

AVETRA Science & Technology Applied Research in TAFE (START) Network

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Background

In February 2000, The Department of Industry Science and resources held an Innovation Summit and asked "all" sectors associated with Australian Innovation to participate. The attendance and involvement of the VET sector in innovation and thus at this summit was largely ignored, both from a research involvement perspective and from a Human dimension/education perspective. The national TAFE system has little to no credibility in this area despite the fact that it is an integral part of the innovation system in this country and that it has great involvement in much Applied Research & Development for which it is not recognised.

As we move toward the knowledge based economy the effort of the VET sector will come under more scrutiny in terms of its relationship to science, technology and the commercialisation of innovation.

TAFE researchers in science and technology (and there are many) have no support or communication network in the system and AVETRA could provide such an opportunity to network. This would also expand the relevance of AVETRA both to the VET sector and the University sectors. It would also provide opportunities to expand the membership of AVETRA.

Goals

- To establish a communications network for TAFE staff pursuing applied research and development projects.
- To establish an organisation capable of representing TAFE as a source of Applied Research & Development expertise and an organisation capable of attracting funds from Government Agencies, industry and other sources to support Applied Research & Development projects at TAFE institutions.

Short-term objectives

1. To carry out an inventory of TAFE staff currently involved with Applied Research & Development projects.
2. To identify TAFE staff who are suitably qualified and interested in contributing to Applied Research & Development projects if suitable arrangements are in place.
3. To identify all sources of funding for Applied Research & Development projects carried out at TAFE Institutions.
4. To establish a START Newsletter/web page for TAFE Institutions throughout Australia.
5. To establish central START nodes in each of the states and Northern Territory.

Management of the network

The initial phase of development of the network will be jointly managed by TAFE Industry Partnership Centre and the Central Metropolitan College of TAFE, Business Development Unit, Perth, WA.