: What does this mean?**
- **Education, Training & Work – VET and the SDGs**
- **VET in Australia: Changing times, policy churn, challenges & opportunities**
- **‘Leave no one behind’: A framework for implementation?**
- In/conclusion
- References



Defining T/VET

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is understood as comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods. TVET, as part of lifelong learning, can take place at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels and includes work-based learning and continuing training and professional development, which may lead to qualifications. TVET also includes a wide range of skills development opportunities attuned to national and local contexts. Learning to learn, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET. (UNESCO GC, 2015)



T/VET's dual responsibility

T/VET has a dual responsibility – economic and social

- ensuring an ongoing and timely supply of adequately skilled workers to match the needs of a nation's labour force now and to meet future trends and demands,
- to facilitate access to decent work and participation in the labour force, including for marginalised and vulnerable populations and persons.
- In these ways & more, inclusive T/VET has the potential to enhance social inclusion and social-economic wellbeing of individuals from all walks of life, as well as contribute to productivity & national/regional/global economies.

Contemporary trends & transformational changes: A Global 'New Deal'



INEQUALITY

- We are at a tipping point in relation to increasing inequality;
- Inequality can no longer be treated as an afterthought (OECD 2015);
- Inequality is also a serious issue in Australia (ACOSS/UNSW 2018)
- Inclusive growth is the new goal
- Skills for life and work are part of this new mix



A Global 'New Deal'...

Mega Trends:

The Fourth Industrial Revolution

- The internet of things
- Big data
- Porous boundaries
- Increasing automation
- Digital –technological transformation
- Adoption & adaptation of AI et al

The Anthropocene Transition (Castree, 2016)

- A new geological epoch: human impact on the planet



A Global 'New Deal'... A new social contract

Mega Trends are resulting in profound transformation in

The Future of Work and The Future of Learning

New skills are required in and for transforming labour markets

Equality of opportunity is required to prevent increasing inequality



Transformation of T/VET

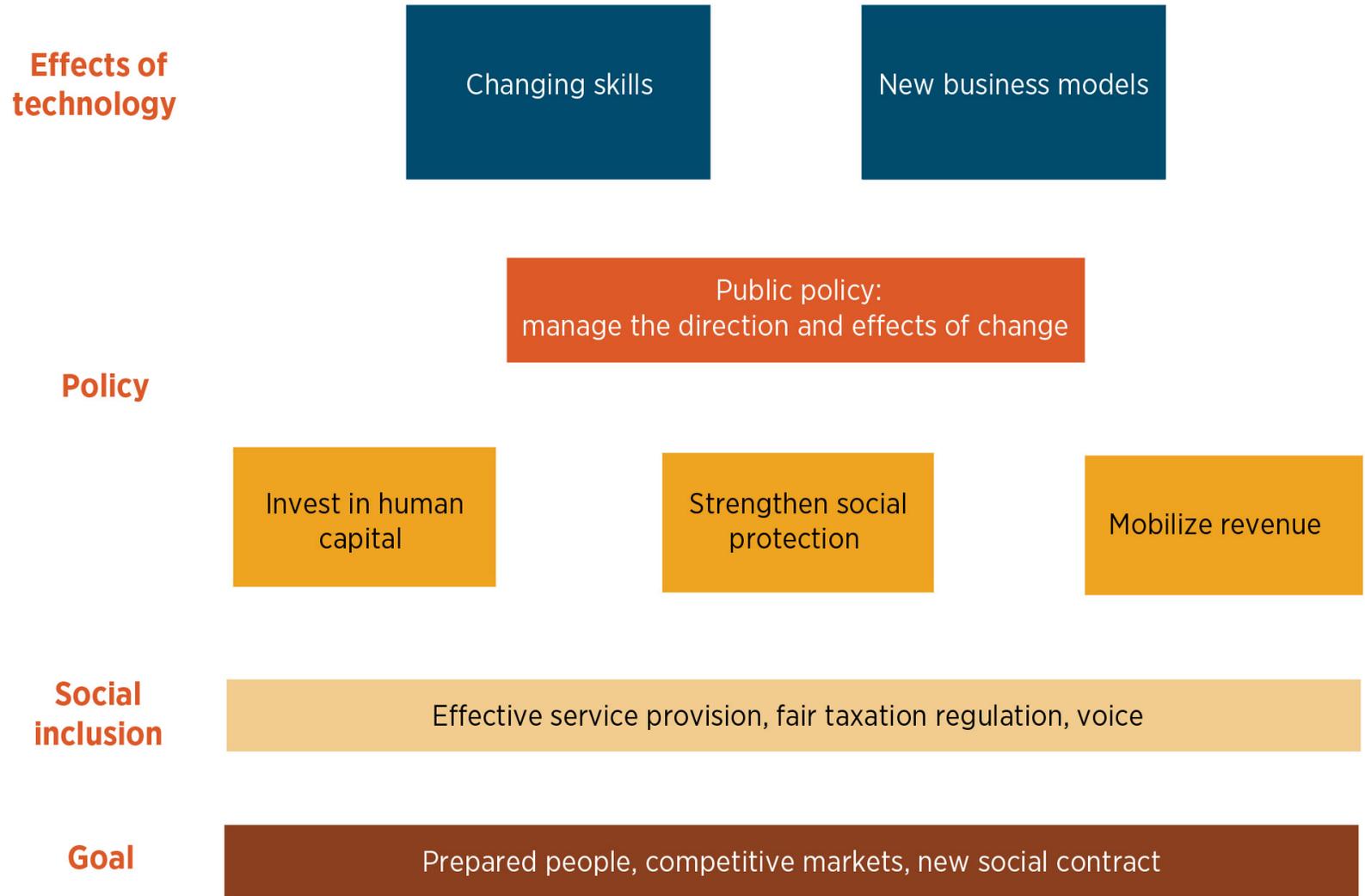


The challenge of meeting changing skills needs

- Persistent **youth unemployment**
- **Low student enrolment** share of TVET
- Technological advances (new **opportunities, risks**).
- **Polarized labour markets** and **rising inequality**.
- **Medium-skilled jobs** can be at risk from automation.
- Need for **'new skills'** to meet demands of the new economy.



FIGURE 0.3 Responding to the changing nature of work



Source: WDR 2019 team.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





What are *Agenda 2030* & the SDGs?

After intensive and extensive global consultation, and building on decades of collaborative work, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was unanimously adopted by 193 member countries (including Australia) at an historic UN Summit in September 2015, and formalised in the document: *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework complete with 17 Goals, 169 targets and 232 indicators (54 of which are gender specific) for the world to address poverty through an approach of sustainability and inclusion – ‘leaving no one behind’.

Leave no one behind...an anti-discrimination agenda



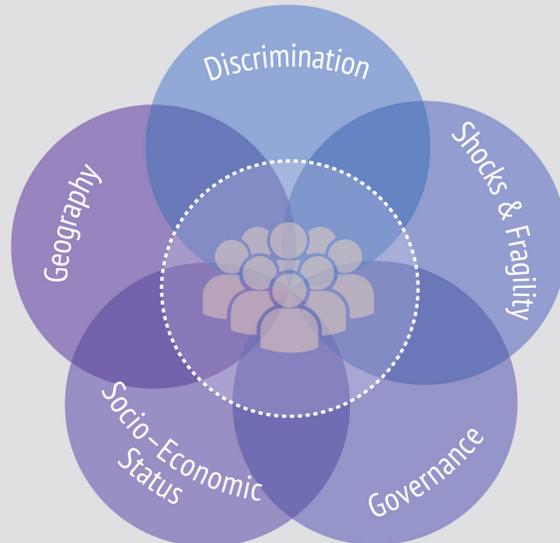
As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavor to reach the furthest behind first' (UNGA, 2015, Resolution A/RES/70/1).

- Ending extreme poverty in all its forms
- Reducing inequalities
- Addressing discriminatory barriers

Who is being left behind and why: five key factors

This framework proposes five intersecting factors as essential to understand who is being left behind and why.

People get left behind when they lack the choices and opportunities required to participate and benefit from development progress. All persons living in extreme poverty, in any form, are left behind, together with those enduring disadvantage(s) that deny or limit their choices and opportunities relative to others in society.



People at the intersection of these factors face reinforcing and compounding disadvantage and deprivation, making them likely among the furthest behind.



Leave no one behind

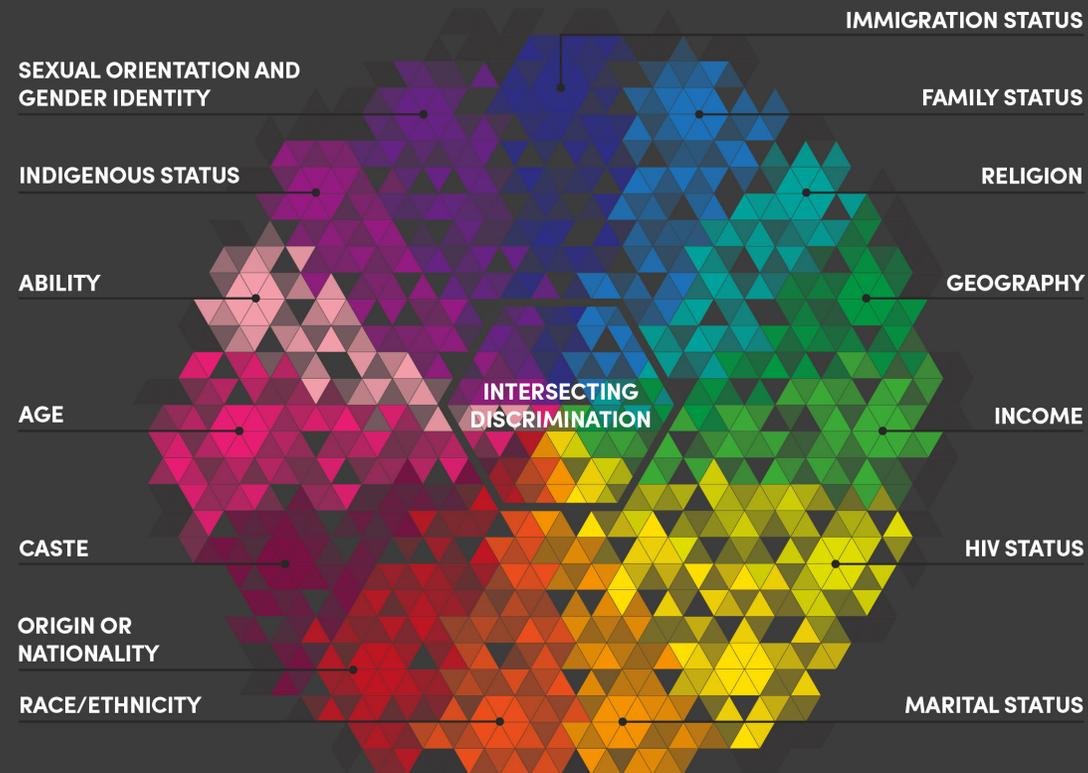
Five essential intersecting factors

- **Discrimination**
- **Geography**
- **Socio-economic status**
- **Governance**
- **Shocks and fragility**

(UNDP, 2018)

FIGURE 4.1
COMMON FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION FACED BY WOMEN AND GIRLS

Gender-based discrimination will often intersect with other forms of discrimination to create acute forms of disadvantage



Discrimination

**The need for
disaggregated
data**



**A data
revolution**

**(UN Women,
2018,p.16)**

Leave no one behind...

The pledge to leave no one behind runs across all 17 SDGs, embedded in goals, targets and indicators that demand disaggregated data, inclusion and equity in social, environmental and economic spheres.

However, '(s)uccess in all countries is highly dependent on political will, which may be lacking where elites defend vested interests' (Renner/UNDP, 2018).



Responding to changing skills needs: **SDG targets related to TVET**



SDG 4 : Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

By 2030, SDG 4 calls on Member States to:

- Ensure **equal access** to affordable and **quality** TVET programmes (target 4.3)
- Substantially increase the number of youth and adults with **relevant** skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (4.4)
- Eliminate gender disparities in education (4.5)
- Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote **sustainable development** (4.7)



Education
Training
&
Work

VET and
the SDGs

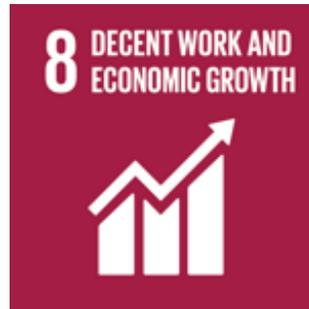
SDG4
Is the
Education
Goal

Education, Training & Work – VET and the SDGs



Similar to SDG5 (“Achieve gender equality and empower all women & girls”) that is recognised as a cross cutting SDG, it is also acknowledged that “(e)ducation is central to the agenda, in particular SDG 4, which aims to ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (Aust. Govt., n/d)

Given T/VET’s positioning between education and work, Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG8) is also implicated:



SDG8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



Key Documents

(1) The new vision for education (including TVET) is elaborated in the key document: *Education 2030. Incheon Declaration & Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4* (UNESCO et al 2015).

(2) The Agreed Framework for TVET is encapsulated in the *Strategy For Technical And Vocational Education And Training (TVET) (2016-2021)* (UNESCO 2016).

The Strategy has three priority areas:

- Fostering youth employment
- Promoting equity and gender equality
- Facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies.

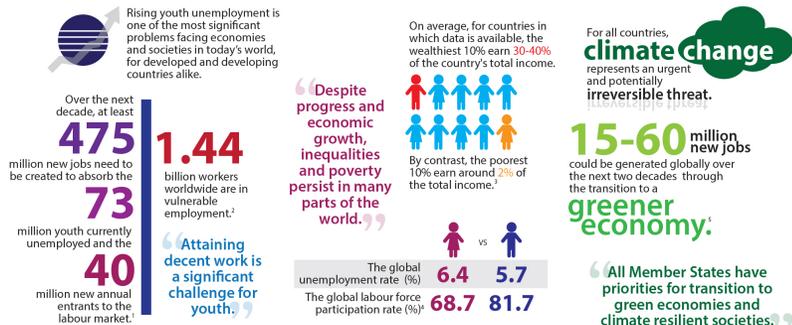


UNESCO Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2016-2021

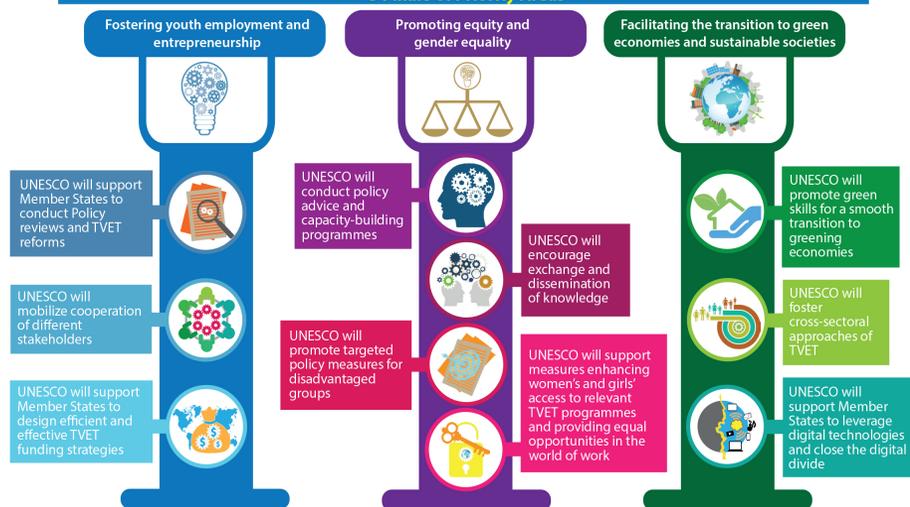
The strategy aims to:

- support the efforts of Member States to enhance the relevance of their TVET systems and to equip all youth and adults with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning, and
- contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole.

Did you know that...



3 Pillars of Priority Areas



To maximise the outcomes of the Strategy's priority areas, UNESCO will help Member States:



1 - ILO: World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2015

2 - ILO: Research News 1/2015

3 - ILO: World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2015

4 - ILO: Global Employment Trends 2014

5 - ILO: Working Towards Sustainable Development 2012

Designed by UNESCO/UNEP/ICA, Paris

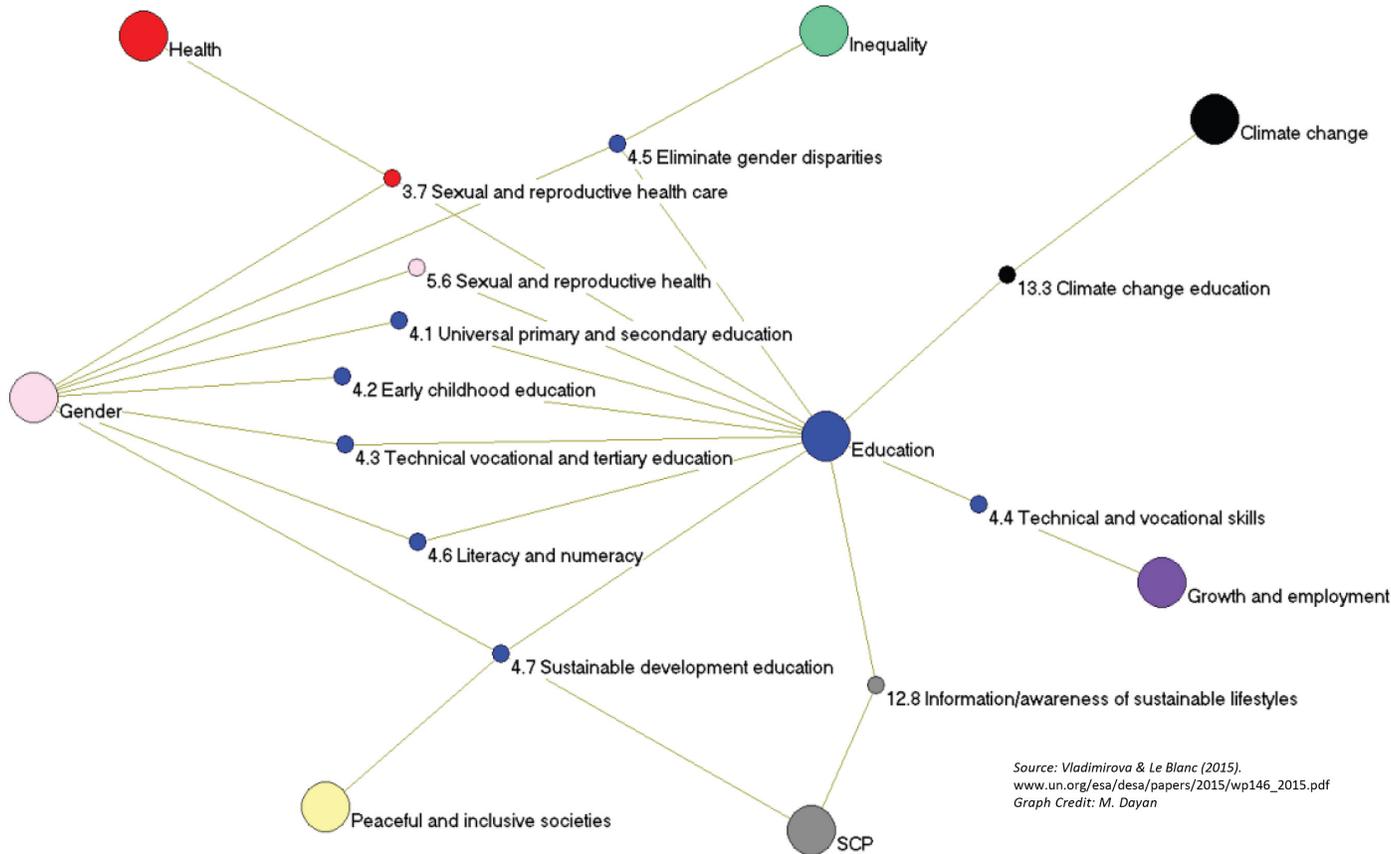
UNESCO Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2016-2021

SDG4 & TVET: A cross cutting goal with inter-sectoral links



Education
2030

Inter-sectoral links of SDG-4 targets with other SDGs





Responding to changing skills needs: **(1) UNESCO Standard-setting instruments**

Objectives of TVET

Empower
Individuals

Promote sustainable
and inclusive
economy

Promote social
Inclusion

Foster
Environmental
Sustainability

Key areas of TVET reforms

1. Enhancing responsiveness/relevance of TVET provision
2. Changing Perception of TVET
3. Reforming Qualifications Frameworks and building new learning pathways
4. Establishing Post-Secondary TVET
5. Empowering learners: Learner-centred pedagogies
6. Work-based learning: Apprenticeship/in-service training
7. TVET teachers and trainers
8. ICT in TVET
9. Good governance and partnerships
10. Financing TVET

Transforming TVET: Three Analytical lenses



Changing role: Three analytical lenses



Source: [Marope, M., Chakroun, B. & Holmes, K \(2015\)](#)



Responding to changing skills needs: (2) Coordination of Global TVET indicators (IAG)

TVET Indicators (concept framework)



Source: Inter-agency group on TVET work on TVET indicators



4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030) (July 2018) focus: SDG 4.3, 4.4.

A collective set of recommendations was agreed on to:-

- Revise and update national policies and programmes to ensure a holistic education environment that encompasses secondary education, TVET, tertiary and adult education within a lifelong learning context and to ensure no one is left behind from availing to the diverse learning opportunities and pathways; and to
- Provide feedback to the national and regional monitoring.



APMED 4 Agreed Recommendations & Action Areas

- Revise and update national policies and programmes to ensure a holistic education environment that encompasses secondary education, TVET, tertiary and adult education within a lifelong learning context and to ensure no one is left behind from availing to the diverse learning opportunities and pathways; and to
- Provide feedback to the national and regional monitoring

Action Areas

- ‘Inclusion, equity and gender equality’, reaffirming the central positioning and significance of inclusiveness in TVET reform. :
- Digital skills;
- Promoting a smooth transition from school to work;
- TVET (to improve the relevance and quality of TVET and skills training provision and programs); and
- Monitoring of SDG targets 4.3, 4.4 (including enhancing data capacity and disaggregation).

There is much of relevance to Australian VET here, in this regional endeavour focusing on a transformative TVET agenda.



VET in Australia: Changing times...

That there are now multiple calls for a national review of the architecture of the post-school education and training sector/s is hardly surprising, albeit it deeply disturbing that it has come to what is being called a crisis.

As summed up by Schubert, 2018, p.3):

‘Australia’s lack of policy clarity, inconsistency between States and political parties, chronic under-funding and endless tinkering means our vocational education system is no longer considered world class, even though despite the interference some institutions still meet this benchmark. The system can be rebuilt and redesigned to be fit for purpose’.

The *Senate Select Committee on the Future of Work* Recommendations relating to VET



Recommendation 18

5.104 The committee recommends that the Australian Government undertake a major overhaul of our post-school education and training system, to ensure that Australians are being equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for jobs in the future.

Recommendation 19

5.105 The committee recommends that the Australian Government consider how best to ensure that its policies support Australians to engage in lifelong learning throughout their formative education and working life

Recommendation 22

5.108 The committee recommends that the Australian Government commit to reversing recent funding cuts to achieve sustainable funding of the VET and higher education sectors

'Leave no one behind': A framework for implementation?



It is well understood that VET has a dual responsibility of both economic and social obligations. This is ever more important in these times of disruption and increasing inequality.

The balance between the economic and social in Australia VET policies and practice has tilted severely to the former at the detriment of the latter increasingly over the last three decades.

Informed and adequate attention to matters of equity and inclusion (and especially gender equity) in Australian VET history has a troubled history, with ambivalence especially noticeable from the early establishment of the national system increasing since that time.



There is now compelling evidence of the need for T/VET systems in all nations to transform, given the ongoing impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on work, labour markets and on learning for work and for life.

Given the plethora of demands for a rigorous overhaul of the Australian VET system as a matter of urgency, I contend that there is much of benefit for a re/forming Australian VET system to comply with obligations & activities associated with *Agenda 2030* and the subsequent contemporary transformation of TVET that is underway in our region and elsewhere.

Transforming the Australian VET system will of course present major challenges that will be hotly contested, as ever. However, as a community of researchers and practitioners, we have gained valuable insights and experience since the formation of the national system four decades ago.



The concept of **'leave no one behind'** that underpins all of *Agenda 2030's* 17 Sustainable Development Goals provides a framework for revisioning and re/enacting inclusion in the policy agenda for a transforming Australian VET system. It is accepted that inclusion is a central organising feature of the *Agenda*, and all work that is in progress globally & regionally in striving to meet the obligations of the SDGs.

It is time to think hard and well about what a transformed Australian VET system should look like, and this system could centre an inclusive framework.

What might such a framework look like? How can we best redress the enduring reticence around equity issues in Australian VET policy & practices?

These are some of the very big questions that confront us as researchers and practitioners. There is no time to waste



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Thank you.

Elaine Butler

elaine_butler@optusnet.com.au

