

From the President

Reflections on VET–‘fee-for-service’ activity: a common theme in thirty years of restructures which deserves more research



On being bestowed with the great privilege of becoming President of AVETRA, I began to reflect back on my thirty odd years in the sector. A

constant theme for this entire period has been the almost constant restructuring. Yet nearly every restructure of at least the TAFE systems has had very similar objectives – even if the tactics vary 180 degrees from full scale devolution to full scale centralisation. The stated objectives nearly always include reducing overhead costs, putting more resources into frontline teaching and reducing dependency on government funding. The last pronouncement is based on what appear to be often untested assumptions about the size of the actual ‘fee-for-service’ or the ‘Business to Business’ (B2B) market and the capacity and capability of TAFE’s to service clients in these market segments. I think that deserves further research.

My first Australian restructure was a result of Brian Scott’s report, *‘TAFEs commission for the 1990s: restructuring vocational, basic and adult education’*. I say in Australia because in 1989 I was escaping the merger of my then college in Hertfordshire, England with a near neighbour. Scott is mainly remembered for his view that within eight years TAFE NSW should become 50% self-funding. Scott identified three core elements from where this 50% would come from - efficiency improvements, industry contributions but mainly vastly increased ‘fee-for-service’ programs for both enterprises and international customers (Scott pxiv).

The need for TAFE systems to increase ‘fee-for-service’ training for enterprises was also a major theme of the contemporary investigation chaired by Ivan Deveson on the *‘Training costs of award restructuring: report of the Training Costs Review Committee’*. Unlike Scott this investigation was a national one. Award restructuring would require a more

highly skilled workforce. Much of the additional training and workforce development required would need to be paid for by industry, even if delivered by TAFE on a ‘fee-for service’ basis. Deveson, unlike Scott, did some detailed analysis of the size of the market for this training. Based on research commissioned from Pappas, Carter, Evans and Koop and the Victorian State Training Board Business Development Branch, the Deveson committee believed it would be realistic for ‘fee-for-service’ revenues in TAFE (there was no VET then and far fewer private providers) nationally to grow from the current average of 4.2% to between 15 to 20% of total recurrent funding within five years (Deveson p56).

Performance

So what do we know about how TAFE systems have done in reaching these initial targets?

Well overall, at first sight, according to the NCVET Financial information for 2016, public providers nationally are just short of the lower end of the Deveson targets. This publication reports that ‘fee-for-service’ activities represent 14.2% of total operating revenue amongst public providers, largely TAFE. Though this ‘fee-for-service’ revenue had increased in 2016 by around 3% from 2015, it had declined by 8% since 2012 (NCVERa p6).

Is this just theoretical now?

However, there are a few definitional issues which impact on these comparisons. It is clear Deveson was concerned with enterprise funded training or what TAFE’s now tend to call their B2B activities rather than their B2C (Business to individual Consumer or Student) activities.

Some would argue that changing funding regimes since the time of Scott and Deveson have made this all a bit theoretical and any income for a TAFE system is good income. For example, the NCVET count VET Fee Help Income not as ‘fee-for-service’ but in student fees and government funding.

B2B in TAFE systems

It is difficult to obtain accurate, detailed data because of confidentiality issues. I would be greatly interested in other conclusions. I stand to be corrected and informed. But an indication that TAFE is not the dominant player in the contracted B2B enterprise training market is given in an answer to Senator Lee Rhiannon at Senate Estimates by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training about the multimillion dollar National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF). The NWDF provided subsidies to employers of between 33 and 66% depending on size to engage an RTO to deliver accredited, nationally recognised training to their existing workforces. The enterprise could select the RTO. Out of over 70,000 enrolments public providers delivered less than 14% (Senate p1).

Another indication of the size and characteristics of the VET market is given in the NCVER's total VET Students and Courses for 2016. Of 30 million total VET subject enrolments, 55.9 % were with private training providers, 28.4% in TAFE and only 2.9% with Enterprise Training providers. The rest were with schools, universities and adult and community education providers. (NCVERb p21)

Within private providers over 60% of their subject enrolments were domestic 'fee-for-service' enrolments. Nationally 34.2% of total VET subject enrolments (TAFE and private providers) were domestic 'fee-for-service' enrolments with private providers.

Do these statistics mean that there is a large market for enterprise, B2B contracted, 'fee-for-service' training that TAFE systems could potentially tap into and thus finally reach the Scott and Deveson targets? What we do not know is how many of these 'fee-for-service' enrolments with private providers were individuals paying for their own training – an individual paying the full commercial fee for a Diploma in Beauty rather than an employee being sent on a Skillset 'working in confined spaces' enterprise training program. We do know, however, from the NCVER statistics that the 'fee-for-service' market delivered by enterprise owned RTOs is very small.

More have I seen questions than answers

Twenty-eight years on it seems difficult to draw any definitive conclusions beyond saying that Scott and Deveson were possibly over-optimistic about TAFE and the B2B, 'fee-for-service' market. Other restructures have been similarly optimistic. Data in the public domain tells us there is a lot of privately-funded training and a lot of it is delivered by small private providers. But much of this commercial training is initiated by individuals not enterprises. What the size of the enterprise-funded market actually is seems less certain. I have seen some private market estimates by research companies, but these tend not to differentiate between private and public funds or between individual and enterprise funded training. Perhaps this is fine, but I for one would be interested to know more.

Can I encourage our fine research community to look at this? Maybe the 'fee-for-service' or 'B2B' market is large and has never really been tapped. If it is not, maybe a few restructures had some shaky premises which might help to explain why they are so frequent.

References

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- Senate Committee: Education and Employment, QUESTION ON NOTICE, Additional Estimates 2014 – 2015, Outcome: Skills and Training, Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000103, Senator Rhiannon Lee provided in writing.

Robin Shreeve, President

A MINUTE WITH RUTH SCHUBERT

Finally, hope is on the horizon for vocational education.



After all, how many reviews, senate inquiries, subcommittees, and research reports does it take to realise that our vocational education system is critically in need of a new bipartisan vision for the next 30 years. Well it appears the Federal Labor Opposition have paid

attention, with the recent announcement of a talented group of leaders and stakeholders tasked with the role of defining the terms of reference for a once in a generation review into post-secondary education, with the emphasis on vocational education.

So where to start? That perhaps has always been the problem. The issues have been and are almost overwhelming and have resulted in continuous and ineffective tinkering with parts of the system. Of course, that is why such a review is needed. It does, however, require visionary leadership both to design the architecture of the system and to pay attention to the finer detail of how will it work.

At the heart of the problem is the very design of the system itself. What type and number of institutions are required to deliver the outcomes we need? How are these institutions to be funded? What is to be the governance or independence of these institutions? How will vocational education institutions relate to existing higher education providers? These are fundamental questions that other international jurisdictions have managed to address in redesigning their systems. A few of note are Canada and several European States (in particular, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany). But it is not just these countries that have addressed these issues; countries as diverse as China and Brazil have also implemented new visions for their vocational education systems.

The Colleges and Institutes in the Canadian system are essentially higher vocational institutions that have the look and feel of large comprehensive TAFEs with a couple of important exceptions. These Institutions are recognised and supported by each province as being trusted institutions providing trusted qualifications with a distinct mission which is equal to but different from universities. The role performed by the institutions is central to the economic and social development of the province, as they not only provide high quality vocational education but also undertake applied research to provide business solutions largely but not exclusively with small medium enterprises. This means that they are an essential part of the innovation system.

The Netherlands, in typical pragmatic fashion, has over the last 20 years reinvigorated and redefined its vocation institutions with a series of major reforms; these institutions are now called Universities of Applied Sciences and they also look and feel like high performing mature TAFEs. Their distinct mission is to be equal to but different from that of research intensive universities. In focussing on collaboration and *knowledge circulation* as part of innovation ecosystems they are able not only to provide high quality vocational education, but also to work together with enterprises and other educational institutions in the application and commercialisation of new products and processes.

What these countries have in common is the high level of trust between the social partners (that is, industry, government, unions and education institutions). They are anchored in their place with local industry, and have not suffered the wrecking bull of a private training market. Formal tertiary study in this country and virtually around the world is predominantly funded by the State, with the share of the cost increasingly borne by the individual; however, it remains true that it is in the national interest of all countries to have a highly educated and skilled society.

In Australia the elephant in the room is of course the concept of an effective and open training market. Such a concept is flawed and cannot hope to enable the

achievement of an educated and skilled society, a fundamental national interest. Individuals participating in formal study need trusted institutions that are anchored in their local communities and industry. This is mainly because students who undertake a formal qualification will do so less than a handful of times in their lifetime and because they will only really know how good the study is when they have completed the course (also known as *an experience good*).

This is not a black and white argument about public and private providers, and is not to deny the role that quality niche and not-for-profit private providers can play in the system; however, the role, function, and number of these providers accessing public funds needs to be carefully and strategically managed for the benefit of students and the wider society. The last thing Australia needs is more of the blatant rorting by some corporatised private providers evident in recent years around the VET FEE HELP debacle. A recent presentation by the CEO of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) revealed that the *not for profit* private providers seeking status as higher education providers had a low risk profile equivalent to that of universities. In the same presentation, however, it was clear that in implementing its policy of 'a high front gate' to entry TEQSA was also cautious about admitting new higher education providers to the sector. It is a pity that this careful and savvy approach was not applied to RTOs seeking to access public funds for the past 20 years. Still on the positive side it does show Australia can learn from past mistakes.

Australia's lack of policy clarity, inconsistency between States and political parties, chronic under-funding and endless tinkering means our vocational education system is no longer considered world class, even though despite the interference some institutions still meet this benchmark. So,

can our system be rebuilt and be fit for purpose in a world with rapid changes in technology? Yes of course. This is best demonstrated by Victoria, the self-proclaimed *Education State*, a State that has demonstrated the very worst excesses of a training market and yet now is again, the leading State in vocational education reform. For the last four years the Andrew's Government has systematically re-established and re-invested in TAFE to make it central to the system. Victoria alone has a governance model for TAFE institutions (originally modelled on the former Colleges of Advanced Education) that is more closely akin to university governance. Victoria is also fortunate to have in place mature and entrepreneurial TAFE institutions and dual sectors that have survived the maelstrom of the past few years. Other States have endured massive restructures of their Institutions and frequent changes in political direction.

What then is required of the generational review recently announced by the Federal Opposition? Although the countless range of issues that need addressing is a list too long to elaborate on here, we are seeing for the first time in many a year (yes, almost a generation) the emergence of a consensus about the need for fundamental reform and reinvigoration of the vocational system, with an emphasis on the central role of TAFE. This then gives hope to those within the sector that TAFE will again be regarded and supported as an essential part of the national tertiary education system, and that the trust of students and industry can be restored to previous levels. Fingers crossed!

Dr Ruth Schubert

Senior Fellow - LH Martin Institute, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, and **Principal Consultant** – Schubert, Lehmann & Hartley

Appointments and reappointments



The Hon. David Pisoni
Minister for Industry and Skills, South Australia
https://www.stevenmarshall.com.au/david_pisoni_mp



The Hon. John Gardner
Minister for Education, South Australia
https://www.stevenmarshall.com.au/john_gardner_mp
<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/department/about-department/minister-education/about-minister-education>



Professor John Pollaers
Reappointed to Chair of the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC)



Tara Diamond
Reappointed as Commonwealth representative on the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC)

VALE – ROSALIND CARTER

It is with great sadness that we learned Dr Rosalind Carter passed away on, 25 May 2018 (her 58th birthday), at Wahroonga, New South Wales.

Ros was a long-time advocate for vocational education and training, her devotion to the education of others was exceptional. Her commitment to quality teaching and learning in vocational education and training was well recognised and one that she pursued with passion and dedication. Ros's legacy and one of her lasting contributions was to promote an Applied Research approach to the Learning and Teaching Framework in TAFE NSW higher education programs. This framework sets out three underpinning principles: Applied Teaching; Applied Learning and Applied Research. Today, this approach provides opportunities for students and teachers to collaborate with business and industry to create new, continuous and unique learning experiences.

From the first year of her EdD, Ros began to attend and submit papers at VET conferences including but not limited to: AVETRA, UTS, NCVER and JVET. She was always grateful for the support and friendliness of seasoned researchers. Over time she became a dedicated individual who mentored, encouraged and provided life-changing advice and opportunities to others through education. She enriched the lives of everyone with whom she came in contact. She was dedicated, passionate and put others before herself. Rosalind retired as Dean, TAFE NSW Higher Education in March 2018 following 37 years of service. By embedding Applied Research in TAFE NSW Higher Education curriculum, Ros's work substantially continues to contribute to relevance and currency in student learning and teaching practice.

Ros's contribution will live on through her writing with many hundreds of students both past and future, benefitting from learning in the TAFE NSW Higher Education curriculum. On behalf of all colleagues in the VET community, I extend our deepest condolences to: Ros's mother Heather; brother Mark; sister Ruth and their families. The VET community has lost an amazing individual!

Awards and recognitions

Congratulations to Dr Mike Brown from La Trobe University, who can be seen here receiving from the President of AVETRA (Robin Shreeve) the award for the 2018 AVETRA Journal Article of the Year for his article: 'The tradies' entrance into teaching: the challenges in designing teacher education for vocational education and training in schools', *International Journal of Training Research*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14480220.2017.1350199>



Have you visited the Educator Hub site recently? <http://avetraeducatorhub.org/just-like-avetra-this-hub-is-set-up-to-bringaustralias-vet-research-community-together/>. There are links to AVETRA research tools and other current research issues, a blog to discuss your research, and an opportunity to network with other researchers/inquirers in the VET sector. The Hub is free, so we hope you will involve yourselves (from Linda Simon, AVETRA Executive member).

International Project at Griffith University

Singapore learning and innovation research project

Long-standing AVETRA member Professor Stephen Billett from Griffith University in Brisbane is currently working with Singapore colleagues on a research project funded by the Singapore Ministry of Education that seeks to align learning and innovation in small to medium size enterprises (SMEs). The project engages with enterprises and workers in the advanced manufacturing and aged care sectors in Singapore, and involves site visits, observations of work and interviews with workers. Singapore is particularly concerned to find ways in which its workforce can be provided with opportunities to learn across working lives and to play a greater role in innovation in workplaces. Like Australia, Singapore is seeking to respond to global challenges and sustain its ability to remain economically strong. It views workplace innovation and ongoing learning as being central to this process. Linking the further development of workplaces through innovative practices and workers' lifelong learning is seen to be of interest to Singapore in workplaces, workers and its government. The project commenced in November 2017 and will continue through 2018 and report to government by the end of the year.



Pictured here are members of the research team. From left to right are Millie Lee, Dr Arthur Chia, Prof Stephen Billett, Dr Silin Yang (Project Leader), Tai Jo Fang and Aishah Alhadad.

AVETRA turns 21 this year



The Australian National Training Authority Research Advisory Council (ANTARAC) at its 1996 national conference paved the way for the establishment of AVETRA on July 1997. Here is a brief announcement that we found in *Training Agenda*, vol 5, no.3, August 1997, p7.

To ANTARAC, a child

As ANTARAC (Australian National Training Authority Research Advisory Council) raged against the dying of the light, a wish was expressed that there be a national independent association of VET researchers. The wish won the unanimous support of delegates attending the final

ANTARAC Conference in Melbourne in November 1996 and a brain child was conceived.

After an eventful gestation involving a volunteer interim committee and a three-person interim executive, AVETRA (Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association), last-born child of ANTARAC was introduced to the world on 1 July 1997.

The Association's first national conference will be held in Sydney in February 1998, when office-bearers will be elected. In the meantime, the association's business will be conducted by a small executive comprising Professor Leo Maglen, head of the University of Melbourne's VET department, Karen Whittingham of TAFE NSW and Chris Robinson of NCVER.

AVETRA's aim is to create a network of VET researchers with a view to promoting VET research and research training, reviewing research priorities and providing platforms for the promotion and dissemination of research findings. To assist in these endeavours, AVETRA will have the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Vocational Education and Training as its official independent journal, and a twice-yearly newsletter. It will also conduct its own national research conferences.

Any individual who is engaged in, or has an interest in, VET research is urged to join the Association by completing the form below. Membership, is not however, open to institutions organisations or corporations.

Industry Insights: a new online tool

The Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) recently launched a new online resource to help ensure vocational education and training (VET) qualifications and skills are evidence based and meeting the needs of industry. The National Industry Insights Report combines industry intelligence from the AISC's network of 64 Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) with broader labour market and training data. 'We need a workforce that can adapt to and take advantage of new opportunities as the nature of work changes. This resource is part of the AISC's focus on creating a strong evidence base to inform VET training package development and ensure qualifications meet skills needs,' said AISC Chair, John Pollaers.

Below are the contents of the letter sent by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training to Industry Reference Committee members, Skills Service Organisations and Australian Industry and Skills Committee members.

Dear Industry Reference Committee members, Skills Service Organisations and Australian Industry and Skills Committee members

I wish to advise that the full version of the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) commissioned National Industry Insights Report website has gone live. This latest version of the website now includes national overview pages along with the previously published industry content. The national overview pages provide analysis of industry skills needs, and the factors and trends affecting the demand for skills at a national and cross-industry level.

As you will be aware, the AISC commissioned NCVER to develop the National Industry Insights Report website to be an easy to access information resource to help Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) make informed decisions about the review and development of training packages.

Thank you to all those that have been involved in providing comments on both the industry content pages and the national overview pages of the site during development. NCVER have taken account of comments

where possible. Where feedback has not been taken account of at this stage, it may yet be taken up as part of future website updates. NCVER will be updating the website in the coming months to reflect 2018 IRC Skills Forecasts and Proposed Schedules of Work as well as any relevant data releases.

The AISC hopes to see the site continue to evolve to support IRCs and SSOs with easy to access and relevant information. NCVER will be looking for ways to continue to improve the site and available information where possible.

You may provide ongoing feedback through the 'contact us' form on the website to help the resource continue to grow in usefulness. The site can be accessed at <https://nationalindustryinsights.aisc.net.au/> or by following the links from the AISC website at www.aisc.net.au

Regards,

National Policy Section, Industry Advice Branch, Australian Government Department of Education and Training

www.education.gov.au

Source: Manufacturers' monthly - <http://www.manmonthly.com.au/news/new-aisc-resource-gives-insight-future-skills-needs/>

Moving on to different pathways



IBSA CEO moving on

Skills Service Organisation and training resource provider, Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA), has announced its CEO, Patricia Neden, will be leaving the company in August. Patricia advised the Board of her intention not to seek a renewal of her contract. The Board accepted her decision with regret. IBSA Chair, John Vines OAM, stated, 'IBSA has been most fortunate to have had Patricia's service as an outstanding CEO. She has been instrumental in successfully responding to the challenges and opportunities which IBSA has faced.' He added, 'We have a strong management team in place and the Board is looking forward to furthering IBSA's role in industry collaboration through stakeholder engagement, and our services and products.' Patricia will work with the Board and senior staff until a successor is appointed to ensure a smooth transition. Patricia said, 'It's been a privilege to have led IBSA over ten great years. However, I've decided it's time to focus on other areas of interest, both professionally and personally. I'm incredibly proud of our accomplishments, achieved as a result of working

with committed teams of people.' Source: IBSA - <https://ibsa.org.au/ibsa-ceo-moving-on/>



NCVER MD moving on

At the March 2018 board meeting of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Managing Director Craig Fowler indicated his intention to retire from NCVER.

'Having been privileged to lead NCVER for three and a half years through a period of major reform of the company's activities, and in positive support of planned leadership succession to best benefit the company's future, including implementation of NCVER's new Strategic Plan 2017-20, I have decided that it is the right time to step down. This decision is reinforced by my desire to create new opportunities in which I can express and expand on my experience for the remaining part of my working life, as well as make more space and time for family commitments', Craig said.

Peter Shergold, Chair of the board said 'Whilst Board members fully appreciate the reasons that Craig wishes to look to new opportunities, he will be difficult to replace. Craig has set a strong foundation for NCVER in his time at the helm. Working closely with staff, government members

and the broader stakeholder community, Craig has set a clear strategic direction for significant change in the years ahead. Under his leadership new statistical collections have been added, new research initiated and new digitally-driven approaches to presenting complex data introduced.'

Source: <https://www.ncver.edu.au/about/news-and-events/media-releases/ncver-managing-director-to-step-down>

Stories making the news

Quick Links: Click on these links to get to the home pages of the different State Training Authorities.

- Australian Capital Territory (ACT) - [Skills Canberra](#)
- New South Wales (NSW) - [Training Services NSW](#)
- Northern Territory (NT) - [Department of Trade, Business and Innovation](#)
- Queensland - [Department of Education and Training](#)
- South Australia (SA) - [Department of State Development](#)
- Tasmania - [Skills Tasmania](#)
- Victoria - [Department of Education and Training](#)
- Western Australia (WA) - [Department of Training and Workforce Development](#)

The Victorian government introduces legislation to support jobs for local workers

New laws to be introduced into Victorian State Parliament to give priority to local workers and businesses. The Victorian Local Jobs First Bill, will make mandatory the implementation of a minimum local content on major projects. For construction projects this will be a 90% minimum of local workers. The Bill also aims to make mandatory the employment in these projects of local apprentices, trainees and cadets.



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Adelaide University and University SA are having talks about possible merger

The Vice Chancellors of Adelaide University and UniSA are putting aside six months to have extensive talks about whether or not there are benefits in merging the two universities. Groups to be consulted are university staff, students and alumni, as well as business, industry, government and members of the community.



180619 Adelaide

Is the gig economy for real?

In an article for the Washington Post Robert J Samuelson asks whether the gig economy is a myth. The gig economy comprises alternative jobs (for example, Uber jobs) where workers are often matched to jobs via online platforms. Analysing data about the US labour market he finds that over the last two decades long-term trends in this type of work have not increased. See more at:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/is-the-gig-economy-a-myth/2018/06/17/80b66cf4-70b2-11e8-bd50-b80389a4e569_story.html?utm_term=.be0c54745e42

South Australian employers are being encouraged to give their views in major skills survey

Minister for Industry and Skills David Pisoni has announced a major survey about South Australia's future skill needs. South Australian industry and people working in the vocational education and training sector are encouraged to have their say in the Industry Priority Qualifications (IPQ) survey. 'Businesses across South Australia need access to a skilled workforce so they are better able to invest and expand' said Minister Pisoni.



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States sign up to the Skilling Australians Fund

To date, South Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory have signed the Agreement. Under this new national partnership agreement states and territories agree to match federal funds to 'boost VET' and increase apprenticeship numbers and occupations in demand. A copy of the [National Partnership on the Skilling Australians Fund](#) (as signed over the last 10-11 days) is now available.

New ACER research report of sense of belonging in Australian school students

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), manages the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in Australia. Sense of belonging has been identified as one of the factors that predicts academic success at school. Australian students, on average, reported a poorer sense of belonging at school compared to students across the OECD. Source: The Conversation - <https://theconversation.com/many-australian-school-students-feel-they-dont-belong-in-school-new-research-97866> ; <https://research.acer.edu.au/ozpisa/30/>

20% tax on TAFE student loans

Directors of vocational education institutes (represented by TAFE Directors Australia) say that one of the factors leading to a steep decline in enrolments at TAFE is the need for diploma students to pay a 20% tax which the federal government calls a loan fee. The loan fee on a diploma costing \$12,774 is \$2256. These costs are added and becomes the total amount the student has to pay back to the government when their incomes reach the threshold for payment. See more at: Australian Financial Review - <http://www.afr.com/news/policy/education/tafe-tax-20180525-h10jao>

Automation will make lifelong learning a necessary part of work

Check out what President Macron of France says to delegates about investing in African start-ups at the VivaTech fair in Paris. Also check out some of the latest in innovation, including a robot for applying make-up.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QORrBGkLIM&feature=player_embedded. McKinsey's research highlights some of the productivity and performance benefits automation and artificial intelligence can bring when they are used for addressing disease and climate change. To see how this would affect the skills required for the future, [McKinsey's latest research analyzed skill requirements](#) in more than 800 occupations to see what proportion of time was spent on manual and cognitive skills and how these are estimated to change by 2030. See more at: Harvard Business Review - <https://hbr.org/2018/05/automation-will-make-lifelong-learning-a-necessary-part-of-work>

Audit report for TasTAFE recommends tightening up institutional processes

Jeremy Rockliff, Minister for Education and Training, tabled in Parliament, the full independent TasTAFE audit report. The report delivered recommendations across nine areas including credit card usage, recruitment and travel and accommodation. These recommendations are to be implemented by year's end.

Source: [ABC News - http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-24/tas-tastafe-leadership-criticised-in-audit/9796268](#)

The 2018-19 Federal budget

The Treasurer's budget speech did not focus on VET but planned spending on welfare, essential services and infrastructure will have implications for the sector.

Source: VDC - <https://vdc.edu.au/vdc-news/vet-and-the-2018-19-federal-budget/>

Labor's review of tertiary education will consider a range of issues

Shadow Minister for Education and Training Tanya Plibersek announced in March this year that if elected Labor will review current qualification structures, the mix of institutions, and financing models across the sectors. Labor will aim to 'put TAFE and unis on an equal footing' and will revitalise restoring demand-driven funding.

Source: The Conversation - <https://theconversation.com/six-things-labors-review-of-tertiary-education-should-consider-93496>

How to reverse poor STEM performance in Australian students

Director of Research Development and Quality Assurance at the Australian Council of Education Research (ACER) Dr Robert Timms has recommended some major reforms of the educational system to help raise the performance of Australian children in STEM subjects. 'Australia's unbalanced and fragmented STEM curriculum is leading to declining interest among students ... An integrated approach that focuses on practices, skills and capabilities, and not just disciplinary knowledge, will create a relevant context in which content can be learned.' He also recommended early intervention and a STEM-strong teaching work force.

Source: ACER - <https://rd.acer.org/article/reversing-australias-downward-spiral-in-stem>

Falling diploma enrolments in TAFE

TAFE diploma enrolments have fallen dramatically in the past five years Megan O'Connell from the Mitchell Institute at Victoria University, reports that they have fallen by 260,000 or 23 per cent. The number of individuals who took on a Commonwealth-funded student loan for a diploma in early childhood education fell by 63 per cent; the number IT diploma enrolments reduced by half.

Source: Triple J Hack - <http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/why-is-no-one-doing-tafe-diploma/9777332>

Updating South Australia's subsidised funding list

The new Marshall Government in South Australia is updating the Subsidised Training List. The new Minister for Industry and Skills, David Pisoni, reports that he has given more access to subsidised training for non-government training providers. 'That's an extra 250 courses and 1,700 training places ... covering defence, agriculture, health, construction and ICT', the minister said. The update is to be effective 1 July 2018 and 'moves it a step closer to a contestable training market and delivers employers and students increased choice' he went on to say.



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Boosting apprenticeships in Mackay (Queensland)

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and Minister for Training and Skills Development Shannon Fentiman have announced a \$1 million fund to encourage employers to take on apprentices and students to enter these pathways. 'Apprenticeships and traineeships set people up for quality jobs and are vital for growing the Queensland workforce,' she said.



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Linda Simon speaks with José Luis Fernandez Maure

Linda: José Luis, you are the Manager of the International Department at TKNIKA, the Basque Centre of Research and Applied Innovation in VET. What does this involve?

José Luis: Being involved in the development of research and Innovation projects demands an attitude of awareness in all the fields the different departments and colleges are working on. We need to know which are the references at world wide level and need to contact them to learn and then to transfer that knowledge to our own system, to anticipate to the changes that will happen in a near future. That is the reason why staff from the international department are members of the board at WFCP, members of the steering committee at TA3, members of CHAIN5, members of EFVET, members of UNESCO-UNEVOC, all of them significant international networks that work in the Professional and Technical Education and Training System.



TKNIKA also helps the Basque companies abroad training employees and future employees from different countries. We are also involved in training University and College teachers in the implementation of new methodologies to afford the change

Linda: Recently you visited Australia as a guest of the Victorian TAFE Association (VTA). What was the purpose of this trip?

José Luis: It was a fellowship program optimally organized by VTA. I had the chance to know a lot of teachers from the colleges and to share some workshops and conferences about entrepreneurship, industry 4.0, and challenge based collaborative learning. I felt very comfortable with all the attendants and should like to address to them to thank them for the interest and the collaboration that they showed in all the workshops.

Linda: You gave a presentation as the keynote speaker and undertook a workshop at the recent AVETRA VET Practitioner Research Conference. What were the main messages in your presentations?

José Luis: I tried to transmit some general ideas based on the following concepts:

- The Professional and Technical Education and Training System has to lead the strategies to afford the change that will happen with the 4th industrial revolution
- It must be a shared strategy. Doing it in an isolated way, will never contribute to the social and economical development of the country
- It needs to be a top to bottom and bottom up strategy, with a clear lead by the Education department and with the involvement of the colleges at all levels
- The strategy should be based on the principles of agreed flexibility, networking based on the strategic triangle, competitiveness based on collaboration, and a regional approach.
- The traditional learning system based on memorizing is finished
- We need to seduce the society to improve the attractiveness of the VET system
- It is a **must** for women to be involved in the decision-making bodies.

Linda: What messages do you have for those of us who work and research in Australia's VET system in terms of innovation and applied research, so that we can help to adopt some of your successful practices in the Basque country?

José Luis: I was very lucky because I had the chance to know a lot about the colleges in Australia and also to visit some of them. I am aware about the role that applied research plays in the colleges' strategies and consider that they are working very well but there are a couple of aspects that I think can be improved.

1. In general, the VET colleges don't have the habit to collaborate with each other and this limits the impact for the improvement of the system. I think that an institution similar to TKNIKA could coordinate all the colleges and make visible the outcomes of the innovation and applied research projects to the rest
2. It is necessary to define objectives and activities for the proper functioning of the strategic triangle, institutions, colleges, and the labour market.
3. We consider that entrepreneurship should be included in the curricula of the colleges as a way to prepare the students with competencies that will be valid for their professional and personal life.
4. Maybe I will not be right, but I consider that in general the internationalization is short term benefits oriented and leaves aside the real collaboration with organizations for the improvement of the policies on Innovation and Research.

Just to finish I should like to remark that we are nearer than we think in all the aspects regarding education but also regarding our ways of life. As I enjoyed Melbourne and the friendship of those I met, I should like also to invite you to visit our small Basque Country. It will be a real pleasure to welcome you



The beautiful Basque country: photos provided by José Luis.

Facts and figures: statistics from the Survey of International Onshore VET graduates



This trial survey investigates the outcomes for international onshore students who completed their vocational education and training in Australia in 2016. There were 42 923 international onshore graduates in the trial, and 37 690 graduates received an invitation to complete the survey. Of these graduates, 11 506 responded to the survey representing a response rate of 30.5%. Of these 8767 were from private training providers, 2243 were studying at TAFE institutes, 342 were from community education providers and 154 were studying VET qualifications at universities.

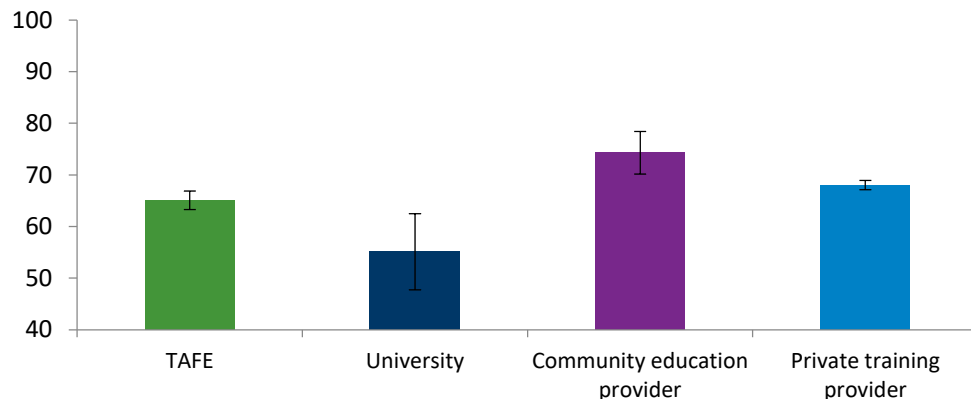
The following facts and figures are reproduced from the NCVER publication

<https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/international-onshore-vet-graduate-outcomes-2017>

Highlights

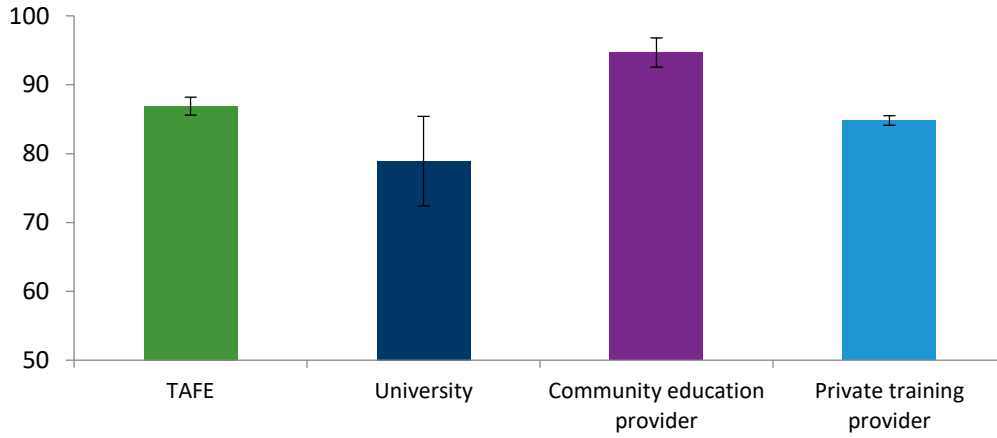
- 63.3% of international onshore graduates undertook training for employment-related reasons, 29.5% for personal reasons and 7.2% for further study reasons.
- 89.2% fully or partly achieved their main reason for training.
- 67.4% of international onshore graduates were employed after training.
- 47.7% were enrolled in further study after training.
- 82.0% were employed or enrolled in further study after training.
- 85.3% of international onshore graduates were satisfied with the overall quality of the training.
- 88.8% would recommend the training, and 84.8% their training provider.

International onshore VET graduates employed after training, by provider type, 2017 (%)

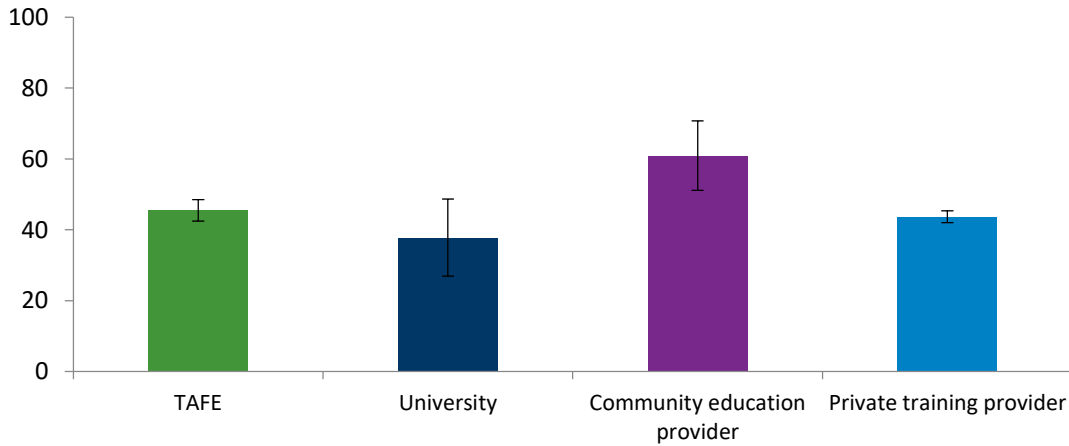


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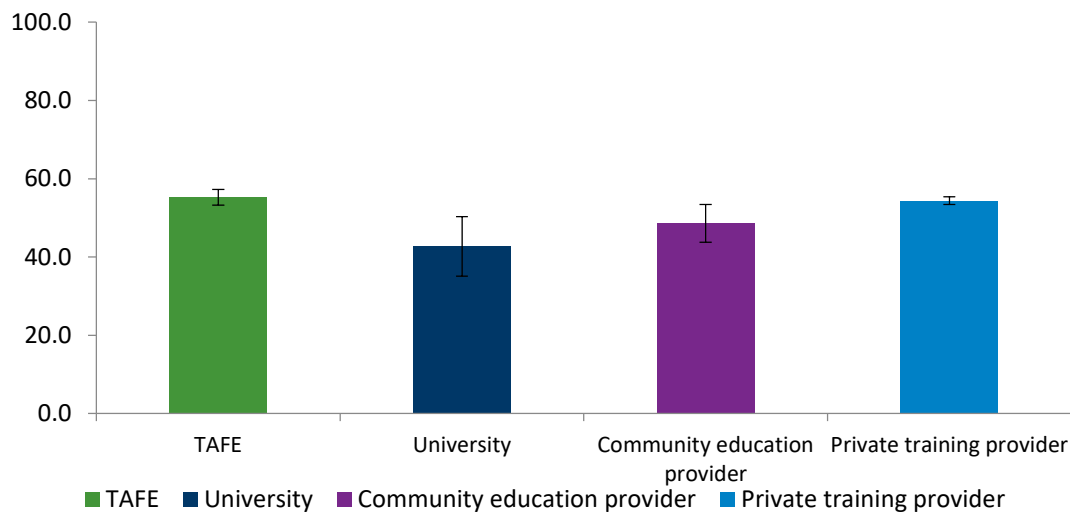
International onshore VET graduates employed or enrolled in further study after training, by provider type, 2017 (%)



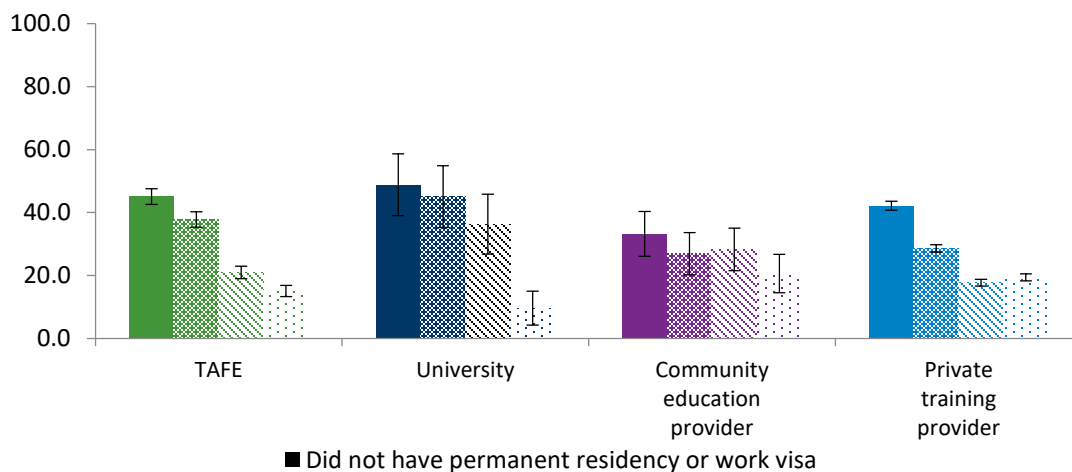
International onshore VET graduates not employed before training who were employed after training, by provider type, 2017 (%)



Improved employment status for international onshore VET graduates, by provider type 2017 (%)



Barriers encountered by international onshore VET graduates when looking for work, by provider type, 2017 (%)



To find out more about the survey and its other findings please feel free to contact or call Pip Granfield of NCVER at pip.granfield@ncver.edu.au, tel: 08 8230 8446

Resources for your research: NCVER's VOCEDplus data base



The considerable resources of the VOCEDplus data base can help you when you are starting up new research projects or literature reviews. They can be accessed at: <http://www.voced.edu.au>

The VOCEDplus Pod Network allows instant access to research and a multitude of resources in a convenient and efficient platform. <http://www.voced.edu.au/pod-network>

Link to the whole list of podlets: <http://www.voced.edu.au/podlets>

Link to the feedback form: <http://www.voced.edu.au/content/contact>

NCVER has developed another product to help you with your research work. This is the VET Knowledge Bank. Click here to start <http://www.voced.edu.au/vet-knowledge-bank>

VET Knowledge Bank

The VET Knowledge Bank contains a suite of products capturing Australia's diverse, complex and ever-changing vocational education and training (VET) system.

It aims to provide a collected memory of VET reference information.

The VET Knowledge Bank is a living, growing resource. More content will be added in the coming months.



Getting to know VET

Get a broad overview of different aspects of the VET system in Australia.



Policy initiatives

View a timeline of VET policies, programs and initiatives covering the last 20 years.



Governance

Access information about who governs and regulates VET in Australian.



Glossary of VET

Understand the terms and acronyms used in Australian VET.



History of VET

Trace the story of VET in Australia through timelines and key publications.



Landmark documents

Explore the evolution of VET in Australia through this collection of landmark documents.



Organisations and resources

Discover key Australian research organisations and useful VET resources.



Further reading

Read the main information sources consulted in developing the VET Knowledge Bank.

If you would like to know more about the VET Knowledge Bank you can contact the team at voced@edu.au

2018 Upcoming Conferences: details, dates and links

Australian Conferences



July 12-13, Australian Conference of Economists, *ACE 2018, Australia's Place in the World*, Canberra. See more at: http://esacentral.org.au/annual-conference-item/25300/ace-2018/?type_fr=407

August 12-13, Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) Research Conference 2018, *Teaching practices that make a difference: Insights from Research*, International Convention Centre, Sydney. See more at <https://www.acer.org/research-conference>

August 29-31, *ACPET Canberra 2018, ACPET National Conference and Asia Pacific International Education Forum (APIEF)* See more at <http://www.acpet2018.com.au/>

August 15-17, Joint international conference *Skills for a global future: working and learning together*, Sydney. This conference is co-hosted by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research and New Zealand Ako Aotearoa and Industry Training Federation. This is a coming together of the NCVER 'No Frills' conference and the New Zealand Vocational Education and Training Research Forum. AVETRA is one of the supporting organisations for this conference. See more at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/about/news-and-events/events/27th-national-vocational-education-and-training-research-conference-no-frills-2018>

September 13-14, *Velg National Conference 2018, Skilling Australia's VET Futures*. Adelaide Convention Centre. See more at <https://www.velgtraining.com/nvc>

October 2-5, South Australian Council of Teaching English as a second Language (SATESOL) and the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) Conference, *English language learning in a mobile world*. See more at <http://tesol.org.au/ACTA-Conference/ACTA-International-Conference-2018>

October 8-12, The World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics World Congress 2018, *Preparing for Skills Future Now*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, (hosted by TAFE Directors Australia supported by Victorian TAFE Association, with planning committee members coming from Box Hill Institute and Holmesglen Institute) See more at: <https://www.tda.edu.au/>

October 9-12, The Australian International Education Conference (AIEC), *Empowering a new generation*, Sydney. See more at: <http://www.aiec.idp.com/home>

November 13-15, Community Colleges Australia Annual Conference *Taking the Lead*, Sydney, See more at: <https://cca.edu.au/what-we-do/2018-cca-annual-conference/>

Check out this website to find conferences by topic and date to be held in Sydney <https://10times.com/sydney-au/education-training/conferences>

International Conferences



June 6-8, 3rd International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training. *Skills for employability and careers*, Winterthur, Switzerland. See more at <http://www.vpet-congress.ch/>

July 13-15, Association for Research in Post-compulsory Education (ARPCE), 3rd International ARPCE Conference, *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford. See more at:

<http://arpce.org.uk/conference-2018/>

July 17-19, SCUTREA (Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults), *'Lifelong Learning and the Pedagogy of Hope'*, University of Sheffield's Hotel and Conference Centre, Sheffield, United Kingdom. See more at <http://www.scutrea.ac.uk/>

July 5-6, Education and Employers and the Edge Foundation with support from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, *5th International Conference on Employer Engagement and Training*, London Westminster. See more at <https://www.educationandemployers.org/research/5th-international-conference-on-employer-engagement-and-training-2018-call-for-papers/>

August 12-15, IVETA International Conference 2018, *'Making technical and vocational education training the first choice'* Tsogo Sun, Cape Town, South Africa. See more at <http://www.sacpo.co.za/iveta-2018>

September 3 – 4, European Educational Research Association, *Inclusion and Exclusion, Resources for Educational Research?* Free University, Bolzano. See more at <http://www.eera-ecer.de/ecer-2018-bolzano/>

September 12-14, 9th international conference of the EARLI SIG 14 *Learning and professional development*, University of Geneva, Lausanne, Switzerland. See more at <http://unige.ch/earlisig14/>

Check out this website to find conferences by location, topic and date.

<https://10times.com/education-training/conferences>

Inaugural AVETRA VET Practitioner Research Conference was a success

The AVETRA VET Practitioner Research Conference was held on 26 and 27 April 2018 at the VET Development Centre in Melbourne. Thanks go to the Centre and the Victorian TAFE Association for their support and for helping to make the conference a success.



There were 66 people registered for the one and a half days of the conference; they came from across public and private VET sectors, with the largest single group coming from TAFE. The focus of the conference was on providing VET practitioner researchers the opportunity to present and discuss their research; a number of presenters were new researchers. There were also workshops aimed at giving participants the opportunity to further develop their research skills and knowledge. The presentation by the keynote speaker, José Luis Fernandez Maure from the Basque Country was very enlightening. An interview with José Luis also features in this newsletter.

A range of benefits were reported by participants in their conference evaluations; these included the following comments.

- *The main benefit is in bringing in a wider range of researchers into AVETRA. To sustain AVETRA, we need to 'grow' new researchers, 'new' contributors from sectors beyond universities and TAFE etc.*
- *There were many benefits, such as encouraging teachers in VET to be involved and come and present their work. I can't help but think that it is a shame that the NCVET Community of Practice scholarship program is no longer running as this would have been a great forum for VET scholars to attend workshops and present their work.*
- *I liked the variety of presentations including the 20 to 30-minute presentations and the 10-minute presentations. It is good to give presenters an option of times. I like the idea of reducing the cost to make the conference more affordable.*
- *For me the benefits of the conference were the opportunity to mingle and learn from others already involved in research and how you go about it, and the potential fields/topics covered.*
- *The environment was so warm and inviting, primarily because the VET research community are so awesome!*



AVETRA is considering a range of recommendations arising from the conference, including how we can continue such conferences in the future, and support a continuing scholarship for VET practitioner researchers.

Review by Linda Simon and Steven Hodge, AVETRA Executive.



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About AVETRA

AVETRA is the peak professional association for VET researchers. Its ability to be a sustainable and viable association depends on its membership. Members are urged to continue their membership and to encourage their colleagues to join AVETRA.

AVETRA services include:

- An annual VET international research conference
- Two editions of International Journal of Training Research per annum
- The AVETRA e-newsletter with the latest news in the VET sector as well as VET research twice a year.
- The new Research Today publication twice a year.
- OctoberVET workshops organised by AVETRA members in centres as widely spread as Perth, Darwin, Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.
- The AVETRA website with VET research links and information
- Awards for VET researchers including the Berwyn Clayton Award, The Ray Barker Award, and the AVETRA Best Paper Award.

HELP AVETRA help VET research and join now if you are not a member. Full \$190 (GST inclusive) and Student memberships \$95.00 including GST are available.

If you are interested in providing leads or contributing to this newsletter, please contact Josie Misko - josiemisko@ncver.edu.au

Note: AVETRA Membership for institutions and organisations has been formally endorsed. Arrangements are currently being made to enable institutions and organisations to join AVETRA on an annual basis.