

A-NEWS

*The Newsletter of the Australian Vocational Education
and Training Research Association*



AVETRA 'A-NEWS' NEWSLETTER – December 2015





From the President

Greetings to all our AVETRA members

I do not think I can recall a time in the past five years or so, when VET was in the news as much as it has been in recent months. Regrettably, some of this attention has not always been positive and has indeed been a 'disrupting force' as it brings thorny questions about who should pay for VET and issues associated with regulation in the sector.

This edition of *A-News* picks up this theme of disruption – albeit from a more positive angle – by highlighting new developments in the sector and inviting critical reflection on our work. Peter Noonan's thought provoking commentary points to some of the key issues the sector must face if it is to take its place as a driver for the knowledge economy. Cross sectoral frameworks which seek to break down traditional silos across the school, VET and higher education sectors are long overdue. The new Centre for Vocational and Education Policy which was recently launched in Melbourne has as one of its core goals better understanding and management of youth transitions and how education sectors might more effectively respond to this and many other issues which act to limit the effectiveness of education to deliver on meaningful outcomes for individuals, industry and the wider society.

As the year draws to a close, preparations are now in full swing for our annual conference which will be held at North Sydney Institute in April. The conference will offer a range of interesting keynote speakers, workshops directed towards developing research capacity and a range of presentations on the newest research being undertaken in VET. Please mark this event in your diary!

As part of the conference we will again be celebrating the contributions and achievements of our AVETRA members through our awards. Nominations are currently open for:

- TDA/AVETRA Innovation Scholarship (nominations close Friday 11 March 2016);
- The Ray Barker Award for Distinguished Service to VET (nominations close Friday 19 February 2016);
- AVETRA 2015 Journal of the Year Award (nominations close Friday 19 February 2016); and
- AVETRA (Ray Barker) Ambassador Award (nominations close Friday 19 February 2016)

Please consider nominating a colleague for these prestigious awards and plan to join us during our conference to celebrate excellence and achievement in VET.

2016 will also bring elections for a new Executive for AVETRA. I would encourage you to consider offering your skills and knowledge to AVETRA by nominating for a position on the Executive. Membership of the Executive is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about VET across Australia and to be engaged in developing ways to support the growth of the VET research community.

On behalf of the AVETRA Executive please accept our very best wishes for a happy, relaxed and fun-filled Christmas break and great New Year.

Michele Simons
President of AVETRA,
Western Sydney University, December 2015



A MINUTE WITH Peter Noonan, Mitchell Institute

Mitchell Professorial Fellow, Peter Noonan, has played a major role in shaping tertiary education policy in Australia over the past 25 years. He was a senior executive in the former Australian National Training Authority and in the Victorian and Queensland VET systems. He was a member of the Expert Panel for the Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley Review) in 2008, and in 2010 undertook a Review of Post-Secondary Education in Queensland for the State Government. Peter is Professor of Tertiary Education Policy at Victoria University and an Honorary Senior Fellow at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne.

The Mitchell Institute's work program spans schools and tertiary education with a key objective of advancing policy and practice to meet emerging and future needs. One of my interests at the Institute is to think about the future shape of vocational education in its broadest sense and how vocational education might become central to the purpose of senior secondary and tertiary education.

We know that most young people will begin to engage with the labour market well before they leave full time education and that in an increasingly service oriented economy and indeed in most workplaces, personal attributes and capabilities matter more than ever. These attributes and capabilities are built tacitly through families and personal experience, including work.

For me this has been evident personally seeing three daughters transition through senior secondary into tertiary education, all of whom have also been in the workforce over this period, with one opting to take VET-in-Schools subjects in a school which was academically strong but also valued VET.

It has also been interesting to span roles in higher education and VET and to see the differing policies, practices and cultures that characterize the sectors, even though many higher education programs have vocational outcomes (some underpinned by competency standards) as their primary purpose!

My point is that vocational learning in its broad sense should be relevant to all young people as part of their general personal development. But the current way we define and provide vocational education means that it has only a partial and residual role in schools and is understood and applied differently between VET and higher education.

Australia's definition of workplace competence in VET is still largely derived from a 'task and occupationally' focused model that Australia uncritically imported from the UK a quarter of a century ago. When the former Australian National Training Authority took over responsibility for this model over twenty years ago, we missed an important opportunity to look at different and broader models of competence.

When the schools sector unwisely adopted the more limited competency model as the basis of VET in schools, it limited the scope of VET delivered in schools to a set of lower level task-oriented competencies. Too often VET in schools has been used as an engagement strategy for potential early school leavers rather than as a broader and common set of offerings to all students.

Higher education and VET pathways have been made difficult because of differences in policies and practices between the sectors.

I have long argued that Australia needs a common framework for vocational learning across the current schools, VET and higher education sectors that encompasses the specific skills required for individual job roles, occupations and professions and the personal attributes and capabilities required at all levels of the modern workforce. The OECD in its seminal work on the knowledge economy said that learners and the workforce in a knowledge intensive economy would need to know 'what', know 'why', know 'how' and know 'who'. To me – as a researcher, in influencing policy, as a sometime employer and a parent – the OCED framework is a good starting point!

A framework of that kind cannot be delivered in the system as we know it. We need to treat the upper and perhaps even middle years of secondary education and the early years of tertiary education as a more coherent set of offerings and experiences for young people rather than a sharp transition point which has little regard for what young people already know, can do and are interested in pursuing.

To coin a currently popular term, the current system is ripe for disruption and someone will disrupt it if they develop a model of vocational learning that connects the lives, interests and aspirations of young people with the changing requirements of, and opportunities in, the modern economy.

*Peter Noonan
Mitchell Professorial Fellow*

Sharing research tools and resources



Have you visited the Educator Hub site recently? <http://avetraeducatorhub.org/just-like-avetra-this-hub-is-set-up-to-bring-australias-vet-research-community-together/>

There are links to the 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.

*Linda Simon
AVETRA Executive member*

AVETRA welcomes

The Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy within the Melbourne Graduate School of Education

The Centre was launched by Victorian Minister for Training and Skills, Steve Herbert, on Friday, 6 November 2015.

Led by the highly respected Professor John Polesel, the new research centre within the Melbourne Graduate School of Education is one of the few research hubs in the world producing evidence-based analysis and policy advice in the field of education transitions and VET quality.

The Centre also has a particular focus on learning outcomes for disengaged young people. The Centre has hit the ground running and is working closely with industry and governments across Australia to address the issues of poor transitions, especially for the most disadvantaged young people.

The Centre is currently working with the Victorian Department of Education and Training and the LH Martin Institute on a project aimed at identifying the types of capabilities teachers need to help students reach their full potential. It is also working with the NSW Department of Education to identify potential policy interventions to increase the number of young people completing higher level VET qualifications, such as diplomas and advanced diplomas.

‘Collaboration and knowledge growth’ are critical now that regulatory and funding reform of the VET sector is clearly on Federal and State Government agendas. We also know that people are at greatest risk when they move from one education or employment phase in their life to the next, for example when they leave school to enter training or re-train for a new job. But Australia’s stressed vocational training systems are buckling under growing pressure to solve problems spanning the entire labour market’, said Professor Polesel.

The Victorian Minister for Training and Skills, Steve Herbert, welcomed the Centre’s establishment, saying, ‘I am excited to launch this new research centre which should provide valuable new insights about school and transitions to higher education, training and employment. Strong research to underpin Government programs and decision making is vital in our promise to address youth unemployment and disengagement in Victoria.’ The Australian Higher Education Supplement (10 November 2015) has described the launch of the Centre as ‘oh-so-timely’ and predicted that the Centre will “fill the massive policy and analysis blackhole” in these important policy areas.



A new Managing Director for TAFE NSW



Jon Black

On 13 November 2015 Jon Black, former Director-General for the Departments of Environment and Heritage Protection and for Energy and Water Supply, was appointed to the position of Managing Director of TAFE NSW. Minister John Barilaro (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) said 'Jon has significant experience in skills and education, serving as Executive Director for Training Management in the Australian Army, where he was responsible for managing the Army's individual officer and soldier training programs'.

Two new national managers at The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)



Dr Mette Creaser

Mette is National Manager, Statistics and Analytics for the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). She is responsible for the national statistical program covering the collection and analysis of student activity, apprentices and trainees, student outcomes, and employer views of the VET system. She has recently taken over this role after seven years as Manager, National Surveys, where she was responsible for leading and managing a suite of national surveys. Prior to NCVER Mette performed a variety of roles at the Australian Bureau of Statistics, including Director of Environment Statistics. Other positions include Postdoctoral Researcher and Senior Researcher at the South Australian Research and Development Institute. Mette has a PhD from Cambridge University and a Professional Certificate in Management.



Jodieann Dawe

Jodieann is National Manager, Research and Business Development at the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). She is responsible for in-house research, commissioned research, external consultancies and business development. Jodieann is an executive with diverse skills in research and business development at a national level, with particular experience in managing applied research to deliver knowledge, evidence and market intelligence valued by industry and governments. She has a strong understanding of the role of research in informing policy and practice. Jodieann's previous roles include CEO of Water Research Australia, Managing Director/Company Secretary of a UNSW University company supporting students and also Manager, Research Operations of Meat and Livestock Australia. As the founding CEO of a membership-based non-profit company, structured similarly to NCVER, she brings valued experience in governance, business development and stakeholder management. Her diverse and strategic leadership roles are an asset to NCVER. Jodieann's qualifications include a Masters in Applied Science, Master of Business Administration (Finance/Strategy) and a Diploma from the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Policy updates and links

TAFE Queensland IT system hacked; personal details of thousands of students stolen

The personal details of thousands of TAFE Queensland students have been stolen in an IT system hack. The ABC reports that the names and addresses of students were accessed by hackers. The websites of TAFE Queensland and the Department of Education and Training were breached. Queensland's Attorney-General was adamant that the hackers did not uncover any details that were not available in a phone book. Minister for Training and Skills, Yvette D'Ath, confirmed that the hack did not put any financial information at risk.

Sources: ABC News - <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-10/tafe-queensland-it-system-hacked-student-data-stolen/6926746>

One in four Australians are engaged in vocational education (media release)

On 10 November Minister Luke Hartsuyker (Federal Minister for Vocational Education and Skills) hailed the release of a new NCVET report that showed that in 2014 around one in four Australians between the ages of 15 and 64 years participated in vocational education and training. According to Minister Hartsuyker the fact that almost four million Australians were engaged in VET studies last year was a strong indication of Australia being a learning nation. 'As a government, we're absolutely focused on the importance of VET training to contribute to us as a high wage nation ...I would like to thank all of those who contributed to the report especially those private providers providing data for the first time'.

Source: Department of Education and Training - <http://ministers.education.gov.au/hartsuyker/one-four-australians-engaged-vocational-education>



NCVER vocational training data emphasises growth

The Total VET Activity report aims to provide a comprehensive account of the nationally recognized training provided in the private sector as well as in publicly funded VET (including all training by TAFEs, and government-supported delivery by private and community colleges and enterprise training providers). Here is a short video introducing you to the product.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnOFiuvQaTs&feature=youtu.be>

The Higher Education Amendment (VET FEE-HELP Reform) Bill 2015

This Bill was announced by Minister Luke Hartsuyker on 15 October. The Bill is aimed at protecting the interests of VET students from unscrupulous training providers by introducing and or requiring: a two day cooling off period between enrolling in a course and completing an application for a VET FEE-HELP loan; minimum pre-requisites such as literacy and numeracy to better enable students to complete the higher level VET courses (diploma level and above) for which VET FEE-HELP is available; and a parent's or guardian's signature before a student under 18 years can request a VET FEE-HELP loan. In addition the Bill aims to help those students who have been 'inappropriately' signed up to a loan to cancel the loan debt and to recover the debt from the provider concerned; minimum registration requirements for providers offering VET-FEE-HELP, including a track record of quality training provision; financial penalties for breaching guidelines; partnerships between the Department of Education and Training and the regulator (Australian Skills and Quality Authority) aimed at strengthening arrangements for monitoring and enforcing the compliance of providers.

<https://ministers.education.gov.au/hartsuyker/vet-fee-help-bill-push-dodgy-providers-out-market>

Recent research news

International STEM students value program quality and career prospects when choosing study destinations

A new study by the British Council has found that at undergraduate and postgraduate levels those students looking to study STEM abroad (UK, US, Australia or Canada) were mostly interested in the quality of career and research opportunities available, the quality of the course itself and the extent to which they could transfer skills between different contexts. For example, just over half of undergraduates studying in the UK had chosen the country because of its high reputation for quality education. Almost a third had done so because they believed that a UK qualification provided them with 'excellent' opportunities to gain or progress in a career. The presence of friends or relatives was an attraction for just over a fifth of students. There were similar findings for why post-graduates chose the UK as a study destination. Post-graduates were also attracted to the UK because of its leadership in innovation in the disciplines concerned. Nevertheless, the most attractive study destinations for career prospects for these international STEM students were identified as Australia and the United States (72% and 71% respectively). Canada came in third at 61 per cent, while the UK was fourth with 40% of STEM post-graduate students believing that the UK was the best place for furthering career opportunities.

Link to report <https://ei.britishcouncil.org/educationintelligence/ei-features-stem-2015>

Barber T, Netherton C, Bettles A and Amanda Moors-Mailei, 2015, Navigating VET to university: students' perceptions of their transition to university study, in 'Student success: a journal exploring the experiences of students in tertiary education', Volume 6, number 2, August 2015, pages 33-41. The results of this study indicate that students who enter university via VET pathways feel that their VET studies and experiences prepared them well for undertaking university studies, motivated them to study further, and enhanced their study skills, time management and academic writing. It also prepared them to work independently. The study compares students who reported high levels of VET influence with those who reported and low levels.

Lane J and Christense, 2015. Competence is the best credential, Calgary, Alberta: Canada West Foundation
In this study the authors note that although the Canadian workforce is one of the best-educated, most highly credentialed workforces in the world, it does not mean that it is the most competent, especially in a world that values competencies as the 'new' credentials. They go on to lament the perceived lack of competency frameworks and conclude that there are lessons to be learnt from the competency approaches being adopted in many European systems. Here a systematic itemization of the specific skills, knowledge and attributes required by workers, can be used as a schema for individuals to prove their competency.

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), 2015, Vocational pedagogies and benefits for learners: practices and challenges in Europe / Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. This research investigates the impact of learning outcomes approaches on vocational pedagogies, by looking at the benefits for learners of learner-centred teaching and learning methods from 15 European Union Member States. Ten case studies describing how VET teachers and trainers, existing learning environments, and available learning materials, facilitate or hinder the implementation of learner-centred teaching.

Probert B, 2015, The quality of Australia's higher education system: how it might be defined, improved and assured, Sydney, New South Wales: Office for Learning and Teaching

In this paper the author reflects on what has happened over the last twenty years to improve the quality of higher education system in Australia. She examines how universities themselves have implemented government quality assurance initiatives and processes aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning. Probert is of the view that Australian universities could wrest control from centralised quality assurance regimes by learning from what is happening in the United Kingdom. Here the Higher Education Commission has proposed a 'pluralist' regulatory framework for higher education that aims to protect students, encourage innovation and enhance excellence. Probert is of the view that such pluralist approaches can be applied to the Australian context to 'support diversity and cope successfully with continued growth, new kinds of providers, cost pressures and global competition'. In the final part of the paper the possible elements of a quality regime for the future of Australian higher education are outlined and critically evaluated, building on what can be learnt from the Australian experience and the higher education systems of the United States and the United Kingdom.

Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), 2015, The new work order: ensuring young Australians have skills and experience for the jobs of the future, not the past, Melbourne, Victoria: Foundation for Young Australians

That young people will be the hardest hit over the coming decades is a key finding of this recent FYA report. This is because jobs of the future will be affected by rapid changes in technology, increasing globalisation and labour mobility, and flexible ways of working. The work environment will be characterised by even smarter machines than already exist, and wider access to work from remote domestic and international locations. Increasingly young people will be faced with flexible opportunities to generate income either through start-up businesses or combining a number of part-time jobs with different employers. The report concludes that there are benefits and risks for young people in these new contexts; benefits relating to the opportunities to create their own wealth and risks referring to increased inequality, unemployment and insecurity.



VOCEDplus

This information comes from the considerable resources of the VOCEDplus database, a useful starting point for new research projects or literature reviews. VOCEDplus is funded by the Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and is endorsed by the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre in Bonn, Germany. It is produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), based in Adelaide, Australia.

Click on the following link to start your search.

<http://www.voced.edu.au/>

The 2015-16 Research Prospectus



You may recall at the start of 2015 NCVER published a research prospectus.

The aim of the prospectus is to guide not only specific research projects we are undertaking at NCVER during 2015-16, but to set the scene for continued robust discussion and a forward looking research agenda.

Keep up to date with research in progress

Research topics in the prospectus are presented under an organising framework across the four priority areas of: productivity; participation; outcomes; learning and teaching; and the place and role of VET. If you are

interested in finding out more information on the research projects currently underway at, or funded by, NCVER the links to project descriptions can be found when exploring the prospectus on our Portal:

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/researchprospectus.html>

Relevance and feedback

The prospectus notionally sets out topics for research to be undertaken across a two-year horizon. However, sufficient flexibility is built in to accommodate emerging sector needs and priorities as they arise. Topics in the prospectus will be reviewed on an annual basis, recognising that not all topics listed will be undertaken in an annual period and some topics may be rolled over, as required.

We are also seeking to broaden our partnering in both the conduct and the critique of research, not only by engaging with the established research academic community but also to draw in expertise from industry, policy and training providers on appropriate research topics.

If you wish to contribute ideas or feedback please email researchprospectus@ncver.edu.au

Outcomes from completed research

A considerable amount of research published by NCVER over the period from 2011 to 2014 explored many of the challenges facing the sector and pointed to some of the solutions. I encourage you to read the comprehensive report by Francesca Beddie which brings together the key findings from all research undertaken and helps to identify future lines of enquiry. To access ***The outcomes of education and training: what the research is telling us 2011-14***, visit www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2789.html.

Jo Hargreaves

Senior Research Officer, NCVER

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Factors Lifting Apprenticeship Retention (FLARe)

Tim Powers, Faculty of Education, Monash University



The FLARe study identifies (and measures) what motivates trade apprentices' commitment to their occupation and completion of their apprenticeship across four trades: bricklaying, carpentry, electrical and plumbing. Apprentices are surveyed every 6 months about their off- and on-the-job training experiences. Findings will inform how best to target resources to optimise retention, by predicting who will thrive in their apprenticeship and who is at risk.

Three key research questions are investigated.

1. **What motivates apprentices?** Is being truly interested in the trade enough? How do apprentices value their training? Do opinions of their trade impact risk profile?
2. **What are the key impacts of training delivery?** Is it the way we teach? Do facilities and equipment make a difference?
3. **What is the influence of employers?** How important is the employer's approach to training? Does social support really help? Are apprentices proud to be working in the trade?

The first survey was completed by 2,057 apprentices during the first half of 2015, across 30 trade schools and 238 classes. All Australian States and the ACT are represented. This survey measured 44 factors. In this snapshot we present factors which impact apprentices' interest in trade school.

Findings: Apprenticeship interest in trade school training was strongly and positively associated with higher perceptions of: how useful the training is for future work; support received from teachers; and how appropriate the facilities and equipment are for training. Interest was decreased as a result of emotional worries, nervousness and feelings of undue burden concerning trade school training. Notably, the perception of the training as difficult (or not) was unrelated with interest. In combination, apprentices' interest in trade school training was best predicted by (a) supportive teaching, and (b) the perceived usefulness of the qualification in the future job market. While having 'good' equipment was associated with higher levels of interest, its effect appears to work through apprentices' perception of supportive teaching. In other words, better equipment raises their perceptions of supportive teaching, which increases interest. The converse is also true - poor equipment leads to lower perception of supportive teaching, and reduced interest. Taken together, the trade school environment explained 57% of apprentices' interest in trade school training. This is a high result.

The FLARe study is ongoing and has begun disseminating to trade teachers a number of 2-page highlights as data becomes available. If you would like to be receive these highlights, please email tim.powers@monash.edu.

Congratulations Corner



Congratulations go to Mike Brown who was awarded the inaugural '2015 La Trobe Student Union (LTSU) Research Supervisor Award'. He was nominated by five of his doctoral students from the La Trobe School of Education Research Society (SOERS).

Here he is with some of his PhD students at the awards night on 15 October at the Odeon Theatre.



Mike is the Convenor of Adult, Vocational and Technology Education programs within the Faculty of Education (Bundoora). His educational goal is to support and encourage 'worker bees to become architects'. Mike began his teaching career as a Technology teacher in a secondary school before moving into the TAFE sector as a trade teacher. He worked on a number of statewide and national TAFE curriculum projects. For the past twenty years, Mike has built expertise in designing, developing and teaching in many teacher/trainer undergraduate and postgraduate programs developing professionals for Adult, Professional and Vocational Education. His most recent teaching and research, within the schools sector, has concentrated on the areas of Design, Creativity and Technology, VET and VCAL within secondary schools. In 2011, Mike was awarded The Dean's Award for the Faculty of Education as part of the Latrobe University Excellence in Research Awards, and in 2013, he joined the Board of the VET Development Centre. Mike continues to supervise a range of Higher degree by research students and has examined around twenty doctorates and research masters studies.

Current and recent research projects include:

- Inclusive quality learning for the future: improving aged care practice, DRP funded study with Professor Yvonne Wells, Dr Julie Ellis & Karen Tschuva (Faculty of Health Sciences) - 2014
- Young people, well being, schooling and social enterprise, DRP funded study with Professor Margaret Robertson, Dr Mary Burston, Dr Eva Dakich, Dr Liam Lenten, Dr Andrew Skabar - 2014
- A collaborative e-research project for a proof of concept on 'Creating digital commons: how young people build and traverse their community'. (Research team led by Professor Margaret Robertson in partnership with Whittlesea local council funded by LaTrobe University e-Research Grants).

Congratulations also go to Peter Hurley, interviewed here by Linda Simon



Linda: Who is Peter Hurley?

Peter: I am the recent recipient of the 2015 TDA/AVETRA Innovation Scholarship. I have worked for fifteen years in all different sectors of education, including international, university and vocational. I really enjoy working in the vocational sector because of the opportunity to create, design and deliver a huge range of programs. I am currently completing my PhD at Monash University in how education is recognized between countries.

Linda: What is your project?

Peter: My TDA/AVETRA project looks at the educational features of Work for the Dole programs. Recently mandated requirements mean there will be half a million people undertaking such a program over the next three years. Work for the Dole is much maligned and the evidence suggests rightly so. However, employment based programs, of which Work for the Dole is one type, have the opportunity to create a learning experience that has an enormous positive impact on a participant's life. My research will look at the experience of teachers, managers and others to ascertain what they believe make a successful program.

Linda: What do you hope to achieve?

Peter: Apart from the stated aims of the project, I would like to contribute to the wider debates about the value of vocational education. There is an almost existential need for VET to articulate its worth. Research will be crucial to answering the question posed by those who have the ability to ensure a flourishing sector: why invest in VET? I hope that my research will be part of the many different answers to the question.

AVETRA/TDA Scholarship 2016

Nominations are now being called for this 2016 Scholarship. The Scholarship, now in its third year, provides \$6,000 for an individual or group of TAFE professionals to research innovative ways to work with industry or community to meet skill needs. The aim of the Scholarship is to build innovation and applied research capability in the TAFE sector.

The closing date for the 2016 scholarship applications is COB **11 March 2016**. Applications from new researchers and those that contain co-sponsorship contributions by TAFE institutions or by industry are strongly encouraged.



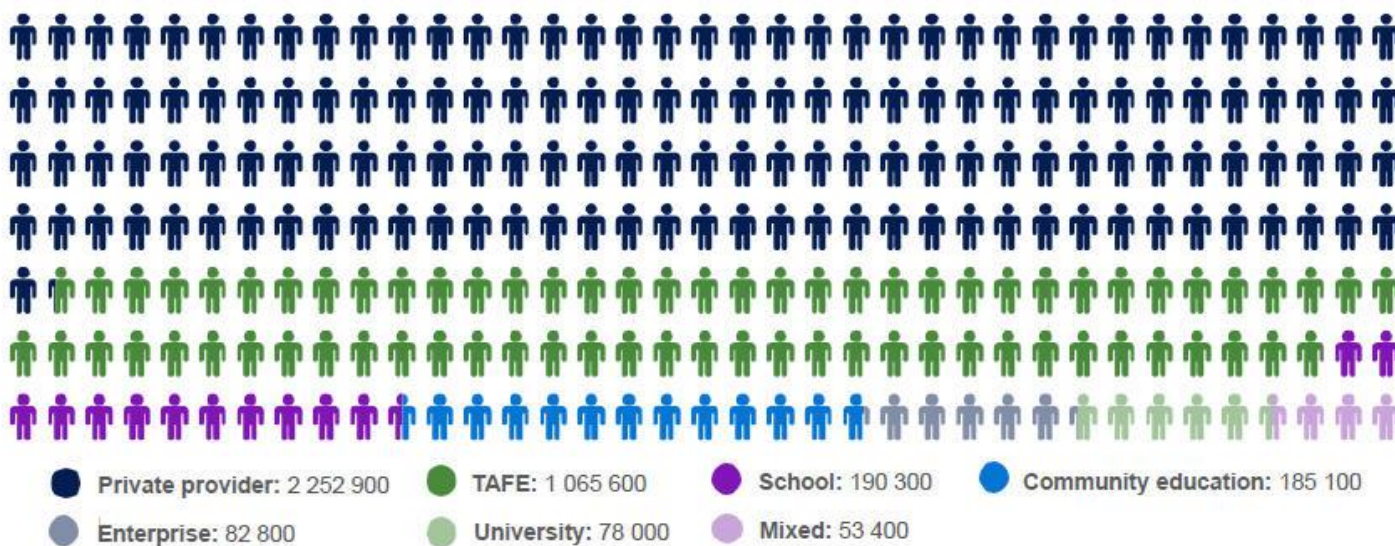
For more information, and to obtain the scholarship guidelines and application form, visit [TDA](#) and [AVETRA](#) websites or contact Melinda Waters at TDA on 02 9217 4951 / mwaters@tda.edu.au.

Latest national facts and figures about VET participation and outcomes

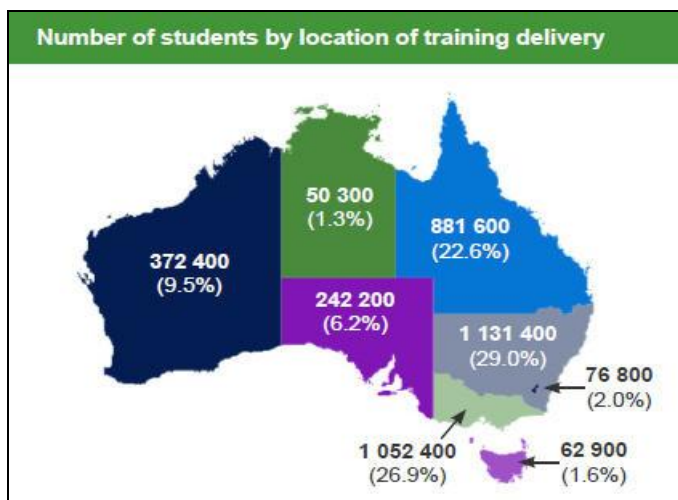
The 2015 Total VET Activity statistics showed there were: 3.9 million VET students, 27.5 million subject enrolments, and 818.2 million delivery hours. The top 5 fields of study were management and commerce, followed by engineering and related technologies, society and culture, mixed field programs, and hospitality and tourism. There were 4601 providers comprising 2865 from the private sector, 960 schools, 497 community education providers, 210 enterprises, 57 TAFEs, and 15 university providers. A further breakdown of students by provider, location of training delivery, and qualifications completed appear below.



How many students are enrolled with each provider type?



Number of students by location of training delivery



What level of qualifications were completed?



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



Another outstanding OctoberVET season!

The 2015 OctoberVET season has been a great success. With events in most states, including regional centres and an online event, a large number of stakeholders have had the opportunity to discuss issues in VET and learn about new developments in policy and research.

It cannot be stressed enough that these fantastic events require the good will, creativity and determination of OctoberVET Convenors and their teams who volunteer their precious time and resources to the cause.

A big thanks from AVETRA to **Denise Stevens** and **Erica Smith** for leading events in Victoria, to **Josie Misko** and colleagues at NCVET in Adelaide for the South Australian event, to **Anne Bowden** and **Michele Simons** for events in NSW, to **Sue Thompson** and **Llandis Barratt-Pugh** for staging events in Western Australia, and to **Robyn Cooper**, **Shayne Baker** and **Ali Abusalem** for events held in Brisbane, Toowoomba and Mackay (respectively) in Queensland.

Thanks to your kind efforts, and the good work of your teams, the importance of VET and the value of VET research are more widely appreciated.

With 2016 just around the corner, it's time to start thinking about issues and developments in VET that might be the focus of OctoberVET events in your area. Keep a lookout for the annual 'Call for Convenors' around the time of the 2016 AVETRA Conference.

Steven Hodge
National OctoberVET Coordinator



Australian Conferences 2016: details on dates and links

February 29- March, APAIE - Asia - Pacific Association for International Education 2016, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. See more at <https://www.apaie.org/conference/2016/>

March 9-11, Universities Australia, Higher Education Conference 2016, National Convention Centre Canberra. See more at https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/Media-and-Events/events/Higher-Education-Conference-2016#.VklZ_GdZqUk

April 7-8, 2016, Group Training Australia National Conference, Adelaide Hilton, South Australia. See more at http://www.grouptesting.com.au/Events_and_media/2016-group-training-national-conference

April 7-10, Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA), and the Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL), International Conference, *Diversity: Exchanging Ways of Being*, Perth. See more at <http://tesol.org.au/ACTA-Conference/ACTA-International-Conference-2016>; <http://waalc.org.au/2016-ACAL-ACTA-conference/index.htm>

April 20-22, AVETRA, *Putting VET research to work: Collaboration, innovation, prosperity*, TAFE Northern Sydney Institute, Learning and Innovation Campus, St Leonards, NSW. See more at <http://avetra.org.au/annual-conference>

May 19-20, Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) Conference, *Excellence in Professional Practice: Collaboration for school improvement*, Bayview Eden, 6 Queens Road, Melbourne. See more at <https://www.acer.edu.au/eppc>

May 25-27, Career Development Association of Australia, *Inspiring Excellence through Evolution, Innovation and Transformation*, Sofitel Melbourne on Collins, Melbourne. See more at <http://www.gemsevents.com.au/cdaa2016/>

May 30-June 1, EduTECH, *Educational Congress and Expo*, Brisbane, Choose from 4 conferences. See more at http://www.edutech.net.au/pdf/EduTECH2016_Flyer.pdf; <http://www.edutech.net.au/registration.html>

July 4-6, National Vocational Education and Training Research 'No Frills' Conference *Equity, Engagement, Evolution*, Central Queensland University, Rockhampton North Campus, Queensland. See more at www.ncver.edu.au

July 11-13, 2016, ACE, 45th Australian Conference of Economists, Flinders University of South Australia, Bedford Park Campus. See more at <http://ace2016.org.au/>

July 27-28, VETnetwork Australia, Biennial National Conference, 'Vocational Education and Training: leading and driving change', Gold Coast Convention Centre. See more at http://vetnetwork.org.au/02_cal/details.asp?ID=125

August 25 – 26, The ACPET National Conference will be held in Hobart in 2016 Hotel Grand Chancellor. See more at: <http://www.acpet.edu.au/article/9682/acpet-national-conference-coming-to-tasmania-in-2016/#sthash.6mSIWitu.dpuf>

September 15-16, velg National Conference, *Celebrating VET*, Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre, Gold Coast, QLD. See more at <https://www.velgtraining.com/national-conference>

October 18-21, Australian International Education Conference, *Connectivity at the heart of international education*, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne, VIC. See more at <https://www.ieaa.org.au/what-we-do/australian-international-education-conference>



International Conference for 2016: Dates and links

April 5-7, *International Conference on Learning in Later Life: Theory, Policy and Practice*, The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom, See more at [http://www.associationforeducationandageing.org/ufiles/2%20\(revised\)%20CALL%20FOR%20%20PAPERS%20International%20conf.pdf](http://www.associationforeducationandageing.org/ufiles/2%20(revised)%20CALL%20FOR%20%20PAPERS%20International%20conf.pdf)

April 8-12, 2016 American Educational Research Association Meeting: 'Public Scholarship to Educate Diverse Democracies', Washington DC. See more at <http://www.aera.net/EventsMeetings/AnnualMeeting/2016AnnualMeeting/tabid/15862/Default.aspx>

June 20-22, 2nd International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training. '*From Skills to Prosperity – Sharing Elements of Success*', Winterthur Theatre and the nearby ZHAW Campus on St. Georgen-Platz/Mäander, Winterthur, Switzerland, See more at <http://www.vpet-congress.ch/>

June 23-24, '*Moving, Teaching, Inspiring: The Power of Place and Past in the Future of Adult Learning*', jointly organised by the University of Nottingham and the National Trust, will be held at Attingham Park, near Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The deadline for proposals is 31 January 2016. See more at: <http://royalhistsoc.org/calendar/cfp-moving-teaching-inspiring-the-power-of-place-past-in-the-future-of-adult-learning-deadline-31-january-2016/>

July 5-7 SCUTREA (Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults), '*Adult Education in Austere Times*', See more at <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/lifelong-learning/events/scutrea>

July 8 – 10, Further Education Research Association (FERA) '*Research in Post-Compulsory Education*', Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford, UK. See more at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13596748.2014.955660?journalCode=rpce20>; register at www.arpce.org.uk

August 22- 26, European Educational Research Association, '*Leading Education: The Distinct Contributions of Educational Research and Researchers*', University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland. See more at http://www.eera-ecer.de/ecer-2016-dublin/?type=0&utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

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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 quarterly AVETRA e-newsletter with the latest news in the VET sector as well as VET research.
- The *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.

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

We wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and an exciting and prosperous New Year for 2016.

