

From the President



Dear Members

Thank you for your continued participation in AVETRA, which is all about keeping our members informed, connected and providing them with opportunities to learn about the trends and changes in the vocational education and training system. On behalf of the executive, I also want to thank you for your support of the executive who represent the wide range of people and groups involved in AVETRA and bring their skills in VET quality, research, systems, effective approaches to learning and assessment, management and the use of digital technologies (just to name a few) and of course their enthusiasm. The AVETRA Executive has a healthy mix of experienced and newer committee members who give generously of their time to help AVETRA meet the needs of the association. I encourage you to contact them with ideas about how we can best meet our goals as an association and make meaningful contributions to the VET research community. Some people are already working on projects with them.

The 2016 AVETRA conference was a high quality event and an excellent opportunity for members to meet, share their knowledge and experience and hear from the decision makers in the VET world. It also highlighted the importance of tapping into the perspectives of the wide range of people and groups

involved in the VET research world. Most importantly the conference demonstrated that the impact of the research and the connections made extend far beyond the classroom, the apprentice's workplace or the bureaucrat's office. It showed that diversity of perspectives, knowledge and experience, and underlying complexity, is AVETRA's strength in preparing for the VET research world of the future.

I would like to refer you to The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's position paper *Focus on Skills: Building a Better National VET System*, released in February 2016. This paper acknowledged that 'Australia needs a robust vocational education and training (VET) sector capable of delivering quality outcomes that meet the skills needs of industry, and boost workforce participation and social engagement.' The challenge for VET researchers and practitioners is to contribute to the development of a sound and coherent evidence base to inform policy decisions about the design and implementation of a VET system that is responsive to diverse local, national and international contexts and issues.

Some of the key (but not necessarily new) questions include;

- How do we prepare people to be adaptable and ready for the future workforce where we can't imagine many of the skills, knowledge or business and employment models that will have an impact on people's lives?
- How do we recognise that investment in VET training is a shared responsibility between governments, industry and community members, and balance the financial and in-kind investments to ensure high quality outcomes for all stakeholders? What is the impact of these factors on VET delivery and assessment?
- How do we continue to value and support those that work in VET as professional educators and change leaders?
- What will a transnational approach to education, work and business mean for the VET sector at all levels?

I'm sure you can think of many more.

What will be important as we go forward is to ensure we continue to build VET research capacity, knowledge and approaches that can help us ask insightful questions and provide the evidence to answer them. Part of our future will be changing research policy in Australia which emphasises impact, which can be advantageous for VET researchers who are actively engaged in working with stakeholders and focus on making difference. One of our challenges ahead will be to ensure the impact of VET research be effectively and accurately represented so we can continue to demonstrate the value of investment in VET research and VET researchers, nationally and internationally. Finding ways to include international partners will be an important part of growing AVETRA's voice and capacity to support members to address these challenges.

I look forward to walking this path together and to find ways to ensure you have ways to participate as the future of VET researchers.
Regards,

Ruth Wallace
President, AVETRA



A minute with

Gerald Burke, honorary member of the Faculty of Education at Monash University and of the LH Martin Institute at Melbourne University and former member of the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency

The financing of education and training is a long term interest and I have just completed a report for NCVET in this field. My report concerned data not included in the NCVET financial collection which focusses on the funds of training providers. An example of funding not included is the Australian Government's student support payments in Youth Allowance, Austudy and ABSTUDY which are designed to help persons of low means

participate as full-time students. Another example is government spending on incentive payments to employers of apprentices and trainees. Limited data are available on these forms of funding in budget papers or annual reports of government departments. Student financial support was examined in the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education (2008). Bradley was concerned with the decline in educational participation of students from lower socio-economic background. Most of Bradley's recommendations on easing access to the assistance were adopted.

Bradley's concern was for university students but VET students should have benefitted from the liberalization of the funding schemes. The number of VET students on benefits, however, has not increased while the number of higher education students is markedly higher. Given the lower socioeconomic background on average of VET students and an increase in the total number of full-time VET students this is a matter of surprise and concern. More precise analysis is needed. And for this we need regular and more detailed data on the students assisted and the expenditures.

On employer incentives there are aggregate data for the Australian government's contribution to apprentice and trainee support but there is little consistent data available on the various forms of support by the states and territories.

Australian government funding of employer incentives has changed sharply in recent years following the report of the Expert Panel on Apprenticeships in 2011. The Expert Panel recommended that 'Australian Government support should focus on occupations that have tangible and enduring value for the economy' – traditional trades and the newer forms such as community services, health services and information technology. Employer incentives are now largely restricted to traditional trades and to training for some 'priority occupations' (Aged Care, Childcare, Disability Care Worker and Enrolled Nursing). The Expert Panel recognised that this would mean withdrawal of incentives for hospitality, clerical and administrative workers, sales workers, and machinery operators and drivers – some of which are traditionally female dominated. The number of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements fell 50 per cent between 2012 and 2014 with the decline concentrated in traineeships. Female commencements have fallen more than male. As expected the Australian Government's outlays on employer incentives, reported in the national budget, are now roughly half the level they were early this decade.

Issues of concern to researchers and policy makers are equity in participation in VET and the extent to which VET meets the needs of the economy. Student assistance and employer incentives are relevant to these issues but are little researched. The lack of publicly available information on the funding and the characteristics of those supported seems to be a major reason for this neglect. It would be good if NCVET with the assistance of Commonwealth and State and Territory governments was able to develop better data in these areas.



AVETRA welcomes

Mr Mark Paterson AO has been appointed to the position of Commissioner for Regulatory Operations. According to ASQA Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer, Chris Robinson, 'Mr Paterson's government and industry experience would further enhance the authority's regulation of the vocational education and training sector'. Mr Paterson will be based in Sydney.

<http://www.asqa.gov.au/news/3066/appointment-of-new-commissioner1.html>

Visiting researcher from the Ministry of Employment and Labour (MOEL), South Korea



Mr Doin Pyun has spent the last six months or so at the National Centre for Vocational Education in Adelaide completing a study on how to establish an industry-driven VET system in Korea based on the Australian system. He is well prepared to undertake such a task. Doin has worked for the last 16 years in MOEL's policy bureaus for public employment, employment insurance, and vocational training. He has been responsible for the management of training providers, and estimation of government-funded training and assessment programmes. Since

2013 he has also been involved in the development of reforms of the Korean VET qualification system. Doin says that during his stay he has been able to learn a lot about the VET system in Australia, and that his experience of life and work in Australia has left a strong and lasting impression. He and his family have also been able to enjoy what the Australian country side has to offer, and have particularly enjoyed the natural beauty of Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln.

Early Career Researchers' Breakfast AVETRA Conference 2016



One of the exciting events at the AVETRA conference this year was the opportunity to hold an Early Career Researchers' Breakfast. Not all who turned up were beginning researchers, some participants just wanted to

provide their expertise and experience. But it was a great opportunity to talk about research and what was needed in a supportive role. There were three key messages for AVETRA. Conference participants wanted:

- Networking – the chance to stay in touch with people and happenings in the VET world
- Research mentoring – particularly for those getting started, they sought feedback on ideas and wanted advice on research options
- Publication opportunities – to know where to publish, how to write, and opportunities for collaborative writing

The AVETRA Executive will consider these issues further, but you might also have other ideas as to how we make all of this a reality. For a start, the AVETRA Educator Hub has set out to address many of these issues, particularly around networking. If you are not connected to the Hub, please follow the link below: avetraeducatorhub.org.



Congratulations Erica!!!

The Ray Barker Award for Distinguished Service to VET research was awarded to Professor Erica Smith from Federation University.

This award, which is conferred only every two years, was instituted as a way of recognising distinguished and long-term contributions to research and scholarship in vocational education and training.

Michele Simons, from the University of Western Sydney and President of AVETRA, who nominated Professor Smith for the award,

referred to her research achievements over a period of 25 years

‘Across this sweep of time and experience Erica has made contributions that have shaped policy and practice and influenced the thinking and practice of many teachers and trainers; Erica is a scholar of global significance’, Professor Simon said.

Professor Smith said it was an honour to be nominated for, and to win, this award.

‘This is the leading award in VET research and I was delighted that in the awarding ceremony my contributions to VET policy and practice nationally and internationally, as well as to scholarship, were cited’, Professor Smith said.

Ray Barker was a notable VET practitioner and scholar, as well as a major contributor to several Australian industries.

In his latter years Dr Barker was a benefactor to VET research in Australia.

‘I was particularly pleased to receive this award, as Dr Barker’s thesis on apprenticeships was one of the first works I read when commencing my PhD studies 20 years ago’, Professor Smith said.

(Story sourced with permission from Federation University website

http://federation.edu.au/news?announcement_id=20913&action=view_announcement&category_id=&utm_source=feduni_news&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=FedNews)

Congratulations Ross!!!

Linda Simon interviews Dr Ross McLennan, TAFE Brisbane, recipient of TAFE/AVETRA scholarship for 2016.



Linda: Who is Ross McLennan?

Ross: I am a Senior Lecturer in the new Bachelor of Contemporary Music Practice degree at TAFE Brisbane. This is delivered in partnership with the University of Canberra. I am a passionate teacher and educational designer, as well as a composer for film and

television. I have a Bachelor of Music from the Queensland Conservatorium, a Master of Philosophy from the University of Cambridge and a Ph.D. from the University of Queensland.

Linda: What is your project?

Ross: The apprenticeship model is used in the Trades. The paid internship model is used in Medicine and Law. But the majority of studies do not include any form of paid work experience for their students. In the United States, student debt has now superseded credit card debt. Australia is fast following suit. Education fees and student debt are on the rise, deregulation of Universities is on the Government agenda and innovative solutions are thin on the ground.

My TDA/AVETRA project explores the viability and implementation of a new internship model, which allows students to work with Industry on campus as part of their academic programs. It will provide Industry with tax benefits, as well as much needed student-delivered services and, research. In return, Industry will contribute to a scholarship trust fund, which is used to offset student debt upon graduation.

Linda: What do you hope to achieve?

Ross: In the short term I hope to help set up a pilot scheme of the model at TAFE Brisbane. In the long term, I hope this model can be implemented at a National level, in vocational and higher education.



Congratulations Don and Steven!!!!

The **AVETRA 2016 Conference paper of the year award** was presented to **Don Zoellner from the Northern Institute**, Charles Darwin University, Alice Springs, NT, Australia for his paper 'Fixing problematic apprentice systems: there is never a clean slate'.

Abstract: This paper compares major features of the British and Australian apprenticeship systems in order to explain why the English have invoked an employer levy to finance the formal apprenticeship system while the Australian response has been to use student loans. It was noted that even though the systems exhibit similar characteristics and have been exposed to a similar set of reforms, the policy options that are politically viable in each country depend upon how the role of an apprentice is conceived (workers or learners) and historical precedents. Where the system has been will determine where it will go in the future.

country depend upon

The **AVETRA Journal article of the year award** was presented to **Steven Hodge from Griffith University, Queensland, Australia**.

Abstract: Competency-based training (CBT) is a curriculum model employed in educational sectors, professions and industries around the world. A significant feature of the model is its permeability to control by interests outside education. In this article, a 'Neoliberal' version of CBT is described and analysed in the context of Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET). In this version of the model, a division of curriculum labour is instituted that, from the perspective of Neoliberal theory, allows the interests of educators to be limited in accordance with the belief that they will neglect the interests of students and other

stakeholders if they have control over the whole curriculum construction process. But this version of CBT denigrates the expertise of educators by forcing them to set aside their own judgement about what is important to teach and implement a pre-existing picture of an occupation that may or may not be an effective representation. Empirical evidence is reviewed that suggests curriculum work in VET is indeed alienating for educators. Existing critiques of CBT are considered and found to have overlooked the specifically Neoliberal form of CBT in VET analysed in the article.



Don and Steven receive their awards from incoming President Ruth Wallace and outgoing president Michele Simons. Steven and Ross hold up their awards.

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Latest national figures from NCVET: Government-funded training January to September 2015

Training providers

- A total of 1889 training organisations delivered government-funded VET (broadly defined as all activity delivered by government providers and government-funded activity delivered by community education and private training providers) in the first nine months of 2015. They consisted of:
 - 54 TAFE institutes, 14 other government providers, 377 community education providers
 - 1499 private training providers.

Students by training providers

In the first nine months of 2015:

- there were 1.36 million students enrolled in the government-funded VET system
- the government-funded VET system comprised:
 - 63.6% of students enrolled at TAFE and other government providers
 - 4.7% at community education providers
 - 30.7% at private training providers
 - 1.0% attending more than one provider type.

Students by state/territory

In the first nine months of 2015:

- Victoria, with 430 500 students, was the major provider of government-funded VET in Australia, followed by New South Wales (383 400), Queensland (242 900), Western Australia (126 300), South Australia (100 000), Tasmania (34 000), Australian Capital Territory (21 500) and Northern Territory (19 900).

Student characteristics

In the first nine months of 2015, government-funded VET students comprised:

- 52.2% males
- 21.9% aged 15 to 19 years
- 19.5% aged 20 to 24 years
- 18.0% apprentices and trainees undertaking off-the-job training at government-funded training providers.

Students by programs

In the first nine months of 2015:

- 1.18 million government-funded students (86.9%) were studying Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) programs
- 1.06 million students (77.7%) were studying national training package programs
- 36.6% of all students were studying certificate III qualifications
- 17.5% of all students were studying diploma or higher qualifications
- engineering and related technologies was the most popular field of education, with 17.4% of government-funded students, followed
- by management and commerce, with 16.7%.

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2013, National VET Provider Collection, Students & Courses, <http://www.ncver.edu.au>

Caution: As this is the first year that government-funded VET data have been collected and reported on a quarterly basis, caution must be used when interpreting data from these initial data collections.

Updates and links: Policy and research

USA- College Graduates Now Make Up Greatest Share of Workforce

A recent report from the Georgetown University Center on Education has found that the workforce is made up of mostly four-year college graduates. This group has a greater share of jobs than those who earn high school diplomas but do not go on to higher education. Of the 11.6 million jobs that were created after the recession, 11.5 million went to those who had undertaken a college education. Of these, 8.5 million jobs went holders of bachelor's degrees or higher qualifications. In comparison just 80 000 jobs went to those with high school diplomas. Source: Education News - <http://www.educationnews.org/higher-education/college-graduates-now-make-up-greatest-share-of-workforce/>

United Kingdom –A government plan will require 16 year olds to choose between an academic or technical pathway radical government plans reveal

A set of '15 high quality routes' will replace the 20000 or so vocational courses available to students in post-16 education. The aim is to have these qualifications awarded by one awarding body and to start with the first pathfinder routes in 2019, with all 15 routes coming on board by September 2022. Four of the 15 routes will be 'primarily delivered through apprenticeships'. The first 'pathfinder' routes will be taught from September 2019 and will be two-year college based programmes suitable from the age of 16, as well as those 19+, with close alignment to the new apprenticeship standards.

Source: FE Week - <http://feweek.co.uk/2016/07/08/choose-academic-or-technical-route-at-16-radical-goverment-plans-reveal/>; Source: TES - <https://www.tes.com/news/further-education/breaking-news/sainsbury-review-what-changes-are-way-post-16-education>

A workforce for the future digital economy

Vocational Education and Training (VET) has well-served the national economy as it has moved from agriculture, to manufacturing, to mining, and now to the service and health industries. As all industries continue to adopt digital technologies for many spheres of work VET will continue to play its part in preparing students for workplaces and jobs in this digitized environment. A joint study between TAFE Queensland and the CSIRO 'THE VET ERA: Equipping Australia's workforce for the future digital economy' investigates the types of skills that will be required and how VET is best placed to provide these skills. http://tafeqld.edu.au/about-us/research-papers/#.V3xDz_195ph or [The VET era \(PDF, 4.29MB\)](#).



NCVER 2016 NO FRILLS conference closes at CQUniversity with a positive outlook for vocational training

'Innovation and collaboration to secure the future of vocational education and training' were the key drivers to come out of the 25th National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference, held at CQUniversity Rockhampton this week. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research's National Manager, Research and Engagement Ms Jodieann Dawe said the event, held from 4-6 July, was an excellent

opportunity for innovators within the VET sector to connect.

Source: CQUniversity - <https://www.cqu.edu.au/cquninews/stories/general-category/2016/ncver-conference-closes-at-cquniversity-with-a-positive-outlook-for-vocational-training>



The power of education to build the world to which we aspire

Upcoming Conference details and links

The challenges educators face in 2016

Save the date for the ACE 2016 National Conference 'Changes and challenges: The power of education to build the world to which we aspire'. This two-day event held 26 & 27 September 2016 being together Australia's top educational professionals including: our very own President-elect Professor Dianne Mayer, MACE Dean of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney, Ms Rachel Hunter, Deputy Chancellor, Griffith University and former Chair for the board of the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and Professor Colin Power, FACE, Adjunct Professor, University of Queensland and former Head of the Education Sector of UNESCO for almost 12 years. Also announcing a new Career Entrant Special Interest Group Stream at this year's conference—a specially curated range of sessions with speakers focussing on issues relevant to professionals in the early stages of their career.



THE TDA CONVENTION, 4-6 OCTOBER 2016, Sofitel Melbourne on Collins, Victoria, Australia

The 2016 Convention will explore emerging and innovative policies and ideas in vocational skills development from both an international and

Australian perspective. Registration and attendance details will be available in late April.



The NATIONAL SILLS COMPETITION: Thursday, 6 to Saturday, 8 October 2016 at Melbourne Showgrounds. Close to 500 young apprentices, trainees and students from all corners of Australia will compete for the coveted title of 'National Champion' in over 50 skill categories, including Vehicle Painting, Bricklaying, Hairdressing, Programming, Cookery and Welding. There will be 300 Judges, 100 Volunteers involved in the event. Available to the competition will be \$10mil worth of materials and equipment, including 8 tonnes of steel, 10km of cabling, 80 mannequin heads, over 600kg of flour and close to 3,250 stems of flowers and foliage. Visitors will have a chance to try their hand at a range of trade and skill-based professions at a host of fun, interactive *Try aSkill* activities. Students who are keen to learn about vocational pathways and career opportunities will have the chance to speak to industry experts and advisors about the various courses available whilst witnessing the competitors in action.



Call for OctoberVET 2016 Convenors!

This year's national OctoberVET coordinators, Steven Hodge and Joe Pagnoccolo, would like to invite you to convene an OctoberVET event in your area. OctoberVET is the name of a season of local events to share information and ideas about VET. OctoberVET complements AVETRA's annual conference, and as the name suggests, it runs through October (with a few events usually spilling into November as well).

OctoberVET events range in size and scope, depending on local needs and interests, and range from convivial, small-scale gatherings to larger formal events with speakers. Events can be brief (a couple of hours) or can span a whole day. In 2015, OctoberVET events ran in most Australian states. In 2016 we hope to see OctoberVET events run throughout Australia and in other countries, too. The success of OctoberVET always depends on the good-will and inventiveness of a local Convener (or group of Conveners) who are connected with local VET networks and identities and can find a focus and a space for their event.

AVETRA offers a small seed-grant for all OctoberVET events (which can be used for catering for example), and a national coordinator is on hand to discuss your ideas, and to provide advice and support. AVETRA also advertises OctoberVET events nationally to help draw attention to local events.

Last year's themes will give you an idea of variety of interests gathered together under the OctoberVET banner:

- New South Wales: VET and University: Professional Learning and Teaching Exchange Forum
- New South Wales: Practitioner Research Under Analysis
- Western Australia: Striving for Excellence: ESL/LLN Skills Symposium
- Western Australia: Changing Learning and Organisations
- Queensland: A Quest for Research Capability
- Queensland: Making great learning and teaching practice happen through Participatory Action Research
- Queensland: AVETRA Breakfast – Recognising VET Contributions to Business and Industry
- South Australia: Using data to inform policy on education and training
- Victoria: Unearthing the Digital Landscape: Innovating Pedagogic Practice in VET
- Victoria: Architectures for apprenticeship: Achieving economic and social goals (an OctoberVET event in conjunction with the International Network on Innovative Apprenticeship Conference).

It's time to start thinking about how to bring your local VET community together to share ideas and inspiration. Get in touch with Steven Hodge (s.hodge@griffith.edu.au or 0421224474) or Joe Pagnoccolo (jpagnoccolo@swin.edu.au) to discuss your ideas and find out how to get the OctoberVET ball rolling.



Sydney



2016 National Conference on VET Teaching and VET Teacher Education



The **Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group (ACDEVEG)** in partnership with the School of Education, University of Technology Sydney and Sydney TAFE is holding the 2016 National Conference on the 8th & 9th of Dec 2016. The conference theme for this year is Research, Policy & Teaching Practice: building connections.

The program is an important forum for VET practitioners, teacher educators, researchers and policy makers to share knowledge and to work collaboratively in the VET sector.

The first part of the conference will be held on the 8th of Dec 2-5pm at the Sydney TAFE campus. The second part will be held at the University of Sydney Technology on the 9th of Dec 9am-4pm.

There will be a call for abstracts at the end of June.

Registrations will open early July.

The final call for abstracts will be the 1st of August.

For information please see the attached flyer and visit the conference website-For information please see the attached flyer and visit the conference website- <http://www.uts.edu.au/about/faculty-arts-and-social-sciences/events/2016-national-conference-vet-teaching-and-vet-teacher>

Third Conference of the ESREA Network on Policy Studies in Adult Education, 8-10 June, 2017, University of Verona, Italy



We are glad to announce that the **Third Conference of the ESREA Network on Policy Studies in Adult Education “Equity, Social Justice and Adult Education and Learning Policy”** will take place on **8-10 June 2017**, at the University of Verona, Italy. The aim of the conference is to explore equity and social justice concerns in relation to adult education and learning policies. How far – given cultural, ethno-racial, linguistic, religious and sexual diversity – do these support or hamper the conditions for a fair redistribution of resources and the full recognition of rights? Scholars from all countries are invited to submit proposals, and papers may relate to any part of the world. Abstracts submission: by 19th January 2017, Confirmation letters: by 27th February 2017. All correspondence regarding the conference should be sent to: esrea.psae2017@ateneo.univr.it,

Best wishes,

The Organizing Committee

Associate Professor Marcella Milana, University of Verona, Italy

Assistant Professor Antonietta De Vita, University of Verona, Italy, Senior Researcher Paolo Landri, Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies, Italy, Contract Professor Dr. Vida A. Mohorčič-Špolar, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia,

The convenors of the ESREA Research Network on Policy Studies in Adult Education are John Holford, Marcella Milana and Vida Mohorčič Špolar

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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 joint award with TAFE Directors Australia, 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 **\$180** (GST inclusive) and Student memberships **\$90.00** including GST are available.

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