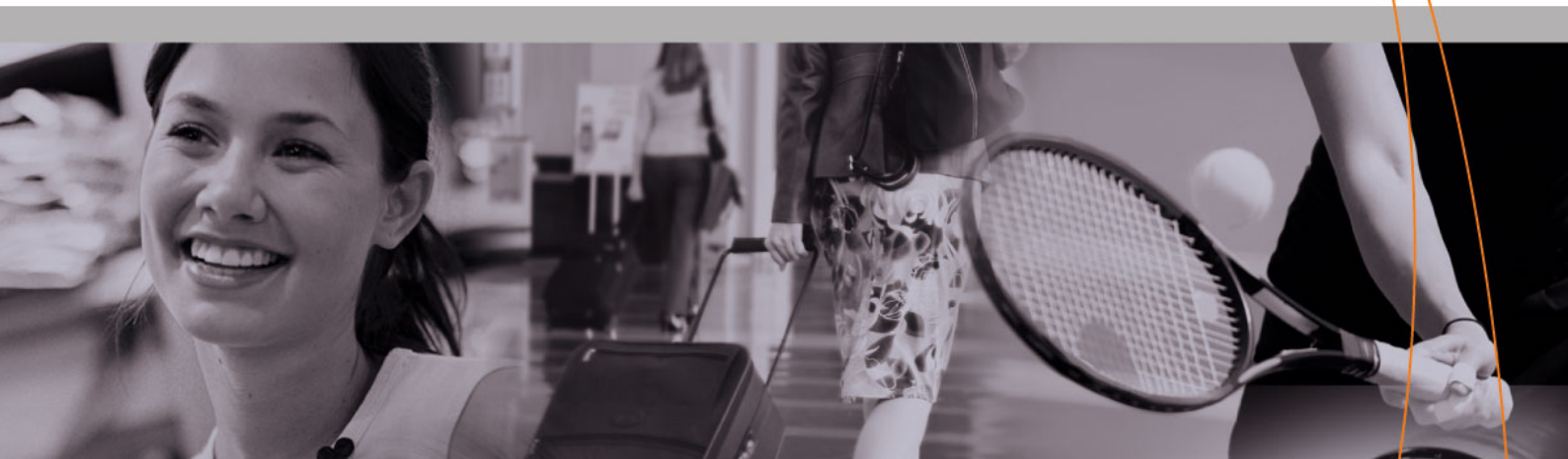## THE NEW DEAL:

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR
## SERVICE INDUSTRIES VET PRACTITIONERS

**SERVICESKILLS**
AUSTRALIA

**Research Report**
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# Contents

# Chapter 1. Introduction

'Workforce development' is a widely used and disparately defined term. In some contexts it is used to refer to the broad range of training and retraining programs and initiatives for young people and adults to ensure that there is a better match between these skills levels and the current and projected skills needs of globalised economies. In other contexts the concept also includes government and industry responsibilities, management roles and accountabilities and a developing intersection with human resource policies and practices. The focus of all these activities is on increasing productivity, national and international competitiveness and a government policy commitment, in many cases, to the development of low skilled workers and the integration of unemployed members to match the provision of VET better with the needs of industry, the economy and the society.

## The role of the VET workforce in workforce development

Often neglected in the workforce development discussions is the issue of the skill and education levels of the teachers and trainers themselves. Perhaps this can be explained in terms of the little-questioned assumption that the VET system must work with industry, enterprises and government to achieve the articulated goals of workforce development. But the capability of the VET professional to deliver on the development needs that have been articulated and changing arrangements for delivery is a question that is crucial, and awareness of the vital role of the VET professional in the achievement of workforce development goals and their role in implementation of new policies and practices is vital. Internationally, Comyn (2008) comments that:

> *"…….sifting through international examples of genuine workforce development initiatives reveals that VET providers across the globe are grappling with the challenges of making their products and services more effective and relevant to workforce development" (p. 1)*

## Workforce development for the VET workforce

While the VET workforce is charged with the responsibility of assisting all sectors of the economy to develop their workforce, attention also needs to be paid to the development of the VET workforce itself. This is only recently been considered outside the traditional realm of professional development, for example, in the 2009 Productivity Commission project on 'Sector Capacity-VET workforce'. The report stated that there was unanimous support for the need to focus on the VET workforce. Major issues identified by stakeholders in achieving this included lack of national data, the importance of a professional identity which allows for dual identity, and the lack of professional recognition that VET practitioners faced compared to university lecturers or school teachers (Council of Australian Governments, 2009).

## What are the required capabilities for VET practitioners?

There are a number of capabilities for the VET practitioners embedded in a range of reports, national and international, that focus on workforce development strategies. These are summarised below.

VET professionals must be able to:

- Improve levels of participation of those with low skill levels;

- Facilitate movement of workers with low skill levels to higher skill levels;

- More effectively link formal, non-formal and informal learning;

- Develop partnerships with enterprise to more closely link to industry needs;

- Build confidence in the process of recognition of prior learning (RPL);

- Develop networks with other practitioners;

- Broaden participation by targeting low skilled and workers with low literacy;

- Introduce the relevant programmes necessary to upgrade, on a consistent basis, the skills for the existing labour force to meet the future needs of the economy;

- Tailor provision to the distinctive needs of enterprises and not to treat them as smaller versions of large companies;

- Equip individuals with broadly based skills and knowledge;

- Demonstrate industry currency and

- Prepare a wide variety of individuals for the modern labour requires VET professionals to adopt new and varied approaches to skills development.

Sources: (ELWA, 2003; Australian Industry Group, 2007; Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2009)

## Project methodology

The project comprised seven stages.

### Stage 1: Industry focus groups

The focus group stage of the project was intended primarily to capture industry's view about what it requires from its VET practitioners. Focus groups were held around Australia during May-June 2009 with 60 participants in all; some people were interviewed individually by phone as they were unable to attend focus groups. The majority of participants were from industry although some were from RTOs. Focus groups lasted between one and two hours, while individual interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. Participants' names are included in Appendix 1.

### Stage 2: Overseas comparison with UK

This involved inspection of web sites relating to VET teacher training, a telephone interview with an expert in this area, and telephone interviews with senior staff from two service industry skills councils.

### Stage 3: Survey of RTOs

A survey (see Appendix 2) with 33 questions was sent in June 2009 to all Registered Training organisations offering Service Skills qualifications (1623). The list of RTOs was provided by the National Training Information Service.

### Stage 4: RTO-based case studies

We undertook eight case studies in June-July 2009, selected on the basis of recommendation from the industry focus groups and in consultation with Service Skills Australia. There were two in each of the four major Service Skills industry areas, one public and one private in each case (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Case studies by State, industry area and type of provider

|   | Location | Industry area | Type of RTO |
|---|----------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Brisbane, QLD | Retail | Private |
| 2 | Sydney, NSW | Floristry | TAFE |
| 3 | Sydney, NSW | Hospitality | Private |
| 4 | Melbourne, VIC | Hospitality | TAFE |
| 5 | Melbourne, VIC | Hair | Enterprise |
| 6 | Adelaide, SA | Hair & Beauty | TAFE |
| 7 | Melbourne, VIC | Fitness & Community Recreation | Private |
| 8 | Sydney, NSW | Fitness | TAFE |

Case studies were written up individually and then a thematic cross-case analysis was undertaken. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the findings of all eight case studies.

As well as the eight case studies which were selected on the basis of their industry areas, we have investigated some 'special perspectives': enterprise RTOs and RTOs that deliver to substantial numbers of overseas students. To research the enterprise RTO perspectives, teleconferences were held in August 2009 with three members of the Enterprise RTO Association (ERTOA); and the international perspective is gained from interviews with four managers from RTOs with substantial numbers of overseas students (RTOs were recommended by Service Skills Australia), from the three case study RTOs with large numbers of such students, and from inspection of the nature of the RTOs with substantial numbers of international students who responded to the survey. A summary of Special Perspectives findings is in Chapter 7.

### Stage 5: Data analysis

Data about service skills VET practitioners from the industry focus groups, RTO survey, case studies, and telephone interviews were brought together and analysed to draw out some general findings and to provide a springboard for the development of the Workforce Development Strategy.

### Stage 6: Participant confirmation

Validation of the findings and a draft of the strategy was undertaken in the following ways:  a draft final report was sent to two international experts for comment, two focus groups were held in October 2009, one in Sydney and one in Melbourne, with a total of 17 participants (see Appendix 2 for names), and a meeting was held with staff from Innovation and Business Skills Australia to share information about VET practitioner qualifications.

### Stage 7: Finalisation of workforce development strategy and evaluation strategy

As a result of feedback from the validation stage, the final version of the workforce development strategy and a proposed evaluation strategy were developed by the project team.

# Chapter 2. Literature review

The first section of the chapter provides a brief overview of literature relating to the four major industry groupings covered by Service Skills Training Packages. The data in this chapter are taken from Service Skills Environmental Scans 2009, and Australian and international literature on the industry areas, focusing particularly on literature that relates to training and to trainers. For each industry area, implications for VET practitioners are drawn from the literature. The second section of the chapter looks at literature related to VET practitioners and VET teaching qualifications.

## 2.1 Industry groupings

### Retail, Floristry and Wholesale

**Nature of the industry and forecast changes**

In Australia, the service industries are by far the biggest employers of labour, and the retail sector is the largest. In 2008, retail, including floristry and wholesale, employed 1.5 million people (Service Skills Australia (SSA), 2009a). Wholesale and retail together accounted for 11% of Australian GDP in 2006/7 (SSA, 2009a). However, despite its massive size, work in the retail and allied industries is often undervalued by the public and scholars alike (Hart, Stachow, Farrell and Reed, 2007) and there is a relative dearth of literature compared with, for example, the manufacturing sector.

While growth in the retail industry has been steady it has not been large compared with other industry sectors. There has been an increasing concentration of the industry towards larger employers. While in Australia this has not affected total employment (Richardson, 2003) it is sometimes seen as a concern. In the UK and Europe, the independent retail sector is a sector defined as 'at risk' (Byrom, Harris & Parker, 2000). It is interesting to note though that department stores in Australia have been losing market share to specialist clothing stores and others (SSA, 2009a). There is high volatility among parts of the sector (SSA, 2009a).

Huddlestone and Hirst (2004, p. 6), for retail, state 'customer service is … the most essential employee skill.' However other skills such as product knowledge, technological awareness and sustainability awareness (SSA, 2009a) are also important, to varying extents depending on the particular part of the retail sector.

**Nature of the workforce**

Retail employs a predominance of part-time, female, younger workers and thus has a different employment profile from other industry areas (SSA 2009a; Richardson, 2003). Students both in secondary (Smith and Wilson, 2002) and tertiary education form a large proportion of the industries' workforce. Labour turnover in retail is high (Booth and Hamer, 2007) partly because of the nature of the workforce.

Partly because of the tight labour market in many western countries over the past decade, companies have become engaged in partnerships with employment services providers to integrate or re-integrate unemployed people into the labour market; examples are in Scotland with Tesco (McQuaid, Lindsay & Greig 2005) and in Austria with Spar (Krenn, 2007). Both of these programs offer a permanent job guarantee to successful participants. The Scottish program attracted many older males, who are not the traditional retail labour force. A further study of older males in retailing was carried out by Roberts & Stoney (2003) also in Tesco. This supermarket chain has been proactive in recruiting older workers and the study examined the ways in which such workers were integrated into the existing workforce, as well as comparing data of issues such as comparative turnover and sickness levels for older and younger

workers. The presence of different generations in workplaces can lead to some management issues (SSA, 2009a).

There do not appear to be any particular issues associated with cultural diversity in the retail and allied sectors; it is not discussed in the literature in the same way as it is in hospitality and tourism. Clearly in a migrant society like Australia, both staff and customers are likely to include significant cultural diversity (SSA, 2009a), and in some localities the majority of both staff and customers would be from particular cultural backgrounds.

### Nature of training in and for the industry

In English-speaking countries, qualifications are not yet a prerequisite for employment in the retail industry (Huddlestone and Hirst, 2004), and managers in particular are under-qualified (Hart et al., 2007). Internationally, the retail industry is a 'low consumer' of external training particularly that offered by public training providers (Dougherty, 2003); this could partly be related to the typical small size of many retail establishments. On-job training is the most common type of training in small and medium enterprises (Jameson, 2000). However it should be noted that in the Germanic countries, for example, retail has for a long time been an apprenticed trade, and therefore it should not be assumed that a low qualification regime is innate to retailing.

Spielhofer and Sims (2005) in the UK identified fundamental some barriers to the successful implementation of Modern Apprenticeships (similar to traineeships) in retailing. These are related to the culture of the sector, including the mobility of young workers, who frequently change jobs, and the need to focus on serving the customer, which can restrict and fragment training and development opportunities. These factors have been identified in Australia too. It is perhaps the case that these factors do not prevent structured training being possible, but rather provide challenges that need to be overcome. However it is a fact that in 2006/7 18.2% of retail employers provided no training at all to their staff compared with 13.9% of all employers in Australia (SSA, 2009a). There is some evidence, e.g. from State regulators, that formal qualification-based training in retail in Australia is sometimes of low quality (SSA, 2009a).

Some of the quality issues may be due to a lack of capability in training others among management staff. There is a lack of take-up of management training (SSA, 2009a) among small businesses, for example, which is affected by perceived business pressures and low engagement of SMEs with the training sector. It is clear however that there is a need for more training for managers, as SSA (2009a) points out both in 'soft skills' (including being able to manage training for other workers) and in harder skills such as marketing and planning. As discussed earlier, independent retailers are regarded in Europe as 'at risk' and training and development of this sector has been seen as a priority to assist it sustaining it in terms of economic prosperity, competitiveness and employment. Byrom, Harris & Parker (2000) produced a review to assist training providers involved, or wishing to be involved, in sustaining the independent retail sector through training. It might also be expected, although there does not seem to be literature on this issue, that the progressive take-up of retail qualifications would lead to the gradual entrenchment of a training culture in the industry. However there is a low take-up of higher level qualifications such as the Diploma in Retail management, in Australia (SSA, 2009a)

### Conclusions and implications for the VET workforce

SSA (2009a) identifies a number of major issues including closer attention to the outcomes of training, a more streamlined funding system, and closer attention to a range of workforce issues. The latter include: attraction of new staff including older workers through marketing of retail as a career, retention of existing workers by means such as job re-design, better career paths, better performance management and fostering an appreciation among both employers and employees of the benefits of training. These issues are clearly in line with the international literature on the sector.

Many of these issues are outside the domain of the VET practitioner. Some that are within the domain include the role of VET practitioners in:

- Improving motivation and retention through an enthusiasm for careers in the sector;
- Encouraging managers to consider qualifications or other training for themselves;
- Being able to work effectively with very young workers but also to include the needs of older workers;
- Being able to co-ordinate training activities in a part-time and casual labour force environment;
- Being familiar with appropriate technology in different workplaces and its effects on work;
- Being conversant with environmental sustainability issues in retail;
- Being sensitive to the managerial environment in retail workplaces of differing sizes;
- Providing managers with strategies to facilitate training in sometimes difficult circumstances.

## Tourism, Hospitality and Events

### Nature of the industry and forecast changes

In this section of the chapter, 'hospitality' is taken to include tourism, travel and events. Hospitality employed 1.2 million people in Australia 2008 (Service Skills Australia (SSA), 2009e). The hospitality industry is expanding rapidly in all western countries. In the UK, for example, restaurant trade increased by 71% in the decade to 1998 (Pratten, 2003). Internationally around 10% of all workers are employed in tourism and hospitality alone (Baum, 2002). The sector is expected to grow by around 1.7% per annum over the next five years (SSA, 2009e) but the industry is very susceptible to changes in the economy and in international political events. There are some variations in the sector's strength across Australian States and territories (SSA, 2009e).

Unlike retail, hospitality consists predominantly of smaller employers. Only 1% of businesses employ over 200 staff (SSA, 2009e). However some larger employers do exist and some of these are major multi-national chains. Unlike retailing, hospitality is not heavily unionised (Baum, 2008).

Service is paramount in these industries; Maxwell, Watson and Quail (2004, p. 159) point out that for hospitality 'the customer reigns supreme'. In a study of training in the Hilton chain, Maxwell et al. (2004, p. 269) note that a service culture is deeply imbued with organisational structures and practices, and cannot be added on simply by training individual staff.

The hospitality industry caters both for Australian and international customers, and customer expectations of service standards are continually rising (SSA, 2009e).

Much of the business in this sector is outside major population concentrations (SSA, 2009a), creating particular demands on the industry including its labour force. In this respect hospitality has some affinities with the mining sector. The industry is continually providing a more flexible service to customers often creating a need for extend opening hours (SSA, 2009e). There are considerable technological advances in many sub-sectors especially with regard to bookings stock control (Balta, 2007); SSA, 2009e).

**Nature of the workforce**

As a labour intensive industry, the quality of workers' skills is central to productivity (SSA, 2009e). As with retail, hospitality work is often undervalued and referred to in a demeaning manner (Poulston, 2008). Perceptions of low skills are often socially constructed (Baum, 2002). However, the work certainly has its real disadvantages; for example hospitality workers are sometimes subject to split shifts and cramped working conditions (Pratten, 2003). Pay tends to be low also (Pratten, 2003) although jobs are very diverse and include managerial and professional work (Baum, 2002). In the tight labour market of the past decade it has been increasingly difficult internationally to attract staff to many jobs in the industry (Poulston, 2008).

As with retail, the workforce is often part-time and/or casual and, in some cases, transient. In the UK, and Ireland in particular, for example, hospitality has attracted huge numbers of workers from the EU 'A8 accession countries' such as Poland (Wickham, Moriarty, Bobek and Salamonska, 2009; Hearns, Devine and Baum, 2007) which brings additional training needs such as language training well as a workforce that does not intend to stay in the industry. In Australia too backpackers form a sub-section of the labour force. The labour force in Australia also has many non-English speaking migrant members to the extent that several national resources have been developed to assist trainers with delivery to such workers (e.g. Adams & Holden, 1998). Baum notes (2008) that migrant workers may not have direct experience of the routine consumption of hospitality services and may need more assistance than western workers in understanding its nature and customers expectations. The same argument could be applied to international students. It is noted that in other countries front-line workers in hospitality are required to have sophisticated language skills and that the perception of the value of such worker is higher in those countries (Baum, 2008).

Because of the multi-cultural nature of the customer base, employers look for staff that can work effectively with people from different cultures. The multi-cultural nature both of customers and staff means that managers in hospitality need sophisticated cross-cultural skills (SSA, 2009e; Hearns et al, 2007). All hospitality workers need to have a good understanding of intercultural issues and this has implications for the hospitality curriculum (Hearns et al, 2007). According to the latter, proficiency in handling cultural diversity has two aspects: development of consciousness and awareness about cross-cultural differences and skill development in language, communication and negotiation.

Again as with retail, is increasing attention to the need to attract older workers (SSA, 2009e). Among some sub-sectors, there is a particular niche for older post-retirement workers who are attracted to the part-time and interactive nature of the work. The importance of 'emotional labour' in the parts of hospitality that involve direct customer interaction (Baum, 2008) places particular demands on the types of people that are selected by employers and that enjoy working in hospitality.

### Nature of training in and for the industry

Internationally, employers sometimes tend to express dissatisfaction with training provided by external providers (Pratten, 2003). There are some difficulties with on-the-job training, however; as Poulston (2008) puts it, 'performing a task publicly with insufficient skill jeopardises service quality, and can demean and embarrass employees'.

In the Australian context, SSA (2009e) reports that 'industry' has concerns about training quality among some providers. There are particular concerns about RTOs that deliver training in fewer hours than appropriate and in the school context.

Historically, only the occupation of chef has had formal VET qualifications in Australia. The other occupations within hospitality have only recently been afforded formal qualifications. Most of enrolments in the Australian hospitality qualifications are at Certificate II and III level. Hospitality has a higher proportion at Certificate II level than tourism and events. Compared with retail, hospitality has higher enrolments at Diploma level. International students form a substantial part of hospitality enrolment; 25.1% of all international VET enrolments are in hospitality (SSA, 2009a). Both in regard to international students and more generally, SSA (2009e) identifies a number of issues including: the need to explain better to students what a job entails, better data to look at matching of employment outcomes against qualification, and better communication of needs of employers to students. RPL is being increasingly used in hospitality training (SSA 2009e) but the rates vary among the sub-sectors.

Considering that most employers in hospitality are SMEs there is relatively little attention paid to training for these businesses. Becton & Graetz (2001) in an Australian study note the under-qualification among managers, and that although managers would like more training, the pressures of work and costs act as a deterrent. While generally on-the-job training was favoured by these employers for their staff they were more prepared to consider external training for themselves.

An application of a well-accepted measure of service quality (SERVQUAL) in hospitality was used in a North American study of training for hospitality (Clemenz & Weaver, 2003). This study shows that trainees valued, in descending order, the following provided list of qualities: interactivity, supportive climate, courtesy, relevance and credibility. While this research is interesting in terms of the possible transference of the service culture of the industry to expectations of training, the research was carried out only with supervisory and management trainees and may not necessarily apply to operational workers.

### Conclusions and implications for the VET workforce

SSA (2009e) identifies a number of major issues including better data on training including training outcomes, delivery strategies; employment rates of overseas students; the appropriate use of RPL; and the quality of VET in schools.

For VET practitioners the following issues arise from the literature in this section:

- Improving motivation and retention through an enthusiasm for careers in the sector;

- Being able to co-ordinate training activities in a part-time and casual labour force environment;

- Being familiar with advances in technology and its effects on work;

- Being sensitive to the managerial environment in hospitality workplaces of differing sizes;

- Working with learners from different cultural backgrounds and training Australian learners to work alongside such workers;

- Training learners to understand and service customers from a range of nationalities and cultural backgrounds;

- Providing learners with a high level of service in training commensurate with their expectations that have been developed through working in, or aspiring towards, service industries;

- Delivering training in regional and remote locations;

- Training in the appropriate use of RPL;

- Providing managers with appropriately flexible higher-level training.

## Hair and Beauty

### Nature of the industry and forecast changes

In early 2008 the hairdressing and beauty sectors employed over 84,000 people (88% female, of which approximately 45% worked part-time). The industry is made up of small to medium businesses, employing less than 20 people. (Service Skills Australia (SSA), 2009b). Compared to other service skills industries, hairdressing and beauty had the highest volatility. This high volatility could be the result of changes in the economic climate.

Currently in the service industries, the main shortages are in the areas of traditional trades, specifically hairdressing and commercial cookery. Shortages in these areas are partly due to a move away from the traditional trades as a career option and low uptake of apprenticeship pathways (Service Skills Victoria (SSV), 2008). In the future, SSA (2009b) suggests that time poor Australians with higher disposable incomes will turn to the hair and beauty industry to not only receive personal services but also to increase a sense of well-being through personal indulgence and 'time out'.

### Nature of the workforce

South Australia, NSW and Victoria are experiencing high net overseas migration. The cultural diversity in the workforce and of customers means that the ability work across cultures is becoming and essential skill (SSA, 2009b). Birrell, Healy and Kinnaird (2007) report that overseas commencements in cooking and hairdressing courses have nearly tripled between 2004 and 2006. They critically examine the standards of training and conclude that only a minority of those completing these courses and subsequently gaining permanent residence will ever actually enter the occupations in Australia.

The hairdressing sector seems to have fewer problems in attracting new employees but faces problems in retaining qualified hairdressers (SSA 2009b). In the case of the traditional trades such as hairdressing, the competition from other industries with more powerful and positive images pulls potential labour and talent away from this industry. The poor perception combined with relatively low wages also hinders entry into these sectors by young people (SSV, 2008). The introduction of Australia's first ever federal industry award is a major victory for hair and beauty in Australia and will be take effect from January 1, 2010.

In the UK, there is a general shortage of new entrants into the hairdressing industry (Cunningham, 2003). Hairdressing is an important sector in providing training and employment opportunities for women, who make up approximately two thirds of the UK workforce. There are many young workers in the industry and training arrangements for the industry are well established and widely applied (Druker, White & Stanworth, 2005).

### Nature of training in and for the industry

Business success largely depends on the quality of the customer service that employees provide and their specialist skills and knowledge. Hence the quality of entry level training, which involves a combination of technical and service skills, is of great importance (SSA 2009b).

Whilst 79.1% of graduates of hairdressing training packages are employed after training, attention needs to be on the 20.9% of hairdressing and a lower percentage of beauty students that did not receive or choose employment after training. The relevance of training was rated highly by hairdressing graduates (SSA 2009b).

There is a variety of factors creating demand for learning and skills in the hairdressing industry in both Australia and the UK. SSA (2009b) predicts that management skills, the ability to budget, adapt to changes and market are seen as skills that will help reduce the annual rate of exits. Anderson and Hemsworth (2005) claim that in the UK, management skills have emerged as a major skills gap. HABIA, the sector skills body, has identified shortfalls of general business skills, including selling skills, finance, IT, marketing and business planning.

Research suggest that employers in the industry are not impressed with formal qualifications, with training providers in the UK reporting that NVQ level 2 being the highest qualification achieved by most, with few going on to complete all of the components of the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship (Cunningham, 2003; Druker, White & Stanworth, 2005).

In contrast to this view, Anderson and Hemsworth (2005) maintain that drivers for the progression of advanced apprenticeship programmes in the UK are rising skill levels and a demand for learning and skills in the hairdressing and beauty sector beyond level 3.

In Australia, hairdressing will continue to be a high training priority at Certificate III and IV level, driven by the skills shortages in this field. SSV (2008) state that there is a need for Certificate IV and above in beauty, as the beauty sector will see and increase in practitioners becoming specialists in advanced beauty technology following the beauty diploma qualification.

### Conclusions and implications for the VET workforce

SSA (2009b) has identified a number of issues envisioning that future domestic, social and economic changes will have multiple effects on the hairdressing and beauty industries. Leadership and management skills are particularly important for handling changes in Australian society. The ongoing training of employees must be a priority for managers, to strengthen their employee recruitment strategies and staff retention plans (SSA, 2009b). The implementation of the new federal award combined with the initiatives suggested by Service Skills South Australia (2008) in the hair and beauty workforce development project will revitalise the industry.

In terms of the literature, the following points are relevant to the VET practitioner working in the hair and beauty sector:

- VET practitioners need to promote hairdressing as an industry and a destination for employees and perspective employees.

- Since hair and beauty is a highly customer focused industry, VET practitioners need to ensure that they provide a combination of technical and customer service skills.

- VET practitioners need to incorporate the explicit teaching of management skills, marketing, IT, finance and market flexibility as integral skills which need to be taught.

- VET practitioners teaching beauty need to make a concerted effort to maintain levels of knowledge in a rapidly changing industry.

- VET practitioners should encourage a higher level of AQF qualifications for hairdressers and ensure that future career pathways are well recognised by students and employers.

## Sport, Fitness, Community and Outdoor Recreation

### Nature of the industry and forecast changes

The sport and recreation industry includes a range of areas including fitness, sport, community recreation and outdoor recreation (Service Skills Australia (SSA), 2009d). It has been defined by Service Skills Australia (2009c) as encompassing 'a range of people (paid and unpaid) and agencies for the express intention of providing services relating to participation in physical activity to enrich the lives of all Australians for the health and well being of the community'.

Training Packages (Certificate II to Diploma) are delivered in each of these areas and graduates are employed in a range of jobs and settings including athlete support services, fitness instruction, community recreation, sports coaching and sports development (SSA, 2009d). The number of students completing the various training packages varies across the industry sectors. The largest number of annual completions nationally was reported to be in the fitness industry (Certificate III 1750, Certificate IV 900, Diploma 100). The remaining sectors generally had less than 300 completers nationally per year in any training program with the majority of these being at the Certificate II or III level (SSA, 2009c). Comparison of completions with commencing student numbers indicates that there is substantial drop out from all courses in the range of 50-90%. Therefore, this review will focus on the training and employment conditions of the fitness industry.

The industry is forecast to evolve in response to a range of factors including population growth, increased immigration (non-English speaking), ageing of the population, lifestyle changes including an increased focus on convenience and decreased tendency to volunteer, and increased emphasis on physical activity as a strategy to combat an anticipated increase in chronic disease (SSA, 2009c).

Despite the current dominance of the fitness industry training programs, there is a forecast increase in sport and outdoor recreation focused tourism. This will see a substantial demand for individuals capable of developing providing the necessary infrastructure and services to both the domestic and international visitor market. Further, an estimated 4.5 million Australians undertake some form of sport and active recreation annually. A substantial proportion of this activity is undertaken in a setting which relies upon the involvement of volunteers. It has been estimated that 72% of staff servicing the sport and active recreation sector are volunteers (ABS, 2006). The involvement of volunteer, while essential to the industry, is under stress. Volunteers are becoming harder to recruit and sustain, and their needs are changing. It appears that the VET sector is not meeting the needs of this cohort (SSA, 2009c).

### Nature of the workforce

Service Skills Australia (SSA) reported in 2007 the industry employed 93,100 people the majority (52%) of whom were women and worked part time (53%). The industry included 17,700 businesses, the majority of which were classified as small whereby they employed less than 20 people (SSA, 2009c). A key characteristic of the industry in Australia since its genesis in the late 1980s has been the significant proportion of part time employees, as well as volunteers in the community sport area. The development of the industry has coincided with the growth in the number of community leisure facilities developed by Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and the more general move for LGAs to outsource the management of many of their service delivery roles. This was initially undertaken via competitive tendering and

followed by 'best value' approaches. The industry has also developed in response to the establishment of commercial gymnasiums and more recently to the establishment of a plethora of small business offering personal training services.

In general, there is a dearth of peer reviewed literature which explores the employment and training needs of the VET-based fitness industry. An extensive review of the published literature located a small number of studies published by authors in the UK and USA. No such studies by Australian authors were identified.

Ravenstock and Gilchrist (2005) have explored the impact of the changing management practices alluded to above on the leisure centre workforce in the UK. They were able to undertake this investigation as the leisure industry (particularly provision of municipal leisure centres) in the UK has been established for longer than in Australia. The UK leisure centres were initially established by LGAs and operated under a public service model. Ravenstock and Gilchrist (2009) report that the move towards service regulation rather than service delivery by LGAs or 'hollowing out' of LGA roles has resulted in the outsourcing of leisure services. This move is reported to be in keeping with the broader government agenda of 'arms length' regulation and a move away from training and service delivery. They contend that this has resulted in a move away from public service approaches and associated long term, vocationally focused employment. Instead, there has been a rise of part time, short lived employment and employees seeing involvement in the sector as a means to income generation rather than as a vocation. Moreover, this has resulted in the development of a small number of highly skilled permanent employees and a large group of low skilled, transient employees. Importantly, they argue that this agenda has seen a move towards 'in house' management focused training, a reduced incentive to train and retrain lower level staff, and reduced options for career advancement in general, and in the leisure industry, specifically. It has also seen a move towards the development of small enterprises with low profit margins and often with little or no training or development available to employees. Overall, they assert, this has resulted in many organisations operating with staff trained to no more than the legal minimum.

The advent and reinforcement of the fitness industry as a low paid, transient and relatively low skilled workforce in the UK was also the attention of an ethnographic study undertaken in the USA by George (2008). George (2008) characterised these jobs as 'expert service work'. She considered these jobs to be located mid way between low level, low paid unskilled jobs and high skilled professional positions. These expert service workers largely function in an unregulated or minimally regulated environment and the nature of their service is somewhat ambiguous. They provide "knowledgeable, customised, interactive labour" (George, 2008, p. 115). George (2008) explored a number of service delivery typologies and tended to conclude that these individuals were providing a valued service. She did not, however, comment on the nature of the employment or the appropriateness of the training background of the service providers.

### Nature of training for the industry

The advent of a legal minimum or 'licence to practice' has been implemented in the UK as a strategy in response to governments aligning practice with their policy limited labour market regulation (Lloyd, 2005). The establishment of a licence to practice framework has reportedly been a central part of labour market regulation in many European countries and has also been used to a limited extent in the USA. In theory, it is seen as a way to exclude low quality competition and improve the quality of service to consumers (Lloyd, 2005). However, it has been posited that this approach simply restricts supply and forces up the cost of services (Kleiner, 2002). Lloyd (2005) reported on an investigation into the effect of self-regulation on the development a of 'licence to practice' system in the UK fitness industry; a Register of

Exercise Professionals (REP). The REP was ostensibly established in order to assist employees and consumers better understand the plethora of exercise-related qualifications, to improve the overall professional image of the industry and to align the industry with the needs of the health sector; an emerging employer of exercise-trained staff (Lloyd, 2005). Importantly, the system developed in the UK did not involve workers in the regulation of their industry and registration was voluntary.

For most large UK fitness service companies, the introduction of the REP had little effect on their operation as they already tended to hire employees who met the new, but low threshold, industry standard. There were, however, notable exceptions where the REP forced providers to alter their hiring practices and adopt the new standard. It should be noted, however, that the minimum requirement, a level that is increasingly being seen as the maximum, is equivalent to a two to three week full time course of study. Notwithstanding the advent of the register, UK-based employees continued to focus upon employing staff on the basis of personality or social skills. Lloyd (2005) concluded that the advent of a self-regulated standard had little impact on the industry. It did little to improve the training or employment conditions of employees. This was seen to be due to the low registration requirement, the constant flow of young people willing to pay for a three week course, and the rapid turn over of staff. In this sense, the apparent limited impact of the REP reinforces the more general or systemic issues canvassed by Ravenstock and Gilchrist (2005).

### Conclusions and implications for the VET workforce

It is possible to make the following tentative conclusions and implications for the VET fitness industry workforce from the limited data available for this review. These conclusions and implications are based on the assumption that there is a reasonable level of concurrence between the dominant public policy paradigm in the UK and Australia.

- Training for the fitness industry will be an area of on-going popularity due to the part time, transient nature of the workforce.

- Training will need to take into account demographic changes of the target clientele; in particular increased number of non-English speaking clients, older clients and clients with chronic disease.

- Students undertaking training do not view the entry to the industry as a vocation, rather as a strategy to earn income.

- Training curricula will need to balance the technical and social skills required by employees.

- Demand driven VET-based training will largely be focused upon provision of minimal skills.

- The use of minimum standards registers tends to translate to 'maximum standards' and may not result in improved service provision.

- Employees will focus staff development upon the needs of a limited number of permanent employees at the expense of low level staff. These programs will be increasingly run 'in house' and in the Australian context, outside the VET qualification framework.

## 2.2 VET practitioners and VET teacher qualifications

In Australian VET, the minimum qualification for VET practitioners to deliver and assess nationally-recognised training is the Certificate IV in Training & Assessment (TAA40104). This was introduced in late 2004 as an updated version of the previous Certificate IV in Assessment & Workplace Training (BSZ98). While the new Certificate IV qualification was regarded in itself as an improvement on the old, its implementation is generally agreed to have been poor, with much reliance on credit transfer from the previous Certificate IV and on recognition of prior learning (Simons & Smith, 2008). Prior to 1998 no minimum qualifications were set and it was the implementation of the Australian Quality Training Framework in 2003 that set the qualification as mandatory.

Paradoxically at the same time as the introduction of a 'floor' for VET teachers, the proportion of these teachers that are more highly qualified has been reduced, as State TAFE systems have withdrawn progressively from a former system where they supported their teachers to gain post-employment university VET teaching qualifications (Smith & Keating, 2003). Some teachers still undertake such qualifications on a voluntary basis; however there are no national standards for such programs. During 2009 a number of projects have been set in place at a national level to address the perceived problem of under-qualification of the VET workforce; projects are being undertaken by the Australian College of Education, by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research and the Australian Education Union. Thus the issue of initial VET teaching qualifications is in some disarray in Australia.

VET teachers are also required to have certain industry level qualifications. These are mandated by the individual Training Packages which they deliver, and most commonly require them either to possess the qualification which they are delivering or assessing or a qualification that is one level higher. There may also be requirements about 'industry currency'.

In terms of requirements for professional development the following are mentioned as important and currently underdeveloped: assessment, workbased learning (Figgis, 2009), maintaining partnerships with industry, marketing to industry, recognition of prior learning processes, e-learning, delivering higher-level qualifications, and delivering transferable generic skills (Western Australian Department of Training, [WADOT] 2008). Hillier (2009) notes that one of the most useful ways of innovation in VET practice is through contact with employers and through networking with 'brokerage services' (intermediary organisations, as they are known in Australia).

### Industry currency

There is very little scholarly literature on 'industry currency'; early explorations of the topic were undertaken by Holland & Holland (1998) and Moy (2001). Western Australian Department of Training (WADOT) (2002) provided a brief list of possible industry currency activities: return to work, collaborative activities with industry partners, buddy systems, supplier liaison. The Queensland government has recently undertaken a research project in this area; a consultation paper (Queensland DETA, 2009) listed a number of benefits of, and barriers to, maintaining industry currency. Clayton, Fisher & Hughes (2005) also discussed barriers including staff resistance.

### Involvement in staff development

Given that RTOs do not often mandate involvement in staff development, what is it that motivates VET practitioners to engage in development? Smith (2000) produced a model to illustrate VET practitioners' propensity to engage in staff development associated with top-down change, such as the introduction of competency-based training or flexible delivery (Figure 2.1). Engagement means any of the following:

1.  Seeking out opportunities for staff development -within or outside the institution

2.  Attending activities provided by the institution

3.  Participating constructively in activities

4.  Implementing lessons learned during the activity.
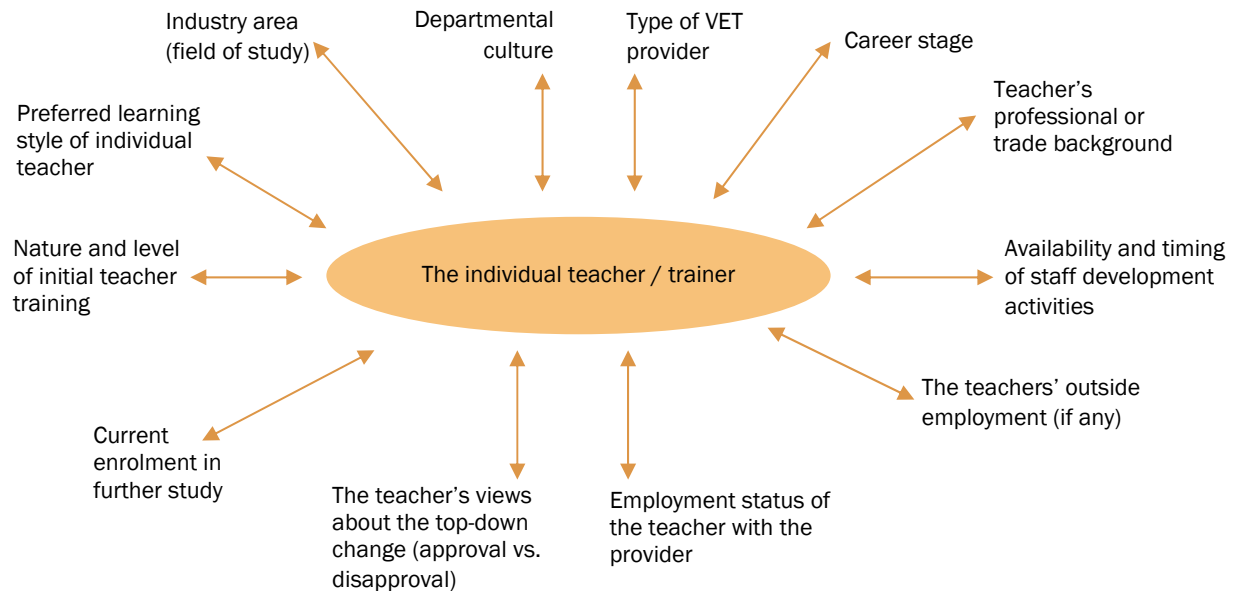


**Figure 2.1:** Factors affecting engagement of individual VET teacher with staff development associated with top-down change

Source: Smith, 2000

Going beyond engagement in provided staff development activities, Figgis (2009) looks at those practitioners who routinely develop their own practice and help others to do likewise. She says that 'Practitioners who are actively thinking of sharing their practice are (i) reflective, (ii) responsive to and respectful of learners (iii) closely engaged with local enterprises and (iv) learn from and share knowledge with other practitioners'. Mitchell (2008) has introduced the concept of the Advanced VET Practitioner, whose characteristics include a willingness to continue learning and to combine business with educational expertise. In his paper Mitchell notes that advanced practitioners are able to move easily among what he describes as four 'paradigms' or delivery modes: within an institution, mixing institutional and workplace delivery, embedding delivery in enterprises, and discussing workforce development strategies with enterprise. In a later paper (2009) Mitchell notes that advanced practitioners are likely to have had a range of previous careers – not just VET and an industry area - assisting them in broadening them in their outlook.

It is generally accepted that part-time and casual VET practitioners who form a substantial proportion of the VET are traditionally 'hard-to-reach' in terms of engagement of development activities. This view is in line with the general finding that casual and part-time staff receive less training in the workforce in general (Vandenheuvel & Wooden, 1999).

### Recent developments in VET workforce development

In September 2008 the Council of Australian Governments Working Group on the Productivity Agenda (the COAG Working Group) circulated a discussion paper in which it proposed that:

> *the VET sector needs a workforce that has the industry currency required to prepare learners for the modern labour market, as well as the ability and skill to engage a wide variety of learners across a range of mediums. (COAG Working Group 2009, p.30)*

In support of this proposition, the COAG Working Group noted a number of challenges faced by the VET workforce, including the ageing of that workforce, changes to the labour market and VET student population demanding that VET educators adopt new approaches, the lack of a clear professional identify and professional recognition for VET educators, and the fact that VET educators are both education professionals and also members of their own industry area. Despite a range of indicators that national action on workforce development is appropriate for the VET workforce, the discussion paper noted that 'unlike other areas of national importance, such as health, the VET workforce has attracted little coordinated national attention' (COAG Working Group 2009, p.30). In March 2009 the COAG Working Group reported that consultations based on the discussion paper had revealed 'unanimous support for the need to focus on the VET workforce' (p.13).

While the COAG workplan clearly identified a need for workforce development for the VET workforce, it did not propose the form that such a workforce development strategy might take. Furthermore, while consultations raised the question of whether a workforce development strategy would encompass the whole VET workforce (public and private) (p.13), the workplan identified the development and training of the *public* VET workforce as the responsibility of State and Territory governments in each jurisdiction (p.8), and left the question of responsibility for development of the *private* VET workforce unaddressed. The COAG agenda sets the scene for the SSA workforce development strategy, which will encompass all sectors of the Service Skills VET workforce.

### The 'dual identity' of VET practitioners

The COAG discussion paper pointed to the significance of a dual identity for members of the VET workforce, as education professionals and also as industry professionals. Issues surrounding workforce development in a context of specialist industry skills and knowledge, and specialist vs. generalist pedagogical skills and knowledge, emerged in both the literature and the fieldwork data for this project. Fisher and Webb (2006) explored issues relating to initial teacher training for educators in the UK learning and skills sector. They pointed to a tension between UK policy initiatives that encouraged the development of subject specialist pedagogy, and teacher training programs that instead supported the development of broader, more generic pedagogies. Research conducted by the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED 2003, cited in Fisher & Webb 2006, p.340) showed that many pre-service training programs for learning and skills, or vocational, educators assumed that trainee teachers either already held subject specialist skills, or would receive support in the development of specialist skills in the educational institutions in which they worked. On the subject specialist side of this debate stood research suggesting that 'love of their subject' was a key motivator for learning and skills teachers (GTC 2003, cited in Fisher & Webb 2006, p.339), and that teachers needed 'two sets of skills – to be expert in their subject, and to be trained to teach it' (DfES 2003, p.7, cited in Fisher & Webb 2006, p.340). The other side of the debate was reflected in changes to pedagogical practice that saw teachers in further education challenged to be generalist facilitators of learning, working collaboratively and in a multidisciplinary way.

In the context of this tension between the demand for specialist vs. generalist pedagogical skills and knowledge, Fisher and Webb outlined the 'Associate Online' project. This was a collaborative partnership project, funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, in which a group of UK universities developed and supported online learning communities to provide trainees with subject specialist pedagogical skills (Fisher & Webb 2006, p.344). Using browser-based software, the online communities connected geographically dispersed subject specialist in-service trainee teachers and provided development opportunities such as access to mentors, peer tutoring, shared resources, comparative discussions about effective practice, and observations of good practice through video links. The project aimed to work with 5000 in-service trainee teachers who were studying in 71 locations (p.345). The benefits of this model were seen to extend beyond the pedagogical content, also providing in-service trainee teachers with a direct and positive experience of online learning from a learner's perspective, and providing opportunities for collaborative development of subject-specific learning resources (pp. 345-346).

A second issue impacting on a workforce development strategy is the ageing workforce. The National Industry Skills Committee (NISC 2008, p.14) identified industry concern about the impact of the ageing Australian workforce on national productivity and economic performance. With specific reference to the VET workforce, the COAG Working Group similarly identified ageing as a challenge, citing the TAFE sector where in 2004 the proportion of teachers aged over 45 was almost double the Australian workforce average (COAG Working Group 2009, p.30). NISC outlined a number of strategies that have been adopted in industry to respond to this issue; these strategies may be useful to incorporate into a workforce development strategy for Service Skills VET practitioners. For example, confronting the impact of loss of technical knowledge through retirement of members of its technical workforce, ALCOA WA Mining introduced a project based on a combination of knowledge retention and phased retirement (NISC 2008, pp.14-15). Such knowledge retention strategies in themselves may be more appropriate for implementation within individual RTOs rather than on a sector-wide basis.

## Conclusion

The literature review shows that there is considerable diversity in the industry sectors covered by Service Skills Australia. Despite this some common threads emerge which are relevant for VET practitioners delivering training in and for the sectors:

- Diversity of workforce elements eg part-time/casual

- High labour turnover

- Extended operating hours

- The importance of 'soft skills' in workers

- Wide dispersal of industry locations and the presence of large numbers of small and medium enterprises

- Low perceived status of some industry and occupations within them

- The importance of understanding the nature of clients of the industries

With regard to VET practitioners generally the literature shows the broad and deep range of skills and knowledge required by VET practitioners and the perceived inadequacy of current qualifications to address these skills and knowledge requirements. The importance of industry currency is not disputed but there is little literature to assist in understanding its nature or the best way to develop it. In the UK literature there is an extended understanding of the ways in which teaching and training might adapt for different industry areas ('subject specific pedagogy'). The varied nature of the VET workforce increases challenges in addressing perceived inadequacies, in much the same way as the nature of the service skills workforce provides challenges for VET practitioners.

# Chapter 3. Overseas comparison: The UK

The issue of the capability of the VET workforce to address the development needs of the workforce in general is an issue of importance internationally. A comparison was undertaken with the UK to examine whether there are any initiatives in that country that could be of relevance to Australia and to the service industries in Australia in particular. The UK was chosen because in some respects its VET system has similarities with Australia, with the two countries often leapfrogging over each other in training reform initiatives of the past 25 years. Moreover, with similar (although by no means identical) cultural histories, it is much easier to draw comparisons with assurance than it would be, for example, with Germany.

The following method was undertaken:

1. Desk analysis of relevant documents from the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (formerly the Department for Education and Skills) the UK government body responsible for the VET system and from Lifelong Learning UK (the sector skills council responsible for skills development of VET practitioners); telephone Interview in May 2009 with Dr Roy Fisher, a leading VET teacher-training academic involved with national initiatives in VET teaching.

2. Desk analysis of relevant documents from the Sector Skills Councils responsible for Tourism & Hospitality (People 1st) and Retail (Skillsmart); telephone interviews with Research Managers from these two Skills Councils June 2009

## 3.1 VET practitioners in the UK: An overview

### The VET scene in the UK

In the UK, formal VET is provided by a network of Further Education (FE) colleges which are publicly-funded, as well as a large number of private training providers. The latter are primarily engaged in delivering 'work-based learning'. As in Australia there are also many adult and community education training providers. This collection of different contexts for delivery is referred to as the 'learning and skills sector' (DfES, 2008, p. 7). VET qualifications are awarded by 'awarding bodies' and may be 'owned' by these bodies (such as City & Guilds qualifications in many apprenticed trades) or may be National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). NVQs are somewhat analogous to Training Packages but have never achieved the hegemony that Training Packages have in the Australian system, with awarding bodies still retaining a great number of additional qualifications. Awarding bodies are sometimes perceived as having become 'increasingly rapacious, (Kent, *pers. comm.*) in their pursuit of business. Most recently, enterprises have been allowed to offer qualifications to their own workers including the ability to act as awarding bodies (Smith & Smith, 2009). The latter has occurred only in the last two years, unlike enterprise RTOs in Australia which have been in existence for around 15 years.

The reforms to VET were assisted by the publication of the report 'World Class Skills' (DIUS, 2007) which itself is a response to a comprehensive inquiry into the current and future skills needs for the UK. Under these provisions the 'rate of public subsidy towards Further Education programmes were be reduced to 50 per cent by 2010 for learning outside the priority areas for some learning there will be no public subsidy' (Leitch, 2006, p. 1.8-1.9) This was to be accompanied by a trend towards demand led training. 'Taking account of other work-based employer training programmes the total employer focussed funding will reach around 1.3 billion pounds by 2010/11' (Leitch, 2006, p. 1.10-1.13). More recent policy developments include the 2008 Work Skills Legislation.

This legislation demanded that people claiming income support entitlements will have to participate in training if their benefits are to be maintained. 'It is expected that this will be benefit 100,000 19-25 year olds over the next three years' (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills [DIUS] 2009, p. 1). Finally there has been a move to reform the numbers of qualifications offered. For example in hospitality, travel and tourism the number of qualifications is to be reduced from around 400 to around 200. This will be done both by reducing the duplication of qualifications, and by considering the need for some low-demand qualifications. (Kent, *pers. comm.,* 2009).

The UK policy framework for workforce development for VET practitioners working in and for the service industries is thus highly complex and constantly evolving. In recent years the number of small and highly entrepreneurial private providers has proliferated. Many of these have been in the service skills area. The 'boom' in the beauty sector and the developing range of complementary therapies, for instance, has given rise to increasing numbers of small and possibly under-capitalised companies coming into the market. As in Australia, there have been a number of 'VET scandals' over the last few years. Some of these relate to international students and providers who have been referred to as 'visa factories'. Many of the new providers in the service skills industries specialise in provision for the NEET group ('Not Engaged in Employment, Education or Training)' training for students, who must be enrolled in education or training to ensure their welfare payments. 'The private sector has a long and documented history of parsimonious training' (Fisher, *pers. comm*., 2009).

## VET teacher/trainer qualifications in the UK

In the last few years there have been significant changes to the credentialing of VET professionals as well as to the marketplace of VET provision in the UK. Initial training for College teachers is governed by the Further Education Teachers Qualifications England Regulations 2001 (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2008, p. 13). Lifelong Learning UK estimates that there are 283,094 individuals working in community learning, 272,970 staff in further education (FE) and 136,625 staff in work based learning (WBL) (Lifelong Learning UK, 2009a, p. 1).

The English Department for Education and Skills in its report "Equipping our Teachers for the Future; Reforming Initial Teacher Training for the Learning and Skills Sector" (2008) set out a blueprint for teacher reform in this sector.

A number of the reforms included the introduction of a new 'offer for trainee teachers, leading to a new award - Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS); setting new standards for teachers across the learning and skills sector; amending the current regulations for teachers' qualifications in further education; and piloting approaches to mentoring to help teachers develop teaching skills in their own specialist or subject area.' (DfES, 2008, p. 4). These suggested reforms apply across a range of sectors - adult and community learning, college based delivery, the public sector and private sector employers. Compliance with QTLS for all teachers in the learning and skills sector will form part of their 'licence to practice', which then requires an annual review. (DfES, 2008)

The networks of Further Education Colleges, private providers and Universities deliver teaching qualifications for people training for the Service Skills industries, and other industries, in the UK. FE organisations recognise the importance of providing continuing professional Development to VET professionals to improve outcomes of VET for students, employers and communities For example one large FE college enrols 200 students each year in a pre service course in teacher preparation (Fisher, *pers. Comm*., 2009). Students enter the program with an NVQ 3 or equivalent and usually they have been teaching in an FE college with no qualifications beyond their discipline area. These students are trainers whose main

qualification is experience. Both these programs embed the initial 'Qualified Teacher Learning Skills' qualification.

The overall profile of the VET professional in the service skills industries in the UK has been described by one commentator as a 'mishmash of qualifications with high degrees of specific industry variation.' (Fisher, *pers. comm.,* 2009). The newer industries in this sector tend to have better qualified teachers and trainers whilst the traditional industries like commercial cookery tend to rely on industry experience as the benchmark for teaching capacity. There is some indication that the industry commitment to trained trainers has grown.

The latest teacher qualification reforms are predicated on the concept of the award of a 'licence to practise' (DfES, 2008, p.7). Teachers who meet the designated standards will be provided with the credential 'Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills' (QTLS). Initially teachers will be given a 'passport to teaching' module of about 30 hours of tuition. 'Those whose teaching role is limited to the delivery and assessment of their specialist area may exit following the successful completion of the passport award' (DfES, 2008, p. 7). The credential will be awarded at level 3 in the qualifications framework. (There are 8 levels of qualifications in the VET system plus a foundation level.) All other teachers should articulate into full teacher training and teachers will have up to five years to complete this work. Both programs contain 'taught and practical' elements. Teachers who complete this program will have a full licence to practice. Both programs will contain teaching about assessment, accreditation of prior learning, 'skills for life' support, mentoring, blended learning, observation, professional development, and registration requirements. The Institute for Learning is responsible for registering trainee teachers and trainers at the start of training.

The standards previously developed by FENTO (the National Training Organisation for further education) have now been taken over by Lifelong Learning UK. One of the aims of the new reforms has been to establish benchmarks and standards for initial teachers across the learning and skills sector rather than just in Further Education Colleges. A common core of teacher skills has been identified. A network of Centres in Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) has been established, which support this credentialing framework (QTLS) and a new set of standards, quality assurance procedures and planning arrangements for initial teacher training. For example, one focusing on Inclusive Learning has been set up at the University of Northumbria. **http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/academic/sches/ed/cett/?view=Standard**.

For the VET sector that is outside the formal FE colleges, a requirement for teacher-trained staff has been imposed not by regulation but by contractual leverage – i.e. if a provider does not have appropriately qualified staff it will not receive government funding *(*Paddey, *pers. comm.,* 2009).

However while these reforms may seem desirable, there is also a feeling that VET teacher-training tends to be seen by industry as 'knowledge-based', i.e. a little overly theoretical (Padde*y, pers. comm.,* 2009). A new scheme has been introduced for enterprise trainers called the 'Bespoke Accreditation Scheme' where Standards Verification UK, part of LLUK can accredit an enterprise's trainer-training provision so that they are deemed to have qualified trainers. High-profile employers accredited under this scheme include the Ministry of Defence. Two major supermarket chains – Tesco and Sainsbury's – were involved in the pilot for this scheme (Paddey, *pers. comm.,* 2009).

In addition to these general teacher training qualifications there is a requirement for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, which is for a Level 4 qualification (equivalent to the first year of a degree) even when such training is delivered in enterprises. It has been reported that some employers do not like this stringent requirement, and often have to outsource such training (Paddey, *pers. comm.,* 2009).

## 3.2. Service industries in the UK: Two examples – retail, and hospitality travel & tourism

As in Australia, these two sectors are very large. For example, hospitality, tourism & travel employs about 2 million people, from a total UK workforce of about 28 million, (People1st, 2009), in 180,000 establishments. Retail employs 3 million people (one in nine of the workforce) across 291,000 businesses. Both industries are highly polarised between large multi-site employers and micro-businesses. Both industries employ large proportions of part-time workers including students and, particularly in hospitality, itinerant and migrant workers. Both industries have a tradition of high labour turnover. Hospitality, travel & tourism has been hit badly by the recession of 2008-9, particularly in the pub sector, but on the other hand the scheduled Olympics for 2012 in London has increased the need for training. The recession also provides opportunities for cross-fertilisation among industries as people lose their jobs in one sector and look to move into other work where the skill set is similar (People1st, 2009). The standard of service in both industries is perceived to be lower than required (especially in a situation where customer expectations are continually rising) with both industries also reporting a need for improved management skills (Kent, Paddey, *pers. comm*., 2009). The hospitality industry also has a skill shortage in chefs (People1st, 2009).

### Training in the service industries in the UK

In these two inquiries most of the training is informal. In both, only a small proportion of training is carried out in FE colleges (5% in retail and 14% in hospitality, tourism & travel), with the private sector and employer training accounting for the remainder. In the hospitality industry, chef training has traditionally been carried out at FE colleges but the NVQ qualification, predicated on workplace delivery, was found to be unworkable (mainly because it was too expensive to deliver in circumstances where all materials had to be purchased for training purposes: 'some colleges did not teach meat and fish' (Kent, *pers. comm*., 2009).. The industry has therefore introduced a new institution-based Diploma in Professional Cookery at FE colleges as well as planning other Diplomas in hospitality and travel (People1st, 2009). It is accepted in both industries that major employers have highly professional training departments and that training within these companies is often focused on 'brand standards'.

Retail has a number of major private providers, for example VT Plus Training, Protocol Skills, JHP, and YMCA which tend to have contracts with major employers nationally. As much of the accredited training is 'work-based' (i.e. 100% on-the-job) there is an emphasis on assessment rather than on training. An example was given of Whitbread pubs who are working with an awarding body (Edexcel) in an arrangement where the pub managers are accepted by the awarding body as able to undertake the assessment for an apprenticeship for bar staff. 'They are making the system work harder.' (Kent, *pers. comm.,* 2009).

There seems to be a divergence of views about the situation where assessment is privileged above training. On the one had, this is seen as functional and a natural consequence of the NVQ model, with employers who bemoan the lack of training seen as either uninformed or unwilling to take the role of trainer (or both); on the other hand it is seen as problematic that the 'training' part of the 'assess-train-assess' sequence (Paddey, *pers. comm.,* 2009) is missing. As providers are judged only on output, which is characterised as the numbers of qualifications achieved by learners, there is no quantitative measure of training delivered. The retail Skills Council in particular is keen to address what it sees as the training deficit. It was stated that retail is not suited to college delivery since the skills are 'situational rather than physical like the trades; they arise from interactions with customers. The perception outside the industry is that we aren't very skilled. But the work is skilled; it's just different' (Paddey, *pers. comm.,* 2009) and therefore the focus on improved

quality needs to take place within the existing framework of work-based delivery. Therefore the National Skills Academy for retail, unlike that for hospitality, travel and tourism, is distributed widely geographically. A number of Skills Shops (existing retail training providers) have been set up as Centres of Excellence which each have a monopoly over a certain geographical area. 18 are in place out of a planned total of 70. Other training providers can set up in these areas but cannot be part of the National Skills Academy except in a 'hub and spoke' model (Paddey, *pers. comm.,* 2009). Hospitality appears to be conceived on a more traditional model with a recognition that the best training will be in large population centres, and rural and regional areas will inevitably miss out (Kent, *pers. comm.,* 2009).

In both industries the Skills Academies are designed to showcase best practice - to show the sectors what is the expectation of a high quality training provider. Both Academies are also used to deliver short courses deigned by the Skills Councils to address skill deficits. Skillsmart has written a course in service levels aimed primarily at small to medium enterprises. It has also developed a series of 'master classes' in management and a Foundation Degree (equivalent to the first year of a degree) in Retailing, which is delivered on-line through several universities. A group of Tesco staff for example is undertaking the latter in two years part-time. People1st has developed a one-day customer service course, supported by a two-day management and leadership course which is run in tandem with the customer service course so that managers and workers have aligned expectations. There is also a course for training providers in service standards that are run through the Skills Academy. Both Skills Councils indicate that while customer service was included in accredited qualifications, and indeed there were special customer service standards (i.e. units of competence) nationally, they were poorly taught - hence the need for intervention.

### VET practitioners for the service industries

As might be expected, the Skills Councils considered VET practitioners primarily from the point of view of whether they were delivering what industry wanted and needed, as opposed to focusing on pedagogical skills. In hospitality it was stated that there was a low perception of teachers in FE colleges but it was acknowledged that this was probably due to the unpopular NVQ qualifications. It was maintained that colleges were now increasingly focusing on recruiting teachers with recent industry experience to improve the currency of training delivered. There was a 'lecturers into industry' scheme in this industry, although not, it seems, in retail. A hospitality example was given from Northern Ireland. A lecturer had spent two weeks in a famous chef's kitchen in a structured program with special emphasis on patisserie skills. He introduced these back into his college-and arranged a deal for placements for four students at the kitchen as well. In another example, two lecturers did placements in Gordon Ramsey's restaurant. (Kent, *pers. comm.,* 2009). In retail it was recognised that the lack of a strong FE college tradition meant that a body of expertise in retail training had not been built up (Paddey, *pers. comm.,* 2009). In retail, and to a lesser extent in hospitality, tourism & travel, it is actually more difficult to train than in other industry areas because of the need for a customer interaction to drive the skills that are developed.

The new Diploma qualifications in hospitality, as well as in Retail Business, can be delivered through consortia arrangements of schools, FE colleges, as well as training providers. In fact the Diploma design is predicated upon a model of partnership delivery and is intended to bring together both theoretical and applied elements of training within a realistic, sector-related context. The retail sector expects this to raise issues of teacher qualifications and industry currency. (Paddey, *pers. comm.,* 2009).

Both Skills Councils provide 'continuing professional development' seminars for trainers in the industry. It was reported in retail that some sessions were more

popular than others; for example, a recent seminar about the new qualifications system was hugely over-subscribed (Paddey, *pers. comm.,* 2009). This suggests that among trainers there is more interest in learning about the VET industry than about the industries for which they train. The Skillsmart course for training providers on teaching service standards has been mentioned above. People1st has developed a 'train the trainer' course for managers who deliver training in enterprises. Typical clients are HR officers or line managers that provide training for their staff. In the hospitality, travel and tourism industry this was seen as important because with the recession enterprises were increasingly taking training in-house rather than outsourcing it to consultants. In other words this sort of training was outside the formal VET system.

## Major learning points from the overseas comparison

While there are differences between the two countries both in terms of industry performance and workforce and in terms of the VET arrangements, there are enough similarities for some of the initiatives in the UK to be transferable. The most relevant are listed below. Some of these points apply to VET in general and some are service-industry specific. Their inclusion here does not imply that they should be adopted uncritically (in fact, at first glance, some have serious weaknesses) but that they provide models that are worth examining.

- Involvement of Skills Councils in developing courses to address deficiencies in industry skills that are not addressed by relevant national qualifications (i.e. customer service) and to ensure the appropriate delivery of such courses and their embedding in workplace practice (is supporting courses for training providers and for managers.

- Geographically-distributed Skills Academy initiatives.

- The acknowledgement of the need for workplace delivery in some service skills areas and hence the need to find non-traditional ways of building teacher expertise in the recognition that there will never be large bodies of college-based teachers.

- Recognition on the other hand that those qualifications designed for workplace delivery cannot always be delivered properly in colleges.

- Realignment of national VET teacher qualifications to allow for a lower-level QLTS 'passport' for people training only in their specialist area.

- The Bespoke Accreditation scheme where employers can seek 'blanket' coverage of their training staff.

- The use of contractual leverage rather than regulation to enforce teacher qualifications.

- Involvement of Skills Councils in university-level qualifications.

NB For further information, the Skills Councils' web sites contain their National Skills Strategies which include points about training provision and teacher development. As well, they contain many other relevant research reports.

http://www.people1st.co.uk/

http://www.skillsmartretail.com/

# Chapter 4. Results from Stage 1: Industry focus group summary

Focus groups were held with industry representatives around Australia in the locations listed below. In some cases the focus groups were supplemented by additional interviews with people who were unable to attend.

| Industry group | Date | Location | Number of participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hair & Beauty | 11 May | Victoria | 5 |
| Floristry, Retail & Wholesale | 11 May | Victoria | 5 |
| Community Pharmacy | 12 May | Victoria | 15 |
| Community Pharmacy and Hair & Beauty | 13 May | SA | 9 |
| Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 18 May | NSW | 6 |
| Floristry, Retail & Wholesale | 18 May | NSW | 2 |
| Sport, Fitness, Community & Outdoor Recreation | 19 May | NSW | 3 |
| Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 20 May | QLD | 4 |
| Sport, Fitness, Community & Outdoor Recreation | 24 June | Victoria | 9 |
| Funeral Services | | Phone interview | 2 |
| | | Total participants | 60 |

Each focus group was provided with a set of questions, and the discussions were organised around these. The following section is a consolidation of the responses across the identified industry areas. It has been organised on the basis of the focus group questions which were as follows:

- Please briefly outline the nature of the industry e.g. structure (small/large businesses), franchises, volatility, prospects in the current economic climate.

- Please briefly outline the nature of the workforce in the industry e.g. age, education levels, full-time/part-time.

- What are the major features of training in your industry e.g. levels, on/off the job, public/private provision, proportion of training delivered through traineeships/apprenticeships, quality issues? Are there differences among the States in any of these issues, e.g. funding available, traineeships available?

- Please briefly outline what is your understanding of the nature of the training workforce for the industry e.g. age, education levels, full-time/part-time.

- Please outline what you expect from trainers for the industry – knowledge base, teaching qualifications, industry experience? Are there differences in expectations between RTO-based and enterprise-based trainers?

- Is it more important for VET practitioners delivering training for the service industries to have skills and knowledge about the industry *or* about education? (A five-point scale was used to capture a snapshot of views and promote discussion).

- How have your experiences of trainers measured up against what you have outlined as your expectations? Please describe any major gaps and also any examples of good practice.

Participants were asked to suggest RTOs that might be appropriate for the case study phase of the research. A number of suggestions were received, and explored. They were also asked to comment on the draft RTO survey and suggest changes or additions. Most did this later by email.

### The nature of the industry - its structure, franchises, volatility, and prospects in the current economic climate

The industries represented in the focus groups were ***structurally varied.*** While there was a bi-modal distribution of business size across the industries ranging from small and often family operated businesses (funerals) to large chains and franchises (retail and wholesale, predominantly the businesses were in the small to medium range. Community Pharmacy had traditionally been a 'small business' industry operating under the national regulations that required the owner of the business to be a registered pharmacist. However in recent years there has been a proliferation of franchise operators where ranges of other products such as hair care items and cosmetics were also sold. The floristry, retail and wholesale industry has also been characterised by small and medium sized business with a demonstrable trend towards large retail chains and franchises over recent years. This industry sector employed over 1.5 million people in 2008. The funeral service industry continued to be family owned and dominated with only a small number of larger companies that tended to be located in major urban areas. The hairdressing and beauty industry also had a small scale owner operated structure with a small number (35) of franchise chains operating in Australia. The sport, fitness, community and outdoor recreation industry was characterised by a mixture of structures that ranged from the predominantly small to mid range businesses to larger franchises and chains. The diversity of organisations in this industry area was especially noticeable as it included commercial, not for profit, charity, sporting groups and government organisations. The same structural patterns were identified in the tourism, hospitality and events industry.

The ***stability or volatility*** of the industries varied. A number of the industry areas were extremely stable. The funeral Industry in particular, with its concentrations of small family owned companies, displayed high levels of stability. In the floristry, retail and wholesale Industry area volatility was not evenly distributed across the industry sub groups. Examples of highly volatile businesses included flowers retailers, liquor stores and confectionary wholesalers. Low volatility characterised magazine wholesalers, department stores and photographic equipment retailers. Hairdressing and beauty were highly volatile industries and it was estimated that of all the industry areas this one displayed the highest levels. Similarly participants described massive volatility in the outdoor recreation sector.

The participants commented on their ***industry prospects in the current economic climate***. Community pharmacy experienced an increase in business as customers moved from doctors to their pharmacists for medical advice and treatments. Similarly the proliferation of natural remedies increased sales. This was also the case in the beauty industry where the lines between medical and commercial treatments were becoming increasingly blurred. This change was reflected in a rapid expansion in areas such as spa therapies. Periods of recession impacted most heavily on the floristry, retail and wholesale Industries. The point was made by a number of participants that good management practices insulated businesses from the full force of downturns in the economy. High levels of financial planning and the application of sound business management skills equipped businesses to adjust to changes in the economy and fashion. These skills were more likely to be found in large rather than small businesses.

### The nature of the workforce: Age, education levels, full-time/part-time employment

In all the five of the industry areas participants commented on the diverse nature of the workforce. The funeral industry was the one exception. It displayed high levels of stability in terms of the age of the employees, their education levels, the desirable attributes for employment and their employment status.

In the community pharmacy industry staff fell into three distinct categories. The first of these was the Pharmacist who generally worked full time. The Pharmacist was supported by a range of generally part time employees who were untrained shop assistants. The third category of employee was the trained pharmacy assistant who was generally female and employed part time. Many of these assistants had gained qualifications through traineeships or independent study undertaken with RTOs. The floristry, retail and wholesale Industry had 41% of the staff employed on a part time basis. The employees in this industry area had a wide variety of qualifications and employment statuses. There was an absence of clearly defined career pathways in some sections of this industry area and this made attraction, retention and training of staff difficult. In the franchises and chains in retail and wholesale the workforce fell into different categories from full time employment to high levels of causal employment at peak consumption times such as Christmas. The funeral industry employed predominantly mature age workers whose characteristics and skills had more to do with good communication abilities than levels of formal training. Hairdressing and beauty could be described as a 'young people's industry' although salon owners and supervisors tended to be full time older employees. Sport and recreation also had a large number of younger part time employees but the government and industry regulation of this industry implied that a Certificate III in Group Fitness was the expected level of qualification. In the tourism, hospitality and events industry the workforce was predominantly causal or part time and the employers accepted that much of the training that was needed would be provided on the job given the lack of trained applicants for positions.

### The major features of training in the industry area

Apprenticeships were widely used for chefs in hospitality, and traineeships for front of house employees. The apprenticeships were mainly TAFE based. However there were a large number of Certificate III qualifications and Diplomas delivered by private providers to overseas students. In these cases it was often difficult to find work placements for students given their difficulties with the language. In the sport, fitness, community and outdoor recreation industry there were two distinctly different types of training- industry based non VET training and accredited VET courses. Traineeships were used in some parts of this industry. However it was difficult to generalise about the use of VET qualifications, due to the high level of diversity across the various sectors of the industry. This was also the case with floristry, retail and wholesale. In this industry area participants were dissatisfied with the levels of training and assessment. In response to this level of complaint a number of enterprises were also registered as RTOs delivering customised training to their employees.

In the beauty industry, participants felt that TAFE was generally not qualified to deliver the qualifications needed and private providers filled this void. It was also the case that private providers were becoming more common in the hairdressing industry. However a lot of private providers were thought to be unresponsive and poorly equipped to deliver the qualifications. In the funeral industry, given its family traditions, much of the training was conducted on the job. One large funeral company provided off the job training, induction, mentoring and training for promotion. Two of the main problems confronted by this industry in the provision of training were the cost to the predominantly small business and the logistics of

organising training sessions with any degree of predictability given the nature of the business. Very few employees engaged in nationally accredited training. In contrast in the community pharmacy industry area staff, including some part time staff, received training to Certificate I or III levels. Traineeships were a common pattern of delivery of these qualifications. The training providers included the franchise companies, the Pharmacy Guild and to a much lesser degree TAFE. In this industry area there was also a focus on face-to-face delivery of training by brand and product representatives.

One common theme that emerged across a number of industry areas was the need for staff to have more supervisory and business skills. Staff that were responsible for organising and providing training particularly needed these skills. For instance in community pharmacy the retail manager had a broad range of activities to manage and whilst they were recruited on the basis of industry experience and currency and product knowledge, they did not have the managerial skills that equipped them well for this complex work.

### Differences amongst States and Territories

In the floristry industry apprenticeships were recently made available but these were mainly confined to the Sydney (NSW) area. Victoria had a well-established reputation for training in the hairdressing industry. However the recent changes in the sign up procedures for apprenticeships caused a lot of concern in the focus group. A 12-month course had been introduced in hairdressing and there was serious concern about the quality of training and assessment under these new arrangements. The industry qualifications and expectation in fitness were established nationally and this reduced differences between states. However there were significant differences in delivery and qualification levels expected by state based sporting bodies.

In one focus group the participants raised the issue of 'auditing strictness'. They identified inconsistencies across the States in this area.

### The nature of the training workforce for the industry

The participants were asked to comment on the nature of the training workforce for their particular industry areas with reference to such factors as age, education levels and employment status of training staff. In the tourism, hospitality and events industry the participants felt that TAFE was predominantly populated with baby boomers. This was in contrast to the opinions from the enterprise RTO representative who commented that the trainers they employed were generally between 25 and 35 years old and university qualified. Participants were not impressed by the TAA and felt that it was more about compliance than preparing people to be effective trainers. In sport and fitness the focus group participants maintained that it was not possible to generalise about the age of the training workforce as it varied widely. They felt that TAFE had the training experience but lacked industry currency. In this industry the level of content area qualifications varied enormously between providers but generally most trainers would have either the TAA or the BSZ, or be working under the supervision of a member of staff who held this qualification. It was interesting to note that in this discussion industry resistance to VET was a key theme. The focus group participants from hairdressing and beauty held similar views and commented that "there is a view that the trainers are not very good". Again they were unimpressed by the Certificate IV TAA.

In the retail, floristry and wholesale focus groups, participants expressed dissatisfaction with past training arrangements. In particular the age profile of TAFE teachers was interpreted as a measure of non industry currency. Participants also thought that it was difficult to tailor training to specific needs given the array of content covered in any one Training Package. In community pharmacy many of the training staff were employed part time in pharmacies and they were generally mature

age people. This is in contrast to the TAFE profile where industry currency was often absent. Enterprise trainers who had the equivalent of Year 10 formal schooling provided the majority of the training. The Pharmacy Guild, TAFE and other RTOs provided other training

## Expectations of trainers for the industry

Participants agreed that on balance the most important quality for trainers was industry currency. This was also reflected in the scales participants were invited to complete (see below). This was articulated very clearly by members of the community pharmacy focus group. This was measured both in years of experience and current employment in the industry. They also listed other qualities that were essential for the VET practitioner such as, knowledge of service skills, exceptional communication skills a, 'deep knowledge' of one facet of the industry and a sound knowledge of the rest, commitment and enthusiasm for learning, preferably a Certificate IV TAA, an ability to work in a number of modes and a capacity to assess particularly for RPL purposes. The other industry groups produced similar sets of expectations with a few additions that were industry specific. For example in floristry, OH&S was considered to be extremely important as was the capacity to teach basic business management and financial accounting. The participants also identified the capacity to adapt training and planning to a variety of contexts and an ability to recognise that different contexts and locations demand different pedagogies and content. It was also the case that the ability to translate learning into a workplace context was extremely important as was the understanding of how people learn.

## Balance between skills and knowledge in the industry area and in education

Each participant in the focus groups was provided with a scale (as reproduced below, in Table 4.1). Participants were asked to circle a number on each relevant line below according to their industry and where they thought the ideal balance between industry and education skills and knowledge should be.

**Table 4.1: Is it more important for VET practitioners delivering training for the service industries to have skills and knowledge about the <u>industry</u> *or* about <u>education</u>?**

| | Industry ← skills & knowledge → Education | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Floristry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Beauty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Hairdressing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Retail (incl. Wholesale & Community Pharmacy) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Funeral Service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Community Recreation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Fitness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Outdoor Recreation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sport | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other (please specify)........................... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Each participant's response was then assigned an 'index' e.g. 2 which could be added together with other participants' to form composite indices. Table 4.2 shows the results from the focus groups and telephone interviews. Not all respondents chose to complete the scale.

Table 4.2: Industry education scale (*1= industry skills/knowledge is most important, 5 = education skills/knowledge is most important*) Summary of focus group response averages, calculated by type of respondent and by industry grouping

| Industry cluster | Hair & Beauty | Tourism, Hosp. & Events | Sports, Fitness, Comm. & Outdoor Rec. | Floristry Retail & W'sale | Comm. Pharmacy | Funerals | Index total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of respondent | n = 9 | n = 10 | n = 12 | n = 5 | n = 17 | n = 4 | n = 57 |
| A (Employer i.e. Company) n = 28 | 1.3 | 2.0 | 2.7 | 3.0 | 2.4 | 2.0 | 2.3 |
| B (GTO / labour hire company) n = 5 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 0.0 | 2.2 |
| C (Employer association) n = 13 | 1.0 | 4.0 | 3.0 | 2.0 | 3.8 | 1.5 | 2.8 |
| D (other) n = 11 | 2.7 | 4.0 | 2.7 | 0.0 | 2.5 | 2.0 | 2.8 |
| Index total n = 57 | 1.7 | 2.6 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 2.9 | 1.8 | |

From the scales above it is clear that on the whole, the bias of all respondents was clearly towards the 'industry' end of the scale. Some slight differences can be noted:

1. Employers and GTOs/labour hire company representatives were particularly focused on industry skills and knowledge.

2. By industry, hair & beauty demonstrated the strongest support for industry knowledge and skills.

3. The other four industry areas supported the importance of industry knowledge and skills as the essential characteristics needed by the VET practitioner, with community pharmacy and the sports cluster nearest to the mid-way point of 3.

### Differences in expectations of RTO-based and enterprise-based trainers

Some participants from the tourism and hospitality industry group commented that there was decreasing engagement with nationally recognised training. This trend was exacerbated by the fact that the Certificate IV in TAA was more designed for RTO professionals than for part time trainers working in companies and enterprises. In sport and fitness participants drew a line between RTO trainers and content area specialists. The former group could cover the 'generic or soft' skills but all sport specific skills needed to be delivered by people with industry currency and experience. The fitness industry did not have a high number of enterprise RTOs like hospitality but the industry did offer a lot of non-accredited VET training. In hairdressing and beauty participants commented that there are very few enterprise RTOs but these are nevertheless held in very high regard by the industry. The differences in expectations were very clear and in a sense reflected the different pathways into this industry. Under an apprenticeship model the expectations varied depending on the relationship between the business and the particular RTO. In the case of RTO delivered training, industry generally expected low levels of quality and employability while enterprise based RTOs have improved expectations. These high profile and very profitable salons have achieved this improvement in expectations by having onsite training staff with a Certificate IV in TAA. Where partnerships existed between RTOs and industry both the model and reality of training were successful.

## Discrepancies between industry's expectations of trainers and their experiences

Participants were asked to measure their expectations against their experiences, and to describe identified gaps and provide examples of good practice. In community pharmacy the consensus was that enterprise trainers were adequate but that some RTO trainers lacked credibility. The major disjunction occurred when trainers were not current in their industry area or when they lacked assessment and delivery skills. Similarly the retail and wholesale and floristry participants mentioned the gaps between teaching qualifications and industry experience and currency.

Some participants expressed their dissatisfaction with institutional RTOs in terms of the failure to locate learning in the context of a workplace. This separation meant that graduates were not employment ready and this had created the need for enterprises to organise their own training both nationally accredited and industry recognised. This was particularly obvious in the retail, hospitality and fitness industry areas.

Participants were asked to suggest some strategies to address the gaps between their expectations, and the realities of training. These included:

- Updating trainer knowledge of new Training Packages
- Reducing the gaps between trainers and the industry they serviced through a more consistent and thorough approach to industry currency
- Revising the Certificate IV in TAA to better suit the needs of the particular industry areas and the different modes of training, particularly enterprise based training.
- Customising the industry specific Training Package to suit a greater diversity of industry needs and realities
- Locating all learning within a workplace context
- Reducing the inconsistencies in training and assessment
- Increasing the skill levels of RPL assessors
- Working in partnership arrangements- a trainer providing the educational expertise and a technical specialist providing the local industry and job role knowledge.
- Acknowledging and accommodating the tension between commercial imperatives for profit and the costs of staff training
- Creating effective communication pathways between trainers (in whatever location) and the industries they serve.
- Reviewing the quality of VET in schools offerings in terms of quality and credibility

# Chapter 5. Results from Stage 3: Findings from the survey

We sent the 33-question survey to all NTIS-listed RTOs offering Service Skills qualifications (1623). A copy of the questionnaire can be found at Appendix 2. A second wave of reminders was sent to all RTOs by email, with letters also sent to TAFE Institutes, who were initially slow in responding. We received in total 216 responses, of which 8 were discounted as these RTOs did not appear to offer Service Skills qualifications, leaving 208 valid responses.

It is not possible to say for sure how representative our respondents are, as no comprehensive survey has been done of Service Skills RTOs with which to compare. However, the distribution among States and Territories (as derived from the slips which RTOs returned to enter the incentive draw, of which there were 143) seems to be reasonable, with response rates (measured by return of incentive slips) varying from a high of 17.1% in SA to a low of 5.9% and 6.3% respectively in NT and Qld, with the remainder between 8 and 12%.

After 'returns to sender' were deducted from the denominator, our total response rate was 13.3% which is around the par for surveys sent to companies. With the aid of the reminder, we eventually received 15 TAFE responses which is an excellent response rate (31.9%) from the 47 Institutes recorded on the NTIS.

This chapter provides an overview of the most interesting statistical data and also the major themes from the questions that required qualitative responses.

## 5.1 Quantitative data analysis

Detailed tables analysing results by various factors (primarily type of RTO, size of RTO measured by numbers of students, and Training Package cluster) are provided in some cases. It was not possible for reasons for space and clarity to provide tables for all data, but these have been provided to Service Skills Australia in Progress Report 2. In particular this chapter does not provide results for individual Training Packages, only for Training Package clusters.

### The nature of Service Skills RTOs (section 1 of survey)

From the responses received it seems that Service Skills RTOs were

- Fairly small – with 56.4% having only one site, 72.2% having 500 or fewer students, and 64.6% having ten or fewer permanent or contract teachers/trainers/assessors and 74.6% having ten or fewer casual/sessional VET practitioners.

- More likely to be confined to one State or Territory (70.9%) than national (29.1%)

- Likely to receive the bulk of its funding from Governments (42.9%) or individual fee-paying students (34.5%) rather than from industry direct (16.3%)

By Training Package, these Service Skills RTOs most commonly delivered

- Retail (47.3% of respondents)

- Tourism, Hospitality and Events (44.0% of respondents)

- Hairdressing and/or Beauty (18.8% delivering each of these)

- Followed by the sport/fitness/recreation clusters, which are each delivered by between 11.6% and 14.5% of respondents.

For further analysis by Training Package area, the RTOs were divided into four groups which were (1) Hair & beauty, (2) Retail and allied (including floristry and wholesale) (3) Sport & recreation (including fitness) and (4) Tourism & hospitality (including events).

We were interested to find out how broad a spectrum of Service Skills Training Package areas were covered by these RTOs. This might enable appropriate targeting of professional development activities. Further analysis showed that while a combination of retail & allied and tourism & hospitality (groups 1 and 4) was quite common (18 RTOs), further combinations were rarer. Nine RTOs delivered Training Packages from groups (3) and (4), and six delivered from all of the groups except hair & beauty. 11 RTOs delivered Training Packages from all of the groups and of these one was a school/secondary college, and nine were TAFE Institutes (one did not state its type). The 18 RTOs that delivered groups 1 and 4 were more diverse, with half being commercial RTOs and the remainder distributed among all the other types of RTO. These data suggest that professional development is best targeted to individual Training Package groups since those delivering across a broader spectrum are likely to be TAFE Institutes. Retail & allied and hospitality & tourism is the only combination grouping where some synergies might be possible and helpful.

Table 5.1: Which Training Package clusters are delivered, by size of RTO (by number of students)

| | 0 – 100 | | 101 - 500 | | 501 - 5000 | | More than 5000 | | Total | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Hair & Beauty | 20 | 45.5 | 9 | 20.5 | 6 | 13.6 | 9 | 20.5 | 44 | 100 |
| Retail & Allied | 18 | 21.4 | 37 | 44.0 | 18 | 21.4 | 11 | 13.1 | 84 | 100 |
| Sport & Recreation | 10 | 19.2 | 18 | 34.6 | 13 | 25.0 | 11 | 21.2 | 52 | 100 |
| Tourism & Hospitality | 16 | 20.0 | 28 | 35.0 | 26 | 32.5 | 10 | 12.5 | 80 | 100 |
| Total | 64 | 24.6 | 92 | 35.4 | 63 | 24.2 | 41 | 15.8 | 260 | 100 |

Note: Retail & Allied includes Floristry, Wholesale and Community Pharmacy; Sport & Recreation includes Fitness, Community and Outdoor Recreation and; Tourism & Hospitality includes Events

Note: Many RTOs deliver more than one Training Package and they are counted more than once in this table. This is the reason why the total is considerably more than the total number of RTOs that responded to the question.

Table 5.1 indicates that 'micro-RTOs'- with 100 students or fewer -were most likely to be in hair and beauty; retail & allied RTOs were most likely to be in the 'medium' range (100-500 students); and tourism, hospitality and events had greater concentration than others in the 'large' range (501-5000). For individual Training Packages, fitness (40%) and floristry (85.7%) were both concentrated in the 'very large' range reflecting their concentration in TAFE Institutes. By type of RTO (Table 5.2), hair & beauty and retail & allied were the most likely Training Package clusters to be delivered in commercial RTOs, while retail & allied (but only 11.2%) was most likely to be delivered by enterprise RTOs. Sport & recreation was most likely to be delivered in schools or secondary colleges (37%), with a fairly high concentration of tourism & hospitality also in this type of RTO (31.1%)

Table 5.2 : Which Training Package clusters are delivered, by type of RTO

| | TAFE Institute | | Enterprise RTO | | Community RTO / ACE Provider | | Industry RTO | | Commercial RTO (for profit) | | School / Secondary college | | Group Training Organisation (GTO) also an RTO | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Hair & Beauty | 12 | 22.6 | 1 | 1.9 | 2 | 3.8 | 11 | 20.8 | 25 | 47.2 | 2 | 3.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 53 | 100 |
| Retail & Allied | 15 | 15.3 | 11 | 11.2 | 14 | 14.3 | 4 | 4.1 | 39 | 39.8 | 9 | 9.2 | 6 | 6.1 | 98 | 100 |
| Sport & Recreation | 12 | 22.2 | 1 | 1.9 | 2 | 3.7 | 3 | 5.6 | 16 | 29.6 | 20 | 37.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 54 | 100 |
| Tourism & Hospitality | 14 | 15.6 | 5 | 5.6 | 6 | 6.7 | 2 | 2.2 | 32 | 35.6 | 28 | 31.1 | 3 | 3.3 | 90 | 100 |
| Total | 53 | 18.0 | 18 | 6.1 | 24 | 8.1 | 20 | 6.8 | 112 | 38.0 | 59 | 20.0 | 9 | 3.1 | 295 | 100 |

Note: Retail & Allied includes Floristry, Wholesale and Community Pharmacy; Sport & Recreation includes Fitness, Community and Outdoor Recreation and; Tourism & Hospitality includes Events

Note: Many RTOs deliver more than one Training Package and they are counted more than once in this table. This is the reason why the total is considerably more than the total number of RTOs that responded to the question.

Sources of funding also to some extent reflects distribution by type of RTO, with floristry as the single Training Package with the largest reliance (87.5%) on government funds. Retail & allied was the group with the largest reliance on government funding (60.8%) (Table 5.3). The greatest reliance on fee-paying students was sport & recreation followed by hair & beauty. Industries and enterprises provided reasonably substantial funding (around 17%) for RTOs that delivered retail & allied and hair & beauty.

Table 5.3: Sources of financial turnover/funding (1st largest source), by Training Package cluster

| | Government (both state and Commonwealth) | | Industry / Enterprise / Business | | Students | | Other | | Unsure | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Hair & Beauty | 20 | 38.5 | 9 | 17.3 | 21 | 40.4 | 1 | 1.9 | 1 | 1.9 | 52 | 100 |
| Retail & Allied | 59 | 60.8 | 16 | 16.5 | 18 | 18.6 | 2 | 2.1 | 2 | 2.1 | 97 | 100 |
| Sport & Recreation | 22 | 43.1 | 2 | 3.9 | 24 | 47.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 5.9 | 51 | 100 |
| Tourism & Hospitality | 47 | 52.8 | 7 | 7.9 | 31 | 34.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 4.5 | 89 | 100 |
| Total | 148 | 51.2 | 34 | 11.8 | 94 | 32.5 | 3 | 1.0 | 10 | 3.5 | 289 | 100 |

Note: Retail & Allied includes Floristry, Wholesale and Community Pharmacy; Sport & Recreation includes Fitness, Community and Outdoor Recreation and; Tourism & Hospitality includes Events

Note: Student funding, means student fees payable, apart from standard administration fees charged to government-funded students

Note: Many RTOs deliver more than one Training Package and they are counted more than once in this table. This is the reason why the total is considerably more than the total number of RTOs that responded to the question.

By mode of delivery (Question 8 of the survey) these Service Skills RTOs were differentiated quite sharply between those who delivered the bulk of their training at an employer's workplace (22.5% delivered 81% or more in this mode) and the bulk at the RTO (35.8% delivered 81% or more in this mode). Proportions of distance or online delivery were small, with only 7.4% delivering more than 20% in this way and 69.6% of all respondents doing no distance or on-line delivery. Assessment (Question 9 of the survey) was distributed in a similar fashion, with slightly higher proportions in the workplace and slightly lower proportions by distance/on-line.

The greatest proportion of workplace delivery by Training Package cluster (Table 5.4) was retail & allied, with hair & beauty and tourism & hospitality showing the greatest proportion of institutional delivery. Sport & recreation showed the greatest proportion of mixed delivery modes. As with delivery, a similar pattern prevailed for assessment (Table 5.5).

Table 5.4: Major mode / location of training delivery, by Training Package cluster

| | Predominantly workplace delivery | | Predominantly institutional delivery | | Predominantly distance or online delivery | | Mixed (no mode predominates) | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Hair & Beauty | 10 | 18.9 | 23 | 43.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 20 | 37.7 | 53 | 100 |
| Retail & Allied | 27 | 27.8 | 21 | 21.6 | 1 | 1.0 | 48 | 49.5 | 97 | 100 |
| Sport & Recreation | 3 | 5.6 | 19 | 35.2 | 1 | 1.9 | 31 | 57.4 | 54 | 100 |
| Tourism & Hospitality | 16 | 18.4 | 37 | 42.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 34 | 39.1 | 87 | 100 |
| Total | 56 | 19.2 | 100 | 34.4 | 2 | 0.7 | 133 | 45.7 | 291 | 100 |

Note: Retail & Allied includes Floristry, Wholesale and Community Pharmacy; Sport & Recreation includes Fitness, Community and Outdoor Recreation and; Tourism & Hospitality includes Events

Note: Many RTOs deliver more than one Training Package and they are counted more than once in this table. This is the reason why the total is considerably more than the total number of RTOs that responded to the question.

Table 5.5: Major mode / location of assessment, by Training Package cluster

| | Predominantly workplace assessment | | Predominantly institutional assessment | | Predominantly distance or online assessment | | Mixed (no mode predominates) | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Hair & Beauty | 10 | 19.2 | 23 | 44.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 19 | 36.5 | 52 | 100 |
| Retail & Allied | 38 | 39.6 | 15 | 15.6 | 1 | 1.0 | 42 | 43.8 | 96 | 100 |
| Sport & Recreation | 7 | 13.0 | 15 | 27.8 | 1 | 1.9 | 31 | 57.4 | 54 | 100 |
| Tourism & Hospitality | 22 | 25.3 | 29 | 33.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 36 | 41.4 | 87 | 100 |
| Total | 77 | 26.6 | 82 | 28.4 | 2 | 0.7 | 128 | 44.3 | 289 | 100 |

Note: Retail & Allied includes Floristry, Wholesale and Community Pharmacy; Sport & Recreation includes Fitness, Community and Outdoor Recreation and; Tourism & Hospitality includes Events

Note: Many RTOs deliver more than one Training Package and they are counted more than once in this table. This is the reason why the total is considerably more than the total number of RTOs that responded to the question.

Almost a third (32.9%) of these Service Skills RTOs provided non-nationally-recognised training as well as nationally recognised training. Of those that provided the former, only 17.2% (11 RTOs in total) delivered more that was not nationally recognised that was, with a further 7.8% delivering about the same proportions of each. For most RTOs, then, nationally-recognised training seemed to be their bread and butter. By type of provider, enterprise and community RTOs were more likely to provide a greater proportion of non-NRT, but the numbers were really small (Table 5.6). By Training Package cluster, RTOs delivering retail & allied were most likely to offer higher proportions of non-nationally-recognised training but even for these RTOs, national-recognised training formed 77.1% of their delivery.

Table 5.6: Proportion of non-nationally recognised training compared with nationally-recognised training, by type of provider, n = 64

| | More non-nationally recognised than nationally-recognised | | More nationally recognised than non-nationally recognised | | About the same amount | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| TAFE Institute | 0 | 0.0 | 7 | 100.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 7 | 100 |
| Enterprise RTO | 3 | 60.0 | 1 | 20.0 | 1 | 20.0 | 5 | 100 |
| Community RTO / ACE Provider | 3 | 30.0 | 6 | 60.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 10 | 100 |
| Industry RTO | 1 | 16.7 | 5 | 83.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 100 |
| Commercial RTO (for profit) | 4 | 12.5 | 25 | 78.1 | 3 | 9.4 | 32 | 100 |
| School / Secondary college | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 100.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 100 |
| Group Training Organisation (GTO) & also RTO | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 100.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 100 |
| Total | 11 | 17.2 | 48 | 75.0 | 5 | 7.8 | 64 | 100 |

Only 15 of respondents (7.4%) provided training to substantial numbers of international students – with only 1 of them offering training overseas. See Chapter 7 for discussion of these RTOs.

## The RTOs' teaching and training staff (section 2 of survey)

The responses provided us with the following information about VET practitioners in these Service Skills RTOs.

- They were more likely to be female than male (56% of RTOs reported that 51% or more of their staff were female).

- They were about as likely to be full-time as casual/sessional ((50.8% of RTOs reported that 51% or more of their staff were full-time).

- However RTOs seemed to be quite differentiated, with 20.8% having no full-time teachers/trainers/assessors, 51.8% having no part-time staff, and 42.6% having no casuals or sessionals.

- They were more likely to be older than younger. Only 10% of RTOs had 51% or more of their staff under the age of 35 while 54.9% had 51% or more of their staff between the ages of 35 and 50.However, very few RTOs had 51% or more of their staff above the age of 51. This seems to contradict a belief about the 'greying' of VET practitioners or perhaps indicating that Service Skills is an atypical area.

RTOs that had completely full-time or part-time teaching/training workforces were most likely to be enterprise (53.8%), industry (both 50%) or commercial (37.6%) RTOs, as well as schools; and the most heavily casualised RTOs were community/ACE RTOs with 33.4% having entirely casual/sessional teaching workforces (Tables 5.7 and 5.8).

Table 5.7: RTOs which employ certain proportions of teachers / trainers on a full-time or part-time basis, by type of provider, n = 190

| | 0 % full-time or part-time | | 1% - 30% full-time or part-time | | 31% - 50% full-time or part-time | | 51% - 80% full-time or part-time | | 80% - 99% full-time or part-time | | Fully full-time or part-time | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| TAFE Institute | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 15.4 | 5 | 38.5 | 5 | 38.5 | 1 | 7.6 | 13 | 100 |
| Enterprise RTO | 1 | 7.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 30.8 | 1 | 7.7 | 7 | 53.8 | 13 | 100 |
| Community RTO / ACE Provider | 6 | 33.3 | 3 | 16.7 | 2 | 11.1 | 5 | 27.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 11.1 | 18 | 100 |
| Industry RTO | 2 | 11.1 | 3 | 16.7 | 1 | 5.5 | 1 | 5.5 | 2 | 11.1 | 9 | 50.0 | 18 | 100 |
| Commercial RTO (for profit) | 15 | 17.6 | 11 | 12.9 | 10 | 11.8 | 10 | 11.8 | 7 | 8.2 | 32 | 37.6 | 85 | 100 |
| School / Secondary college | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 2.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 2.9 | 3 | 8.6 | 30 | 85.6 | 35 | 100 |
| Group Training Organisation & also RTO | 2 | 25.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 37.5 | 1 | 12.5 | 2 | 25.0 | 8 | 100 |
| Total | 26 | 13.7 | 18 | 9.5 | 15 | 7.9 | 29 | 15.3 | 19 | 10.0 | 83 | 43.7 | 190 | 100 |

Table 5.8: RTOs which employ certain proportions of teachers / trainers on a casual or sessional basis, by type of provider, n = 190

| | 0 % Casual / sessional | | 1% - 30% Casual / sessional | | 31% - 50% Casual / sessional | | 51% - 80% Casual / sessional | | 80% - 99% Casual / sessional | | Fully Casual / sessional | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| TAFE Institute | 1 | 7.7 | 7 | 53.8 | 4 | 30.8 | 1 | 7.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 13 | 100 |
| Enterprise RTO | 7 | 53.8 | 5 | 38.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 7.7 | 13 | 100 |
| Community RTO / ACE Provider | 2 | 11.1 | 4 | 22.2 | 2 | 11.1 | 1 | 5.5 | 3 | 16.7 | 6 | 33.4 | 18 | 100 |
| Industry RTO | 9 | 50.0 | 3 | 16.7 | 1 | 5.5 | 3 | 16.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 11.1 | 18 | 100 |
| Commercial RTO (for profit) | 32 | 37.6 | 15 | 17.6 | 6 | 7.1 | 14 | 16.5 | 3 | 3.5 | 15 | 17.6 | 85 | 100 |
| School / Secondary college | 30 | 85.7 | 4 | 11.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 2.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 35 | 100 |
| Group Training Organisation & also RTO | 2 | 25.0 | 3 | 37.5 | 1 | 12.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 25 | 8 | 100 |
| Total | 83 | 43.7 | 41 | 21.6 | 14 | 7.4 | 20 | 10.5 | 6 | 3.2 | 26 | 13.7 | 190 | 100 |

By Training Package cluster, tourism & hospitality and sport & recreation were the most likely to have the largest proportion of full-time staff. The most heavily casualised Training Package teaching area was retail & allied (31.1% of RTOs had more than 50% casual/sessional)  (Tables 5.9 and 5.10).

**Table 5.9: RTOs which employ certain proportions of teachers / trainers on a full-time or part-time basis, by Training Package group delivery area, n = 276**

| | 0 %<br>full-time or part-time | | 1% - 30%<br>full-time or part-time | | 31% - 50%<br>full-time or part-time | | 51% - 80%<br>full-time or part-time | | 81% - 99%<br>full-time or part-time | | Fully<br>full-time or part-time | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Hair & Beauty | 4 | 8.2 | 2 | 4.1 | 4 | 8.2 | 11 | 22.4 | 10 | 20.4 | 18 | 36.7 | 49 | 100 |
| Retail & Allied | 10 | 11.1 | 12 | 13.3 | 10 | 11.1 | 18 | 20.0 | 8 | 8.9 | 32 | 35.6 | 90 | 100 |
| Sport & Recreation | 6 | 12.0 | 2 | 4.0 | 5 | 10.0 | 7 | 14.0 | 9 | 18.0 | 21 | 42.0 | 50 | 100 |
| Tourism & Hospitality | 6 | 6.9 | 10 | 11.5 | 9 | 10.3 | 12 | 13.8 | 12 | 13.8 | 38 | 43.7 | 87 | 100 |
| Total | 26 | 9.4 | 26 | 9.4 | 28 | 10.1 | 48 | 17.4 | 39 | 14.1 | 109 | 39.5 | 276 | 100 |

Note: Retail & Allied includes Floristry, Wholesale and Community Pharmacy; Sport & Recreation includes Fitness, Community and Outdoor Recreation and; Tourism & Hospitality includes Events

Note: Many RTOs deliver more than one Training Package and they are counted more than once in this table. This is the reason why the total is considerably more than the total number of RTOs that responded to the question.

**Table 5.10: RTOs which employ certain proportions of teachers / trainers on a casual or sessional basis, by Training Package group delivery area, n = 276**

| | 0 %<br>Casual / sessional | | 1% - 30%<br>Casual / sessional | | 31% - 50%<br>Casual / sessional | | 51% - 80%<br>Casual / sessional | | 81% - 99%<br>Casual / sessional | | Fully<br>Casual / sessional | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Hair & Beauty | 18 | 36.7 | 16 | 32.7 | 7 | 14.3 | 4 | 8.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 8.2 | 49 | 100 |
| Retail & Allied | 32 | 35.6 | 21 | 23.3 | 9 | 10.0 | 13 | 14.4 | 5 | 5.6 | 10 | 11.1 | 90 | 100 |
| Sport & Recreation | 21 | 42.0 | 13 | 26.0 | 6 | 12.0 | 4 | 8.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 12.0 | 50 | 100 |
| Tourism & Hospitality | 38 | 43.7 | 20 | 23.0 | 9 | 10.3 | 11 | 12.6 | 3 | 3.4 | 6 | 6.9 | 87 | 100 |
| Total | 109 | 39.5 | 70 | 25.4 | 31 | 11.2 | 32 | 11.6 | 8 | 2.9 | 26 | 9.4 | 276 | 100 |

Note: Retail & Allied includes Floristry, Wholesale and Community Pharmacy; Sport & Recreation includes Fitness, Community and Outdoor Recreation and; Tourism & Hospitality includes Events

Note: Many RTOs deliver more than one Training Package and they are counted more than once in this table. This is the reason why the total is considerably more than the total number of RTOs that responded to the question

In terms of age distribution, analysis by size of RTO did not reveal any major differences; by type of provider, TAFE Institutes and community/ACE RTOs were least likely to have high proportions of young staff; and by Training Package area, there were no major differences. Around 55% of all the respondent RTOs had 51% or more of their staff in the 35-50 age group; only 10% had 51% or more aged under 35 and only 9% had 51% or more aged 51 or over.

In terms of HR practices, Service Skills VET practitioners were likely to be fairly lightly managed:

- About two-thirds of these Service Skills RTOs had agreed work objectives for full-time staff (64%), regular staff appraisal (61.6%) and professional development plans (58.6%);

- However only about a third had staff performance rating systems for full-time staff (32.5%);

- Only about one-fifth (18.5%) linked pay to performance for full-time staff;

- The proportions of all these features decreased for part-time and contract staff and casual/sessional staff.

These findings have implications for a workforce development strategy; while performance management systems were generally in place they were not often being used to shape behaviour in a firm manner.

Service Skills VET practitioners were not, on the whole, highly qualified. **In teaching/training**, most staff had the Certificate IV as their highest qualification; almost one-sixth of RTOs (17.3%) reported that over 50% of their staff had the pre-2004 qualification (BSZ) as their highest teaching/training qualification while over half (58.6%) reported that for over 50% of their staff the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA) was their highest qualification. This gave a total of three quarters (75.9%) of RTOs where over 50% of staff had a pedagogical qualification of only Certificate IV level. Very small numbers of RTOs were involved with Diploma level TAA or VET qualifications; 94.2% of RTOs had nobody with the Diploma in VET as their highest pedagogical qualification and 89.4% had nobody with the TAA Diploma. University level qualifications were slightly more popular than Diploma qualifications; over a quarter (28.8%) had at least one person with a university degree or above in VET or adult education, with 8.6% of RTOs having over half their staff qualified to this level. However, these figures include RTOs that were schools. 16 RTOs that were schools gave valid responses to this question. When schools were removed from the analysis, the overall teaching/training qualification levels were lower, as might be expected since schools require degree qualifications in teaching.

The data were analysed by size of RTO, type of RTO, and Training Package clusters. While this document provides results both including-schools and excluding-schools, probably the more useful is excluding-schools (Section C). The excluding-schools analysis showed that GTOs, industry RTOs and ACE providers were most likely to have the lowest level of teaching/training qualifications. Enterprise RTO staff were predominantly qualified only to Certificate IV level in teaching/training but were much more likely than the aforementioned types of RTO to have staff with TAA rather than BSZ Cert IV. Commercial RTOs had the highest proportion of staff with university-level teaching/training qualifications. But low response rates from TAFE Institutes to this question have affected this analysis. Table 5.11 shows distribution of RTOs with 50% or more of specific levels of teaching/training qualifications by type of RTO. Only 4 TAFE Institute responded in relation to teaching/training qualifications, and 5 in response to industry/discipline qualifications. In terms of size, RTOs with higher proportions of staff with the lowest level of teaching/training qualifications were most likely to be micro (fewer than 100 students) or medium (501-5000 students). There were few major differences by Training Package cluster.

Table 5.11: Distribution of proportions of RTO teaching / training staff by 50% or more with highest level of teaching / training qualifications as specified, by type of RTO (excluding schools), n = 88

| | Cert IV (old) BSZ | | Cert IV (new) TAA | | Diploma (either) | | University degree or above | | Mixed (no one category applies to more than 50% of staff) | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| TAFE Institute | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 50.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 25.0 | 1 | 25.0 | 4 | 100.0 |
| Enterprise RTO | 1 | 9.1 | 9 | 81.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 9.1 | 11 | 100.0 |
| Community RTO/ ACE provider | 3 | 25.0 | 8 | 66.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 12 | 100.0 |
| Industry RTO | 2 | 22.2 | 5 | 55.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 22.2 | 9 | 100.0 |
| Commercial RTO (for profit) | 9 | 18.4 | 29 | 59.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 8.2 | 7 | 14.3 | 49 | 100.0 |
| Group Training Organisation (GTO) also RTO | 2 | 66.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 33.3 | 3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 17 | 19.3 | 53 | 60.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 5.7 | 13 | 14.8 | 88 | 100.0 |

Teachers/trainers had higher levels of **industry or discipline qualifications**. Although quite a large minority of these Service Skills RTOs (34.5%) had more than 50% of their teaching staff qualified only to Certificate III or IV level, Diploma level qualifications were more popular (19.5% of RTOs had over half their staff qualified to this level as their highest industry/discipline qualification) and nearly a quarter (23.1%) of RTOs reported that over half their staff had a university degree or above as a industry/discipline qualification. Analysis of industry/discipline qualification levels is again distorted by the presence of schools and low responses from TAFE Institutes to this question. Once schools were removed from the analysis qualification levels were lower.

As with teaching/training qualifications, analysis was undertaken both including-schools and excluding-schools. Excluding schools, by type of provider, enterprise RTOs were most likely to have both the highest and the lowest levels of industry/discipline qualification (Table 5.12), while community and ACE providers were most likely to have high proportions of staff qualified to Certificate IV or below.

Table 5.12: Distribution of proportions of RTO teaching / training staff by 50% of more with highest level of industry/discipline qualifications as specified, by type of RTO (excluding schools), n = 120

| | Cert III | | Cert IV | | Diploma or Advanced Diploma | | University degree or above | | Mixed (no one category applies to more than 50% of staff) | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| TAFE Institute | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 20.0 | 3 | 60.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 20.0 | 5 | 100.0 |
| Enterprise RTO | 3 | 30.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 40.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 10 | 100.0 |
| Community RTO/ ACE provider | 4 | 23.5 | 6 | 35.4 | 3 | 17.6 | 1 | 5.9 | 3 | 17.6 | 17 | 100.0 |
| Industry RTO | 1 | 9.1 | 6 | 54.5 | 1 | 9.1 | 1 | 9.1 | 2 | 18.2 | 11 | 100.0 |
| Commercial RTO (for profit) | 7 | 9.9 | 12 | 16.9 | 18 | 25.4 | 13 | 18.3 | 21 | 29.6 | 71 | 100.0 |
| Group Training Organisation (GTO) also RTO | 2 | 33.3 | 2 | 33.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 33.3 | 6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 17 | 14.2 | 28 | 23.3 | 25 | 20.8 | 19 | 15.8 | 31 | 25.8 | 120 | 100.0 |

By Training Package cluster (Table 5.13) the sport and recreation group was far and away the most likely to have large proportions of staff with university-level qualifications while the retail and allied cluster had the highest percentage of RTOs with the majority of staff qualified at Certificate III level only.

Table 5.13: Distribution of proportions of RTO teaching / training staff by 50% or more with highest level of industry/discipline qualifications as specified, by Training Package cluster (excluding schools), n = 157

| | Cert III | | Cert IV | | Diploma or Advanced Diploma | | University degree or above | | Mixed (no one category applies to more than 50% of staff) | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Hair & Beauty | 3 | 9.4 | 5 | 15.6 | 15 | 46.9 | 2 | 6.3 | 7 | 21.9 | 32 | 100.0 |
| Retail & Allied | 11 | 17.2 | 15 | 23.4 | 7 | 10.9 | 11 | 17.2 | 20 | 31.3 | 64 | 100.0 |
| Sport & Recreation | 1 | 4.5 | 3 | 13.6 | 7 | 31.8 | 7 | 31.8 | 4 | 18.2 | 22 | 100.0 |
| Tourism & Hospitality | 5 | 12.8 | 11 | 28.2 | 9 | 23.1 | 2 | 5.1 | 12 | 30.8 | 39 | 100.0 |
| Total | 20 | 12.7 | 34 | 21.7 | 38 | 24.2 | 22 | 14.0 | 43 | 27.4 | 157 | 100.0 |

Note: Retail & Allied includes Floristry, Wholesale and Community Pharmacy; Sport & Recreation includes Fitness, Community and Outdoor Recreation and; Tourism & Hospitality includes Events

Note: Many RTOs deliver more than one Training Package and they are counted more than once in this table. This is the reason why the total is considerably more than the total number of RTOs that responded to the question.

Questions about **industry currency and experience** provided interesting responses

- 62% of the RTOs that responded said that more staff were confined to one industry area than taught across several, implying that they were teaching in a particular area of expertise

- 93.2% of RTOs said that more than half of their staff had industry experience in all areas in which they teach

- 91.7% said that they had industry currency requirements, with 58% saying that currency meant within the past two years

- The required forms of industry currency were, in order of popularity: working in the industry (84.6%), attendance at seminars or conferences (77.1%), placement in the industry (36.7%).

Industry currency requirements seemed to be strictest (in terms of recency required) in micro, small and medium RTOs and least strict in very large RTOs (more than 5000 students) (Table 5.14). By type of RTO, schools were slightly more likely than other providers to require any industry currency while enterprise RTOs had the strictest requirements. Industry and ACE providers and GTOs were the least likely to require currency within the last two years. There was virtually no differentiation in currency requirements by Training Package area.

Table 5.14: Recency of industry currency requirements for teachers / trainers, by size of RTO, n = 178

|  | Last year | | Within the last two years | | Within the last five years | | Other | | Not required | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 0 – 100 | 13 | 23.6 | 20 | 36.3 | 14 | 25.5 | 5 | 9.1 | 3 | 5.5 | 55 | 100.0 |
| 101 – 500 | 23 | 30.3 | 20 | 26.3 | 19 | 25.0 | 6 | 7.9 | 8 | 10.5 | 76 | 100.0 |
| 501 – 5000 | 8 | 22.2 | 9 | 25.0 | 10 | 27.8 | 6 | 16.7 | 3 | 8.3 | 36 | 100.0 |
| More than 5000 | 1 | 9.1 | 3 | 27.3 | 5 | 45.4 | 1 | 9.1 | 1 | 9.1 | 11 | 100.0 |
| Total | 45 | 25.3 | 52 | 29.2 | 48 | 27.0 | 18 | 10.1 | 15 | 8.4 | 178 | 100.0 |

## The RTOs' staff development needs and practices (section 3 of survey)

The top five staff development needs for the next year were as follows (respondents were asked to select from a provided list, ticking up to five responses):

1. Assessment (13.3%)
2. Training and delivery (12.9%)
3. AQTF topics such as administration or continuous improvement (12.9%)
4. E-learning/flexible delivery (9.8%)
5. Training Package specific (9.6%)

With relation to industry skills and knowledge, the most popular was 'developing industry partnerships' which came in at seventh (6.9%).

There seemed, among the RTOs that responded to be a predilection for prioritising staff development. Almost three-quarters said that their investment in training/staff development for training staff had grown either significantly (27%) or somewhat (47.1%) over the past three years; and 78.9% of the RTOs had a written training and development plan.

Small and very large RTOs were the most likely to have significantly increased their investment in staff development for teachers/trainers, while by type of RTO there was little difference except that enterprise RTOs slightly led the field. By Training Package area, RTOs delivering sport and recreation were most likely to have significantly increased staff development investment while hair and beauty RTOs were most likely to have remained static or declined.

When asked where they were likely to source their most urgent staff development need, the RTOs responded from a provided list, in order of likelihood, as follows:

- Within the RTO: 46.1%
- External forums or seminars: 43.7%
- Their State/Territory's PD program: 38.3%
- Conferences: 32.0%
- 'The industry' (in which training is provided by the RTO): 27.7%
- Other RTOs: 25.7%
- Australian Flexible Learning Framework: 14.6%
- Universities or private higher education providers: 4.9%

The 'industry-education' scale that was used throughout the project was utilised in the survey. RTOs were asked to respond for each Training Package area that was appropriate. In some cases RTOs responded for Training Package areas in which they did not deliver, and these responses were discounted, to ensure that all responses were based on appropriate expertise. The question was 'Is it more important for VET practitioners delivering training for the Service Industries to have skills and knowledge about the industry or about education?' The scale was between 1 (industry) and 5 (education). Table 5.15 shows the responses.

Table 5.15: Industry education scale – which is more important for the VET practitioner? (*1= industry skills/knowledge, 5 = education skills/knowledge*). Survey responses, by RTO by Training Package

| | No. of respondents | Index |
|---|---|---|
| Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 85 | 2.4 |
| Outdoor Recreation | 24 | 2.4 |
| Floristry | 6 | 2.5 |
| Retail (includes Wholesale & Community Pharmacy) | 86 | 2.6 |
| Community Recreation | 21 | 2.6 |
| Beauty | 35 | 2.7 |
| Hairdressing | 36 | 2.8 |
| Fitness | 27 | 2.8 |
| Sport | 24 | 2.9 |
| Funeral Services | 3 | 3.0 |

It can be seen that there were some differences among the Training Packages, but most sat around the 2.5 point – i.e. further towards the industry skills and knowledge end of the scale than the education skills and knowledge end. No Training Package had RTOs with mean responses beyond the mid-point. In general, then, Service Skills RTOs seemed to value industry skills and knowledge more than pedagogical (teaching and learning) skills and knowledge.

## 5.2 Qualitative data analysis

The questionnaire included a number of questions that asked participants to comment on a range of issues identified by the researchers as central to the discussion of workforce development. These issues were:

1. The requirements for industry currency;

2. The ideal skills, qualifications and attributes that VET practitioners in the specific industry and in the service industry generally should have now and in ten years time (assuming unlimited resources);

3. The strategies that could be used to develop these "ideal" characteristics, skills, attributes and qualifications;

4. The 'enablers' that would allow the development of this ideal profile of the VET practitioner;

5. The 'barriers' that would impede the development of this 'ideal' profile;

6. Examples of 'good practice'; and

7. Other comments.

The appropriate questions in the survey were 21 (part), 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33 (See Appendix 2 for a copy of the survey instrument)

The responses to these questions were cross tabulated with other quantitative data, to identify any trends in responses related to:

- The highest level of teaching/training qualifications

- The requirements for industry currency

- Strategies for developing the profile of the VET practitioner

- Enablers and barriers that may impede the development of the 'ideal' profile if VET practitioner.

### Requirements for industry currency

16 participants commented on this question. All agreed that working in industry was the preferred way in which this status could be maintained. Other forms of industry currency included placement within industry where the placement was formally supported by the employer. Projects and consultancies were also regarded as strategies for maintaining currency. As in the case studies attendance at seminars, conferences, trade expos and other public opportunities for currency and networking provided the opportunities for staff to remain up to date with trends, styles and information. This was particularly advocated in hair, retail and hospitality. Industry currency was also enhanced by memberships in industry associations and professional groups. Regular consultations and meetings with industry representatives were also seen as a strategy that could contribute to a sense of currency in the industry.

The participants from hair and beauty, and tourism, hospitality and events suggest that VET practitioners needed a minimum of one week working in industry. However the preferred profile for a teacher was one that included current work in the industry area or experience in the field within the last five years. The retail and allied, and sport and recreation participants definitely wanted teachers who were currently employed in industry preferably on a part-time basis.

### Staff development needs

In RTOs where 50% or more staff held the BSZ Certificate IV as the highest qualification the most urgent staff development needs included e-learning, continuous improvement strategies and TP specific skills related to assessment. In RTOs where the TAA was the highest qualification held by 50% or more of the staff, the staff development needs clustered more around the need for industry currency, AQTF compliance issues, e-learning, industry links and behaviour management.

Participants (irrespective of industry area) listed the following urgent staff development needs. Teachers require greater skills in:

- Developing industry partnerships

- Using delivery skills to meet the diversity of student needs

- Awareness of current industry trends

- Assessment – Mapping, design, validation and implementation

- Promoting and developing client relationships

- The processes of continuous improvement and strategies for maintaining industry knowledge.

- Training and delivery possibly through the study of TAA

- Maintaining levels of knowledge about training package changes and changes that are industry specific

- Meeting AQTF and audit compliance requirements.

These needs fell into four distinct categories:

- Skills associated with teaching/learning and assessing

- Skills associated with industry awareness and currency "personal industry education".

- Skills associated with knowledge of the content in which they were working – compliance, Training Packages and AQTF.

- Skills associated with knowledge of processes such as continuous improvement, customisation of training packages and the development of learning materials.

**The ideal skills, qualifications and attributes that VET practitioners in the specific industry and in the service industry generally should have now and in ten years time (assuming unlimited resources)**

175 participants responded to this question. There was a wide range of responses that can be grouped into the following categories. Firstly participants thought that a number of *teaching skills* were crucial for the ideal VET practitioner to have in the service industries. These included the ability to meet individual learning needs based on the principles of adult learning. The capacity to develop authentic and valid assessment items in response to training package requirements was also important. A number of participants stressed the importance of being able to act as a facilitator of learning and the ability to adjust to teaching and assessing in a workplace and the capacity to engage in workplace delivery using sound teaching and learning strategies. Other participants thought that a blend of business, technology and instructional design skills would contribute to the profile of the ideal VET practitioner. Respondents identified a number of dispositional qualities that the ideal VET practitioner should have. These were attributes such as good communication skills, an ability to relate to students and their needs, an understanding of the importance of literacy as a building block for learning, empathy, understanding and flexibility and responsiveness to industry and students.

Secondly participants identified a range of issues associated with *industry currency*. This desirable attribute was common to most answers although it was juxtaposed beside other characteristics. It was interesting to note that the need for industry currency appeared first in the list of desirable characteristics. The respondents thought that the ideal VET practitioner should have high levels of industry involvement and awareness, and they should ideally hold a post trade qualification.

Thirdly, in terms of the *qualifications* that are ideal for the current VET practitioner, respondents thought that the Certificate IV (TAA04) was a minimum qualification with many advocating further study to at least a Diploma level. Participants across all industry areas implied that the acquisition of these qualifications would address a range of issues. A credible qualification would equip VET practitioners to:

- Assess students in a variety of contexts using a range of strategies

- Customise Training Packages

- Interpret Training Package requirements in response to industry needs

- Understanding emerging industry trends and needs and incorporating these into their teaching

- Teach and assess in a wide variety of contexts

- Understand compliance practices

- Integrate technology into all facets of delivery.

- Respond to the range of learner needs in different contexts

- Integrate their industry knowledge more explicitly in their teaching

- Develop and implement curriculum.

Other respondents did not specify either the type or level of the educational qualification. However it was clear that they wanted a qualification that bridged the gap between industry experience and the demands of teaching and that focussed on developing teaching attributes such as flexibility, understanding of the training package relevant to their industry and a commitment to teaching and learning. It was also clear this qualification should encourage a 'deep knowledge' of industry, teaching and assessment.

Respondents commented on the attributes, skills and qualifications that will be needed in *ten years* time. Many of these were identical to those that are needed currently. The obvious addition to the pool of skills will be the ability of the VET practitioner to cope with, and effectively use, the new and emerging technologies. Respondents also commented that higher level educational qualifications will be needed with a particular focus on supervisory and management skills blended with the principles of adult learning. Industry currency was again mentioned in nearly all the responses as being critical for the VET practitioner in ten years time.

### The strategies that could be used to develop these 'ideal' characteristics, skills, attributes and qualifications

Participants felt that a variety of strategies could be used to develop these ideal qualities. Many thought that additional workplace involvement, industry involvement and constant liaison with the particular industry would help to achieve the 'ideal'. Partnerships were seen as a very practical way in which these desirable relationships could be developed. Others thought that staff development was critical. They also suggested that the staff development needed to be tailored to the needs of the staff and the relevant industry, needed to be funded and well organised and needed to be linked to individual development plans and in some cases performance management processes. This set of strategies implied a commitment on the part of the organisation to provide opportunities for staff based on the realisation that professional development contributed to the overall capacity of the organisation. The commitment was part of a larger set of processes related to continuous improvement. Many thought that the TAA was not a sufficiently rigorous or relevant qualification and suggested having 'something much more for new training entrants'.

Participants across all industry areas providers the consistent responses mentioned above. The hair and beauty, retail and allied and hospitality participants also suggested that a set of national strategies that would integrate and promote the development of industry and educational interests and capabilities would be valuable in achieving the set of 'ideal' characteristics.

Other strategic suggestions included:

  a. Collaborative planning for professional development.
  b. Opportunities to learn about future oriented industry trends
  c. " Dual occupations"- industry/teaching
  d. Focused and targeting recruitment of staff
  e. The provision of funded "time' for professional development.

### The 'enablers' that would allow the development of this ideal profile of the VET practitioner

Participants agreed that more funding was required to allow for the development of this ideal VET practitioner. Other suggestions included the provision of staff

development, restructuring of the teaching awards, fully funded industry placements for staff, and the development of a 'learning culture' inside the organisations. Some respondents suggested that their organisations needed to make more long term and strategic decisions about the organisation and then plan methodically to achieve these goals particularly in relation to the employment of staff. This was linked to the idea of closer links with industry. Participants in all industry areas suggested time to return to industry and to study would assist in developing their practice of the VET practitioners through the creation of an Industry Skills Council to develop practitioner skills would be an 'enabling' practice.

### The 'barriers' that would impede the development of this 'ideal' profile

Respondents identified a number of barriers that would impede the development of the 'ideal' profile of the VET practitioner. The lack of financial resources was mentioned in a large numbers of responses. This lack of resources created an ethos where managers felt that the cost professional development for staff could not be justified. In remote locations and thin markets this problem was overlaid by the difficulties of providing a range of professional development activities suited to the particular industry teachers. The 'culture' of particular organisations with their legacies of practices and the 'weight of history' behind them were identified as a significant barrier in a number of cases. This cultural history, particularly amongst long standing staff members exacerbated the reluctance to maintain industry and educational currency. This produced a type of disinterest amongst the profession to stretch their thinking, to develop and implement creative teaching and learning strategies and to work collaboratively with colleagues and industry. Other participants mentioned that the Certificate IV did not equip teachers well for their roles and responsibilities while others cited the over reliance on compliance as a mitigating factor in the development of the ideal profile. This was described by one participant as the tension between the time and costs associated with compliance as opposed to the necessary focus on training and the desire to understand the industry 'deeply'.

### Examples of 'good practice'

These included examples of cross collaboration amongst some private providers across the sector. Other respondents included examples of creative ways in which professional development goals have been achieved. These examples included internships in industry, memberships of professional associations, an industry experts scheme and industry secondments. A number of participants thought that the encouragement of regional networks and opportunities for sharing expertise were examples of good practice. These were facilitated by the addition of online seminars and the provision for online resources to support the learning of teachers. Partnerships with industry were also thought to be examples of good practice.

### Other comments

This question gave the participants the opportunity to raise other questions and issues. A large number of participants commented that more support in assisting and promoting training and assessing strategies in RTOs was needed. Others felt that the burdens of compliance 'left little time or money for the RTO to invest in training, training facilities and employment outcomes'. Low literacy levels amongst students were identified as a problem as was the capacity of the teachers to cope with these levels in their teaching.

# Chapter 6. Results from Stage 4: Case study cross-case analysis

## Introduction

Participants in the industry focus groups in Phase 1 of the project recommended RTOs that reflected good practice in the areas of workforce development and industry partnerships. After discussion with Service Skills Australia, eight of these RTOs was contacted and arrangements were made to carry out case studies in these sites. Four were public RTOs and four were private, with one of the private RTOs characterising itself as an enterprise RTO although it did enrol students from other companies

The case studies were carried out during June-August 2009. They were written up individually, allowing contextual issues arising from the industry sector that they served to be acknowledged. The research team then examined the individual analyses and the major issues across the industry areas were thematically drawn out.

Case studies were carried out in the following locations in the following industry areas.

|  | Location | Industry area | Type of RTO Provider |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Brisbane, QLD | Retail | Private commercial RTO |
| 2 | Sydney, NSW | Floristry | TAFE Institute |
| 3 | Sydney, NSW | Hospitality | Private commercial RTO |
| 4 | Melbourne, VIC | Hospitality | TAFE Institute |
| 5 | Melbourne, VIC | Hair | Enterprise RTO |
| 6 | Adelaide, SA | Hair & beauty | TAFE Institute |
| 7 | Melbourne, VIC | Fitness & community recreation | Private (not-for-profit) RTO |
| 8 | Sydney, NSW | Fitness, sport & recreation | TAFE Institute |

A brief overview of the location by State and type of provider is given below:

|  | Private | Public |
|---|---|---|
| NSW | 1 | 2 |
| VIC | 2 | 1 |
| QLD | 1 |  |
| SA |  | 1 |

### Methodology

In each case study location interviews were undertaken with a range of people. These were:

- Senior manager or delegated officer, and also in some cases an HR manager;
- Up to two service skills teachers / trainers;
- Up to two student / learners enrolled in service skills qualifications; and
- Up to two HR / senior managers in partnering enterprise(s).

The majority of the interviews were carried out face to face at each site over a single day. The participants were provided with a list of questions prior to the interviews and many had prepared answers in advance. The interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes with the majority around 30 minutes. The interviews were taped and transcribed, with permission. Participants were each also asked to place the 'ideal VET practitioner' on the scale between industry skills and knowledge and education skills and knowledge.

This thematic analysis of the case study findings is based on the questions asked of the participants (see Appendix 3 for interview protocols), and participants' comments are used for illumination.

### The contexts for the case studies

The following section provides a summary of the contexts in which the case studies were carried out. The context included a description of the location of the RTO, its organisational structure, the number of staff employed, the student base of the RTO and the qualifications that were being delivered in the different industry areas that were being studied.

#### Case study 1: Private RTO – retail

Based in Brisbane, and with historical beginnings as a local pre-employment retail school, 'private RTO-retail' is a private Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that specialises in providing training services for the retail industry Australia-wide. Private RTO-retail proudly displays awards and certificates of appreciation in a colourful display at the entrance to its premises, while itswebsite features their position as Finalist and Winner of two Queensland Private Training Provider of the Year Awards.

At the time of the visit, private RTO-retail offered retail and community pharmacy qualifications from Certificate II through to Diploma level, plus three Business qualifications including Front Line Management (FLM) and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. In addition, the RTO offered a small number of non-accredited short courses in specific retail industry skills, but these represented a minimal proportion of the overall business. While the range of courses encompassed retail and business industry skills, all the RTO's clients were currently in the retail industry FLM and TAA qualifications were customised to the needs of people supporting retail staff and delivering retail competencies.

The RTO had a small, flat organisational structure. There were three working Directors and a General Manager whose position was created as part of the organisation's succession planning. At the time of this study, the RTO employed around 25 training staff Australia-wide through a variety of arrangements including full time, part time, casual and contract. Most of these trainers worked only for private RTO-retail, although the exception was one contract trainer in a regional location where the 'thin' market meant that no single RTO was able to offer sufficient employment. In the past, the RTO had used partnership arrangements to deliver services in remote States, but subsequently moved to employing its own staff in all locations.

Private RTO-retail worked with clients across the entire retail industry. This case study involved interviews with two employer clients, both widely recognised retail businesses. One client interviewed was a national retailer selling fashion, footwear and manchester. The other was a national retailer which sold business products to the building industry. This case study focused on retail training using Training Package qualifications.

### Case study 2: Public RTO-floristry

A floristry section was included on one of seven campuses on a major metropolitan TAFE Institute. In 2008, the Institute had over 73,000 student enrolments and scope of more than 550 vocational qualifications from Certificate I to Advanced Diploma, with some Graduate Diplomas. The Institute offered qualifications in most service skills sectors and many other industry areas. In the heart of a multicultural city, its domestic student profile represented wide cultural and linguistic diversity. In total, around 40% of the Institute's student population spoke a language other than English as their first language.

The focus of this case study was on qualifications from the Floristry Training Package. 'Public RTO-floristry' delivered Certificate II, III and IV in Floristry, and skills set Statements of Attainment for groups not seeking full qualifications. Public RTO-floristry also offered non-accredited programs such as a 'TAFE Plus' introduction to the floristry industry. In an industry primarily characterised by small businesses, the RTO worked with individual enrolments rather than corporate clients. The enterprise partner interviewed for this case study represented one of the largest flower growing groups in the southern hemisphere, and one of the oldest flower growing companies in Australia. Accessing the two well-equipped floristry classrooms was a sensory experience. Students and visitors walked through an attractive display of certificates, awards, trophies, and floral arrangements. The teaching area was permeated with the scent of flowers, which were being sorted and trimmed in an adjacent work area; completed arrangements – both teacher and student work – were displayed within the classrooms themselves.

### Case study 3: Private RTO-hospitality

This case study was of a private RTO with its head office located in Sydney. Its offices and classrooms occupy a floor of a central city office block. It specialises in hospitality training, mainly using the Hospitality Training Package, and the company also includes a recruitment agency, which in fact had been the first activity of the business when it was set up twelve years previously, initially to find work placements for students enrolled with a hospitality training provider. Because of the economic downturn over the past twelve months, the RTO now formed about 85-90% of the business, while before the downturn, it accounted for about 70% of the business. At the time of the case study visit, 'Private RTO-hospitality' had three major sections with several thousand enrolled students overall. One, 'the Academy' offered face to face training to students undertaking full-time qualifications; the 'retail training' section offered short courses for individuals and business, including Responsible Service of Alcohol and similar programs, but also tailored training. The third section of the RTO, which was formed fairly recently but was rapidly expanding, was the traineeship section. The latter operated nationally because the major clients also did so. The traineeship section of the RTO was expanding into the retail industry.

Both sections of the private RTO-hospitality trained primarily for the hotel sector, although the clientele was broadening somewhat into pubs, clubs and restaurants. The partner enterprise, from which one manager and one learner were interviewed, was a chain of large cafes, one brand in a chain of several large hospitality venues in Sydney, with six venues in the city. This company operated very large venues with large numbers of staff, mainly part-time and casual. Traineeships were offered to

such staff as well as full-timers and were used partly to assist people to move up into managerial positions.

## Case study 4: Public RTO-hospitality

This case study took place in a TAFE Institute that is specifically devoted to culinary arts, hospitality, tourism and related training. Its offices, classrooms, practical areas and training restaurants occupy several large building covering the majority of a city-centre block. At the time of the visit, 'Public RTO-hospitality' employed around 300 teachers and trainers (with a little over half employed full-time) and had around 12,000 enrolled students, of whom around 1000 were international on-site. In addition to the central city site, the Institute had a program at Cranbourne in the outer metropolitan area, and joint venture campuses in China which had 800 students enrolled in the RTO's programs. Many of its industry clients were major national companies and so the Institute had an additional presence and local staff in several States and Territories of Australia. Courses were offered from VET in Schools programs for Years 11 and 12 students, through to degree level. As a specialist provider, its reputation rested primarily on its links with industry, and the interviews in the case study confirmed this reputation.

The two partner enterprises whose staff were interviewed were a company providing support services to businesses and a large hotel chain. The support services company, with 900 sites and 9000 staff, provided a range of services to business including food services, security and facilities management; food services were its major focus. The relationship with public RTO-hospitality focused on Certificate II to IV programs in cookery, hospitality and kitchen operations, and management. The hotel chain was the largest Australian owned hotel group; the RTO worked with the company on hospitality operations qualifications (with for example 75 participants in Queensland alone) and company-specific e-learning programs.

## Case study 5: Private RTO-hairdressing

This was primarily an enterprise RTO that grew from the training needs of a chain of high-profile hairdressing salons. There were ten salons and two training academies. Private RTO-hairdressing was described as a modern training facility dedicated to delivering a strong classic foundation for up and coming 'wannabe' hairdressers. The Hairdressing and Beauty Industry Association (HBIA) awarded the RTO the '2009 Excellence in Hairdressing Education' Award, the '2009 Teacher of the Year' Award and the '2009 Student of the Year' Award; in addition it had gained 'College of the Year' awards in 2005 and 2006. The salons continued to gain national recognition with several staff members winning individual awards for creative work.

The RTO was established because of some dissatisfaction with the training provided off the job by other RTOs. The staff were being sent to TAFE colleges or hairdressing schools and the manager was not very satisfied with the training that they were providing in terms of the 'habits' that were being instilled.

Private RTO-hairdressing offered Certificates II, III and IV in hairdressing (Certificate III in both apprenticeship and institutional mode) and a dress and style short hair course For International Students, the RTO also offered the Diploma of Salon Management.

## Case Study 6: Public RTO-hair and beauty

This case study was carried out at one campus of a metropolitan TAFE Institute. The campus offers a range of programs including business management, floristry, information technology and the focus for this case study, hair and beauty. Hair and beauty at 'Public RTO-hair and beauty' were linked in terms of their discipline area but they had very different delivery methods, student cohorts, teacher qualifications, and relationships with their respective industries.

The campus is located a short distance from the city centre and draws on a widely dispersed student base. In the hair and beauty section, there were 23 full time equivalent positions that translated to approximately 50 part-time and casual staff. There were around 150 students enrolled in the Certificate III in Hairdressing (apprenticeship). There were also had 300 full-time pre vocational and VET students who were studying part time at school. The hair and beauty section had established a reputation for innovation both in terms of industry arrangements and partnerships, and in terms of the enthusiasm and commitment to high quality teaching and assessment. The RTO's hairdressing staff and management worked closely with two major salon chains. These partnerships involved collaboration in teaching and assessing and were predicated on a commitment by public RTO-hair and beauty to respond to the articulated needs of the industry.

### Case study 7: Private RTO-Fitness & community recreation

This case study took place in a not for profit organisation that provides a range of service including fitness and recreation. The RTO is part of the larger organisation. . At the time of the visit, the Australia-wide organisation operated as both a federated structure in which individual sites were affiliated with a central state and national body (but without direct control) as well as a centralised structure where individual state organisations operated a number of community centres in their own right (i.e. operate with direct control). In most of the centres where direct control was exercised the company acted as a centre manager under contract to a local government authority.

The RTO provided a limited amount of training at three capital-city campuses, however most of its training occurred in a distributed mode via the organisation's community settings. 'Private RTO-fitness' tended to specialise in providing training in the fitness and community recreation (largely aquatic education) areas, although it did also provide training other service areas such as outdoor recreation and in a range of non service industry sectors such as automotive and child care. The provision of these non service focused training options was largely in response to demand from participants in its various community development programs or in response to its growing role as a provider of child care services for its recreation clients. Service industry training was largely provided to meet its 'in house' needs for gymnasium and aquatic program staff. However, the training was also provided in order to meet general community demand.

### Case study 8: Public RTO-Fitness, sport & recreation

This case study took place at one of seven a campus of a major metropolitan TAFE Institute.  At the time of the visit, the Institute delivered a large range of courses to the Sport and Recreation industry. These courses ranged from Certificate II to Diploma level qualifications in areas such as Fitness, Outdoor Recreation, Sport and Community Recreation. The Institute's Annual Report stated Sport and recreation was the smallest of the Institute's study areas with an enrolment of approximately 1000 students a year. The Institute marketed itself as a college with credit arrangements with prestigious universities and as a cost effective way of accessing university education. It promoted itself as being a college that catered for a diverse range of students, and one that offered practical hands-on experiences in a flexible manner. It also emphasised the excellence of its teaching, links with industry and the community, and the fact that it was government backed.

The fitness, sport and recreation section offered a full suite of VET fitness qualifications ranging from Certificate III to Diploma. The focus of this case study was the Diploma of Fitness. This qualification is offered over a six month period in a face-to-face delivery mode following completion of the Certificate IV in Fitness. Nationally, the Diploma of Fitness is offered to a limited cohort with approximately 100

graduations from this course in 2007 (Service Skills Australia, 2009), hence Public RTO-fitness has something of a niche market in this area.

## Nature of students & teaching delivery including delivery modes, industry work placements and student satisfaction.

A number of questions in each case study related to the students and the types of teaching they received, and in which modes this teaching took place. The questions also addressed the nature of industry work placements that students were involved with and the levels of student satisfaction with the types of provision offered by the various RTOs.

**Students** involved in the case studies came from a variety of backgrounds. Across all the cases students ranged in age from fourteen years and nine months to sixty years of age. Hairdressing catered for younger students and this reflected the number of industry sponsored apprentices and trainees within the student cohorts. Predominantly these students were between 17 and 24 years of age. Beauty tended to cater for more mature students as this reflected the demands of the industry sector. In the private hospitality RTO the full-time students ranged from 21 to 40 years of age with most in their mid-20s. In private RTO-retail, students were all domestic Australian students, as the RTO did not offer international enrolments. Private RTO-retail'sstudents ranged in age from 14 years and 9 months (the starting age for retail) through to 55-60, although the largest percentage was younger than mid-to-late 20s. Private RTO-fitness tended to cater for students of all ages; however its fitness certification programs catered for students aged 18-25 years. The students generally participated in industry-based face-to-face part time training as individual (non-corporate) students. This RTO also provided training to a wide range of corporate organisations and by definition the students were employed and in a workplace.

Students had different statuses within the RTOs studied. They could be apprentices, trainees, institutional enrolments, full fee paying students, VET in Schools students and enrolees who came via the recently-established Productivity Places Program. There were a number of international students involved in four case studies and these students had a variety of English language skills (enterprise RTO - hairdressing, private RTO-hospitality, public RTO - floristry and public RTO - hospitality). Most floristry students were individual enrolments, from school-based trainees to mature age students seeking a career change or learning a skill for its own sake. The public RTO-floristry had domestic and international students, and had a 'fast track' process in place for students who could demonstrate existing expertise in floristry. The public RTO-hospitality catered predominantly for school-leaver students up to Certificate III level, who were while the more advanced programs attracted mature and international students. At 'Stage 3', as these were known, around 40% of this RTO's students were international, with a concentration of students from Vietnam and India. The students enrolled in the private RTO-fitness were largely young adults, the majority of whom were male. However, an increasing number of the students were middle-aged with significant work experience in a range of non-fitness related fields. There were a very small number of international students enrolled in the program.

**Teaching delivery** in the case studies was varied. It was collaborative in some cases. This was particularly evident in the case of the public RTO-hair and beauty. This was the result of strong partnerships between the RTO and specific industry partners. In these cases curriculum changed very quickly to reflect the particular needs of the industry partner. Staff from partnering enterprises were mentored and supported in the teaching situations and the blend of industry experience/currency with the educational expertise of the teachers was considered to be of great benefit to the students, to the enterprise and to the respective industry as a whole. This was also the case with the private RTO-hospitality where an important part of delivery that

enhanced links with industry was that, since a move of premises about 18 months previously, the RTO no longer maintained its own kitchens. Instead it leased space in the kitchens of several major hotels around Sydney for its practical classes in commercial cookery. This had many benefits for the RTO; for example students and teachers benefited from close weekly contact with hotel kitchens and their staff. In private RTO-hospitality, the partnering enterprise described the partnership arrangements in teaching delivery. The RTO provided the learning materials and undertook the assessment and the company provided considerable support. Each venue, for example, had a member of the management team designated as a 'training facilitator' to assist with coaching for the traineeship as well as training staff in the company's own programs. The partnering enterprise's training and development manager explained that the RTO provided the learning materials and undertook the assessment, but that the company provided considerable support. In this RTO teaching was extremely systematised, with clear standards set for delivery and close monitoring of teaching quality. This was also evident in other case studies.

Strong industry partnerships were also evident in the case study undertaken in the public RTO- hospitality. The training that the RTO undertook for partner enterprises was individually negotiated with companies. For traineeships, the RTO trainers partnered with delivery staff in the workplace but took responsibility for the bulk of the assessment. The manager of one of the partnering enterprises noted that the strength of the RTOs delivery methods and teaching strategies lay in the staff's consistent emphasis on quality, its responsiveness, and the staff's ability to be honest with the enterprise. Also 'we are both passionate about food.' However in the case of this RTO, most of teaching was done on-site, with 'flexi-delivery' (i.e. delivering in the learners' workplaces) being a comparatively new venture and confined to certain sections of the RTO.

In some cases teaching delivery was 'blended'. The public RTO-floristry used several delivery media. Students completed theoretical knowledge online, and to prepare students for this the teachers ran online group classes in the library which also helped students who did not have a computer at home. Theory learned online was reinforced in the classroom practical component. Each skill was introduced through a teacher demonstration covering practical skills and the principles and elements of design. This was followed by student practice and feedback. However, online delivery posed problems of student engagement and persistence to complete in private RTO-fitness, where the strong focus on interaction and demonstration implicit in the content being delivered made distributed learning a difficult undertaking for both staff and students. Similarly the delivery mode in the public RTO-fitness did not involve on-line learning. In general, this delivery mode was not supported as was apparent in the following comment:

> Anybody who's done only online learning in fitness- they have had a lot of theoretical base. They might know stuff but they haven't had that communication skills. They haven't had that practice and the experience. So we do have actually people who've come from other registered organisations who have done some flexible delivery and I find that they are actually the ones that need more input to help them get through the next level because they haven't had that exposure.

Another perspective was also given as to why fact-to-face delivery was preferable for this cohort of students: 'I think that we probably offer the best face to face delivery which, for a lot of people, they need that type of learning'.

While in some public RTOs, delivery was primarily face-to-face on campus, in the private RTO-retail, more than 90% of the delivery was conducted using a work-based delivery model with an RTO trainer working either with one or two learners in the

workplace, or with small groups in the employer's training room with access to a shop floor for observation and practice.

**Assessment practices** in the cases studied were generally rigorous. The teachers, the industry representatives and the students mentioned that notwithstanding the pressures of time and financial imperatives, a lot of attention was given to ensuring the competence of the students and to ensuring that assessment were valid and reliable. For example in the private RTO–hospitality and the private RTO-hairdressing, students and teachers in particular commented on the need for rigorous assessment as a guarantee of work readiness and as a way of maintaining standards within their respective industries.

**Reporting on assessment** in clear and accessible ways was also seen as a hallmark of effective practice. In both the public and enterprise RTOs in hairdressing, the industry representatives commented on the benefits for their business planning and staff management of regular reporting. It wa important that the reporting protocols were negotiated between the teachers and the employers to ensure clarity and comprehensibility.

**Industry work placements** took different forms in the cases examined. In those cases where the RTO was primarily enterprise-based (hairdressing), students worked and studied in a fully operational workplace. The public RTO-hairdressing  operated both fully functional hair and beauty salons, which serviced a regular clientele and provided a realistic working environment for students. Students in the private RTO-hospitality had the benefit of working in 'real' workplaces via arrangements that had been made by the work-placement co-coordinator. The course guide for the public RTO-hospitality stated that 'students are encouraged to seek employment in their industry while studying' and  programs did not appear to offer work placements .While the students said their programs did not involve formal work placements, they said that working in the industry was highly advantageous and that individual teachers assisted students with finding work in the Institute restaurant and also with other employers, including events venues.

Students undertook formal work-placements under the supervision of teaching staff in the public RTO-beauty. In both hairdressing case studies, staff were committed to extending the experiences of their students through participation in competitions, public performances and other authentic learning activities.

Industry work placements were an important element of the public RTO-floristry. These provided real industry experience, an opportunity to practise skills learned in class, and a context for workplace assessment. Teachers noted that some students found it difficult to get meaningful placements. For some international students this seemed to relate to the students' English language skills which were not strong enough for the subtleties of client service in small businesses which did not have time to provide additional training and support. This was also the case in the private RTO-hospitality. To address this dilemma, the floristry head teacher undertook a complex four-year process to establish a working florist shop on the city campus. Students who had no industry placement worked in the shop for one full day each week. Students performed the full range of duties, including basic tasks of sweeping the floor and washing buckets; business processes such as stock control, unpacking and checking flowers, costing orders, using the register and completing quality checks; and customer service including up-selling and handling complaints.

**Student satisfaction** was generally high across the cases studied. For instance in the public RTO-hospitality, students articulated the sentiments expressed by many other students in the case studies. Of the two students interviewed, one was a mature student who worked occasionally in hospitality but whose previous career had not been in this industry. She had entered RTO through a 'sole parents' program at an outlying campus and travelled two hours each way daily to the Institute. The other

was in her early twenties and had worked as a nanny in Australia and overseas before deciding to enter hospitality. She worked at a functions centre part-time. The students said that their experience with teachers was overwhelmingly positive. Students mentioned that their courses had opened their eyes to many career options. They particularly enjoyed the practical classes, but sometimes found the more theoretical subjects challenging, although good teaching made them come alive. They found the workload associated with their courses high, with assignments requiring a great deal of preparation.

In other cases students mentioned that industry experience and currency made a highly positive contribution to their learning. In the case of the public RTO-fitness, the very positive comments expressed by the students about their satisfaction with the course were considered by the teachers to reflect the cohesive nature of the staff and the strong links with industry.

## Summary

- Teaching delivery modes varied among cases, collaborative models, partnership arrangements, Blended, on-line and delivery in learners' workplaces were given as examples.

- Assessment practices were rigorous – ensuring the 'competence' of students with valid and reliable assessment methods. Reporting was also seen to be and integral role of the RTOs studied.

- Industry placements took several differing forms and were seen to be valuable for many students.

- Student satisfaction was generally high across all of the RTOs studied.

## Nature of teachers, RTO requirements for industry currency & teaching qualifications

The teachers in the case studies came from diverse backgrounds with a broad range of educational and/or industry credentials. Most teachers had extensive industry experience and often held a university qualification in teaching. In the public RTO-hospitality, new teachers were required to have the Certificate IV TAA, relevant vocational qualifications and industry experience. Teachers with the two latter requirements were sometimes recruited, on the proviso that they obtained their Certificate IV in TAA. In this RTO, management had a policy of encouraging teachers to acquire the Victorian Diploma of VET; there was a salary increment attached to this. Teachers undertook this free of charge and their managers sometimes provided them with time release. Similar arrangements existed in the public RTO-fitness. The teachers in the Diploma of Fitness had extensive experience in the fitness industry; either as an instructor or as a manager. Many of the teachers also came from an educational background and had completed a Diploma of Education. Nevertheless, all teachers were required to complete the Certificate IV in Teaching and Assessment. In many cases the teachers continued to work in the industry and believed that this ongoing industry engagement improved their teaching and gave them credibility with the student body.

All teachers maintained industry currency through a variety of strategies. Different RTOs focussed slightly more on one side or the other of the industry currency/ teaching qualifications divide. Participants discussed the value of both of these qualities in terms of their discipline area, the students, and their particular relationships with partner organisations or their industry area. Students appreciated the diversity of teachers that they encountered.

In hairdressing the public RTO employed a mixture of staff, some of which were highly educationally qualified. The RTO also highly valued industry currency and this was given practical expression in the employment of teachers from the partnering

enterprises, usually on a fractional basis. This RTO also encouraged all of its teachers to undertake further study and supported this actively. The Manager was explicit about the need to employ staff that would 'fit within the team'. The hairdressing section had an overt appreciation of their staff profile and recruited consciously to achieve a balance between initiative, creativity and solid teaching skills. Staff needed to be good facilitators and sound models for their students. They needed to demonstrate 'vocational competence to ensure industry credibility', as the manager put it.

In the private RTO-hairdressing the main criteria for employment as a teacher was *current employment* in one of the salons in the group. Other staff members who come from outside the chain of salons were provided with six weeks paid training prior to taking up a teaching role. This allowed the RTO to judge the suitability of 'fit' between the techniques and skills of the new employee and the aspirations and demands of the salon ethos. Selecting teachers from the existing workforce was also the pattern of employment in the private RTO-fitness In Victoria, for example, the RTO had 25 teachers. They ranged in age from approximately 20-50 years and there was a good balance of male and female teachers. Approximately 70% of the teachers possessed formal training and assessment qualifications (generally Certificate IV in Training and Assessment) and the Victorian Manager was working towards all teachers possessing this qualification in the future.

As with the other case studies it was clear that in the private RTO-retail, a prominent theme across all interviews with management, teachers and assessors, employers and students was the need for training and assessment staff to have *current, extensive and senior retail industry expertise*. Part of the RTOs strategy for maintaining its industry credibility was to only recruit training and assessment staff who themselves had professional credibility. This involved recruiting staff from the industry, with high-level experience – preferably in retail management. While strong emphasis was placed on the need for retail industry knowledge and skills, the RTOs employment 'bands' were based on educational expertise and qualifications.

In the public RTO-beauty the teachers were highly qualified in both their content areas and in terms of educational qualifications. The staff had a deeply embedded commitment to remaining current given the highly volatile and changing nature of this industry area. The teachers in the public RTO-hair and beauty had long careers in the industry itself and brought with them attitudes about responsiveness to industry that influenced the ways in which they negotiated curriculum and assessment with partnering enterprises.

The private RTO-hospitality had 13 full-time teachers covering the Academy and retail training, and two full-timers in the traineeship section. However the RTO was currently recruiting for 11 new traineeship 'trainer assessors' to replace a number of contract staff working in this area. Because of the economic downturn it had recently become easier to find good-quality applicants for full-time jobs. Another reason for consolidating the jobs into full-time positions was to avoid staff working for other RTOs who might have lower standards than the RTO and who may bring bad habits into their work. *These themes that reputation is crucial, that standards must be preserved and that the ethos of the organisation was always a consideration in the employment of teachers emerged in a number of other case studies*. In this RTO, special attention was paid to the monitoring of the work of those teachers who were responsible for international students. This attention and responsiveness to the particular needs of the students also had its expression in the recognition that the attributes required for teaching on campus students versus trainees in a workplace were slightly different. Although some attributes were similar, those working with on-the-job trainees needed a greater amount of people skills – an ability to liaise at all levels of an organisation – and better networking skills.

## Other Themes

With industry experience almost being regarded as a given, other key themes emerged. The complexities of *understanding and responding to multiple layers of clients* were a common theme across a number of case studies. On one level, there was the need to maintain a good relationship with each individual learner. But teaching and assessing staff also needed to deal with that person's supervisor or store manager, involving conversations at a different level about workplace practices and training practices. Then there was the need to *maintain relationships with the business* or employer driving the training relationship. Beyond the employer client, there were issues of *compliance*, and possibly issues relating to government funding stakeholders. Clearly the RTO had multiple expectations of the skills that the individual brought to the task of teaching beyond those to do with the transmission of skills.

## Summary

The teachers interviewed varied in terms of educational qualifications and industry credentials. The majority maintained industry currency through a variety of strategies.

Reputation was crucial, and respondents said that standards must be preserved and the ethos of an organisation considered when employing new staff.

Themes of varied learners, networking and connections with industry, industry currency and compliance were evident in most of the cases studied.

## Staff development programs provided by RTO for its teachers

RTOs provided a wide range of different forms of professional development across the various case study sites. The staff development programs fell into two distinct categories. The first was the provision of opportunities for staff to update their content area knowledge and experience (*Industry currency*). The second category related to programs designed to enhance the teaching skills of the teachers and trainers (*Pedagogical skills*). In some cases staff development programs were a mixture of both industry currency and pedagogical opportunities for staff.

### Industry currency

All the RTOs in the case studies appreciated the need for staff to be industry-current. A number of different mechanisms were designed to achieve this goal. In some cases the need for industry currency underpinned all staff development activities and in other cases such as the public RTO-floristry the initiative, energy and commitment of the staff member responsible for the staff and students identified the possibilities for connection between staff and the industry. A particular characteristic of the floristry-specific professional development was that some activities were arranged not just for staff, but also for the floristry industry and floristry trainers as a whole, and sometimes also for students. The head teacher was actively involved in the Professional Florists Association (PFA). Other floristry-specific professional development activities that were organised and motivated by the passion of the head teacher included active participation in conferences, visits from overseas experts in the industry, demonstrations by experts, magazine subscriptions and opportunities to work in industry. In the case of the public provider-hospitality, individual responsibility for industry currency activities was endorsed and facilitated by the organisation and while there was no Institute wide requirement for updating industry currency individual teachers were reported by the HR Manager to undertake many activities to keep abreast of industry. Most full-time teachers had a day a week 'non-attendance' when they could undertake this.

The focus in the private RTO-hairdressing was on the new trends and styles and the Manager arranged for trainers to be brought in to keep students and teachers up to date with the latest fashion developments in the hairdressing industry. A number of

teachers were enrolled in their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment but this professional development was regarded as far less of a priority than regular industry input into the work of the teaching staff. Regular training nights were held for all staff to ensure that currency was maintained.

In the private RTO-hospitality the focus of staff development was industry currency rather than pedagogy. This seemed to be partly because the RTO's reputation rested primarily on its industry relationships and partly because the managing director felt that the VET sector changed so rapidly that teachers were obliged to keep abreast of the VET sector and that the workshops they attended for this workshop would always have some pedagogical content. Interestingly. the RTO would help with course fees for either education or industry qualifications and offered time off for study.

The RTOs delivering fitness programs provided a range of staff development opportunities for training staff. The delivery programs were generally aimed at keeping their staff at the cutting edge of current discipline practice. In the private RTO-fitness, trainers who taught in the accredited courses were assembled for two days twice a year to review content and teaching styles. Importantly, they were paid for this time. It should be noted that these staff development programs focused upon technical content rather than pedagogy. In aquatics education a range of approaches were used to trainer development. These included workshops that included various theoretical and practical strategies to keep them up to date with the industry standards in teaching and assessment.

Case study participants did not express much support for one of the methods traditionally regarded as contributing to industry currency-the return to industry. In the case of the private RTO-retail, these small periods of time in industry were not felt to produce the kind of currency that was helpful. As expressed by one RTO manager:

> Well all they're going to do is put them on a checkout or stacking shelves, they're not going to learn anything new about retail doing that. We try to make something that's a bit real and not just something that is going to be paying lip service to compliance.

A trainer/assessor said

> If I go back and work in a store, even if I'm incredibly enthusiastic, what can I do in that workplace? I can't even use the register system, and they are not going to train me because that's probably a two day course at head office anyway – so, what can I actually do that is a learning experience for me up to the Diploma level that I may be delivering? That's the dilemma, because if you just go back in the workplace and follow people around, make the coffee and tidy the stock, at best that is a Certificate II competency, and that role actually hasn't changed much in ten years, so you're helping out but you're actually, probably, not learning a lot. So, exposing people to the appropriate level is actually a challenge that we see as more complicated than just saying that we give them all five days to go back to industry.

The manager in the public RTO-hair and beauty also expressed a similar opinion.

In a number of cases organisations encouraged staff to participate in external **industry networking events**. These took the form of competitions, award ceremonies, fashion shoots, fashion parades and other high profile and publicly visible activities. The rationale for this participation was that it provided opportunities for staff to be in touch with the latest trends and styles in their particular industry area. In the private RTO-hospitality an important part of industry currency was attendance at industry networking functions such as award ceremonies. Managers took teachers along with them to these; attendance was expensive for the RTO but it was felt that networking

opportunities warranted the expense, and in addition the teachers would become alert to personnel who might be interested in being approached by the recruitment side of the business. Teachers were encouraged to attend industry-related activities such as Food Master Classes. The textbooks that were used for teaching were continuously updated and teachers tended to update their industry knowledge with 'magazines'. Teachers also kept current through accompanying students to industry visits such as the fish market or the food hall of major retailers. These methods also characterised the professional development activities in the public RTO-hospitality (although in this case they tended to be initiated by individual teachers rather than the RTO) and the public RTO-fitness. In both the hairdressing RTOs, there was a considerable focus on participation in public events and competitions. Students were also exposed to these opportunities for learning. Staff in the private RTO-retail were also encouraged to participate in external projects related to the industry.

### Individual disposition to learning

Participation in either provided or self-initiated professional development varied among individual teacher/trainers. In the public RTO-beauty, staff demonstrated remarkable initiative in engaging in professional development activities that were pre-emptive responses to either new trends in the industry or to the imminent release of the new Training Package. In this way the disposition of the teachers to be active learners within their discipline could be described as the major imperative behind their staff development. This disposition was able to thrive where teachers worked with one another in collaborative ways.

In the public RTO-fitness a teacher commented that this was characterised by '...learning from each other, developing the resources, being familiar with each others learning resources so that if you needed to step in and take a class or whatever, you know we're in a situation to do that. I think we're also very industry based in a sense so that we still do draw on industry people and industry opinions to establish and help us'.

In the case studies it transpired that staff did not always respond positively to suggestions for staff development. This was mentioned in the Institutional RTOs delivering hairdressing and hospitality. The Senior Educator in one RTO felt that some teachers resisted updating their industry currency sometimes because they were anxious about having lost touch and sometimes because they were 'complacent'. A teacher in the same RTO said that it was well known that some teachers/trainers did not bother to update.

## Pedagogical (teaching and training) currency

In most case study sites the RTO encouraged and supported teachers to upgrade and gain new pedagogical skills. For instance in the Institute that contained the public RTO-floristry, there were a wide range of staff development activities that focussed on developing pedagogy. Some of these included:

- RPL and gap training to encourage teaching and non-teaching staff across the Institute to upgrade their qualifications.

- An opportunity to participate in professional development work based projects.

- Return to industry (RTI) placements that they developed for themselves. RTI could be completed either full-time or part-time and was taken up by about 10 teachers each year.

- Encouragement to become actively involved in their own industry associations and events, and in some instances part-time work in industry.

- Teachers maintained ongoing dialogue with their industry; in some programs (such as floristry) this included involving industry in teaching or assessment activities.

- Workshops on a wide range of topics such as working with training packages, designing learning programs, assessment, new technologies, digital storytelling, understanding Gen Y.

At the public-RTO floristry, Staff could access support to complete university qualifications, both in their discipline and in education. While the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was the entry teaching qualification, staff could choose to complete a degree in education and seek reimbursement of fees. This was also the case in public RTO-hospitality, albeit only to Diploma in VET level.

In the public RTO-floristry, there were two clearly articulated strands that made up staff development. Staff of the RTO had access to two levels of professional development: that provided for all Institute staff, and floristry-specific activities arranged through the initiative and industry engagement of the head teacher. The leadership role taken by the head teacher supplemented the institutionally provided activities and contributed a great deal to the industry currency of floristry staff.

In the cases where the RTO was working with industry partners, and where these partners were involved in both delivery and assessment the RTO provided informal training to their industry partners. This occurred via coaching, mentoring, scaffolding and modelling in relation to delivery and assessment, session planning, catering for individual student needs and responding to the needs of industry.

### Mentoring

A number of RTOs had 'buddy systems' in place to support staff development. In an innovative program, in the private RTO in retail each trainer had an industry buddy (i.e. outside the RTO) who was in a senior role, preferably in an area of retail in which the trainer had no experience. Staff were given expenses to have lunch or coffee with their buddies.

### Staff development as a component of workforce planning

In a number of cases staff development was a strategy embedded within a larger workforce development initiative. This was explicit in the case of the public RTOI-hair and beauty. Staff development planning took place with the individual, 'taking account of their lives and their aspirations'. Planning was underpinned by the idea that each staff member would need different kinds of development. Some would need mentoring and the opportunity to work with other more experienced teachers. Others would need the chance to improve their facilitation skills while others would need to work closely with industry partners to ensure currency and credibility. These opportunities were intrinsic to the development of individual plans. This was also the cases with the private RTO-hospitality. Twice a year each full-time employee including teachers undertook a 'skills gap assessment' with the HR manager. Training plans were then developed; the HR Manager described his learning and development budget as 'very healthy'. Attention was given both to industry skills and knowledge and teaching skills and knowledge.

A similar strategy was adopted in the private RTO-retail. The extra challenge for this RTO was the geographically distributed profile of the teaching staff the staff located in metropolitan and regional areas across Australia. There were only a few sites where a group of the RTO's staff members were co-located. In response to this a touring 'roadshow' provided staff development in a number of locations. The content of the 'road shows' was determined by:

- Issues identified as a common theme in regular staff performance reviews.

- Industry input.

- Staff self-assessment surveys on key topics. In preparation for the roadshow workshops on assessment, private RTO-retail's staff were asked to evaluate current assessment tools, provide input on relevant assessment strategies for different qualification levels, and rate their own effectiveness and confidence in conducting assessment.

- RTO business directions and strategic plan.

The public RTO-floristry had also recently adopted a workforce development approach to staff development. In addition to another suite of activities, the RTO had just begun promulgating the Workforce Services Program. In this program

- Training was to be customised to the needs of staff in each college.

- A new head teacher program would address leadership, technical expertise, operational management, and entrepreneurship.

- To encourage engagement with Industry Skills Councils, the colleges in this RTO had been issued a budget to fund staff to attend Skills Council activities, with the expectation that participating staff would share their learning with colleagues on return to the RTO.

In some cases staff development was seen as an element within the broader activity of career planning. In the public RTO-hair and beauty, the organisation offered various career pathways for staff and worked out a personal development plan for each individual staff member, much like an individual training plan. In the last year, they incorporated performance management into their PD plans. Staff were also actively encouraged to seek wide experience. In the case of beauty, the manager said she encouraged staff to 'gain skills externally and sometimes that means travelling to a different state and training there, setting up different training mechanisms and then bringing those skills back to the RTO'. In the public RTO-hospitality, a teacher mentioned that she had benefited greatly from working in an Institute project in China.

## Links with industry (in general) & specific links with partnering enterprises

In all the case study sites the RTOs had links with industry. In the case of the enterprise RTO, the links was explicit. In the public RTOs these links were formed either through formal partnerships with enterprises (hairdressing and beauty) or through informal arrangements that were contingent on the enthusiasm and energy of teaching 'leaders' within the organisation (floristry). Private RTOs used a variety of strategies to ensure that industry currency and perspectives were central to their teaching and training.

### Public RTOs

The public RTO-hair and beauty had close relationships with two large franchise hairdressing companies. These relationships with the enterprises extended beyond the usual and had been constructed in deliberate, creative and responsive ways. These partnerships had grown out of the industry relationships that staff members had brought with them to their work at the RTO and were a response to the observable gaps between industry wants and RTO provision. These relationships were seen as the logical extension of these patterns of work. The relationships had grown from informal contacts between the Educational Manager of hairdressing and two franchise owners. The relationships were not mandated - they grew out of a genuine need for responsive delivery. The working relationships had their expression in the practical day-to-day running of the hairdressing section. The training staff had a disposition to 'listen' to the industry partners and to put aside views that contributed to a mentality 'where we are the keepers of the (font) of knowledge' (Educational Manager). Staff worked with industry employees to establish strengths

and weaknesses in workplace delivery; they made frequent visits to salon sites where apprentices were working; they acted as learning consultants; and they decided on training provision collaboratively in keeping with the demands of the relevant Training Package. These responsive predispositions were exemplified in the assessment and reporting mechanisms used by RTO.

In the section of the public RTO-hospitality that worked with partnering enterprises was able to offer accessibility and flexibility to the partners, as the two partners interviewed said. Both enterprise partners commented on frequent discussions about delivery and assessment methods, learners' progress, and individual learner needs, for example literacy and numeracy.

In the public RTO-floristry, the links with industry were not so close as in the case of hairdressing. At program level, industry links were integral to teaching and assessment. However the partnerships took less formal forms. Assessment panels of industry representatives and RTO teachers assessed students' major tasks. Industry links were also achieved through student participation in floristry competitions and community events. RTO students were encouraged to enter a range of competitions, such as the Royal Easter Show, and awards, trophies and certificates from competitions made up the display at the entry to the floristry classrooms. In addition, the head teacher had compiled an impressive folio of certificates, awards, letters of appreciation and media clippings celebrating the work of RTO students, graduates and teachers. Through the head teacher's links with industry, the work and achievements of RTO students and teachers were written up and reported in industry journals. To engage with industry, the head teacher would go to the markets whenever possible. The head teacher was one of the founding members of the industry association. Her strong links with, and recognition by, industry was reflected in the fact that in one industry training group she had been selected as an industry representative, rather than an RTO representative.

In the public RTO-fitness a similar method was used to maintain industry linkages. The program was strongly related to the fitness industry and the students were exposed to the needs of the fitness industry via the experience of their teachers, use of visiting lecturers and having the students undertake visitations to key industry settings such as rehabilitation centres in hospitals. However, no specific partnering enterprises were reported.

### Private RTOs

In the private RTO-hospitality, all participants in the case study ascribed this RTO's sound reputation to its close links with industry. This reputation had grown from its roots as a recruitment agency meaning that it had close links with senior management in the hotel industry. The RTO managers were very clear about what the industry needed and recruited trainers who also had this understanding. The teachers who were interviewed had extensive background in the industry; for example the traineeship trainer had worked in HR and training in major hotels. The partnerships with industry were crucial in this RTO. The managing director said that he was more likely to benchmark against training managers in industry (including related industries as well as hospitality) than with other RTO managers. However the RTO did have a relationship with some hotel schools, particularly those whose programs complemented their own. Assessment validation sessions involved industry representatives.

The participants in the private RTO-retail expressed similar  attitudes. The senior managers at the RTO described their relationship with partnering organisations in terms of supporting the client's business goals, improvement plans, and succession planning. Client needs might include addressing identified skill gaps, helping to drive improvement, increasing productivity, or planning for expansion. Having identified a

client need, the RTO then looked for staff members with the skills to support that client relationship.

The private RTO-fitness effectively functioned independently from the remainder of the industry sector as it was major presence. However it did have on-going relationships with peak organisations such as Fitness Australia and the Royal Lifesaving Society. This engagement was functional in that it ensured that the RTO was well placed to adopt good practice. However, it had very little contact with its 'competitor' organisations. Perhaps because it tended to focus on independent students rather than corporate clients it also had very little engagement with partnering enterprises.

## Summary

- All of the RTOs studied had links with their specific industry.

- Enterprise RTOs links were explicit whilst institutional RTOs were formed through formal partnerships or informal arrangements.

- Private RTOs tended to have on-going relationships with peak organisations within their industry.

## Desired nature of VET practitioners for this industry

Participants in the case studies provided extensive information about the desired characteristics of VET practitioners in their particular industries. These included flexibility, good communication skills, regular reporting on student progress in accessible ways and formats, a rigorous attention to detail, industry experience and currency, high expectations and standards of student work and teaching skills. Effective communication was seen as being crucial for all VET practitioners. Similarly the ability to stay in touch, monitor students progress and exchange ideas on teaching and training were all thought to be extremely valuable characteristics.

### Flexibility

In the public RTO- hair and beauty a participant discussed the need for flexible boundaries in the RTO workplace and the need for the VET practitioner:

> to be able to be nimble and fast in the VET environment. You can build your processes all around a so-called great course and it becomes airtight, and the funding falls into place. It all moves perfectly, but that's not the real world. The whole ideal approach needs to have this in built wobble board' (Teacher, hairdressing).

Participants in the enterprise based RTO-hairdressing supported the need for flexibility and responsiveness in the ideal VET practitioner. Similarly in the private RTO-hospitality, participants respected the VET practitioners who understood the need to be flexible in adapting to the exigencies of workplace rhythms.

In the case where many of the students were categorised as 'second chance' learners as in the private RTO-retail, staff and partnering enterprises seemed very aware that many of their learners were adults who held no post-school qualifications, and who had particular needs when returning to training. Expectations of all informants in this case study were that a VET practitioner in the retail industry had to have the skills to be responsive and flexible to the multiple clients being served in VET training: employers/industry, a diverse body of individual learners, funding agencies, and quality systems.

### Effective communication skills

One salon owner from a partnering enterprise summarised the desired nature of the VET practitioners for this industry in the following way: 'they have perfect

communication; they email or call by phone. The teachers are very thorough and it is 'salon worthy' training'.

### Rigorous attention to detail and appropriate monitoring of, and reporting on, students' progress

A rigorous attention to detail included providing opportunities for students to demonstrate competency a number of times in a number of contexts. This characteristic was linked to the high expectations and standards of student work. In the enterprise RTO- hairdressing this attention to detail expressed itself in terms of the RTO never taking any 'short cuts', 'finishing everything' and providing extra tuition for students when it was needed. Employers identified 'professionalism', 'attention to detail' and being 'strict with their training' as important characteristics for teachers in the public RTO-floristry. Participants from the public RTO-hospitality also mentioned these attributes in detail. Qualities such as being organised and on time were highly valued. Many participants regarded the ability to report regularly on student progress in linguistically accessible and 'friendly ways' as a critical skill for an accomplished VET practitioner.

### Respect for students

In a number of case studies, students commented on the fact that those who were teaching them displayed a mutual respect for their progress and their learning. For instance, students in the private RTO-hospitality identified two important characteristics of an effective VET practitioner. The first of these was the teacher's ability to relate their learning to real experiences. The second characteristic was the teachers' unwillingness to intimidate or frighten them. This characteristic was linked to other personal qualities such as a sense of humour, patience and empathy.

### Exchanging ideas on teaching and training

Informants in hairdressing and floristry identified the inclination and ability to exchange ideas about teaching in informal settings as an important characteristic of the VET professional in their respective industry areas. This exchange of ideas also applied to the 'artistic' domain and industry trends, given that these were subject to rapid and sometimes radical change. Teachers learnt from each other in this way and built both the group and the individual store of knowledge. The managers in the public RTO-floristry described a team-based approach in which full-time staff, who had built their pedagogical skills and qualifications over many years, worked with part-time and casual staff that brought industry knowledge fresh from the shop floor. Floristry was one of several program areas in which the managers spoke of a team-based and knowledge sharing approach.

### A personal disposition towards constant learning and continual improvements in teaching and learning

In a number of the case studies participants implicitly and explicitly discussed the 'dispositions' that effective VET practitioners displayed. These dispositions included a passion for their industry area, for their students, for their teaching, and for staying in touch with their industry area. It also included a commitment to ongoing learning in relation to both industry currency and pedagogy. This disposition and enthusiasm was collaborative and extended to the teachers understanding that they too learnt from their students.

### Passion

In a number of case studies, participants described intangible qualities that were expected of VET practitioners: Qualities such as passion, commitment, patience and 'hunger for the next step'. This was evident in retail, floristry , hair and beauty and hospitality industry areas in particular, irrespective of RTO type. Students, teachers and enterprise partners commented on this attribute. For instance one student in the public RTO-hospitality said:

> *We used to love to hear their stories of things that have happened to them in kitchens and their own experiences in the workforce… (It was) really, really good, you noticed everyone's ears prick up. (student)*

Students clearly felt the effects of this 'passion'. In the Institutional RTO that delivered Floristry four students commented on the importance of this seemingly intangible characteristic. One student commented:

> *I think it's really important to have a teacher who is passionate about it. I suppose being amongst you know students and teachers who absolutely have a love of this industry it will hopefully, naturally, translate across to the student. I think that's probably what I would prefer … as opposed to having teaching skills. Yeah, I think it's definitely important to have someone who is really passionate about the industry. (student)*

### Teaching/training (pedagogical) skills

Many participants commented on the importance of high quality teaching skills. These comments were not always explicit or couched in educational language. However it was clear from the case studies that teachers need to be sympathetic, well-informed, patient, industry current and enthusiastic about their work. For instance in the private RTO-hospitality the students interviewed thought it was not important that teachers 'knew everything' but that they needed to be able to convey what they knew. They thought that students varied greatly both in their ages and in their experience of the industry, and that the teachers needed to be able to deal appropriately with these differences, for example: fielding questions at different levels for different students and responding appropriately so that all could understand. The full-time student said that a good teacher needed to 'do their research… they're continuously studying, they are also updating their knowledge.' He would have approved of the traineeship trainer who said:

> *I love education and I love being educated, like I love being open to the fact that, you know, every day that you wake up you can have the opportunity there to learn something wonderful and for me I would hate to… one of my trainees said to me today, you can't teach an old dog new tricks and I said I never want to wake up being that old dog that can't be taught new tricks, you know?*

In the public RTO-hospitality the particular teaching skills that participants identified included the ability to engage students, inspiration, a capacity to work with younger students, assessing learning levels and learning styles and then matching the appropriate pedagogy and being *'More concerned with the outcome of the learning than with ticking off forms and paperwork'* (HR Manager, partner enterprise).

There were a significant number of international students in this RTO and participants were able to make a number of points about what made a VET practitioner good with international students. There was general agreement that having substantial numbers of international students in a class added to everybody's learning. As one student said:

> *You just get to learn about other cultures and also how they work in their work environments and yeah, its good learning about their cultures. And*

*also you become friends with them it's good. Like a lot of my friends are
from lots of different countries so it's really nice.*

However it did create additional challenges for teaching. Some strategies mentioned
by teachers, students and managers are discussed in Chapter 7.

### Balance between skills and knowledge in the industry area and in education

Each participant in the case studies was provided with the industry-education scale
which was described in Chapter 4 of this report. Table 6.1 below indicates the
differing responses to the question about the nature of the ideal VET practitioner.

Table 6. 1: Industry education scale (1= industry skills/knowledge, 5 = education skills/knowledge).
Summary of case study response averages, calculated by type of respondent and by industry
grouping

| Industry cluster | Floristry & Retail | Hair & Beauty | Tourism, Hospitality & Events | Sports & Recreation | Index total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of respondent | n = 11 | n = 14 | n = 16 | n = 7 | n = 48 |
| Senior Manager or delegated officer n = 13 | 2.0 | 2.3 | 2.8 | 3.0 | 2.5 |
| Service skills teacher/trainer n = 12 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.8 | 3.0 | 2.5 |
| Student/learner enrolled in SS qual n = 13 | 2.7 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 2.9 |
| Partnering enterprise n = 10 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 2.0 | | 2.4 |
| Index total n = 48 | 2.4 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 3.0 | |

Table 6.1 shows that, overall, respondents felt that industry currency was more
important than educational skills and knowledge for VET practitioners in each of their
respective industry areas. Students were the group who most highly valued
teaching/training skills and knowledge. Among the industry groups, recreation &
fitness most highly valued these skills, with the next highest being tourism,
hospitality and events. Floristry and retail was the industry that most highly valued
industry skills and knowledge and fitness was the industry area with the greatest
focus on pedagogy (although it should be noted that no responses were received
from enterprises in this industry, which may affect the average).

In each of the case study sites, this question provoked a great deal of discussion.
Participants found it difficult to make a decision because both were viewed as
important. One teacher said:

*The expert in the field is not necessarily going to be the best trainer and
the best trainer is not going to necessarily be the best if they don't have
(industry) skills or the knowledge with it.*

This acknowledgement of balance was reflected in the following comment from a
student in the public RTO-fitness: 'The really good teacher … gave us a great, great,
like a theory side of the learning and he also gave a great practical.'

The detailed arguments about the relative importance of these two attributes are described below.

Most participants agreed that '**industry currency**' was important. Participants in the private RTO- hairdressing felt on balance that industry experience and currency were irreplaceable since they provided the 'insider knowledge' about the day-to-day activities and trends in the salons themselves. These participants were unenthused by the prospect of higher pedagogical qualifications. These opinions were linked to participant conceptions of hairdressing as an art and a vocation and the importance of staying in touch with these intangible aspects of the industry. The sense of commitment and excitement amongst the staff for their students, for the industry and for art and craft of hairdressing was palpable. In the private RTO-retail, the emphasis on industry skills and knowledge rather than education skills and knowledge was expressed in a particular context. Several interviewees noted that retail industry staff tended to have good communication and interpersonal skills. It was further argued that people with retail management experience would typically also have experience in coaching and training staff. To this extent, the emphasis on retail management skills and knowledge may have been seen as necessarily encompassing some level of educational skills and knowledge, although it was acknowledged that not all good managers are necessarily good trainers. There was a consistent perception that 'I think you can convert a retailer into a trainer if they're the right personality, but I don't think you can convert a trainer into a retail trainer as easily'. This was also the case in the public RTO-hair and beauty. Partnering employers in particular highlighted the importance of both broad industry knowledge and specific business knowledge.

The **specific nature of the industry** area also influenced the relative balance between industry skills and educational qualifications. In retail for instance the wide range of specific businesses in which a retail trainer could be working on any one day created a situation where private RTO-retail staff and partnering enterprises argued that it was not possible for an effective retail trainer to rely on a 'script' or 'textbook knowledge'. Retail industry trainers needed to be able to draw on their own experience and knowledge.

In the private RTO-fitness there was a unanimous desire to see a **balance of skills and knowledge**. However it was acknowledged that this would vary with individual staff. In particular it was thought that specialist teachers in areas such as nutrition may have a greater educational background rather than fitness industry skills. Similarly informants from the public RTO-floristry felt that the VET practitioner needed senior industry experience to have a strong understanding of all elements of the industry and the work of a florist. They also needed to have pedagogical skills and knowledge to plan and deliver learning activities, recognise and respond appropriately to individual needs within a diverse student population. They needed to have sufficient understanding of the floristry Training Package and the VET system to be able to plan valid assessments based on real industry tasks, and document those in ways that demonstrated the clear mapping between the holistic task and the range of learning outcomes it covered. Teachers also needed to have sufficient understanding of the complexities of VET to be able to plan and obtain approval for innovative approaches to teaching, such as represented in the organisation's working florist shop.

Summary

- The desired nature of VET practitioners for each industry was varied. But qualities such as flexibility, good communication skills, a rigorous attention to detail and professionalism were all cited as being valuable.

- A degree of passion for the industry, high quality teaching skills and a good balance between industry currency and educational qualifications were seen to be desirable for VET practitioners.

- Most participants agreed that industry currently was extremely important however, the specific nature of the industry influenced the relative balance between industry skills and educational qualifications.

- There was a unanimous desire to see a balance of skills and knowledge across all of the industries studied.

## Suggestions for improvements in the VET workforce for the service industries

A number of themes emerged from the case studies relating to suggestions for improvements to the VET workforce. These themes included changes to organisational structures, a focus on vocational competence, industry experience, passion, higher level qualifications, improved teaching skills, more opportunities for professional development; and also some policy-related issues such as competition between RTOs and Training Package improvements which have flow-on effects to VET practice.

### Structured industry experience and currency

Ideas for industry currency were varied within different RTOs. In the case of the public RTO-hospitality, teachers seemed to favour more action at individual level, for example connecting with their students' workplaces or recognising their own deficiencies and undertaking individual activities to address them, while managers and industry displayed a more strategic approach. The Senior Educator said that industry currency programs need to be organised so that teachers felt comfortable about the activities. There was also support for proper structuring of industry currency. Two enterprise partners in hospitality suggested a program similar to a management trainee program; as one put it, 'where we rotate them basically through all departments from grass roots level up'. Some other participants felt that industry experience was the most important contributing factor in improving the quality of the VET workforce. In the enterprise RTO-hairdressing, staff felt that industry experience should be intrinsic to the work of the VET professional and it should be undertaken in a credible context for a credible period of time.

### Can passion be fostered?

Commitment to the industry and passion for the work were seen as necessary characteristics for the VET practitioner and qualities that could improve the VET workforce in several industries. It seemed to be implicit that 'passion' was intrinsic to the individual teacher rather than something that could be developed, although this question was not explicitly explored, and perhaps deserves to be.

### Higher-level qualifications

Higher-level teaching or training qualifications for trainers were advocated by several of the case study participants from the private RTO-hospitality. Reasons given were to continue their personal learning, to learn how to deal with hard-to-teach students, and to learn more about teaching for the hospitality industry specifically. The interviewee who raised the latter issue noted that in her own Certificate IV in Training and Assessment class, there were people from many different industries, which made learning interesting but at the same time frustrating because it was not possible to study discipline-specific issues in detail. Participants from the private

RTO-hairdressing also expressed this opinion. The private RTO-fitness manager also stated that higher-level qualifications would be an advantage and contribute to improvements in the VET workforce. However the high turnover rates of staff mitigated against the successful achievement of this goal.

Teachers and managers from the public RTO-hospitality also commented on this possible improvement and the RTO actively encouraged enrolment in a Diploma in VET. As the Senior Education Officer put it, 'the Certificate IV is still not enough; it is an issue of quality assurance and upgrading'; and one of the enterprise partners said:

> Sometimes I don't think the Certificate IV is enough because it's delivered in so many different modes these days, such as RPL and distance learning. I really think that the individual, in my personal opinion, to do a Certificate IV and say, 'I'm a qualified trainer,' I don't think it's true.

The staff in the public RTO-floristry felt that higher-level qualifications in their discipline area would contribute to improvements in the VET workforce in this industry. The absence of any qualification in Australia beyond Certificate IV was seen as a barrier: 'there's no career path for them, once they're a teacher'. In some cases, overseas florists were given preference over Australian florists because of their higher qualifications. The only way an Australian teachers could achieve a higher qualification was to travel overseas, and one of the teachers in this RTO had travelled to the US and achieved an American Institute of Floral Designers' qualification.

### Improved teaching skills (non-qualification based)

The theme that emerged in the private RTO-retail was related to improvement of VET practice. Staff and partnering employers alike argued that too much emphasis has often been placed on assessment, and not enough on teaching and learning. One employer argued for a move away from 'ticking boxes' to viewing training as providing a return on the employer's financial investment and the learner's personal investment; both need to see that the employee can apply their learning in the workplace. Employers noted that when training is done well learners are motivated to pursue higher qualifications leading to promotional opportunities. This then increased the pool of staff available for leadership roles. Some specific pedagogical staff development ideas were mentioned by teachers from the public RTO-hospitality including in the area of moderation of assessment and teamwork focussed on improving delivery.

### Broader opportunities for professional development

Staff in the private RTO-retail suggested that improvements could be gained by improving VET professional development offered at system level rather than RTO level. This RTO's staff emphasised a continuing need for government and industry seminars that were well advertised in advance, that were costed realistically, and that were targeted and customised for specific audiences given the diversity of skills that characterise the VET practitioner.

When staff were geographically distributed, participants from the public RTO-floristry suggested that professional development for staff that used technology more efficiently would contribute to improvements in the VET workforce. They suggested the use of technology to support 'innovative networks and professional sharing', rather than simply relying on face-to-face workshops and conferences.

### Changes in the organisation and external policy constraints

Some respondents said that organisational changes had or could bring about improvements in the VET workforce for example in the movement to a five-year

budget cycle in the public RTO-hair and beauty was seen as a positive step in longer-term planning. Respondents in the public RTO-hospitality mentioned problems with workforce planning and development associated with the short-term nature of employment partly due to the industrial agreement, and consequent lack of continuity in teaching areas.

Teachers in the public RTO-floristry expressed concern that competition for students resulted in some RTOs trying to maintain their market share by 'over delivering' at the Certificate III level, building in so much content and covering that in a short timeframe that did not allow students enough opportunity to practice their skills. This created pressure for other RTOs to shorten courses while including more content.

Several RTO managers and teachers and industry partners expressed a similar theme of competition from RTOs with lower standards. Stories about other providers delivering qualifications in a shorter period and at a lower cost but with limited or no suitable facilities and poor outcomes were repeated. At one RTO with a large cohort of international students, staff were disturbed by the public debate alleging exploitation of international students. One manager expressed the view that it was both frustrating and disheartening 'to see the industry getting bad press'.

### Responsibility for practice

The complexity of the question of balance between industry experience and educational qualifications raised the question of 'responsibility' in a number of case study discussions. One point that was made was that one of the consequences of partnerships is that responsibility for the preparation for 'work ready staff' for the industry should not, or did not, lie with the RTO alone. The industry also had a clear part to play in the teaching and training process through the provision of scaffolded entry into the workplace and the creation of opportunities for practice.

> *How many blow dries do you want them to do before you sign them off as competent? We've decided now that we can academically pass them. We've got them to this point but they still need lots of practice. Once a salon has done that you can say that they've finished off. We've given them all of the ground stuff and you can now take them and develop that skill and responsibility. If you rely on the Institute saying they're perfect, they can do this, then you leave yourself open for criticism. But if you work with the salon all the way along then their competence is the responsibility of the partnership.*

Lack of clarity on the locus of responsibility for student development affected perceptions of what the VET practitioner should do and therefore how appropriate skills and knowledge could be developed. It seemed that negotiating such issues should be part of the repertoire of VET practitioner skills.

### Training Package improvements

Some teachers mentioned the restrictiveness and disincentive to innovation imposed by the need to teach to the Training Package. Hair and beauty was an area where this was particularly mentioned. However this opinion was by no means universal, with other respondents expressing satisfaction with their Training Packages. Floristry teachers in the Institutional RTO suggested that clear minimum benchmarks for each qualification level would be helpful.

## Summary

- Suggestions for improvements in the VET workforce included a focus on structured arrangements for improving vocational competence and industry experience, improved teaching skills, higher level qualifications and more opportunities for professional development.

- Several of the RTOs studied expressed that higher level qualifications would contribute to improvement in the VET workforce.

- Reductions in competition between RTOs and Training Package improvements were also suggested as areas of need.

## Workforce development for service industries VET practitioners.

There are a range of conclusions that can be drawn from the case studies.

Firstly workforce development occurs predominantly on two levels. The individual teacher can be committed to personal and professional development and display a strong 'disposition' towards learning and maintaining currency. The RTO can also be committed to developing the capacity of the organisation through the provision of targeted professional development that is integrated into the structure and planning of the organisation in tangible and observable ways. A third level - state and national – is also important.

Workforce development for the VET practitioner as reported in these case studies is best undertaken **when there are conditions that allow the RTO to:**

- Build in the capacity to plan for strategic staff development by extending the budgetary and planning periods thereby allowing flexibility and responsiveness across a longer time period.

- Foster strong leadership amongst staff and plan for individual professional growth.

- Encourage a strong individual or champion (or team) that will drive an organisational culture in RTOs that encourages high quality among teachers .

- Create an environment and management structure that allows for at least annual planning on the strategic directions to be taken in professional development of staff.

- Encourage hands on involvement by senior managers with teaching and/or industry liaison.

- Develop effective partnerships between industry and the RTO that are based on:
  - Respect for the ethos of the industry generally, for the ethos of the particular industry partner specifically, and for the exigencies of day to day delivery experienced by the RTO;
  - Ongoing communication between the partners;
  - Industry experience in its broadest and most realistic sense;
  - Joint delivery of Training Package content; and
  - Clear assessment and reporting processes that reflect the information that industry requires to gauge student progress.

- Embed workforce development in the management processes of the RTO. It must be linked to performance management, the strategic planning cycle and the processes surrounding the selection for staff.

- Adjust delivery and assessment quickly to meet the changing needs of industry

- Have a predisposition towards learning from industry partners and have the ability to resist the tendency towards institutionalisation.

**The desirable attributes** of the VET practitioners, as articulated by case study participants, include:

- Effective communication skills

- Flexibility

- Respect for students; a sense of humour, flexibility, patience and empathy

- A personal disposition towards constant learning and continual improvements in teaching and learning and a willingness to share these.

- Passion for the industry

- Teaching/training (pedagogical) skills

- Attention to individual students' learning needs

- Rigorous attention to detail and appropriate monitoring of, and reporting on, students' progress

The desirable attributes are therefore a mixture of affective talents such as empathy and patience, blended with deep industry experience and a predisposition to learn and to teach in responsive and pedagogically informed and inclusive ways.

In these case studies which were recommended sites of good practice the RTOs **develop their staff** to meet the needs of their industry and their students by:

- Keeping in touch with current trends in industry;

- Providing regular PD sessions some of which were held outside working hours;

- Monitoring staff needs and industry trends;

- Ensuring that there are tight quality control systems in place in relation to teaching and assessing;

- Using strategies that focus both on maintaining industry knowledge and currency, and on developing pedagogical skills and the improvement of training and assessment practice; and

- Moving beyond the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, in its current format and delivery strategy to adequately prepare VET practitioners for the complexities of their role.

The **suggestions for improvement** of the VET practitioner workforce in these industries included:

- A more effective blend of industry experience and training expertise when recruiting staff;

- A more formal approach to professional development plans which allow staff to document their achievements and set career goals for the future;

- Close liaison between traineeship trainers and company training personnel;

- Higher level VET teaching qualifications that included attention to discipline-specific pedagogy;

- Encouragement for teachers to undertake higher level industry qualifications, where available;

- At least a rudimentary understanding of a second or third language where there are significant numbers of international students;

- A flexible smorgasbord of staff development activities, able to be customised to meet local needs;

- The use of technology to support professional networks and conversations;

- Support for teachers to access demonstrations by international industry experts e.g. master florists, master chefs.

- Close attention to developments in the industry <u>and</u> to individual companies' requirements;

- A stipulated industry currency requirement that offered 'back-to-industry' programs that were structured to reduce anxiety on the part of teacher, and have an assessable component.

# Chapter 7. Special perspectives: Enterprise RTOs and RTOs that deliver to substantial numbers of overseas students

This chapter provides an overview of findings from these two special groups of RTOs. The enterprise RTO findings are derived from special-undertaken interveiws, and the overseas findings are derived from special interviews, the case study sites, and the survey.

## Enterprise RTOs

While some examples of enterprise RTOs were included in the industry focus groups it was felt important to undertake further research from a specific enterprise RTO point of view. All Enterprise RTO Association (ERTOA) members that delivered Service Skills training were invited to attend a teleconference, apart from one member who had already made substantial contributions at an industry focus group. Three responded and these were respectively a retail pharmacy group and two leading quick food groups. The senior managers whose area of responsibility included the RTO were involved. Two, 'Chemist Co' and 'Burgers Inc' were interviewed together in a conversation which lasted for 43 minutes, and the third ('Munchy Meals') a separate conversation lasting for 38 minutes.

All three enterprise RTOs employed staff in traineeships, although the proportions of staff undertaking them varied, and all offered pathways through to higher qualifications including university qualifications supported by the company. A feature in common to all three was that their training systems were highly structured. This was partly necessitated by the distributed nature of staff among many branches and also by the commitment of all three enterprises to training as a competitive advantage; hence they wished training and assessment to be as tight as possible. Traineeships were seen to reduce labour turnover and to attract people into careers in the industry. In both quick food companies, the major method of entry into careers in the company was via part-time work while at school. Chemist Co had a somewhat different staffing structure but still experienced high labour turnover. RTO status was an expensive venture for each company, but the investment was felt to be worthwhile. Despite the commitment to training, it should be pointed out that in all three cases there was a very definite expressed belief that training should only be in the company 'brand': 'our skills (need to be) honed to best practice, the here and now and up to date' (Chemist Co). While it was conceded that higher level managers had a need to learn more about other companies, respondents felt that the focus of VET-level training needed to be on company procedures and one of the reasons for this was that the training materials were proprietary and they were jealously guarded.

In this context the nature of the VET practitioners was very important. All three companies differentiated between staff delivering training and those responsible for assessment. While arrangements varied among companies, it was generally the case that assessors worked across a number of branches while front-line trainers were staff employed in the branches (who in one case were described as 'acting more like coaches'). In all cases there were additional training staff at area level as well, and staff undertaking national qualifications were involved in off-site training at central points as well as on-the-job training.

The qualities of good trainers were discussed as follows. In the case of Munchy Meals, trainers were branch managers or assistant managers and these were described as managers who were 'dedicated to training and development', 'nice', and focused on people not financial results. A people-focus anyway produced better financial results. This company had recently made a decision that only certain

branches would be 'certified' as training restaurants and part of the decision making was the nature of the manager who would be training. At Burgers Inc it was explained that 'crew trainer' was the first 'promotion position' for young staff and hence all branch managers had extensive training experience as a matter of course. Attributes of a good trainer included: communication skills, being able to give effective feedback, reporting to their own manager about the progress of learners.

Munchy Meals' assessors worked only as assessors and had 'caseloads' of between 70 and 170 trainees depending on the fraction of their employment. Burgers Inc had a similar system, although they called their assessors 'retail traineeship advisers'. In Burgers Inc, these advisers also conducted the face to face off the job workshops. In the case of Chemist Co, assessors were branch managers for whom part of their job was working as an assessor; but they did not assess in their own branches. Moving between different branches for their assessment work was found to be very valuable for their broader knowledge: 'We've actually found great productivity for them and for their stores'. Interestingly, Chemist Co had recently undertaken a psychometric testing of staff which provided some results about training abilities. The company had found that cosmetics consultants, who needed to be 'people people' because of the nature of their work, were good at training facilitation while branch managers were more focused on processes and quality systems, hence the allocation of training and assessment duties appeared appropriate. At Munchy Meals, assessors were described as having 'an eye for detail', a good knowledge of the industry and specifically the company, 'good with time management' and an understanding of the training process

Respondents completed the industry-education scale (see Chapters 4 and 6) and made many interesting comments as they thought about where to place their circle (Table 7.1). While the Chemist Co participant decided upon a 2, he noted that he had seen many workers with learning difficulties who needed a well-trained trainer to deal with their needs. The Burgers Inc interviewee was clear that mid-way was appropriate; she noted that industry experience in the context of her company could be acquired. The Munchy Meals respondent differentiated quite strongly between trainers and assessors, and placed the trainer circle at 3.5 which is unusually high for this research project.

Table 7.1: Industry education scale about the ideal VET practitioner (*1= industry skills/knowledge, 5 = education skills/knowledge*). Enterprise RTO responses.

| | Industry ← Skills & Knowledge → Education | | | | |
| Respondent Category | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community pharmacy group 'Chemist Co' | | 1 | | | |
| Quick food 1 'Burgers Inc' | | | 1 | | |
| Quick food 2 'Munchy meals' - for trainers | | | | 1 | |
| Quick food 2 'Munchy meals' - for assessors | | 1 | | | |
| Total | | 2 | 1 | 1 | |

To improve industry currency the interviewees suggested that RTO-based teacher/trainers could return to industry (although the nature of such a program was not clearly envisaged by the interviewees), or they could be buddied up with an industry person – 'so they're actually watching an industry trained person train and assess' (Burgers Inc).

## RTOs delivering training to substantial numbers of international students

Responses to the survey showed fifteen RTOs that had enrolled substantial numbers of international students. These are listed in Table 7.2 with details of their Training Package areas and their overall size.

**Table 7.2 Survey respondents stating that they delivered to 'substantial numbers' of international students**

|  | Type of RTO | Training Package delivery area(s) | Size of RTO (no. of students enrolled in 2008) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 140 |
| 2 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 1000 |
| 3 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Tourism, Hospitality & Events; Beauty; Fitness; Sport | 430 |
| 4 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 600 |
| 5 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Beauty | 50 |
| 6 | Community RTO/ACE provider | Retail (incl. wholesale & community pharmacy) | 154 |
| 7 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Hairdressing; Tourism, Hospitality & Events; Beauty | 350 |
| 8 | (survey respondent did not indicate) | Tourism, Hospitality & Events; Hairdressing; Retail (incl. wholesale & community pharmacy); Beauty; Sport | (survey respondent did not indicate) |
| 9 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 70 |
| 10 | School/Secondary College | Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 150 |
| 11 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Sport | 0 |
| 12 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 800 |
| 13 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 115 |
| 14 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 290 |
| 15 | Commercial RTO (for profit) | Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 613 |

As we did not define 'substantial', it could be that some RTOs could have been identified as belonging in this category but chose not to do so. One RTO stated it delivered overseas to international students; this RTO delivered the Tourism, Hospitality & Events Training Package. As might be expected, in response to identified skill shortage areas, most of the RTOs delivered in either hospitality or hairdressing but they varied greatly in size.

The political controversies surrounding overseas students during the life of the research project (mid-2009) may have affected self-identification in this category and also may have affected the willingness of relevant RTOs to take part in the qualitative phase of the study.

The qualitative findings discussed below are drawn from the following sources:

- Telephone interviews with senior managers in four RTOs operating between them in four States, providing training in hospitality, tourism and events, retail, and hairdressing to large numbers of overseas students.

- The two case study sites (one public, one private) in hospitality, which both had large numbers of overseas students.

- The floristry case study, which was a public RTO and had a group of overseas students.

The four RTOs interviewed by telephone are listed in Table 7.3

Table 7.3: Details of RTOs interviewed by telephone about international students

| RTO no | Job title of interviewee | Type | Industry | Date of Interview |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Manager VET programs | Commercial (metropolitan) | Hospitality & Hairdressing | 11 June 2009 |
| 2 | Manager of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management | TAFE (metropolitan) | Hospitality | 3 September 2009 |
| 3 | Principal Education Officer | Commercial (metropolitan) | Hair & beauty | 3 September 2009 |
| 4 | Skill Centre Manager, Retail & Personal Services | TAFE (regional) | Hair & beauty | 3 September 2009 |

In the case of the TAFE respondents, statements in the discussion refer to the departments interviewed rather than the Institute as a whole.

In the RTOs researched via telephone interview, overseas students were drawn from a wide range of countries; some RTOs were more diverse than others in terms of countries of origin, with RTO 4 in particular reporting a very diverse international student group. The major groupings were Chinese, Indian and Bangladeshi, Malaysian and Korean, but a fair number of North American and European students were also enrolled. Students were on the whole young adults. The two TAFE Institutes had large concentrations of overseas students in the departments interviewed; and their overseas cohorts had grown rapidly. They had very few overseas students in other departments. The two commercial RTOs had been working with overseas students who were their major client base, for some time; RTO 3 was currently expanding its domestic market, having recently moved into new premises which provided more space. RTO 2 had begun operating every evening in

the hospitality section to accommodate the overseas students in the available space. RTO 4 was about to move into offshore partnership arrangements, having 'got the confidence (from) delivering to international students (on-shore)'.

In most cases students were studying at Certificate III moving up to Diploma level although at RTO 1 some were enrolled up to Advanced Diploma level. The focus of all of the RTOs in terms of their perceived strength was on their links with industry. They were focused on producing graduates who were able to meet the needs of industry and find employment. While delivery was institutionally-based, there were hairdressing salons open to the public and training restaurants. At RTO 1, each program had an industry reference group that met two or three times a year. Teaching delivery methods and assessment were discussed at these meetings and the focus was on making the predominantly classroom-based delivery and assessment 'real'. Many teachers/trainers in each of the RTOs still worked in industry, and industry associations were invited in to the RTOs to run professional development sessions and/or teachers and trainers were encouraged to attend industry events.

Like the enterprise RTOs discussed above, there were very structured systems in place in the two private RTOs to maintain the quality of training and assessment. Training materials were detailed, prescriptive and explicit; at RTO 1, teaching teams met frequently each teaching term. In the private RTO-hospitality case study, teachers' performance was monitored to ensure quality was maintained. The public RTOs tended not to be so prescriptive in their quality systems except RTO 4 which had adopted licensed hairdressing training materials that required them to undertake certain quality processes to be allowed to deliver them. However all of the public providers offered professional development in cross-cultural issues. One public provider said that only experienced teachers were allowed to teach international students

> .. because they can identify if they're struggling or not, compared to a new teacher who we would tend to (give) our Cert II groups or things like that.

The main additional need of the international students in all cases was perceived to be the language barrier. The limited language skills of some students meant that teachers needed to be careful to use only the level of complexity of language necessary to teach and assess the relevant skills. This was said by one interviewee to be good competency-based teaching practice anyway, with 'reasonable adjustment' in assessment. One RTO had a 'speak in English only' rule at college, although it was noted that it was not always strictly enforced. RTO 4 reported that the proprietary training materials were available in a range of languages and that although English was the teaching language, students could view the resources in their native languages to reinforce their learning. As one interview said of her teachers:

> yes look I think they just realise that they've just got to have a little bit more time and patience for internationals compared to - sometimes the local students catch on a bit quicker

Allied to, but separate from, language problems, was the general propensity of overseas students from Asian cultures particularly to be relatively unparticipative in class. They were reported to prefer rote learning and theory based learning. This was generally addressed by two strategies: by modelling participative behaviour and deliberately engaging the overseas students in teacher-student dialogue; and by 'forcing' overseas students to mix with Australian students in class. The Australian students interviewed in the case studies reported that they enjoyed working with the overseas students and had welcomed the chance to expand their friendship groups

in this way. Teachers said that overseas students were generally very interested in helping out with extra-curricular activities such as open days or industry forums.

Each RTO had additional support staff available to help students with their language and it was noted in all cases that having staff with a multicultural background or that had travelled widely helped to ensure that students felt at home. As one participant said,

> *Somebody that has come from overseas and has come to Australia can understand the alienness of it … particularly if they're from a non-English speaking background.*

At RTO 3, the Principal Education Officer travelled widely in Asia, and had a high profile in hairdressing circles for example in Korea, which was viewed favourable by the students. This interviewee in particular noted that in the industry, Asian styles were more avant garde than Western styles and that she employed casual teachers from those countries to teach the students particular Asian styling techniques. In the private RTO-hospitality case study, many teachers had wide experience in different countries. The RTOs provided additional services that were open to all but particularly appreciated by overseas students; for example RTO 2 provided a 'common room' that provided facilities such as quiet reading spaces, a television, and computers, which domestic students were likely to have in their own homes. It was noted that some students had given up a great deal to attend an RTO in Australia; an example was given of one student who had left a small child in her home country.

An important element of teachers' work was to ensure that students had a good understanding of the cultural requirements of Australian workplaces. It was reported that students sometimes had difficulty in accessing part-time work in the appropriate industry, partly because of language barriers and more recently due to the economic recession, and partly because small businesses were found not always to be able or willing to devote time to assisting overseas students settle into a workplace. Hence there was a need for in-house enterprises such as were found in most of the RTOs concerned. In the public RTO-floristry case study, the RTO had expended a great deal of effort in developing an in-house enterprise to provide students with a substitute for paid work in a supportive environment. In most cases, RTOs also employed a work placement officer to help students find work in the appropriate industry, At RTO 4, in a regional city, no difficulty was experienced in finding hairdressing placements; this was ascribed both to the deep and longstanding industry networks of the teaching staff and to the lack of competition from other providers for the places. RTO 2 had developed an arrangement with a major events venue both so that the venue's facilities could be used for teaching delivery; the private RTO-hospitality (case study) had a similar arrangement with some major hotels. In the former case, students also accessed casual work at the venue.

In the end, despite the special needs of overseas students, good teachers made good teachers of overseas stunts. As one interviewee said, when asked to think about a teacher who was good with overseas students:

> *There's one teacher I can think of who is just a very genuine, patient, nurturing, but sort of also a little bit of no nonsense as well… we have in our institute an award for an international student across the institute each year. She's always very proactive and she knows students… we have in our institute an award for an international student across the institute each year. So any of our international students can be nominated for that. She's always very proactive and she knows students… Whereas someone might have a class and know two or three students, she would know all of them and remember them.*

As she put it the secret was 'not treating them differently, but not treating them the same' – i.e. providing the same level of extra and individualised support for all students. It was considered to be important to treat overseas students with trust rather than assuming that some were more focused on immigration than on their studies. However as one interviewee said

> *A lot of students are here (for) permanent residency but that's perhaps not a bad thing.*

It was suggested by one respondent that a network for teachers dealing with international students for the first time would be valuable. It was noted that the RTOs appeared to have a very strong team spirit and a professional development orientation among their teachers of overseas students. One interviewee said 'we are trying to learn the whole time' and another said 'we definitely really, really push the PD.' The latter regularly sent her teachers interstate to visit other RTOs, both public and private; travelling interstate removed the competition issue from the visits.

In summary the observed and suggested strategies for dealing effectively with international students can be described as follows.

At teacher level:

- If teachers have lived and/or worked overseas, use that experience to show empathy for their situation and to show that they value different cultures.
- Use visual teaching as much as possible where students' English skills are initially poor.
- Make the learning really structured.
- Put international with local students in group activities
- Contextualise content to a variety of settings e.g. teaching legislative requirements for different countries – it was not necessary to know all the laws but it was useful to be able to connect with the student and ask about his/her own context.
- Ask the students easy questions – definitely do not avoid them in questioning.
- Be approachable – even provide mobile phone numbers in case students are too shy to ask questions in class.
- Ensure that assessment tasks do not include English language requirements over and above the appropriate level.
- Ensure that domestic students are not disadvantaged while attending to international students.

At RTO level:

- Provide English language support.
- Forge and maintain good relationships with local employers to ensure the maximum availability of placements and part-time work.
- Provide a substitute for paid work for the students where necessary.
- Ensure that students understand the cultural norms of the industry as well as developing the necessary skills.
- Provide pastoral support services.
- Provide very structured teaching materials.
- Focus on professional development in all areas.

- Evaluate teacher/trainer performance with relation to their effectiveness with international students.
- Provide supportive management of teachers and advice on difficult student issues.

# Chapter 8. Major themes arising from the data

The research for this project has been based on the following sources, as described in detail in Chapters 3 to 7:

- Nine industry focus groups in five States, with a total number of 60 participants.
- International benchmarking via interviews and email conversations with senior UK personnel involved in VET teacher qualifications and in the retail and hospitality sector skills councils.
- 33-question survey of all Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) delivering Service Skills qualifications.
- Case studies in eight RTOs, one public and one private in each of the following areas: retail and floristry, hospitality, hair and beauty, fitness and community recreation.
- Interviews with managers in three enterprise RTOs, and additional research into international student issues.

## Industries

The service skills industries are each very diverse with the sport/fitness/ recreation cluster' appearing to have a particular 'flavour' that differs somewhat from the other groupings. Therefore workforce development strategies for VET practitioners need to be targeted differently for the different industry areas. This raises particular implications for RTOs that are 'mixed' or 'comprehensive' in nature.

Most industry groups pointed to a deficiency of understanding of customer service (especially its importance for the success of a service industry company) among their workforce, and therefore a feeling that RTOs failed to develop this attitude in learners. However technical skills in learners were more important in some industries (e.g. parts of hairdressing and of hospitality). In the UK the Skills Councils interviewed had both developed programs of their own in customer service skills (for learners, and for service skills teachers).

There was also a feeling in some industries that small business management skills were lacking. This was in itself a training need for those managers, and also presented difficulties for learners located in those enterprises, as manages sometimes lacked skills to manage more junior learners. Again, the UK Skills Councils had developed strategies in this area.

## RTOs

Almost three-quarters of Service Skills RTOs are micro or small in size (with fewer than 500 students enrolled). Service Skills RTOs are quite diverse, with some evidence of a bimodal distribution in delivery mode - those who deliver primarily in the workplace and those who deliver primarily in an institutional setting.

Smaller RTOs have the opportunity to manage the development of their teaching/training staff better than larger RTOs; it is easier for them to monitor teaching/training quality and to enforce requirements such as those for industry currency. They are also more likely to focus on a small number of industry areas and links with industry are more straightforward.

RTOs that seemed to have effective teaching/training workforces exhibited some of the following characteristics:

- A strong individual or champion (or team) driving an organisational culture in RTOs that encourages high quality among teachers;
- Involvement by senior managers and departmental managers with industry liaison;
- An evangelical approach to quality in VET;
- An overarching communication of the importance of passion for the industry among teachers;
- Good learning resources;
- Regular team meetings;
- Tight performance management and quality systems;
- A culture that encourages innovation and risk-taking (within certain parameters).

RTOs with international students need additional structures and features to achieve high-quality teaching/training.

## VET practitioners

There are different types of practitioners, which within themselves vary among type of RTO, size of RTO, Training Package area and so on). Four main types may be discerned:

1. Employed by an institutional RTO, delivering primarily in an institutional setting;
2. Employed by an institutional RTO, delivering primarily in employers' workplaces;
3. Employed by an enterprise RTO, delivering nationally recognised training;
4. Employed by an enterprise, delivering non-nationally recognised training.

The project focused on the first three although we did receive comments about the latter group. Each type of teacher/trainer needs a different set of skills and attributes, and has varying development needs.

The survey of RTOs and the RTO case studies provided a picture of the VET practitioner for the service industries.

The survey found the following data about the VET workforce for the service industries. These characteristics do not necessarily apply to workplace trainers that do not work for RTOs, as the survey was only sent to RTOs. The workforce is more likely to be female than male (56% of RTOs reported that 51% or more of their staff were female). It is about as likely to be full-time as casual/sessional ((50.8% of RTOs reported that 51% or more of their staff were full-time). However RTOs seemed to be quite differentiated, between those having no part-time teachers/trainers/assessors, those having no casuals or sessionals and a minority with no full-timers

The VET workforce is somewhat more likely to be older than younger - but very few RTOs had 51% or more of their staff above the age of 51. The oft-reported 'greying' of the VET workforce was not reflected in our data. Most were qualified only to Certificate IV level in teaching/training but qualification levels were somewhat higher in the industry/discipline area. Qualification levels varied among industry areas with sport/fitness being most qualified in both pedagogy and industry area.

School teachers delivering service skills qualifications form part of the VET workforce. We did not directly research these VET practitioners; no case studies in schools were included and we did not involve school system representatives in focus groups. The survey data included schools, but for some analysis of teacher qualifications we

removed schools because school systems have their own qualification requirements which were skewing the data. We are aware that Service Skills Australia and State and Territory ITABs engage with RTOs offering VET-in-schools, but feel that it was appropriate not to include consideration of these VET practitioners in this study.

### Pedagogical expertise

While all respondents (except students) expressed a preference for industry over pedagogical (teaching and training) expertise it is possible that teaching and learning skills tend to be assumed rather than examined by industry; manager in industry do not always seem to examine pedagogy very closely, which is understandable as their main interest lies elsewhere. We suggest that teachers need to 'market' their pedagogical skills better so that industry partners have a full appreciation of the skills and knowledge that underpin the delivery of training. Teachers tend to have an implicit understanding of their teaching and learning principles but are not able to articulate them. Teachers need to better benchmark their training roles. Teachers who have been in training roles for a long time may have a perception that they are good teachers/trainers but have not necessarily benchmarked themselves against other teachers/trainers.

There was a general agreement among respondents that a 'checklist' approach to training and assessment was not helpful and that teachers/trainers needed to focus on learners and what they learned and not on compliance issues – the latter should 'run in the background' as one industry partner put it.

Attributes of a good teacher/trainer were grouped around the following clusters:

- Pedagogical skills i.e. teaching/training delivery skills;
- Assessment skills;
- Attention to learners' needs;
- Communication/empathy/approachability;
- Management/organisational skills including reporting to appropriate managers;
- A deep understanding of the VET system and ability to interpret it for different audiences;
- Personal attributes such as flexibility, adaptability;
- Disposition to learn and to help colleagues learn;
- Passion for the industry;
- Industry technical skills;
- Broad understanding of the industry including how individual workplaces operate.

The requirements for levels of skills and attributes in each of these clusters vary according to the nature of the work done by the practitioner; their importance varies among the four types of practitioners discussed above.

However, while it was recognised that some teachers/trainers deliver predominantly in an institutional context and others in a workplace context, it was generally agreed that practitioners should possess the skills and knowledge to do both. While some respondents argued for a narrower skills and knowledge base for trainers in enterprise RTOs, on the whole this view was not well supported. However this does not mean there is not an argument for a lower level skill set for those working with non-nationally recognised training in enterprises. It was agreed that teachers of international students needed higher level skills; while the skills were not qualitatively different, reflecting simply the ability to cater for learners' individual needs, they needed to be deeper.

The case studies enabled us to meet many VET teachers/trainers who possessed the attributes of an ideal practitioner. However, some of the respondents we interviewed mentioned that not all of their staff or colleagues possessed these attributes. We also met some practitioners who, while well-meaning and clearly competent in their spheres of operation, did not possess the full range of skills, knowledge and attributes listed above. The clusters in which deficiencies were often apparent were those relating to broad understanding of the industry and a deep knowledge of the VET system.

Considering the huge expectations placed on VET practitioners, it is a challenge that teaching/training staff are generally qualified at a fairly low level – predominantly Certificate IV level in Training and Assessment. There was a feeling among many respondents (but not all) that higher level teaching qualifications were desirable; there was also a general dismissal of the Certificate IV qualification as being in itself poorly delivered. However a small number of respondents in the focus groups and case studies felt that the Certificate IV TAA set too high a bar and discouraged participation of enterprise in VET. In the UK there are multi-modal qualification levels for VET practitioners including special arrangements for certain enterprises; it would be worth considering these as possibilities.

### Industry expertise

Industry currency was regarded by all participants from all industry areas as being of utmost importance. The group of respondents that value currency least is students but even they value it highly. Yet RTOs do not appear to pay much attention to industry currency in their staff development planning. The survey showed this very clearly. One reason for this may be that they do not see industry currency maintenance and development as a 'program' but as an individual teacher's responsibility.

Industry currency therefore needs to be examined much more closely. For example: what does it mean? Does it mean up to date technical industry skills? Does it mean big picture appreciation of an industry or specialist knowledge of one sector? Does it mean knowledge, or does it mean passion for the industry?

Methods of maintaining or gaining currency are not well-developed. Working part-time in an industry or a short unfocused industry placement is unlikely to provide more than part of the currency required to be a good teacher in that industry, as almost all participants agreed. Similarly, 'study tours', attendance at seminars and networking events, and attendance at master classes assist but are not enough. Teachers may be resistant to industry currency arrangements, often due to nervousness about their industry expertise, and programs need to take accounts of these. Some respondents provided quite detailed ideas for structured placements in industry which would involve set learning outcomes and some sort of assessment. It seemed that some enterprises would be willing to invest resources to host such programs.

We propose that VET practitioners need constant development in two areas: industry engagement and pedagogical engagement. The word 'engagement is deliberately used rather than 'expertise', 'skills' or 'currency' to signify the breadth of the requirement.

The ideal VET practitioner focuses his or her efforts on two areas of development:

**Industry engagement.** 'Industry engagement' goes well beyond industry currency to include: updating industry skills and familiarity with technological systems' understanding of big-picture developments in the industry; understanding of the whole industry sector, not just one section of it; understanding of developments in the ways in which companies organise their business; global trends in the industry and the economy as a whole.

**Pedagogical engagement.** 'Pedagogical engagement' means attention to good teaching/training delivery and to student learning, commitment to evaluation of teaching from students and from industry, benchmarking against other practitioners, ongoing involvement in professional development in teaching/training , involvement with colleagues in improving own practice and assisting them to improve theirs.

## Workforce development strategy

While it is the next stage of the project that will develop this, some things are becoming clear:

- A strategy will need to segment the RTO market, and the ways in which this segmentation should be undertaken needs to be carefully thought through.

- Segmentation will not take account of individual diversity both of RTOs and of teachers/trainers and these must be acknowledged in any materials and publicity.

- A workforce development strategy is bounded by system features within VET systems, within industry, in Training Packages, within RTOs and so on. Some elements of the strategy might lead to suggestions for change in wider systems.

- Actions may be targeted to several levels - national, industry sector, individual industry, State/territory, RTO, department/teaching team, individual practitioner.

- The lessons from the UK VET system and service skills sector will be valuable, and it would be useful to obtain further advice about their effectiveness.

- Some good development practices were observed in the case studies or derived from participants' responses, but not all will suit all situations.

# Chapter 9. Workforce development strategy and suggestions for its evaluation

This chapter proposes a workforce development strategy for VET practitioners for the service industries, based on the data collected in the project including the literature review and overseas comparison.

## 9. 1 Service skills VET practitioner workforce development strategy

A workforce development strategy based on eight elements is proposed. The strategy is depicted in Table 1 (below) which is adapted from the UK's Further Education workforce development strategy. The three priorities are the same as the UK strategy but the themes are adapted for the Australian context and the service skills context.

**Table 1: Themes underpinning a workforce development strategy for Service Skills VET practitioners**

| Priority 1<br>Understanding the nature of the workforce | Priority 2<br>Attracting and recruiting the best people | Priority 3<br>Retaining and developing the modern, professionalised workforce |
|---|---|---|
| Theme 1<br>Gathering robust data on the workforce | Theme 4<br>Recruiting and retaining the people we need | Theme 7<br>Appropriate leadership and management development, and a flexible, fair and supportive working environment. |
| Theme 2<br>Using data to understand the workforce and improve future planning | Theme 5<br>The improvements people would like to see in the VET workforce | Theme 8<br>Identifying, planning and delivering development programs for the needs of the VET workforce: at national, RTO and individual level |
| Theme 3<br>The ideal VET practitioner attributes | Theme 6<br>Improving and promoting the image of the VET workforce | |

Adapted from 'The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007-1012', Lifelong Learning UK **http://www.lluk.org/fe-workforce-strategy.htm**.

The shading of Theme 8 in Table 1 indicates that it will be the focus of the report's recommendations, but all of the themes are involved in improving the VET workforce for the service industries.

## Theme 1 Gathering robust data on the workforce

It has been notoriously difficult to gather data on the VET workforce – this is for several reasons:

- Who counts as the VET workforce: Who is 'in' or 'out'? For example, should workplace trainers be included?

- Even the measurable VET sector yields poor statistics. As well as around 70 TAFE institutes there are over 4000 private RTOs (1623 of whom deliver Service Skills qualifications) whose reporting requirements are low except when delivering publicly-funded programs.

- The large proportion of part-time and casual practitioners makes record-keeping very difficult for large providers.

- There is a high turnover of staff in the sector.

How could better data be collected?

- Nationally across all industry sectors, this could be done systematically by requiring data on teachers/trainers as part of the national VET statistical collection;

- Capturing workplace trainers and others not working for RTOs would probably be impossible, although from time to time ABS data collection may provide figures about numbers of trainers that may intersect with what is required (eg Dumbrell, 1998);

- Better communication between bodies that have an interest in the VET workforce can aid data collection, such as Innovation and Business Skills Australia, STAs, the Australian Education Union, universities and RTOs that train VET teachers/trainers, the Australian Vocational Education and Training Teacher Educators' Colloquium (AVTEC), the Australian Institute of Training and Development. The data collected through work undertaken by these bodies should be nationally shared and collated;

- Within the Service Skills sector, data could be gathered by repeating our survey from time to time, with improvements as suggested under Theme 2.

## Theme 2 Using data to understand the workforce and improve future planning

The data collected needs to be able to inform future workforce planning and development activities. For this to happen we need to know:

- Educational qualifications of the VET workforce – both in teaching/training and in the industry;

- The nature of the qualifications that will be needed in the future, both in teaching/training and in the industry;

- The employment status of the workforce;

- Diversity within the VET workforce (eg age, gender, cultural and linguistic diversity);

- The types of RTOs for which people work;

- The range of their work (eg range of industry areas and of locations);

- Their career paths and aspirations;

- The nature of available professional development opportunities and uptake rates;

- The level of awareness of available professional development opportunities and their credibility in the eyes of teachers/trainers and their employers; and

- The level of commitment and funding that industry, RTOs, individual practitioners and governments are prepared to allocate to workforce development.

We have not captured all of the above data in our survey, but future surveys of Service Skills RTOs focusing more on the nature of the workforce could capture extra data.

Data should then be disseminated to relevant bodies including

- Other bodies with an interest in the VET workforce (as above);

- The industries which the Service Skills VET practitioner workforce services.

The data collection needs to be informed by the uses to which the data will be put, and so further consultation should take place before future surveys are undertaken.

## Theme 3: The attributes of the 'ideal' VET practitioner

Our project helped to build up a picture of what is seen as an ideal VET practitioner. These attributes are divided into those which apply particularly to the teaching/training role and those which involve application of generic skills to the role.

### Specific to teaching/training role

- **An appropriate balance between industry knowledge and skills and educational knowledge and skills** - All recognised that both were needed but the specific nature of the industry area influenced the relative balance between industry skills and educational qualifications. In all cases industry knowledge and skills were viewed as more important.

- **Information technology skills** - VET practitioners with these skills are well equipped to take advantage of the new technologies for their own learning and development and the development of these skills in their students through the integration of digital technologies in teaching and learning.

- **Monitoring students' progress and regular reporting of student progress** - The ability to regularly monitor and appropriately report on student progress to the different audiences (RTO, enterprise, learner) is a critical skill for the VET practitioner.

- **Respect and empathy for students** - VET practitioners who displayed respect and empathy for their students and respect for their progress as learners were highly regarded.

- **Passion for the industry and commitment to quality.** It seemed that passion for the industry and passion for good teaching went hand in hand.

- **Training delivery and assessment skills** - All qualities of the ideal practitioner were underpinned by confidence in how to plan, deliver, adjust, assess and evaluate student learning.

### Generic skills

- **High level literacy skills** - These skills equip practitioners to work with a variety of students by providing high quality support for their learning. High levels of literacy also assist in the implementation of Training Packages, the development of curriculum and appropriate assessment strategies, and in the negotiation of complex and complementary arrangements with industry.

- **Flexibility** - high levels of flexibility allows practitioners to meet the needs of multiple clients who are being served in VET training i.e.: employers, industry, a diverse body of individual learners, funding agencies and quality systems.

- **Effective communication skills** - These are essential for teaching and for developing and taking advantage of opportunities for industry currency

- **Exchanging ideas on practice** - VET practitioners who learnt from each and built a store of knowledge spoke of a team based and knowledge sharing approach which benefited their teaching.

- **A personal disposition towards constant learning and continual improvements in teaching and learning.** Such a disposition included a propensity to reflect on one's practice, to seek out learning opportunities from many sources including their students, and to benchmark against other practitioners.

## Theme 4: Recruiting and retaining the people we need

Recruitment and retention of good staff emerged as frequent themes in the data collection for this project. The presence in many RTOs of high proportions of casual staff contributes to the difficulties associated with recruiting and retaining high quality staff. However the survey showed that casualisation was not a feature of some RTOs.

An effective RTO shows the following features:

### 1. Overall planning strategies used at an RTO level.

- An ability to **identify** its workforce needs through planning processes that focus on longer rather than shorter cycles.

- Budget planning includes **detailed projections** of the staff needed, their qualifications and experience (and therefore cost) and their 'fit' with the current and future needs of the organisation.

- Staff profiles are **evaluated** in terms of the contribution that the employment of an individual will make to the 'ethos' and capacity of the whole organisation to deliver high quality programs.

- Recruitment and retention of staff are considered to be integral parts of the **planning processes** of the RTO, and the effectiveness of the strategies is evaluated on an annual basis.

### 2. Recruitment at an RTO level:

- A **staffing needs analysis** is undertaken across the RTO and positions are advertised and staff are recruited on the basis of current and projected needs.

- Staff are recruited who demonstrate an **appropriate employment history** that balances industry experience and educational qualifications.

- The **particular needs of the RTO's student cohort** (eg: low literacy levels, English as a second language) are considered when recruiting staff for full and part time positions.

- **Higher level educational qualifications** will be needed in future with a particular focus on supervisory and management skills, and current recruitment will reflect these projected needs.

- A **'critical mass' of well qualified full time staff** are employed to provide continuity, induction, mentoring and curriculum and pedagogical support to new and part time staff.

### 3. Retention at an RTO level:

- **Performance management** is used as a developmental tool and to encourage staff confidence in proper management procedures.

- **Mentoring** is provided for new staff within the organisation.

- **Partnerships with industry** that are established and supported at an RTO level provide interest and development opportunities for teachers/trainers.

- **Career paths are explicit** within the organisation and opportunities for development and growth are encouraged.

- A feeling of pride in the quality of the RTO prevents staff leaving.

RTO managers including Human Resource staff (where available) themselves need to be provided with training and support to develop the skills and practices associated with workforce planning outlined above.

## Theme 5: Improvements required for the VET workforce

The analysis of the nature of the VET workforce compared with the attributes desired by industry, learners and the practitioners themselves, suggests that the VET workforce for the service industries needs to improve in the following ways:

- Improved vocational competence;

- More flexible approach to industry clients and to students;

- Greater confidence in working with industry clients;

- Greater understanding of industry and companies, beyond simple technical competence;

- Higher level qualifications, both in pedagogy and in industry area;

- Improved teaching skills;

- Increased engagement in professional development activity;

- Benchmarking of skills and knowledge against other VET practitioners and against industry practitioners;

- The nurturing of passion for the relevant industry;

- Greater attention to the development of a service culture in the learners;

- Increased levels of leadership and management skills in the workforce.

At a national level there may need to be more attention to diversity in the VET workforce – particularly to teachers/trainers who are indigenous and are from different countries of origin or ethnic backgrounds.

## Theme 6: Improving and promoting the image of the VET workforce

COAG (2009) mentioned the lack of professional recognition for VET practitioners compared to university lecturers or school teachers. We suggest that the improvement and promotion of the image of the VET workforce can be achieved through:

**At the national level**, government support for VET practitioners through a focus on the role of the VET practitioner as well as the current focus on meeting the needs of industry; a designated government funding pool dedicated to developing and showcasing the skills of the VET practitioner with a focus on pedagogy as well as industry engagement; high-level governmental attention to improvements in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment as the minimum qualification for VET teachers; and a refocusing of compliance requirements for RTOs to encourage better teaching and training.

More generally, higher status for the occupations for which VET prepares and upgrades learners, and particularly for service sector occupations, which are often undervalued, would help upgrade the image of the VET workforce.

**At the RTO level**, the development of industry partnerships that focus, as part of a broader set of relationships, on promoting the value of high quality training and the worth of high quality VET practitioners, on ensuring that staff are 'industry current' and engaged in industry-based activities and events as a way of increasing sector wide credibility and on utilising the strengths and qualifications of teaching/training staff as a marketing point.

**The lack of a proper term for a VET practitioner is a problem**. The term 'practitioner' means little and is confusing to non-experts in VET. 'Teacher' and 'trainer' each lack attractiveness to people in particular contexts. 'Facilitator' has some support, but like 'practitioner' has a range of meanings. 'Educator' seems to have greater support

and resonates with some paraprofessional on-the-job contexts such as nurse educators. While this issue is unresolved, it is difficult to market the job of VET practitioner.

## Theme 7: Appropriate leadership and management development, and a flexible, fair and supportive working environment.

To improve the quality of their workforce, RTOs need to focus on performance management, strategic workforce planning and professional development to support these processes. Implementation of workforce development strategies depends greatly on the skills of managers in RTOs and partnering enterprises and their willingness to make a commitment to invest in teacher/trainer training and development. A supportive management attitude in RTOs is important because RTOs have experienced a dramatic increase in competitive pressure which is disturbing to some teachers/trainers, although the study found many managers reporting that their staff were happy to 'step up to the plate'.

Workforce development depends partly on RTO working environments and whether they are conducive to staff learning. Chappell and Hawke (2008) developed a diagnostic tool that can be administered by RTOs to their staff to analyse staff perceptions of factors in their working environment that support or hinder learning at work. The scale contains 46 questions in two domains: 'organisational development' and 'job complexity'. The *Provider Learning Environment Scale* or other tools could be used by RTO managers to explore their organisation's learning environment.

RTO managers need to be prepared to invest substantial resources into development strategies. RTO managers need to use existing performance management systems to shape workforce development. Acceptance by VET practitioners varied in their acceptance of the need for professional development varied widely and some were reported to be resistant. Encouraging such staff to participate requires particular managerial skills and establishing appropriate 'sticks' and carrots'. The inclusion of part-time or casual staff is also problematic and requires special attention.

There is unlikely to be a 'one size fits all' approach for RTO managers. The project identified considerable variety among the approaches to workforce development within Service Skills RTOs. Yet within this diversity, data from the case studies suggested that **the conditions to support workforce development** included:

- Developing a strong sense of the RTO's values and mission, ensuring that these values are shared by staff at all levels.

- Extending budgetary and planning periods to build in capacity for workforce development over a longer time period.

- Establishing champions to drive organisational change.

- Embedding workforce development in RTO management processes, such as annual planning of strategic directions for professional development.

- Encouraging hands-on involvement by managers in teaching and partnerships so that managers are aware of issues that arise daily.

## Theme 8: Identifying, planning & developing development programs for the needs of the VET workforce: at national, RTO and individual level

At each of three levels, national, organisational and individual, there are opportunities and challenges for a VET practitioner workforce development strategy. These are identified in Table 2. The following strategies are suggested for development:

### National cross-industry level

Improvements to the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment are required, regardless of whether Certificate IV remains the main benchmark. There should be greater recognition of higher-level pedagogical qualifications, for instance those offered by universities. There is a case for a lower-level or narrower qualification for those not working with nationally-recognised training. The effects of policy initiatives such as Victoria's Skills reforms on the affordability of VET teaching qualifications should be considered.

National standards for VET teaching could be developed, as in the current school-teaching model, and as in the UK model for further education teacher training courses.

There could be a continuing professional development requirement, possibly endorsed by an Institute for VET Practitioners. There should be awareness-raising about career possibilities within VET.

A better name for VET practitioners should be discussed, to improve the image of the occupation. 'Vocational educators' is one possibility.

### National Service Skills industry level

Irrespective of whether cross-industry initiatives are taken, within the service industries certain initiatives could be pursued. These include the promotion of the need for both **industry engagement** and **pedagogical engagement** for VET practitioners with a clear description of what these concepts mean and how VET practitioners might be involved in them. At a national level, units of competency *Develop and maintain industry engagement*, *Develop and maintain pedagogical engagement*, could be developed, which could be delivered as CPD, as single units, or could be submitted to IBSA for inclusion in the 2010 improvements to the Diploma of Training and Assessment. These units should each have components in which industry specificity is delivered.

A Service Skills CPD framework could be developed which allocates points for different types of activities. National standards for Service Skills VET practitioners could be developed to underpin this framework. These could be developed at 'certified' level (as suggested in New Deal 3) and at 'master level', equivalent to school-teacher 'highly accomplished' standards. It is suggested that maintaining a national register of practitioners at these levels might be too much to undertake, and that instead the standards should be available for RTOs to use in performance management and promotion activities, and when applying for 'tick' status (see below), and for individuals to use in job applications or when applying for national awards. SSA could develop standards and/or a training program for 'Service Skills workplace trainer' for those not involved with the delivery or assessment of nationally-recognised training.

As in the UK, SSA could itself provide or broker a series of professional development activities at teacher or 'master teacher' level to address particular issues as periodically identified. These could be organised on an annual basis and could be locally arranged, along the lines of AVETRA's OctoberVET events. SSA could develop

programs for 'structured work placements' for VET practitioners which could form part of the industry engagement units.

SSA could provide incentives for RTO level development by endorsing RTO professional development activities, funding demonstration professional development projects - perhaps in each of the service skills industry area – and disseminating their outcomes, developing a tick system for RTOs based on their professional development activities (eg number of activities or proportion of teachers/trainers involved). SSA could provide or broker development opportunities for RTO managers and HR Managers so that they can provide support for teacher/trainer development.

For individual level development, SSA could develop on-line teacher/trainer networks to complement on-line assessor networks. These could be generic or there could be special interest groups, focusing for example on industry engagement, pedagogical issues, and teaching international students. The networks could provide voluntary mentoring systems for new teachers/trainers or those new to certain activities (for example teaching international students) SSA could fund competitive scholarships for teachers/trainers, for example to cover cost of activities, qualifications, study visits. SSA could sponsor service skills teacher awards; there could be separate awards for industry engagement and pedagogical engagement, and an 'all-rounder' award, and/or awards for different industry clusters.

## RTO level

Staff development needs to be demonstrably tailored to the needs of the staff, the learners and the relevant industry. It needs to be targeted to areas which have been identified as areas of weakness amongst VET practitioners generally and in the specific RTO. Short-term reaction-led development such as responses to changes in audit regimes should be down-played; good professional development would result in practitioners who are able to respond to such short-term changes as a matter of course.

There needs to be a reconceptualisation of the ways in which **industry engagement** can be encouraged, acquired and maintained. This could include encouragement of regional and industry based networks that focus on the creation for opportunities for sharing expertise and for exploration of future trends. There should be bigger picture methods of looking at **pedagogical engagement** including benchmarking with other RTOs in similar or different areas. Staff should be encouraged to work across roles within the RTO to create a more flexible workforce able to work within a range of different contexts. Mentoring or 'buddy' schemes with industry people and for teaching/training should be instituted.

Professional development needs to be available, and of demonstrated use, to part-time and casual staff as well as full-timers. This could include greater use of available technologies. Training for departmental managers is required in developing the skills of their workforces and management of a diverse cohort of staff at different stages of their lives and careers

## Individual level

While VET practitioners need to work within the requirements of their employing RTO(s) there is much individual activity that could be undertaken. This includes for **pedagogical engagement,** joining electronic networks for VET professional development, forming learning/discussion groups of teachers/trainers within the RTO and with neighbouring RTOs for mutual development and benchmarking, and attending events hosted by STAs or other external bodies. For **industry engagement**, individual teachers/trainers can seek an industry mentor, attend industry events, and join industry association. In both arenas, practitioners can utilise existing contacts with employers and students for their learning potential and subscribe to, or

access through libraries, industry and VET journals. Teachers/trainers working with international students could consider undertaking at least short courses in relevant languages.

Table 2: Opportunities and challenges at national, RTO and individual level

| Opportunities | Challenges |
|---|---|
| **National level** | |
| • A focus on skills in national agendas eg COAG;<br><br>• A recognition of the role of VET practitioners in developing skills in others;<br><br>• A push for higher qualifications for the workforce as a whole and therefore a need for VET teachers/trainers with higher qualifications; and<br><br>• There is current national attention to problems with the VET workforce. | • Lack of a generally agreed understanding on how big the VET workforce is, who is a part of it and who is not;<br><br>• Little national structure for VET practitioner development;<br><br>• No national standards for VET teaching/training other than AQTF requirements and Certificate IV TAA units;<br><br>• A lack of respect for the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment;<br><br>• Little political advocacy for VET practitioners as there has been for school teachers. There is no professional body; there is no single national union. The Australian Education Union represents TAFE teachers but not non-TAFE RTO teachers; and<br><br>• In recent times (until 2009), there has been little political will to improve VET teaching; during the 1990s VET practitioners were largely invisible in VET documents. |
| **RTO level** | |
| • An increasing awareness of the relationship between good quality teaching and the acquisition of higher skill levels amongst students;<br><br>• A growing awareness among enterprises of the potential of qualifications for their workforces and a willingness to engage with RTOs;<br><br>• A growing ethos of flexibility and continuous improvement among VET teachers/trainers;<br><br>• The availability of a range of projects, consultancies, seminars, conferences professional associations initiated by industry but available to RTO staff;<br><br><br>• An increase in the availability of new technologies that can link staff across regions and industries; | • Lack of a tradition among RTOs of demanding qualifications beyond the Cert IV demanded by the AQTF. Therefore it would be bold for an individual RTO, in a tight labour market, to be the first to demand better-qualified teachers/trainers;<br><br>• The increasingly competitive market and the global financial crisis mean that the budget available for staff development and professional development activities may fall, especially in those RTOs dependent on overseas students;<br><br>• The presence of large numbers of part-time and casual teachers/trainers makes professional development difficult to disseminate and monitor;<br><br>• Some part-time/casual staff work for more than one RTO, who may have differing views of quality standards; |

| Opportunities | Challenges |
|---|---|
| **RTO level** (continued) | |
| • Our data has showed that the VET workforce, while mature, is not particularly 'greying'; and<br><br>• The large proportion of RTOs that are not part of the TAFE system have ready opportunities to reward staff through pay rises for appropriate individual development. | • The amount of available time for professional development is often utilised by compliance and reporting requirements;<br><br>• Inadequacy of the TAA in terms for rigour and depth as the initial teacher preparation credential for new entrants into the training area, meaning that RTO strategies may start from a very low base; and<br><br>• The 'culture' of well established RTOs can create barriers to new and creative ways of developing their workforces. |
| **Individual level** | |
| • Some RTOs and TAFE systems reward staff for higher level qualifications through promotion and/or higher pay;<br><br>• Higher level of performance increases the possibility of higher level job offers, particularly for staff whose work is highly visible in industry;<br><br>• VET practitioners have access to a range of electronic networks and discussion lists and of freely available e-resources such as ICVET;<br><br>• In some States and Territories, low-cost professional development activities are offered by STAs, in regional areas as well as capital cities; and<br><br>• Contact with students provides opportunities for learning about the industry as well as about student learning needs. | • Service skills VET practitioners tend to have low levels of formal qualifications. The types of development strategies that people feel comfortable with therefore varies considerably;<br><br>• The dual identity of VET practitioners means that there is a varying degree of willingness to move from being an industry person who passes on his or her skills to being a teacher/trainer;<br><br>• Opportunities for the renewal of industry currency vary among RTOs and among industry areas;<br><br>• Many part-time and casual staff may not be greatly interested in careers as VET practitioners;<br><br>• Remotely located practitioners have restricted access to both collegial support and institutional support for professional development; and<br><br>• Being a VET practitioner is a low status job compared to university and school teaching; professional pride may be lacking. |

A graduated role for Service Skills Australia

A number of suggestions have been made through this report for SSA to play a role in VET practitioner workforce development. Some represent large-scale projects, others are relatively easy to implement. Table 3 provides a visual depiction of the magnitude of the tasks suggested, under the headings 'high', 'medium' and 'low' investment. The word 'investment' refers not only to the financial and human resources that would be required but also to the degree of stakeholder negotiation and communication that would need to take place. This table will assist in prioritising and evaluating the worth of different interventions.

Table 3:     Potential Service Skills Australia VET workforce development interventions, showing levels of investment

| Workforce development strategy themes | High investment | Medium investment | Low investment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Themes 1 *Gathering robust data on the workforce;* and 2 *Using data on the workforce* | Facilitating meetings of relevant national bodies with an interest in the VET workforce | Repeating survey of RTOs periodically | |
| Themes 3 *The ideal VET practitioner attributes;* and 5 *The improvements people would like to see in the VET workforce* | | | Repeating industry focus groups periodically to evaluate changes in perceptions of VET practitioners |
| Themes 4 *Recruiting and retaining the people we need;* and 7 *Appropriate leadership and management development, and a flexible, fair and supportive working environment* | Developing programs for RTO managers and human resource staff | | |
| Theme 6 *Improving and promoting the image of the VET workforce* | Influencing government policy to foreground VET practitioners<br><br>Campaigning to improve status of Service Skills occupations<br><br>Influencing adoption of new name for VET practitioners | Campaigning to improve status of Service Skills VET practitioners, aimed at general public and at industry | |
| Theme 8 *Identifying, planning and delivering development programs for the needs of the VET workforce; at national, RTO and individual level* | Influencing national policy on VET practitioner qualifications<br><br>Proposing the new units of competency for inclusion in the Diploma in TAA<br><br>Developing national standards for service skills VET practitioners, at certified and master level | Developing new units of competency on pedagogical and industry engagement for use in PD programs<br><br>Developing standards and training programs for service skills workplace trainer<br><br>Developing a program for structured work placements for service skills VET practitioners<br><br>'Tick' system for RTOs based on professional development performance<br><br>Development of on-line teacher network including special interest groups | Mounting annual series of professional development activities at certified and master level<br><br>Funding demonstration professional development projects in RTOs<br><br>Funding 'demonstration individuals' to explore PD activities and disseminate what worked.<br><br>Endorsing individual RTOs' professional development activities<br><br>Sponsoring service skills VET practitioner awards<br><br>Funding competitive scholarships for visits, travel etc |

## 9.2 Evaluation of the workforce development strategy

Initial evaluation has taken place through the validation workshops where stakeholders commented on the Themes, modified suggestions for interventions, and suggested others.

It is suggested that the roll-out of interventions needs to have several evaluative phases. These will ensure maximum take-up by stakeholders, as Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman (2004) suggest. In this case stakeholders are: RTOs and their staff, the different Service Skills industries, other national bodies including other Skills Councils, employer and employee associations, and governments.

Using Owen's (1993) framework, the evaluation should consist of

- **Design evaluation**: testing the proposed intervention strategies with stakeholder groups

- **Process or formative evaluation**: Setting annual review dates for the interventions in place, to monitor progress and implement any changes

- **Impact evaluation**: Once interventions are established, setting a review cycle to evaluate effectiveness. Indicators could include for example

  - *Participation*: numbers of individuals or RTOs involved in programs

  - *Stakeholder satisfaction*: Satisfaction of program participants or SSA stakeholder groups with the programs

  - *Outcomes*:  improvements in qualification levels among VET practitioners, greater industry satisfaction with the quality of VET practitioners, lower staff turnover rates in Service Skills RTOs, greater ease in attracting good quality applicants to teaching/training positions.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Research informants

### Data collection phase

These people kindly assisted by participating in industry consultations, hosting case studies, undertaking telephone interviews and commenting on the draft RTO survey.

| Contact | Organisation |
|---|---|
| Lisa Apthorpe | Mc Donald's Australia |
| Jeff Bell | Reject Shop |
| Taryn Bennett | UFS Dispensaries Ltd |
| Jane Biggs | National Pharmacies |
| Wendy Blair | The Australasian College |
| Aaron Bloomfield | NSW Gymnastics Association Inc. |
| Judi Bolger | National Pharmacies |
| Rose Bradshaw | Y Natural |
| Laurie Broomhead | The Green Dispensary |
| Sandra Campitelli | Hairdressing & Beauty Industry Association (HBIA) |
| Renee Clifford | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |
| Robyn Clifford | William Angliss Institute |
| Paul Colagiuri | Camp Somerset, Outdoor Recreation Industry Council |
| Rob Conwell | National Pharmacies |
| Stewart Cooke | Recreation Training QLD |
| Lois Coulter | National Pharmacies |
| Nick Cox | YMCA Australia |
| Penny Curtis | Service Skills South Australia |
| Caterina DiBiase | Heading Out Hair & Beauty |
| Lyn Duguid | Kinect Australia |
| Meredith Dufty | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |
| Carmel Ellis-Gulli | TAFE NSW Sydney Institute – Randwick campus |
| Janet Elms-Smith | TAFE NSW – Northern Sydney Institute |
| Jonni Emerson | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |
| Peter D. Evans | Smart Connection Company |
| Claire Field | TVET Australia |
| Sue Freeman | First Impressions Resources – The Australian Retail College |
| Paul Galloway | Charles Sturt University |
| Wendy Goy | Tobin Brothers Funerals |
| Sandra Grant | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |
| Merrill Gratton | TAFE SA – Tea Tree Gully Campus |
| Ben Grigg | Star City Pty Ltd |
| Natalie Hall | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |

| Contact | Organisation |
| --- | --- |
| Craig Handy | Academie Accor |
| John Hart | Restaurant & Catering Australia |
| Barbara Hawkins | B.E.H. Consulting |
| Mirella Heuperman | BIBA Academy |
| Anita Hobson-Powell | Australian Association for Exercise & Sports Science |
| Steve Hore | Fitnation |
| Joanne Innes | UFS Dispensaries Ltd |
| Ajoy Joshi | Nilgiris Restaurant |
| Tracy Kearney | Prestige Services Training |
| Robyn Keenan | Queensland Tourism Industry Council |
| Debbie Kemp | NSW Sports Federation |
| Jean Kiddle | Master Grocers Australia |
| Jenny Kroonstuiver | National Meat Industry Training Advisory Council Limited |
| Dellece Kuhndt | Modbury Triangle Pharmacies |
| Eugene Lepose | Symetry Cutters |
| Christina Lewis | TAFE NSW Sydney Institute – Ultimo campus |
| Penny Liddington | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |
| Heather MacLeod | University of Ballarat |
| Brigid McGrath | Franklins Pty Ltd |
| Emma McLean | National Pharmacies |
| Deanna McLeod | Australian Funeral Directors Association |
| Jean Mailey | National Pharmacies |
| Colleen Marshall | Y Natural |
| Peter Morris | Action Learning Solutions (ALS) |
| Raman Nambier | Hostec International College |
| Rocco Petrucci | Zucci Hairdressing |
| Peter Richards | Hardware Association of Victoria |
| Karen Riley | Pharmacy Guild |
| Lina Robinson | Service Skills Victoria |
| Christine Rumble | Academie Accor |
| Freda Rossidis | CAST Salons |
| Rosemary Sage | Recreation SA |
| Jennifer Schembri-Portelli | Water Exercise Training Service (WETS) |
| Colin Shearing | Service Skills South Australia |
| John T. Smith | South Yarra Sport / Melbourne High School, Fitness Australia |
| Trina Smith | Blooms on Addison |
| Heather Stockdale | National Pharmacies |
| Lauren Sullivan | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |

| Contact | Organisation |
|---|---|
| Leanne Tankard | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |
| Anne Templeton | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |
| Jane Trewin | Gordon Institute of TAFE |
| Richard Wallis | YUM! Restaurants Australia |
| Genevieve Wearne | Verve – Knowledge & Skills (ITAB) |
| Robin Willis Inglis | Travelscene |
| Anne Marie Yates | Service Skills Australia |
| David Younie | Hospitality Training Network (HTN) Sydney |

## Participants in Melbourne and Sydney workshops to validate the workforce development strategy

| Contact | Organisation |
|---|---|
| Jeanette Allen | Service Skills Australia |
| Christine Bessell-Browne | Qantas Catering |
| Virginia Bloemhoff | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |
| Therese Bryant | Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association |
| Peta Calanchini | Carrick Institute |
| Nick Cox | YMCA Australia |
| Natalie Hall | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |
| Sharon Hebdon | William Angliss Institute |
| Steve Hore | Fitnation |
| Kit McMahon | Service Skills Australia |
| Raman Nambier | Hostec International College |
| Claire O'Conor | TAFE NSW Sydney Institute – Ultimo campus |
| Christine Rumble | Academie Accor |
| Lina Robinson | Service Skills Victoria |
| John T. Smith | South Yarra Sport Melbourne High School / Fitness Australia |
| Lauren Sullivan | Pharmacy Guild of Australia |
| Robyn Willis Inglis | Travelscene |

## Overseas consultants

| Contact | Position | Organisation |
|---|---|---|
| Dr. Roy Fisher | Co-Director - Centre for Research in Post-Compulsory Education | University of Huddersfield, UK |
| Prof. Prue Huddleston | Director - Centre for Education and Industry | University of Warwick, UK |

Appendix 2: Copy of questionnaire

# UNIVERSITY OF BALLARAT



SERVICE SKILLS AUSTRALIA 'NEW DEAL' PROJECT

## 'WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR SERVICE INDUSTRIES VET PRACTITIONERS'

**A study aimed at improving the quality of VET
(Vocational Education & Training)
in and for the service industries**

SURVEY FOR RTOs DELIVERING SERVICE SKILLS TRAINING PACKAGES

**Please return by Wednesday 8 July 2009**

*If you wish to enter the draw for one of ten $100 gift vouchers please complete the enclosed yellow slip which will be separated from your completed survey on arrival. Only on-time returns will go into the draw.*

**Funded by Service Skills Australia
June 2009**

*Please refer to the back cover for the
Plain Language Information Statement as required by the Ethics Committee*

Note: Some questions have been adapted with permission from two sources: a Skills Tasmania RTO survey (October 2008) and; a survey used in a recent study of human resource management practices in RTOs carried out for the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (Smith, A. and Hawke, G. 2008).

**Introduction**

**The survey should be completed by only one person (e.g. CEO, General Manager or delegate), for the whole RTO. We know that in very large RTOs this will involve a great deal of work and we appreciate your time. If it proves too difficult to access information for some of the questions, please leave those questions unanswered.**

The survey is divided into 4 sections:
1. About you, your RTO and its Service Skills training activity.
2. About your teaching, training and assessment workforce.
3. Staff development for your teaching, training and assessment workforce.
4. What skills and attributes should VET practitioners for the Service Industries possess?

Responses will be used to develop a Workforce Development Strategy for VET practitioners for the service industries

**Each question contains instructions on how to complete your answer. If you are unsure about your answer to any question please leave it out. Please answer only for VET and not for ACE or higher education students & teachers.**

# Section 1
# About you, your RTO and its Service Skills training activity

1. **What is your own job title?** ……………………………………………………………………

2. **How many sites/campuses are operated by your RTO?** …………………………………………

3. **Approximately how many students enrolled in your RTO in 2008?**

   Number of students……………… Full-time equivalent……………..

4. **Does your RTO operate:** (*Tick one box*)

   Only in one State or Territory? ☐          In more than one State or Territory? ☐

5. **For most of its delivery, what type of RTO is your organisation?** (*Tick only one box, that which is most applicable*)

   | | | | |
   |---|---|---|---|
   | TAFE Institute | ☐ | Enterprise RTO | ☐ |
   | Community RTO/ACE provider | ☐ | Industry RTO | ☐ |
   | Commercial RTO (for profit) | ☐ | School/secondary college | ☐ |
   | Group Training Organisation also an RTO | ☐ | Unsure | ☐ |

6. **Please rank the top three sources of your RTOs turnover/activity:** (*Place 1ˢᵗ, 2ⁿᵈ, 3ʳᵈ on the lines that apply*)
   a. Government (both state and Commonwealth)                                   ……..
   b. Industry/Enterprise/Business                                               ……..
   c. Students (apart from standard admin fees charged to government-funded students)   ……..
   d. Other (please specify)                                                     ……..
   e. Unsure (please tick if applicable)                                        ……..

7. **From which of these Service Skills Training Packages does your RTO (currently or in the past two years) deliver qualifications and/or units of competency?** (*Tick as many as apply*)

   | | | | |
   |---|---|---|---|
   | Floristry | ☐ | Beauty | ☐ |
   | Hairdressing | ☐ | Caravan | ☐ |
   | Tourism | ☐ | Funeral Services | ☐ |
   | Community Recreation | ☐ | Fitness | ☐ |
   | Outdoor Recreation | ☐ | Sport | ☐ |
   | Retail (includes Wholesale & | | | |

Community Pharmacy   ☐      Other …………………………......  ☐

8. **This question relates to <u>where</u> you conduct training <u>delivery</u> (location of delivery). For approximately what percentage of your total <u>Service Skills</u> Training Package activity in the past 12 months did your RTO conduct training delivery at the following locations?** (*Place a figure on as many lines as apply*)

     a.   At an employer's workplace (this includes on site classrooms)     ……..……….. %

     b.   Away from the workplace at your RTO      ……..……….. %

     c.   Distance or on-line      ……..……….. %

     d.   Other (please specify)………………………………………..    ……..……….. %

9. **This question relates to <u>where </u>you conduct <u>assessment</u> (location of assessment). For approximately what percentage of your total <u>Service Skills</u> Training Package activity in the last 12 months did your RTO conduct assessment at the following locations?** (*Place a figure on as many lines as apply*)

     a.   At an employer's workplace using your staff (this includes on site classrooms)      ……..……….. %

     b.   At the workplace using employer's staff      ……..……….. %

     c.   Away from the workplace at your RTO      ……..……….. %

     d.   Distance or on-line      ……..……….. %

     e.   Other (please specify)………………………………………    ……..……….. %

10. **Do you provide non nationally-recognised training (i.e. not from Training Packages or State-accredited qualifications) for the <u>Service Industries</u> (individual students or companies)?** (*Tick one box only*)

     Yes     ☐           No     ☐

If **Yes**, please indicate for the <u>Service Industries</u> area (individual students or companies) the proportion of such training compared with nationally recognised training? (*Tick one box only*)

More non-nationally recognised than nationally-recognised    ☐     About the same amount    ☐
More nationally recognised than non nationally- recognised    ☐

**Please comment if you wish:**

_____

_____

11. **Are a substantial proportion (more than approximately 20%) of your VET students in the <u>Service Industries area</u> international  students (i.e. not Australian citizens or permanent residents) ?**

     Yes     ☐           No     ☐

If yes, are the international students located on-shore and/or off-shore? (*Tick any box that applies*)

In Australia at one or more of your sites?    ☐      Off-shore in another country/countries?    ☐

## Section 2
## About your teaching, training and assessment workforce
*Note: To save space, in most questions we will use the term 'teaching' to apply to teaching, training & assessment staff*

12. **Approximately how many staff are employed in your RTO, or if your RTO is part of a broader organisation, in the RTO part of that organisation? For enterprise RTOs, please answer for the training division**. *(Please fill in as accurately as possible).*

| | |
|---|---|
| Managers/senior administrators | |
| Teaching/training/assessing staff *(permanent/contract)* | |
| Non-teaching staff *(permanent/ ongoing)(not including managers/senior administrators)* | |
| Casual/sessional teaching staff | |

13. **Of the teaching staff in your RTO or enterprises' training division (who teach/train/assess both exclusively or as part of their work load), approximately what percentage is:**

   Male?          ……….%          Female?          ……….%

14. **Of the teaching staff in your RTO or enterprises' training division  (who teach/train/assess both exclusively or as part of their work load), approximately what percentage is:**
   (*Place a figure in as many response areas as apply*)

   Full-time          ……….%          Part-time          ……….%   Casual/sessional……………..%

15. **Of the teaching staff in your RTO or enterprises' training division  (who teach/train/assess both exclusively or as part of their work load), approximately what percentage is:**
   (*Place a figure in as many response areas as apply*)

   Under 35 yrs          ……….%     35- 50 yrs          ……….%     51+ yrs          ……….%

16. **Describe the basic features of the performance management or review system for the teaching staff  for your RTO or enterprises' training division** (*Place a tick in as many boxes as apply, for each group of staff*).

| | Setting agreed work objectives | Regular appraisal meeting | Rating of staff performance | Performance management linked to professional development plan | Pay linked to performance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teaching staff *(permanent, ongoing)* | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Teaching staff *(contract, fixed term)* | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Casual/sessional teaching staff | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

17. **Of the staff who provide <u>Service Industries</u> teaching for your RTO or enterprises' training division (both exclusively or as part of their workload), approximately what percentage have completed the following qualifications <u>as their highest qualification in the education/training area</u>:**

   a. Certificate IV in Assessment & Workplace Training (BSZ40198)          …………………………..%

   b. Certificate IV in Training and Assessment  (TAA40104)          …………………………..%

   c. Diploma in Training & Assessment (TAA 50104)          …………………………..%

   d.  Diploma of VET (Victorian accredited, 21697VIC)          …………………………..%

   e. University degree, graduate diploma  or above in VET or adult education          …………………………..%

   f. Unsure (please tick)          …………………………..%

**18.** **Of the staff who provide <u>Service Industries</u> teaching for your RTO or enterprises' training division (both exclusively or as part of their work load), approximately what percentage have completed the following qualifications <u>as their highest qualification in their industry/discipline area</u>:**

    a. Certificate III                                  ………………….....…%

    b. Certificate IV                        ………………….....…%

    c. Diploma or Advanced Diploma            ………………….....…%

    d. University degree or above             …………………… ..%

    e. Unsure (please tick)                   ………………….....…%

**19.** **Of the staff who provide <u>Service Industries</u> teaching for your RTO or enterprises' training division (both exclusively or as part of their work load), are they mainly confined to one industry area or do they teach or assess across more than one?** *(Tick one box only)*

    More are confined to one area than teach across industry areas   ☐    About half and half  ☐

    More teach across industry areas than are confined to one   ☐    Unsure  ☐

**20.** **Of the staff who provide <u>Service Industries</u> teaching for your RTO or enterprises' training division (both exclusively or as part of their work load), what proportion have <u>at least some</u> industry experience in all the areas in which they teach or assess?** *(Tick one box only)*

    More than half have industry experience in all the areas in which they teach   ☐
    About half have industry experience in all the areas in which they teach   ☐
    Less than half have industry experience in all the areas in which they teach   ☐
    Unsure   ☐

**21.** **Do you have any requirements for industry currency for your <u>Service Industries</u> teaching staff?**

    Yes  ☐        No  ☐

    **If yes, how recent must this currency be?**
    Last year  ☐      Last two years  ☐
    Last five years  ☐      Other  ☐

    **If yes, what form must the currency take?**
                                   **Please give details if you wish**

Working in the industry   ☐  …………………….……………..……..………………

Placement in the industry   ☐  …………………….…………….…......………………

Attendance at industry seminars,   ☐  …………………….………..…..……..………………
conferences etc

Other   ☐  …………………….………..…..……..………………

**22.** **What are the top three areas, by <u>Service Industries</u> Training Package area, for difficulty in recruiting appropriately skilled and qualified teaching staff?** *(Please rank in order with 1 = most difficult to recruit)*

    1. ...............................................................................................................................

    2. ...............................................................................................................................

    3. ...............................................................................................................................

# Section 3
# Staff development for your teaching, training and assessment workforce

**23. In the last three years, your RTOs investment in training and staff development for teaching/training/assessment staff has**: *(Tick one box only)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Grown significantly ☐ | Grown somewhat ☐ | Stayed the same ☐ |
| Declined somewhat ☐ | Declined significantly ☐ | |

**24. What were the top three training programs/courses/events for teaching/training staff used by your RTO for its teaching staff in the last 12 months?** *(Rank order 1= attended by most staff)*

1. …………………………………………….…………………………………………....

2. ………………………………………………….…………………………………………

3. ………………………………………………….…………………………………………

**25. Does your RTO (or enterprise if an enterprise RTO) have a written training and development plan?** *(Tick one box only)*

Yes ☐                    No ☐

**26. Over the next 12 months, in which five of the following areas is staff development needed <u>as a priority</u> for your <u>Service Industries</u> teaching staff?** *(Tick <u>up to five</u> boxes)*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Workforce planning | ☐ | b. Assessment | ☐ |
| c. Training & delivery | ☐ | d. Business Management | ☐ |
| e. Marketing | ☐ | f. Quality Assurance | ☐ |
| g. Return to industry | ☐ | h. Developing client relationships | ☐ |
| i.  Training Package specific | ☐ | j. AQTF topics such as administration or continuous improvement | ☐ |
| k. Access and Equity | ☐ | l. Developing industry partnerships | ☐ |
| m. TAA04 (Certificate IV) | ☐ | n. TAA04 (Diploma) | ☐ |
| o. E-learning/flexible delivery | ☐ | p. Learning about the industry in which they teach | ☐ |
| q. Other (specify) …………………….………………………………………………… | | | ☐ |

Please describe the one most urgent staff development needed…………………………....…………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**27. From where is this most urgent staff development need likely to be sourced?** *(Tick as many boxes as apply)*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Your State/Territory's VET PD program | ☐ | b. Within the RTO/training division | ☐ |
| b. Other RTO(s) | ☐ | d. External forums/seminars | ☐ |
| e. Conferences | ☐ | f. The industry (in which training is provided by RTO) | ☐ |
| g. Australian Flexible Learning Framework | ☐ | h. Universities or private Higher Education providers | ☐ |
| i. Other (please specify…………………………………….………………………………………………….. | | | ☐ |

Please say why you are most likely to choose this source/these sources…………………………………………….

# Section 4
# What skills and attributes should VET practitioners for the Service Industries possess?

**28. Is it more important for VET practitioners delivering training for the <u>service industries</u> to have skills and knowledge about the <u>industry</u> *or* about <u>education</u>?**

Please circle a number on each relevant line below where you think the ideal balance should be. Please answer for teachers for each Service Skills Training Package that you deliver. (Answers may differ or may be the same for each Training Package). *Please answer only for Training Packages that you deliver.*

| | ←**Skills & Knowledge** → | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Industry** | | | **Education** | |
| Floristry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Beauty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Hairdressing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Retail (incl. Wholesale & Community Pharmacy) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Tourism, Hospitality & Events | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Funeral Service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Community Recreation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Fitness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Outdoor Recreation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sport | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other (please specify)…………………………… | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**29. Assuming unlimited resources were available, what skills, attributes and qualifications would VET practitioners for the <u>Service Industries</u> ideally possess?**

→ now?
..................................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................................

→ in 10 years' time?
..................................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................................

**30. What strategies could be used to develop this profile for these practitioners?**

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..................................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................................

**31. Enablers & Barriers:**

- What things would assist this profile for these practitioners being reached?

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......................................................................................................................................................

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- What things may present a barrier to this desired profile for VET practitioners being reached?

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......................................................................................................................................................

**32. Good practice examples**. Have you seen relevant programs or activities in other organisations that you think will be of use for RTOs or for the Service Industries in general, to develop the teaching/training/assessment workforce for the Service Industries? If so, please describe:

......................................................................................................................................................

......................................................................................................................................................

......................................................................................................................................................

**33. Any other comments?** ......................................................................................................................

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE
Please return in the reply paid envelope, or if you have mislaid it, post to:
**VET Research, School of Education, University of Ballarat**
**PO Box 663, Ballarat Vic, 3353**
Phone Alice Godycki on 03 5327 9383 or email **a.godycki@ballarat.edu.au** with any queries

**This page provides further information about the research project, for those interested.**

**UNIVERSITY OF BALLARAT**

**PLAIN LANGUAGE INFORMATION STATEMENT**

PROJECT TITLE: Workforce development for service industries VET practitioners

**RESEARCHERS:**
**Principal Researcher:** Professor Erica Smith, University of Ballarat
**Names of other Senior and Associated Researchers:** Professor Warren Payne, University of Ballarat, Associate Professor Ros Brennan Kemmis, Charles Sturt University, Dr Lauri Grace, Deakin University.

**EXPLANATION OF PROJECT:**
Our research project is aimed at improving the quality of VET in and for the service industries. It is funded by Service Skills Australia.  We are looking at the attributes and skills needed by VET practitioners in these industries and developing a workforce development strategy for these practitioners. We will be undertaking focus groups around Australia with relevant industry stakeholders such as enterprise, employer group and trade union representatives(*State and Territory Service Skills Councils are assisting us identify relevant people in the Service Skills industry sectors*), surveying all Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that deliver service industry training (*derived from the National Training Information Service listings*), and undertaking 10 RTO-based case studies (*recommendations for RTOs will be given to us through the focus groups*, *and within each RTO we'll be interviewing a manager, a small number of teaching staff and up to two HR staff from enterprise partners*). We invite you to participate in this important project. Many of you will regularly take part in Service Skills consultations and we are pleased that you are willing to consider participation in our project.

By completing the survey you are implying consent to take part in the research, and if you are in   a focus group or interview you'll be asked to complete a consent form. If you are completing the survey it will take about 30 minutes. Your time commitment will be between one and one and two hours for a focus group, and normally between 30 and 60 minutes for an interview connected with an RTO-based case study. If you can only spare a short amount of time for an RTO-based case study interview, we will tailor the time accordingly. We will be asking you questions about your view of what attributes and skills should be possessed by VET practitioners who work in and for the service industries, and ideas about how any gap between this ideal and the actual VET workforce might be bridged.

Your survey and focus group responses will be kept confidential, and in subsequent publications and presentations on the outcomes of the project you will not be identifiable. RTOs will not be named. However you should be aware that because of the relatively small number of people in the focus groups and in the case studies it could conceivably be possible for people reading the report to figure out who made particular comments.  Data will be kept for 5 years in locked cabinets and password-protected electronic files, and then destroyed. These assurances of confidentiality do not negate legal limitations such as freedom of information claims.

We sincerely hope that you will be willing to participate in this research which we see as being of value to the service industries.  If you have any concerns, or would like further information, please contact the principal researcher as listed below.   Thank you for your assistance, which is greatly appreciated.

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If you have any questions, or you would like further information regarding the project entitled 'Workforce development for service industries VET practitioners', please contact the Principal Researcher Erica Smith on 03 5327 9665

*Please note: Research team adapted language to suit the interviewee*

**Senior Manager or delegated officer (1)**

1. What is your role within the organisation? Please briefly describe your working experience before taking on your role.

2. How much of your RTO's business relates to Service Skills qualifications? (prompt with list of Service Skills Training Packages – *see attached*)? Please describe the AQF levels of these qualifications.

3. Please describe the nature of your delivery in Service Skills qualifications (eg on-site at the RTO/mainly work-place based etc.) Do you undertake any delivery of non-qualification-based training in Service Skills, and if so, please describe it?

4. Please describe briefly the nature of your Service Skills students – eg age, domestic/international, individually enrolled/ corporate business.

5. What is your role in the organisation with respect to teachers/trainers and teacher/trainer development?

6. How many teachers/trainers does your organisation employ? - please give an overview of their distribution among full-time/part-time etc.

7. What is your view (and/or the 'corporate' or officially expressed RTO view if any) of the desired nature of VET practitioners delivering training for the service industries?

8. What views are passed onto you by corporate clients about the desired nature of VET practitioners delivering training for the service industries?

9. What views are passed onto you by teachers /trainers about the desired nature of VET practitioners delivering training for the service industries?

10. What's more important for teachers and trainers in the programs that you deliver  -industry skills & knowledge or education skills & knowledge? (*use the scale used in survey- attached*)

11. What do your students and industry people think about your RTO in terms of teaching/training for the service industries? What do you think your RTO does well in this area of activity? How did you achieve this?

12. What are some major foci of staff development programs that you provide for your Service Skills teachers and/or that your teachers undertake? How do you decide what to focus on (prompts - feedback from corporate clients, from students, from departmental heads)?

13. What are the expectations of your RTO in relation to industry currency for Service Skills teachers? Do you have formally-expressed requirements or programs? Are more informal means undertaken?

14. What would you say needs to happen to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers/trainers delivering training for the Service Industries– in your company, in RTOs more generally ? What might assist or impede this?

**Service skills teacher/trainer (2)**

1. What is your role within the RTO? Please briefly describe your working experience before taking on your role. Do you work full-time/part-time, exclusively in teaching or other duties etc?

2. Please describe the nature of your teaching/training/assessing in Service Skills qualifications (eg on-site at the RTO/mainly work-place based etc.) Do you undertake any delivery of non-qualification-based training in Service Skills, and if so, please describe it?

3. Please describe briefly the nature of the Service Skills learners that you teach/assess– eg age, domestic/international, individually enrolled/ corporate business.

4. What do you think are the most satisfying things about teaching for the service industries? and the most challenging or frustrating things about the role?

5. What do you consider to be best practice delivery and assessment for these industries?

6. What's more important for teachers and trainers -industry skills & knowledge or education skills & knowledge? (*use the scale used in survey - attached*)

7. What do you think your RTO does well in terms of teaching/training for the service industries? How did the RTO achieve this?

8. What is your view of the desired nature of VET practitioners delivering training for the service industries?

9. What views are passed onto you by corporate clients or by students/learners about the desired nature of VET practitioners delivering training for the service industries?

10. Please describe some staff development programs that you have undertaken that relate to teaching/training/assessing in the Service Skills industry area. Who provided these programs? What made you decide to undertake them?

11. What are the expectations of your RTO in relation to industry currency for Service Skills teachers? Are there formally-expressed requirements or programs? Are more informal means undertaken by yourself or by other teachers?

12. In what other ways have you learned to be a good teacher/trainer/assessor for the service industries?

13. What distinguishes a good teacher for the Service Industries?

14. In an ideal situation, what would you say needs to happen to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers/trainers delivering training for the Service Industries– in your company, in RTOs more generally ? What might assist or impede this?

**Students/learners enrolled in service industries qualifications/programs (2)**

1. In what qualification or program of learning are you currently enrolled in at this RTO? How long have you been doing it? Are you currently working? If so in what sort of job? (prompt: does it relate to your course?)

2. Have you done a VET qualification previously or concurrently? (Provide details: qualification, employer, completion)

3. Why did you decide to undertake this qualification/program? What is your career plan and/or plan for further study, and how does this fit in with it?

4. Where and in what mode do you undertake your learning (eg on the job, in off the job training)?

5. During the period of your course, what have you learned about the XXX (eg retail) industry and how have you learned it?

6. Generally speaking, what have been the most satisfying things about your current qualification/program? and the most challenging or frustrating things about it?

7. If you're learning mainly at the RTO, have you had any work placements in industry during this course of study? Would you like to comment about your placements and how they have been organised? What role did the teacher/trainer play?

8. What are some observations that you'd like to make about the way in which you've been taught/trained and the way that you've been assessed?

9. What's more important for teachers and trainers delivering and assessing on the course that you're enrolled in -industry skills & knowledge or education skills & knowledge? (*use the scale used in survey - attached*)

10. Think about a good teacher/trainer on your course and one that's not so good. What distinguishes a good teacher for the Service Industries?

11. What would you say needs to happen to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers/trainers delivering training for the Service Industries–in the RTO that you are enrolled in, and more generally ?

**HR Manager or senior manager in partnering enterprise (1 or 2)**

1.  What is your role within the organisation? Please briefly describe your working experience before taking on your role.

2.  How much of your business relates to areas covered by Service Skills qualifications? (prompt with list of Service Skills TPs)?

3.  Please describe the nature of the training that your employees receive in Service Skills qualifications (eg on-site at the RTO/mainly work-place based etc.) Do you purchase or provide non-qualification-based training in Service Skills, and if so, please describe it?

4.  Please describe briefly the nature of your employees that undertake Service Skills training – eg age, education levels, individually enrolled/ corporate business.

5.  Do you have in-house trainers and assessors that work with  XX  or other RTOs?

6.  What is your view of the desired nature of RTO-based VET practitioners delivering training for the service industries? What is your view of the desired nature of enterprise-based trainers and assessors delivering training for the service industries?

7.  What views are passed onto you by your employees (either learners, or those working with RTO teachers and trainers) about the desired nature of VET practitioners delivering training for the service industries?

8.  What's more important for teachers and trainers in the areas for which you purchase or deliver service skills training  -industry skills & knowledge or education skills & knowledge? (*use the scale used in survey (attached) – if they purchase more than one eg retail, hospitality, seek a response in for each*)

9.  What do you think XXX  RTO does well in Service Skills teaching/training? How do you think that they achieved this?

10. Do you work with XXX RTO on issues to do with teaching, training and assessing? If so, can you describe the sorts of things that you talk about?

11. What would you say needs to happen to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers/trainers delivering training for the Service Industries– in your own company, in RTOs, and more generally? What might assist or impede this?