



From the President

Now that the election dust has settled we are faced with another round of change as the VET portfolio moves from Education to the Industry portfolio under Ian Macfarlane. The Minister will take responsibility for skills policy, regulation and programs.

This includes all policy and programs for apprenticeships and related areas such as licensing of occupations. The national regulator ASQA and the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA) will also move into the industry portfolio. While some commentators regret that this spells the end for an integrated tertiary sector, others see value in making explicit the connection between industry and training.

However as we know VET does not fit 'neatly' into one category – and this is reflected in the decision that the Australian Technical Colleges (formerly promulgated under the Howard government) will be reinvigorated within the Education portfolio. The Education portfolio will also take responsibility for TEQSA and 'education and training transitions policy and programs'. This fracturing of VET across portfolios is likely to pose significant challenges, particularly for those registered training organisations that seek to span the school-post school – higher education pathway. A further confounding factor will be the future of developments within the Australian Curriculum such as the development of the Work Studies curriculum for Years 9 and 10 and the National Trade Cadetship for Years 11 and 12. These two developments have the potential to call upon the expertise of VET practitioners and researchers in some new and different ways. How these initiatives might be advanced is now open for conjecture given the significant re-organisation that has been mooted for the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

These changes mean that our networks and capacities to collaborate across boundaries will again be tested and we need to look for opportunities to share our knowledge and expertise as these processes unfold over time. The forthcoming series of October VET events offers one such opportunity. Under the leadership of Linda Simon and Steven Hodge a number of events have been planned across states and territories.

All these events have the common theme of exploring ways in which research can be mobilised to address contemporary issues - perfectly timed for our current circumstances.

Another significant opportunity for the VET research community will be the national conference to be held in Surfers Paradise in April next year. One of the new exciting initiatives at the Conference will be the inclusion of a strand devoted to Adult Learning which is being supported by Adult Learning Australia. This represents a significant collaboration between our two organisations and one that promises to bring a new richness and opportunity for networking. I hope that you will consider joining us in Surfers Paradise for this exciting event.

Michele Simons
President

This year several members of AVETRA attended the Research in Work and Learning conference in Stirling, Scotland.



Prof. Ruth Wallace (vice-president of AVETRA) gave a presentation

AVETRA 2014!

“Informing Changes in VET Policy and Practice: The Central Role of Research”

Mark your diaries for the 17th AVETRA International Conference to be held on the 22 - 24 April 2014

Keynote Speakers:

Professor Thomas Bailey, Columbia University



Thomas Bailey is the George and Abby O'Neill Professor of Economics and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Since 1996, he has been the Director of the Community College Research Center (CCRC). He is also the Director of the Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment (CAPSEE), established in 2011 and funded by a grant from the Institute for Education Sciences of the US Department of Education. He is an AERA Fellow and a member of the National Academy of Education. Professor Bailey holds a PhD in economics from MIT with specialties in education, labor economics, and econometrics.

Post compulsory education in the United States has undergone significant changes over the last 15 years. Yet, post-secondary institutions have attracted significant criticism: college is too expensive, many who enroll never graduate, and the post-secondary educational system remains highly inequitable. Moreover, US policy makers have been particularly upset by evidence that the US no longer leads the world in the share of its population with a post-secondary credential. This combination of developments and anxieties has led to a high profile “completion agenda” advocated by the federal government and which calls for significant increases in the number of post-secondary credentials. This keynote speech discusses how the non-university vocational education system has been influenced by these major changes in the post-compulsory education system. The developments have had positive and negative effects on vocational education. VET has received greater critical scrutiny, but has also been looked to as a route to increased completion. While some programs have been criticized for preparing students for jobs that do not exist or that pay too little to justify the cost of the education, others have been held up as examples of well-organized effective education. Still, the system remains highly varied in quality and large variations in cooperation and coordination with employers. There continues to be no effective national framework, therefore the quality and nature of coordination with employers depend on activities at the state level, but ever more on the initiative of the staff at individual institutions.

Prof. Erica Smith



Erica Smith holds a Personal Chair in Vocational Education and Training at the University of Ballarat. She has published widely, mainly in the area of training policy, apprenticeships and traineeships, enterprise training, and vocational education and training (VET) practitioners. She has previously worked as a human resource manager, in community work, and, in the VET sector, as a TAFE teacher, an RTO manager, and as manager of a State Industry Training Advisory Board.

Erica is co-chair of INAP, the international network for apprenticeship research, and is convenor of AVETRA's experienced researcher group. She has been invited to contribute to a range of national and international consultations. Erica's keynote speech will examine the expectations placed upon apprenticeship systems, particularly in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis, and query whether apprenticeships can deliver what is expected of them. Her address will be based on a series of research projects in Australia and internationally.

DR GOG SOON JOO



Gog Soon Joo is the Executive Director of the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL). As head of IAL, she is responsible for developing the institute into a national centre of excellence in learning, practice and research for Continuing Education and Training (CET). Soon Joo holds an economics degree from the University of London, Master in Tourism Administration from the George Washington University, and Doctor of Education from the Institute of Education (University of London) and National Institute of Education (Singapore Nanyang Technological University).

In the presentation, Soon Joo will be sharing Singapore's experience in building research capability in the CET sector. The presentation will focus on the challenges in developing local researchers, developing research-disposition among policymakers and practitioners, and ensuring research outcomes inform policy and practice. The issues and challenges confronting workforce and economic development, and the role of CET will be discussed.

For Conference Event Sponsorship, please contact: avetra2014@theassociationspecialists.com.au

A MINUTE WITH Tracey Collins, TAFE Illawarra



I first got interested in VET research 2011 when I commenced studying my Graduate Diploma of Education (Adult and Vocational) and found that I really enjoyed the reading and writing processes involved in my course work.

Two people who inspired me most to conduct research were two of my university lecturers were very encouraging and inspired me with the feedback they provided in relation to my university assignments. I was also fortunate to be able to participate in the 2012 NCVET Community of Practice scholarship program and have been inspired by my mentor, Dr John Mitchell, and the NCVET and Victoria University staff, Berwyn Clayton, Hugh Guthrie, Georgie Atkinson as well as the other COP participants.

Methodologies that I have used: In my NCVET research project I conducted a focus group, an online survey and interviews with teachers to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. I am currently completing an action research project for the final unit in my Graduate Diploma course.

The most interesting piece of VET research I conducted: I found my NCVET research project extremely interesting and valuable to both my organization and other TAFE Institutes. My report will be used as a reference in current TAFE NSW eHub projects and also to guide the development of a new approach to supporting teachers to use flexible learning technologies (eLearning) in my Institute.

Currently I am researching for my action research project I am planning to investigate how to effectively facilitate the formation of communities of practice to support teachers who are exploring the use of flexible learning technologies in their teaching practice and who will become advocates for these technologies in their teaching sections. This action research project provides me with an opportunity to implement and trial some of the strategies that were identified during my NCVET research project.

Each edition of AVETRA News will feature a special interview with a VET researcher. If you are interested in being featured or you know someone who might – please get in touch with either Sarojni Choy or Sinan Gemici.



OctoberVET update – Steven Hodge and Linda Simon

OctoberVET is a series of local events that bring practitioners, stakeholders and researchers together to showcase research and debate VET-related issues. The 2013 OctoberVET season is shaping up to be another stimulating feast, with eight events confirmed. Events will be conducted at Southbank Institute of Technology, University of Ballarat, TAFE NSW Sydney Institute – St George TAFE College, Charles Darwin University, TasTAFE, University of South Australia, Edith Cowan University and Charles Sturt University.

Details are already available for some events:

Location	Title	Date	Contact
University of Ballarat, Old Chemistry Building C, SMB Campus, Ballarat	The Variety of VET: Research into policy and practice for schools, training providers and workplaces	18 October	Morgan Wise rave.research@ballarat.edu.au
National Wine & Grape Industry Training Centre, CSU Wagga Wagga Campus, Wagga Wagga, NSW	Research & Evaluation in Vocational Education: The role of evidence/Engaging & Supporting Distance- based Learners in the Workplace	18 October	Wendy DeLuca wdeluca@csu.edu.au
Edith Cowan University, Mt Lawley Campus, Mt Lawley, WA	What is happening in WA VET research	25 October	Llandis Barratt-Pugh l.barratt_pugh@ecu.edu.au
TasTAFE, Campbell St, Hobart	Engaging adolescents in Education: A gathering of minds and experiences	31 October	Jillian Downing Jillian.Downing@utas.edu.au
TAFE NSW Sydney Institute – St George TAFE College, Sydney	Building research capacity and culture in VET	31 October	Linda Simon lindasimon2@bigpond.com
WEA of SA, Angus St, Adelaide	Exploring the relationships between the ACE and VET sectors	22 November	Roger Harris, roger.harris@unisa.edu.au

Details of other confirmed events will be published once they become available.

There is still time to organise an OctoberVET event in your area. AVETRA provides seed grants (which can be used for catering for example) and advice on developing a theme and setting up events. Get in touch with Linda Simon (lindasimon2@bigpond.com) or Steven Hodge (s.hodge@ballarat.edu.au) to discuss your idea.

55th ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPER PROPOSALS

The 2014 AERC Steering Committee is pleased to invite you to submit a proposal for the 55th Adult Education Research Conference scheduled for June 5-7, 2014 in Harrisburg, PA. Pre-conferences are scheduled for June 4th. We are pleased to announce that Penn State Harrisburg will host AERC next spring. We are accepting proposals for three types of presentations:

1. Papers
2. Research Roundtables
3. Symposia

All proposals must be RECEIVED by email on or before September 23, 2013. Receipt of proposals will be acknowledged by email. The full call for proposals is attached and is also available online at: <http://adulterc.org>

Looking for VET Teachers with a story to tell about teaching Australian VET courses overseas

We are seeking research participants for a research project titled: Australian transnational vocational education and training provisions: sustainability, quality and relevance. The purpose of this project is to identify and understand the factors that shape the roles and activities of those teaching Australian vocational education and training (VET) courses in transnational settings. This practical inquiry will gather information about teachers' experiences in making decisions about what and how to teach in transnational settings. It is hoped that the collection of teachers' stories will provide important knowledge about the relevance and quality, and thus the sustainability, of exporting Australian VET provisions overseas. It should also provide much needed information about VET teachers' curriculum practices and how they negotiate between the imperatives of regulation and the needs of their students in diverse cultural settings.

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for VET teachers who have taught any Australian VET accredited or Training Package course overseas in the last ten years. You may be from anywhere in Australia and you may have taught in any discipline. What we are interested in is your experience and your story about teaching students overseas and how this compares to teaching in Australia.

What would be required of participants?

You are invited to contribute to this study by participating in three interviews over a two month period. The first interview will be conducted face to face at a location of your choice. Subsequent interviews may also be face to face or via skype or video-conferencing – whatever is most convenient and practical for you. Each interview will take between one and two hours. The interviews will comprise some questions about your experiences as a VET teacher in a transnational setting. Participation in these interviews is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time during or after each interview, without any adverse comment or consequences. You will have final control over your story. All information collected from participants will be confidential.

Informed Consent

If you are agreeable to taking part in this study, you will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form.

Questions/Further Information

If you have any further questions about this study and/or would like to participate, please phone or text Louise King on 0411 117 427 or email: king.louise@hotmail.com

Thank you for your time and consideration of this project.

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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 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 **\$160** (GST inclusive) and Student memberships **\$80.00** including GST are available.

If you are interested in contributing to this newsletter please contact either Sarojni Choy or Sinan Gemici.