Moving and shaking: managing a large VET college through uncertain times

Carmel Ellis-Gulli, TAFE NSW
Rosalind Carter, UTS

In this presentation
- Aim
- Background and context
- Rationale
- Method
- Findings
- Conclusion

What the research is about
- To inquire into the possible reasons for lack of engagement between staff and the new strategic directions of a large public sector RTO

Background and context
- Govt reforms + targets
- Organisational reforms + targets
  - Quals
  - Recognition
  - Workplace delivery
  - New Strategic Direction – 3 x year plan
  - Org, College and section targets
- Observations of change anxiety though staff surveys and anecdotes

Managing change
- Key issues
  - Strategy – vision and planning
  - Communication
  - Engagement
  - Staff and industry perceptions
  - Relationships and links (between strategic directions and activity in colleges)

Method
- Semi structured interviews
- Document reviews
- Survey results
What we found

- Varying degrees of awareness of
  - some govt reforms
  - org targets
- General understanding that org need to increase commercial business
- Lower level understanding that targets are based on both need for commercial $ and govt reforms
- Varying understanding of what new targets mean for individual sections
- Varying sense of urgency
- Varying levels of teacher engagement – some disconnection between org expectations and teacher level engagement

What participants didn’t talk about

- New capital projects supporting the changing vocational learning setting - plumbing project
- Actual targets allocated to their areas
- Discussing or developing strategies as teams or as individuals

Possible reasons

- Communication and understanding
- Urgency
- Ownership
- Contribution
- Achieving outcomes

Where to from here?

- Acknowledgement of contribution of staff
- Benefits for students and business
- Sharing new practices and outcomes
- Managing change

Questions

- Thank you