

Call for an integrated model for VET quality

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The urgent need for an integrated model of quality assurance for VET is one of the major findings in *Building Dynamic Learning Communities: Ten Regional Case Studies*. This is a report on the second year of CRLRA's four-year longitudinal study. Altogether, 26 findings are presented, based on research whose key question concerns ways of improving VET's effectiveness in meeting stakeholders' needs.

The major finding was that VET outcomes are more effective 'learning communities', communities that are characterised by proactive, collaborative effort. It was found that effective VET must meet the needs of its stakeholders. Other findings include: providers spending scarce resources on competition with other providers rather than on learners and quality training; government funding favouring national or large providers over local ones, and providers tendering for the same courses, reducing diversity in VET courses. Interviewees expressed considerable concerns about poor quality training and learning support and inconsistent assessment in rural and remote sites. Increasing casual and short-term employment conditions point to a need for improved access to professional development. Other major findings concern quality issues, literacy and numeracy, how collaboration enhances VET outcomes, leadership and TAFE's changing role.

Seven drivers of quality VET were identified: industry, enterprises, providers, policy, communities, cultural associations and natural resource management. Industry, enterprises and providers currently receive most resources through strategy and funding. The remainder also require explicit nurturing.

The integrated model of VET quality should be based on the vocational learning experience, shifting the focus from the supply-demand, provider-client model to the provision of VET as an outcome of the local VET dynamic. This would ensure that quality vocational learning is auditable against meeting diverse local vocational learning needs within a framework of national consistency measures through four resource components: resources of the learner; resources related to the learning interactions; human resources, and physical and social infrastructural resources.

Underpinning the integrated quality model are 'learning communities'. CRLRA's ANTA 2001 research program will develop ways of describing and profiling learning communities.

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