

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



## AVETRA 'A-NEWS' NEWSLETTER – June 2019



## From the President

### Vocational versus occupational education and training: is there a difference?



Is there a distinction between vocational and occupational education and training or is this just a false dichotomy? Is it

perhaps just another way of expressing what we mean by education and what we mean by training?

This issue is not new. The English system at one time had both highly specific National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) sitting alongside broader General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs). GNVQs were defined as qualifications relating to occupational areas in general, rather than any specific job, whereas NVQs were work-based qualifications which recognised existing occupational competences.

This potential dichotomy was raised again in my mind in my current role where I have been contracted to be a workforce development adviser for an infrastructure project. This new role connects me to the demand side of VET whereas the roles I have held for most of my working life as a manager at different TAFE institutes in Australia and Further Education Colleges in the United Kingdom have been on the supply side. At these Institutes and Colleges, we ran lots of accredited and competency-based VET Diploma and Certificate courses which were aimed to prepare students for specific *careers or jobs* in different industry sectors. Leesa Wheelahan and Jon Buchanan would argue that we could have done this better if we had abandoned such specified competency-based education and training (including in Training Packages) for a system of knowledge-based curriculum focussing on 'vocational streams ... [which are] a set of linked occupations with related skills within a broad field of practice' (Yu, Bretherton and Buchanan 2013).

Part of their rationale is that most students do not end up working in the specific occupation for which they are trained. This is a powerful argument in the current environment where rapidly changing technologies and cross-border movements of workers and markets are having a significant impact on many workplaces, industries, and occupations. There are some who are of the view that the 'half-life ... [that is] the time span between the time when knowledge is gained and when it becomes obsolete' has shrunk

(Frey 2013). But where I work at the moment we often require employees to learn *specific skills for a specific job* (for example, shotcreting). We ask providers to deliver the Training Package competencies in a short skillset and we expect workers, who are normally experienced in other aspects of construction, to be applying their skills as shotcreters within a few days of completing the training. In this form of training, where progression is not an issue, we have found the Training Package to be very useful, mainly because it defines the required competencies for shotcreters.

If we accept that there is a dichotomy between vocational and occupational education and training and that the former is preparation for a career and the latter preparation for a specific job, then we need also to ask whether both require training providers with different capacities and capabilities. The NCVER has recently published a study on the role and function of small providers in the Australian vocational education and training (VET) system (Korbel and Osborne, 2019). The study found that small providers 'more often delivered highly specialised courses on a fee-for-service basis in areas where there is little or no government funding [including] in creative fields performing arts, theology, religious ministry and yoga'.

Where small providers deliver in these niche areas, TAFE institutes and large private providers deliver across a wide range of disciplines and vocational streams. They can also offer long nationally-credentialled courses because they have the staff, facilities and equipment to do so. Their teachers often possess more advanced technical and teaching qualifications, and (depending on their length of service with the training provider) they probably have more highly specialised and contemporary experience in specific industry skills and occupations. Can these large providers cover all occupations in the same way as do highly specialist small providers or consultants? I suppose the answer is — sometimes but not always.

If there is a dichotomy between vocational and occupational education and training it may in part be explained by the scope of education and training offerings at providers of different sizes. Where providers like TAFE Institutes and large private providers are able to educate students for a wide range of careers, small providers focus their offerings on highly specialised and niche occupational skills and knowledge. To date, this is exemplified by

the success of smaller providers in gaining contracts to deliver enterprise-specific training in comparison with TAFE institutes. Perhaps the broad career education available at large generalist providers like TAFE and the specialist occupational skills training offered by small specialist providers can explain why. Like much else in VET – further research needed!

Frey T, 2013, The Half-Life of a College Education, <https://futuristspeaker.com/business-trends/the-half-life-of-a-college-education/>

Korbel, P & Osborne, K 2019, *The role and function of small VET providers*, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/the-role-and-function-of-small-vet-providers>

Yu, S, Bretherton, T & Buchanan, J 2013, *Defining vocational streams: insights from the engineering, finance, agriculture and care sectors*, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/assets/file/0018/33417/defining-vocational-streams-2667.pdf>

**Robin Shreeve, President**



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

## Introducing ‘The Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA)’

The Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA) replaces the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET). ITECA advocates for and represents private higher education and vocational education and training providers.

A new college for professionals, the ITECA Professional College, provides members with opportunities to gain accreditation as Certified Education Professionals (CEP) or Certified Educational Managers (CEM). According to ITECA ‘these credentials provide a tangible way for individual professionals to demonstrate their mastery as assessors, trainers and managers in the vocational education and training sector’.

As the credentials align with the ASQA regulatory standards they help RTOs to demonstrate compliance with these standards.

The next ITECA conference (ITEC19) is to be held in Queensland on 21-23 August at the Marriott Surfers Paradise.

<https://www.iteca.edu.au/>

## A MINUTE WITH Craig Robertson, CEO TAFE Directors Australia



### Is VET at the cross-roads?

Virtually all commentary agrees that the experiment with open-access funding to any registered training organisation has led to failings. To the extent that reforms have met objectives to attract more students to lift Australia's skill levels is open to question, especially as the quality of

most of that expansion is dubious.

When regulatory or contract action was taken many providers chose to close, and in many cases, they absconded with ill-gained profits, and all too easily they discarded students. If anything, the upheaval coming from governments' responses to these events has tarnished public confidence in VET. At the same time, universities have aggressively welcomed entries on the back of demand-driven funding, resulting in VET participation rates lower than 10 years ago. Now, over-specification within qualifications, enrolment red-tape and compliance-focused regulation is stultifying the system, at the time that it needs to grow and innovate.

### *The sector needs a broad-based re-think*

Analysis and commentary abound about the impact of digitisation and automation on the number and nature of jobs. The World Bank (2016) anticipates advances in automation threaten 45-57% of all jobs in the United States<sup>1</sup>. Artificial Intelligence researchers expect on average to see AI outperforming humans at translating languages by 2024, driving a truck by 2027, and working in retail by 2031.<sup>2</sup>

The scale and spread of the impact are contested, however, and labour market experts point to the history of how labour has adapted to change. The advent of mechanisation in agriculture moved workers into manufacturing, while the development of

advanced manufacturing moved workers within and across national borders. The off-shoring of many routine manufacturing jobs in turn has catalysed workers into service and value-added jobs.

I reckon most of us sense it will be different this time and that digitisation and automation will be all-encompassing. If this is to be the case, then why is it that investment in capital in most advanced economies, including Australia, is occurring at the expense of investment in labour? The Australian Institute Centre for Future Work shows the labour share of Australian GDP was at an all-time low in 2017<sup>3</sup>. The Reserve Bank of Australia also points to this fact and highlights the disproportionate effect that this has on industry. Describing the findings of an OECD study by Andrews, Criscuolo and Gal (2015) on the diffusion of technology, Weir (2018) reports that while 'productivity growth for frontier firms remained robust, the productivity gap between frontier and laggard firms was increasing across many industries and countries'. Weir also reports on a study by Autor et al (2017) which hypothesized that 'uneven technology take-up is resulting in the emergence of technological leaders (superstars) across many industries that have high profit mark-ups and low labour shares of value-added, and that this can explain the macro-level decline in labour's share'<sup>4</sup>.

In other words, what we experience as true in our lives – the power at our disposal in our iPhones, the technology we expect in our cars, or the convenience we seek from narrow casting via Netflix now comes from large multi-nationals. It's only a matter of time before new technologies become more accessible at the regular firm level.

I'll leave the most sobering analysis to one undertaken for a working paper by researchers from the International Monetary Fund (IMF)<sup>5</sup>. Using unique macro-economic general equilibrium modelling they assess the impact of robotization on labour. In doing so, they incorporate into their modelling a new form of capital—*robot capital*—as an additional factor to be considered

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, 2016, World Development Report 2016 (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank).

<sup>2</sup> Grace, Katja, John Salvatier, Allan Dafoe, Baobao Zhang, and Owain Evans, 2017, "When

Will AI Exceed Human Performance? Evidence from AI Experts," Techn. rep.  
<sup>3</sup>

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/theausinstitute/pages/1500/attachments/original/1497298286/Labour\\_Share\\_Hits\\_Record\\_Low.pdf?1497298286](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/theausinstitute/pages/1500/attachments/original/1497298286/Labour_Share_Hits_Record_Low.pdf?1497298286)

<sup>4</sup> Weir G, 2018, Research Discussion Paper RDP 2018-10, Wage growth puzzles and Technology, <https://www.rba.gov.au/publications/rdp/2018/2018-10/full.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2018/05/21/Should-We-Fear-the-Robot-Revolution-The-Correct-Answer-is-Yes-44923>

when determining where robot capital substitutes for skilled and non-skilled labour. They conclude that ‘the transition path is difficult for labour [because]...when multiple parameters ... fall within specific narrow ranges, it takes as little as twelve years for positive real wage growth to materialize (*from robotization*). In other scenarios, the low wage phase lasts 20 - 50+ years’. In other words, the benefits will come, but only after a considerable period of low wage and high displacement.

## **What does this mean for VET?**

Heaps. VET reaches about 70 per cent of occupations in Australia, with over 5.3 million Australians holding VET qualifications. So, it matters. It matters because what we provide in vocational education will prepare those entering and transitioning to work. The philosophy and instruments of the VET sector are not well-suited to respond to these challenges. The unquestioning adherence to competency-based training centred on practical skills aligned to a point in time occupation fails to prepare people for an uncertain future. The little regard given to underpinning knowledge, or to the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills, is a further disservice to students. In addition, qualifications which are pegged to current-day occupations provide little opportunity for advancement.

In times of uncertainty, the most basic tenet of education and training – the development of self-managing individuals – should be paramount. On the simplest of measures there is little focus within qualifications or their regulation on skills for developing agency. Arguably, it’s the cohort of citizens that access VET which is in most need of this support, even on equity grounds. Funding models forcing competition on price and simplistic (tick and flick) training and assessment approaches lead all providers down the same path to rudimentary adherence to standards with little regard for the quality and the spirit of teaching and learning. Well-funded and delivered VET courses can help drive change throughout the economy, especially for developing skills required for engaging in new production and services technologies. However, these considerations do not feature in any public discourse on VET, let alone the content of qualifications. VET public policy fails on basic normative grounds, the most pronounced being backward-looking VET courses. Somewhat paradoxically, we are experiencing a record job bounce across OECD countries<sup>6</sup>. 43 million jobs have been added to OECD

countries in the past 5 years and the unemployment rate is at its lowest in decades. In 2018, employment rate among individuals of working age was the highest it has ever been in Britain, Canada, Germany, Australia and 22 other OECD countries. The change has come from policy reform and initiatives such as the introduction of minimum wages and availability of public child-care services which has brought more women into the labour market.

The thought is that in the face of financial uncertainty, employers are engaging labour ahead of capital (as it’s easier to lay-off staff or reduce pay in some countries). This further clouds discussions about the loss of labour share of GDP. Whether this is a cycle or trend is difficult to know.

Whether or not I am wrong about the impact of technology on labour, there is other extant evidence to show that the nature of skills required for Australians to advance in their careers is way beyond anything prescribed within VET’s training packages. Strong employment conditions give us a window for action – we cannot afford to sit back content with the way we have manipulated people into jobs via our current qualification construct.

The work of VET researchers is a central input to policy responses and I commend the work of AVETRA. The issues facing the Australian vocational education and training sector need to be called out, not for the sector’s sake, but for Australians who rely on it.

If evidence is the friend of research, then advocacy must be its companion.

We all need to act. Complacency is our enemy.

**Craig Robertson**

**Chief Executive Office, TAFE Directors Australia; Chair, World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics**

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<sup>6</sup> The Economist, May 25 2019

## Appointments and re-appointments



**The Hon. Michaelia Cash: Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education**



**The Hon. Dan Tehan: Minister for Education**



**The Hon. Steve Irons: Assistant Minister for Vocational Education, Training, and Apprenticeships**

## VALE — GREGOR RAMSAY

The AVETRA community was saddened to learn of the death of Dr Gregor Ramsey (AM) on 4 May 2018.

Gregor commenced his career as a science teacher and became one of Australia's leading policy thinkers and education research advocates. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2007 for his service to education, particularly higher education, and vocational education and training. Gregor leaves a legacy that is clearly enduring. Apart from the numerous and influential policy reviews he conducted in the education and training sector, he led the successful transformation of colleges in South Australia resulting in the establishment of the University of South Australia. As the Managing Director of TAFE NSW his reforms led to the establishment of TAFE Institutes. He also established the Desert Peoples Centre in Alice Springs to foster a systematic and coordinated approach to Indigenous education and training.

Importantly for our community, he was the reason AVETRA came about. As the Chair of the ANTA Research Advisory Council, he led the establishment of a stronger voice for research-driven policy and practice in vocational education and training culminating in the establishment of several research centres, broad dissemination of VET research projects and finally the creation of an independent AVETRA when ANTARAC was dissolved. Those who worked with Gregor will remember his sharp mind, his unwavering dedication, and his focus on quality, equity and inclusion; of opinion, voices and representation.

On behalf of all colleagues in the AVETRA community, we extend our deepest condolences to Dr Gregor Ramsey's family.

## Learn a thing or two about the digital age: an online professional development program developed at Charles Darwin University (CDU)

Sue Tucker and Wendy Taleo, members of the Education Strategy team, at CDU Alice Springs campus, have recently launched a free online professional development program designed to raise digital literacy skills. The program is called '23 Digital Things' and is to be presented over 23 weeks with a post each week introducing one 'Thing'.

The program is designed to improve people's confidence in a world where digital skills are required to manage the parts of our lives that are online. Among the Things to be posted are: blogging, online collaboration, apps for efficient work, using social media, professional reflection and a whole lot more. Thing 6, which will be launched on Wednesday, 19 June, is all about Working in the Cloud – something highly relevant in today's world where many staff are working remotely from their office base or team.

In explaining who could participate in the program, Ms Tucker says that 'CDU staff and anyone else in the wider world may participate by accessing the open website, reading through the content and completing an activity'.

Ms Taleo noted that the program has been designed to be inclusive so helping to create a community of interested people while they are developing their digital skills. The aim is for participants to spend a little time each week on expanding their digital literacy. Participants can choose to do all 23 Things or just those that interest them.

When people choose to be involved Ms Taleo tells them 'Participate at your own pace in this free and flexible program'.

Click here to access the program: <https://23things.cdu.edu.au>



Wendy Taleo and Sue Tucker; Background Image: Rodion Kutsaev

## 30 years of VOCEDplus!



VOCEDplus is maintained by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). It was originally produced by NCVER's predecessor (the TAFE National Centre) with the help of a network of clearing houses in Australia and New Zealand. It comprised resources in print and diskette form. The focus of the database was very much Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific. Launched in 1989 the database went by the name VOCED because it was a data base of information and resources of specific relevance to the vocational education sector.

In 1997, VOCED went online on the NCVER website. NCVER then undertook an enhancement project to broaden its scope to make VOCED truly international. In 2001, NCVER with the Adelaide Institute of TAFE (now incorporated into TAFE SA) were jointly recognized as a UNESCO Regional Centre for

Excellence in Technical and Vocational Education and Training. VOCED was then formally badged as the UNESCO/NCVER International database for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Research. VOCED was now able to get its own website!

The next major phase of development came in 2011 when VOCED became VOCEDplus. NCVER wanted to take advantage of the potential of new technologies to improve its services for the provision of online resources. These updates included targeted searching, integration with other knowledge sources (including, websites, portals, libraries, books, journals, and data) and the application of Web 2.0 technologies, including, RSS (*Really, Simple Syndication*) feeds, and share and bookmark tools.

Some additional funding in 2009 enabled NCVER to broaden the focus of the database to more fully incorporate information of relevance to the higher education sector, especially in the areas of workforce needs and skills development. In May 2015, VOCEDplus underwent a cosmetic change and adopted the new branding used by NCVER. Enhancements were added to search functions (including, guided search, expert search, and glossary search).

Today the data base has just over: 80,000 items, 49,000 full text items, and 17,800 peer-reviewed items. On average it records over 306,000 visits per year by visitors from more than 150 countries. The VOCEDplus team deal with just over 1,500 document delivery requests per year.

In September 2019, VOCEDplus celebrates 30 years of providing information to the VET sector.



Some of the members of the VOCEDplus team (from left to right): Radhika Naidu, Tracey Gamlin, Leanne Harrison, Kelly Frazer (Manager) and Rose-Anne Polvere.

## Stories making the news

**Quick Links:** Click on these links to get to the home pages of the different State Training Authorities.

- Australian Capital Territory (ACT) - [Skills Canberra](#)
- New South Wales (NSW) - [Training Services NSW](#)
- Northern Territory (NT) - [Department of Trade, Business and Innovation](#)
- Queensland - [Department of Education and Training](#)
- South Australia (SA) - [Department of State Development](#)
- Tasmania - [Skills Tasmania](#)
- Victoria - [Department of Education and Training](#)
- Western Australia (WA) - [Department of Training and Workforce Development](#)

### VET in South Australian to help fill skills shortages

The concept of supermarket schools has been used to describe current high schools in South Australian by the principal of St Patrick's Technical College, Danny Deptula. He says they all offer the same educational offerings, with little regard for the individual needs of students, especially students who were not among the 'top-end or bottom-end of academic achievers'. Schools tended to push these 'middle' academic achievers on to university pathways, when a VET education may have been more suitable. The State Government is set to review the VET delivered to secondary school students. Source: The Advertiser -

<https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/state-government-review-of-vet-in-schools-aims-to-make-it-more-attractive-to-students-and-ensure-skill-shortages-can-be-filled/news-story/b010953affc58a6f2241a2c2dbbfd21e>



State Government  
review .docx

### Knowledge workers will be required in jobs for the future

A paper looking at the type of education and training that will be required for future jobs [The path to prosperity: the future of work is human](#), by Deloitte, underscores the need for post-secondary education and workplace learning to deliver required skills. Source: Universities Australia -

[https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/Media-and-Events/media-releases/Jobs-of-the-future-will-be-in-knowledge#XQGBC4\\_hWUk](https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/Media-and-Events/media-releases/Jobs-of-the-future-will-be-in-knowledge#XQGBC4_hWUk)

### Growing more jobs

Productivity Commission chair, Michael Brennan, has called on the Morrison government to implement reforms that will help grow the highly paid and highly productive jobs desired by Australian. These big changes include 'cutting red tape, reforming taxes, boosting skills and education'. Source: The Australian Financial Review - <https://www.afr.com/opinion/editorials/the-calls-for-job-boosting-reforms-get-louder-20190612-p51wvz>



Job boosting .docx

### WA TAFE is the first to adopt machine learning courses

A course at the South Metropolitan TAFE in Perth is to be piloted with Year 11 and 12 high school students at four high schools in the states. This Certificate II course has been jointly developed by the Resource Industry Collaboration group headed by Rio Tinto, TAFE and the WA government. Source: Sydney Morning Herald - <https://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace/machine-learning-australia-s-first-automation-course-launched-at-wa-tafe-20190612-p51ww4.html>

### Skills for tomorrow

Although technological advancements have affected the way work gets done in a great many industries, it is the specialist jobs, especially those requiring human creativity and 'ingenuity' that have been on the rise. According to an article in the Australian it is these roles (especially the specialist IT roles) is growing at a greater rate than the workforce itself. Source: The Australian - <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/technology/focusing-on-tomorrows-skills/news-story/e415a78f6fb8abf9a330a43b90c40bb2>

### Some jobs are difficult to fill

The Sydney Morning Herald reports that small and medium businesses are finding it difficult to find workers to fill jobs. This is despite the fact that we have high levels of immigration and the economy is healthy. These difficult to fill jobs are in the professions (doctors, architects, and English teachers), and skilled trades (including, mechanics, riggers and plumbers) Source: Sydney Morning Herald - <https://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace/jobs-in-demand-bonanza-as-employment-hits-high-20190523-p51qhp.html>

## Australia needs more IT professionals

A survey of 160 Australian IT companies, notes that Australian IT employers believe that more IT education programs are required if Australia is to grow the extra 100,000 technology workers to become a global ICT leader by 2023. Source: IT Brief - <https://itbrief.com.au/story/why-education-is-the-primary-solution-to-australia-s-it-skills-shortage>

## Urgent reform of Australia's tertiary education system required [podcast]

New research by Mitchell Institute at Victoria University shows a steep decline in the number of young Australians with a tertiary education, at the time when jobs will require a tertiary education. Source: ABC Radio -

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/australias-tertiary-education-system-needs-urgent-reform/11159198>

The Mitchell Institute report can be found at

<http://www.mitchellinstitute.org.au/papers/rethinking-and-revitalising-tertiary-education/>

## Steven Joyce says going to university is not always the best option for Australian students

Steven Joyce, the author of the recent VET Review has noted that the focus on getting a good ATAR in Year 12, government funding policies and other school influences has tended to promote university pathways when not all students benefit. 'You can see through some of the statistics that there are undoubtedly people going to first-year university where that wouldn't have been the best option for them'.

Source: The Australian -

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/steven-joyce-says-uni-focus-holds-back-australian-students/news-story/a653fc10574e392ac8f7d2cacb4be0d6>



Steven Joyce .docx

## Australian workers prefer to learn digital skills on line

A survey of 1000 workers by Swinburne University of Technology's Centre for the New Workforce reports that 46 per cent of them named online courses as a preferred method, compared with TAFE (44 per cent) and university (40 per cent). However just over a third preferred using Google and using their current employer (34 per cent and 35 per cent respectively). Just over half (56 per cent) of workers are of the view that they need a set of new skills for

their work in the near future. In addition, 51% were afraid that automated products and services or artificial intelligence would take over their jobs.

Source: The Australian -

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/australian-workers-prefer-online-path-to-digital-skills/news-story/0bb2c2fb8cd8e1c3649594c6669f6c64>



Online for digital skills.docx

## Government must address higher education reforms

The government's lack of stakeholder consultation with higher and further education providers in the means that policy decisions for educational reform may not be based on strong evidence. The key policy question is to understand whether or not higher and further education are able to provide the skills and knowledge required for success in the 21st century? Source: The Australian -

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/government-must-address-systems-urgent-problems/news-story/aefa2e2c4a6d5669d00436de6245583e>



Tertiary reforms.docx

## STEM Skills Strategy launched by Western Australia

In an attempt to grow its science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce the Western Australian government launched its STEM Skills Strategy—[Future Jobs, Future Skills: Driving STEM skills in Western Australia \[PDF\]](#). There are five components: skills for future jobs; STEM culture; school leadership and teacher excellence; diversity in STEM; training and reskilling for jobs. Source: ZDNet - <https://www.zdnet.com/article/western-australia-launches-its-first-stem-skills-strategy/>

## Keeping prisoners from recidivism

New research finds that if prisoners engage in VET studies while in jail they are less likely to return. Prisoners who had completed a VET program were 2.5 times more likely to remain custody-free at two years after release from prison (a probability of almost 60%) – and 2.1 times at five years after release (a probability of more than 78%). Source: Flinders University -

<https://news.flinders.edu.au/blog/2019/05/28/formal-education-sets-path-to-remain-out-of-prison/>

## Facts and figures: statistics from the NCVET Survey of Employer Use and Views



In this article the facts and figures reported are reproduced from the NCVET publication 'Employers Use and views of the VET system'. See the full publication at: <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/employers-use-and-views-of-the-vet-system-2017>

This publication presents information on employers' use and views of the vocational education and training (VET) system. The findings relate to the various ways in which Australian employers use the VET system and unaccredited training to meet their skill needs, and their satisfaction with these methods of training.

Australian employers can engage with the VET system in three main ways, by: having jobs that require vocational qualifications, having apprentices and trainees, and using nationally recognised training.

A total of 8022 telephone interviews were conducted with Australian employers between February and May 2017 and the results relate to employers' training experiences in the 12 months preceding their interview.

### Highlights

In 2017, similar to 2015:

- 54.4% of employers used the VET system
- 37.2% of employers had jobs requiring vocational qualifications
- 23.5% of employers had apprentices and trainees
- 22.4% of employers used nationally recognised training (that was not part of an apprenticeship or traineeship).

### Employers' satisfaction with the VET system

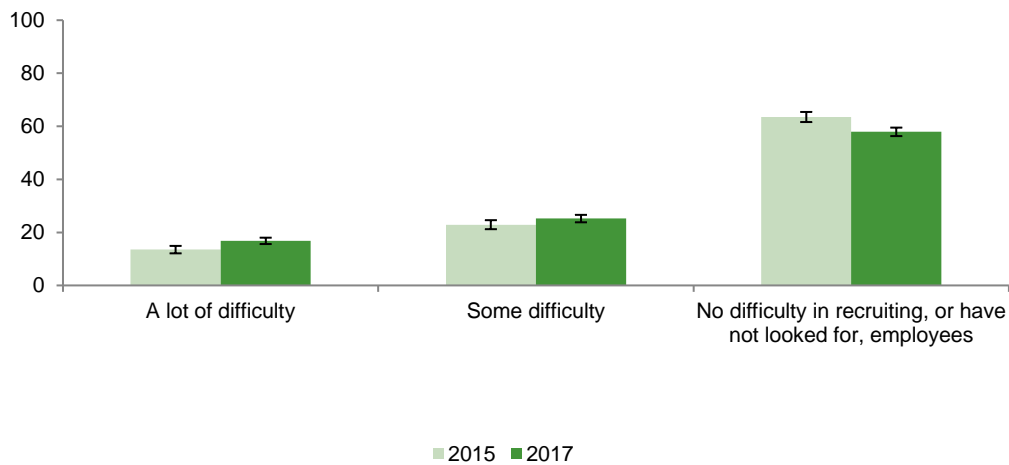
- Of all employers with jobs requiring vocational qualifications 75.4% were satisfied that vocational qualifications provide employees with the skills they require for the job, similar to 2015.
- Of all employers with apprentices and trainees 77.5% were satisfied that apprentices and trainees are obtaining skills they require from training, down 4.2 percentage points from 2015.
- Of all employers using nationally recognised training 82.2% of employers were satisfied that nationally recognised training (which is not part of an apprenticeship or traineeship) provides employees with the skills they require for the job, similar to 2015.

In the following section we present figures 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 from the publication to provide some more information about these highlights.

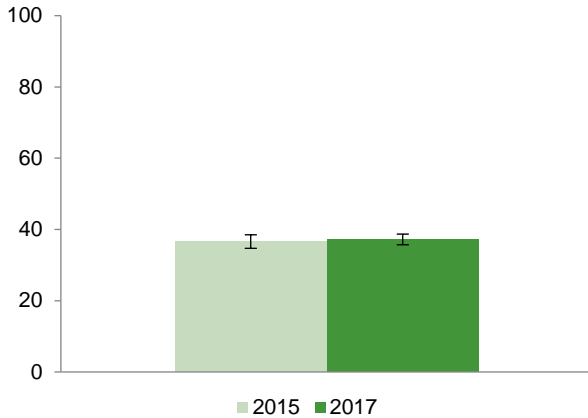
**Figure 1 Employers' use of training, 2015 and 2017 (%)**



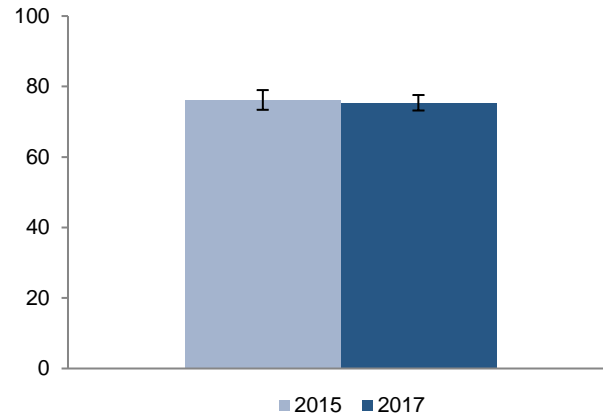
**Figure 2 Employers' recruitment difficulties, 2015 and 2017 (%)**



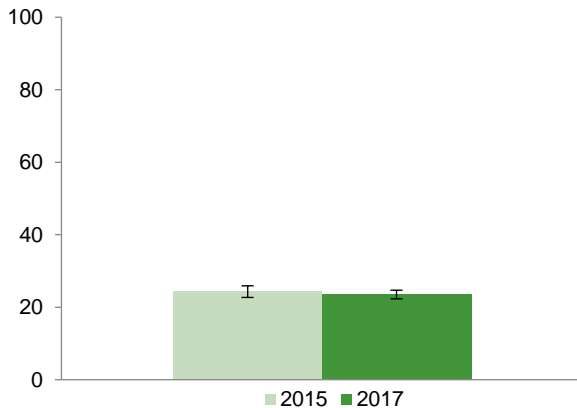
**Figure 4 Employers with jobs that require vocational qualifications, 2015 and 2017 (%)**



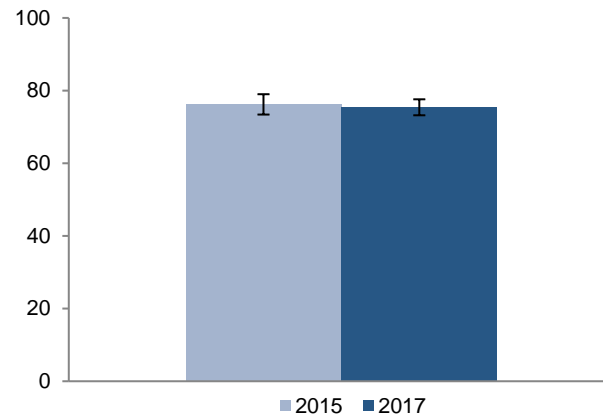
**Figure 5 Employers satisfied that vocational qualifications provide employees with the skills they require for the job, 2015 and 2017 (%)**  
(Base: all employers with jobs requiring a vocational qualification)



**Figure 6 Employers with apprentices and trainees, 2015 and 2017 (%)**



**Figure 7: Employers satisfied with the training apprentices and trainees receive as a way of meeting their skill needs, 2015 and 2017 (%)**  
(Base: all employers with apprentices/trainees)



Please note that the results of the 2019 Survey will be released at the end of October. To find out more about the survey and its other findings please feel free to contact or call Toni Rittie of NCVER at [toni.ritti@ncver.edu.au](mailto:toni.ritti@ncver.edu.au), tel: 08 8230 8613.

## ACDEVEG

**Australian Council of Deans Vocational Education Group**

### **Call for proposals**

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on VET Teaching and VET Teacher Education  
'Diverse Pedagogies for Diverse VET Contexts'**

**9 & 10 December 2019, at Charles Sturt University, Boorooma St Campus, Wagga Wagga**

**Proposals are now invited for two types of activities at the conference:**

**1. Practitioner workshops and roundtables for:**

- Collaboratively working through a teaching and learning issue that is likely to be shared by many VET teachers and trainers in their everyday work practice.
- Presenting a teaching and training innovation or project that has been implemented or is planned and inviting feedback from professional colleagues as 'critical friends'.
- VET teacher-education and VET professional development practices and innovations.

**2. Presentations of research findings or research in progress on issues and topics on VET teaching or VET teacher education.**

To submit a proposal, please use the appropriate template available on the conference website, at <https://thinkspace.csu.edu.au/acdeveg2019/>. Papers and workshops proposals must relate to VET teaching/training, or VET teacher qualifications/professional development.

Please email your proposal to the conference organisers at [ACDEVEG\\_2019@csu.edu.au](mailto:ACDEVEG_2019@csu.edu.au). If you would like to discuss the suitability of your proposal for the conference or would like assistance in preparing your proposal, please contact the conference organisers at the same email address.

The closing date for the proposals for workshops/roundtables and presentations is **Wednesday 31 July 2019**.

Proposals will be reviewed against the following criteria:

**Proposals for a roundtable**

- Relevance of the practice/project/approach to VET teaching and/or VET teacher education;
- Likelihood of interest among the identified target audience;
- Potential for active engagement by the participants in the form of (for example) brainstorming ideas, imagining solutions/possibilities and discussion during the session; and
- The presenter's relevant experience.

**Proposals for a research paper**

- Relevance of the topic to VET teaching and/or VET teacher education;
- Likelihood of interest among the conference audience;
- Originality or potential to add to existing scholarship;
- Conceptual, methodological and theoretical soundness;
- Coherence and clarity of written expression;
- Reference to appropriate literature.

## Upcoming Conferences: details, dates and links

### Australian Conferences



**July 14-16**, Australian Conference of Economists, *ACE 2019, Australia's Place in the World*, Melbourne. See more at: [http://esacentral.org.au/annual-conference-item/25300/ace-2018/?type\\_fr=407](http://esacentral.org.au/annual-conference-item/25300/ace-2018/?type_fr=407)

July **10-12**, 28<sup>th</sup> National VET Research Conference- No Frills: *The student Journey: Skilling for Life*, Adelaide, South Australia This conference is co-hosted by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research and TAFESA. See more at: <https://www.ncver.edu.au/news-and-events>

**August 4-5**, Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) Research Conference 2019, *Preparing students for life in the 21st Century: Identifying, developing and, assessing what matters*, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne. See more at <https://www.acer.org.au/research-conference>

**August 21-23 2019**, -Independent Tertiary Education Council, ITEC19. Surfers Paradise. See more at: <https://www.iteca.edu.au/>

**September 12-13**, Velg National Conference 2019, *Innovate, Activate, Educate*, Brisbane Convention Centre, Brisbane. See more at <https://www.velgtraining.com/nvc>

**October 15-18**, The Australian International Education Conference (AIEC), 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, *Leading the Way*, Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre. See <https://www.ieaa.org.au/events/event/leading-the-way-australian-international-education-conference-aiec-2019>

**November 13-15, 2019** Community Colleges Australia Annual Conference, *Taking the Lead: Building Community* See more at: <https://cca.edu.au/what-we-do/2018-cca-annual-conference/>

**Check out this interactive website** to find details on upcoming education and training conferences by topic and date to be held in Australia from December 2018 – 2019 <https://10times.com/australia/education-training/conferences>

### International Conferences



**June 28-30**, Journal of Vocational Education Conference, *Researching Vocational Education and Training*, Kebble College, Oxford, United Kingdom. See more at <https://jvet.co.uk/>

**July 2-4**, SCUTREA (Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults),

*Adult Education 100: Reflections and Reconstructions*, University of Nottingham, Nottingham United Kingdom. See more at [scutrea2019@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:scutrea2019@nottingham.ac.uk)

**August 12–16**, 18<sup>th</sup> Biennial European Conference for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI) Thinking tomorrow's education: Learning from the past, in the present and the future, RWTH Aachen, Germany, <https://www.earli.org/earli2019>

**September 3 – 6**, European Educational Research Association, *Education in an Era of Risk: the role of the educational researcher*. See more at <https://eera-ecer.de/ecer-2019-hamburg/>

**September 25 – September 27**, Association for Career and Technical Education, Best Practices and Innovations in career and technical education, Tucson, Arizona, USA, See more at <https://www.acteonline.org/bestpractices/>

**July 24 – 26 July**, the 11th International Conference on Researching Work and Learning (RWL 11) will be held in Giessen, Germany.

The conference theme is '**Configuring Enterprises as Spaces for Learning: Possibilities, Risks and Limits**'.

<https://www.uni-giessen.de/fbz/fb03/institute/ifezw/prof/wb/rwl11/registration>

The conference wants to encourage an open-minded but also critical discussion on the wide range of possibilities to learn or not to learn within and outside enterprises in an international context. The conference offers a variety of programme formats including workshops, symposia and roundtables. Besides the conference programme the RWL 11 offers lots of opportunities for exchange of ideas, meet friends or fellow scientists and getting to know colleagues from all over the world. Especially students or PhD-candidates could profit from the participation in the conference by presenting their ideas and do networking

The conference programme will be online in June. Stay updated by visiting our website:

<https://www.uni-giessen.de/fbz/fb03/institute/ifezw/prof/wb/rwl11>. If you have further questions don't hesitate to contact us: [RWL11-conference@uni-giessen.de](mailto:RWL11-conference@uni-giessen.de)

## Save the date for 2020

**June 4-7, 2020**, AEGT 2020, Adult Education in Global Times, An International Research Conference, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, See more at: <https://edst.educ.ubc.ca/aegt2020/>  
And <http://www.scutrea.ac.uk/>

## Research Resources available from the VOCEDplus data base

The considerable resources of the VOCEDplus data base can help you when you are starting up new research projects or literature reviews. They can be accessed at:

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

The VOCEDplus Pod Network allows instant access to research and a multitude of resources in a convenient and efficient platform.

<http://www.voced.edu.au/pod-network> . Link to the whole list of podlets:

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

Link to the feedback form:

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



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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 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 \$190 (GST inclusive) and Student memberships \$95.00 including GST are available.

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

Note: AVETRA Membership for institutions and organisations has been formally endorsed. Arrangements are currently being made to enable institutions and organisations to join AVETRA on an annual basis.