

SYMPOSIUM:

***CENTRING VET RESEARCH:  
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF RESEARCH CENTRES IN  
QUALITY AND DIVERSITY***

***John McIntyre  
RCVET  
University of Technology, Sydney***

Abstract:

The concept of a 'research centre' has been a key feature of the development of the VET research effort in recent years. Centres in universities and TAFE institutes has been crucial in focussing research, defining research directions, developing cross-sectoral partnerships and influencing policy & practice. Yet so far there has been little analysis of the nature of their research work and its contribution to knowledge & to policy. The RCVET proposes a symposium 'Centring VET research' to explore critically their modules vivendi and their role in shaping VET research. In what ways is it useful and productive to 'centre' VET research in such locations? What kind of sites are they, and how connected to other sites in the industry, the public sector and education and training? How do centres balance state-funded priorities with their own agendas? How do they balance the claims of 'usefulness' and contribution to new knowledge? In what ways are VET researchers breaking the mould of traditional educational research? What can be learned from their work about the relationships of research and policy which are structuring shaped by collaborative & strategic research in VET? 'Centring research' will attempt to answer such questions. The symposium would run in two parts over two days (2 x 2 hour slots) to allow for sustained discussion and maximise participation. It would comprise a set of related short papers on the theme of the role of national research centres in quality and diversity of research. Each session will comprise 2-3 short papers with a response from 2 respondents representing a mix of both TAFE and university centres, and ANTA-funded and non-funded centres. (At the time of submission, participation was still being negotiated).

The short papers will focus on (1) quality, utility and relevance (2) VET research as knowledge production (3) research & policy relationships (4) clienteles, partnerships and collaboration (5) resourcing, and other themes as decided by participants.