Submission to the Productivity Commission

Education and Training Workforce: Vocational Education and Training

from the NSW Adult and Community Education Unit,

NSW Department of Education and Training

The Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector in NSW includes a network of 49 not-for-profit, community colleges operating as independently owned and managed organizations. The NSW Government, through the Adult and Community Education Unit, provides support and some funding to ACE providers.

Over 3,000 people are employed by these community colleges.

In 2009 these providers recorded a total of 281,243 individual enrolments in a unit of competency or module of study which resulted in 6,096,339 hours of tuition. A total of 115,029 NSW residents over the age of 15 years and including members of many diverse communities, were enrolled in adult and community education across the state in metropolitan, rural and remote areas.

There was strong participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who accounted for 2.5% of ACE students as compared to 1.6% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the wider community.

Over sixty percent of enrolments were in vocational-related courses, which totalled more than 4.6 million tuition hours.

Feedback from Community Colleges on VET Workforce Issues

In June 2010 the NSW ACE Unit, NSW Department of Education and Training, held an Adult and Community Education Stakeholders Forum in Sydney. Attendance was by invitation to ensure a diverse and informed cross section of the ACE sector, including senior college teaching and management staff.

As a result of the forum a number of issues relevant to VET workforce future development and retention were discussed. The observations from the stakeholders in relation to these issues are recorded in this submission.

The ACE Unit will also take these issues under consideration.

ISSUES FOR THE VET WORKFORCE IN ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Qualifications, Awards and Conditions

- The new Modern Award TESOL structure for community college teachers is unrealistic with the required qualifications and level of pay

- The relevance of higher training qualifications – in some instances trainers are overly qualified for the subject being taught.

- Government funding awarded for literacy programs does not always reflect Modern Award rates

- Pay rates for LLN and TESOL teachers under the Modern Award is insufficient to cover costs for quality services

- Weighting to support delivery - Different funding rates should apply to reflect the type of trainer qualifications that are required for specific delivery. Particularly in the case of clients who require more intensive support.

Sustainability and Investment in ACE and VET Staff

- Short term contracts affect continuity; retention and investment in professional development

- Retaining suitably qualified and experienced staff particularly those working with social inclusion/equity clients. One strategy would be to provide long term funding commitment (such as a 3 year funding cycle) to allow ACE providers to develop sustainable programs that support theses clients and provide work security.

Deepening of Skills

- Funding is required to assist with the enhancement of professional development of staff to maintain industry and training currency

- Promotion of skills development and portability of skills across the VET Sector could be supported by:
  - Individual pathway plans for teachers/trainers/admin and management staff
  - professional development to multi skill trainers
  - professional development for administrative and management staff to encourage better governance and more efficient use of staff

- Individual pathway plans for VET staff are recommended. Funding is required to develop and administer this as a state based or national system.

- System for industry to provide/validate currency of on-the-job skills for trainers

- Mapping current qualifications to Certificate IV in TAA/ TAE - Currently trainers/assessors are required to have the Certificate IV in TAA/TAE in addition to

other qualifications (such as TESOL) which may overlap, particularly in relation to teaching qualifications. Need to minimise duplicating qualifications.

- Introduction of a Credit Transfer system for the mapping of competencies/learning outcomes from all teaching qualifications to the Certificate IV in TAA/TAE for teachers/trainers/assessors would avoid overlap/duplication of competencies

- Effective utilisation of technology - Skills could be enhanced by effective use of technology such as training staff in the use of *moodle* as an interactive conference resource and other e-learning resources such as smart boards.

- Collegiate support for trainers through strategies such as:
  - Creation of a national program to develop proactive approaches for Language, Literacy and Numeracy and VET practitioners to work together and improve the understanding/utilisation of both elements of the education and training system
  - Training passport to support casual VET staff build capacity and recognise professional development pathways linked to their individual pathway plans.